

Renwick speaks about UNC-CH Blacks

by Marjorie Roach
Staff Writer

Statistics for the last five years at UNC-CH reveal a significant drop in black enrollment. In 1980, 425 black freshmen enrolled; in 1981, 450; 1982, 467; 1983, 427 and this fall has only seen 343 black freshmen.

Why, the decline? According to Hayden B. Renwick, associate dean of the college of Arts and Sciences, in an interview last week, "the University has not provided adequate support systems-combined with the lack of priorities, the Black student then flunks out."

Black Ink spoke with Dean Renwick about his comments.

BLACK INK: It has been said that maybe UNC-CH is academically too much for some black students. How do you respond to that?

RENWICK: I think that any student accepted at Carolina can make it. If you are not astute enough to realize

that you can't slide by on what you did in high school and expect to perform well...you won't make it.

BLACK INK: Is the atmosphere here detrimental to academic success?

RENWICK: Any atmosphere is detrimental if you allow it to be so. A good example of this is when you compare attendance of academic tutorials with attendance at social functions.

BLACK INK: What seems to be the problem as far as Black students priorities go?

RENWICK: Our problems is that all Blacks think we have arrived, and we are equal. Black students need to be more realistic and have their priorities straight. Racist thought has not been eliminated; Black students just make it easier for racists to sit back and watch as they (students) defeat themselves by misguided priorities.

BLACK INK: What problems are there

with the university system?

RENWICK: How can you expect Black students to look at academics as being top priority when there is nothing on campus to reward students for academic success. Phi Beta Kappa and the minority 3.0 reception are about the only rewards. There may be honorary societies for each school but no active support to promote these societies.

BLACK INK: Was the minority tutorial system helpful last year?

RENWICK: Out of 427 freshmen last year, one-half are under 2.0. Just 35 had a B average or above. Yet, we still averaged less than 35 students per week for tutorials last year.

BLACK INK: In what way has the black faculty been a support?

RENWICK: As far as the Black faculty is concerned, they are interested in success for the Black student. The new buddy system we're initiating this year is a big support.



Dean Renwick, Dean of Academic Affairs
Photo by Marjorie Roach

The execution of Blacks for discriminatory purposes

by Kevin Washington
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With the execution of James Hutchins and the scheduled execution of Velma Barfield, North Carolinians might be led to believe that the state's death row is composed of older whites convicted of multiple heinous murders.

But a look at death row reveals a cast of Black males, most of whom are in their 20s and 30s and guilty of single murders.

Sixty percent of the 38 inmates on Central Prison's death row are Black, according to Patty McQuillan, spokeswoman for the N.C. Department of Corrections. The 1980 U.S. census placed the percentage of Blacks in North Carolina's population at 22.

Of the 361 people executed at the prison since the state began keeping records in 1910, 78 percent have been Black. And the only two women executed were Black also.

After years of debate over capital punishment, many Black North Carolinians still believe the death penalty is a discriminatory tool used against them by the nation's and the state's legal systems.

And despite the theories on the discriminatory use of capital punishment, statistical evidence may be lacking.

For Kenneth Hardy, director of the statistical laboratory at UNC-CH's Institute for Research in Social Science, many of the analyses of capital punishment and Blacks begin

at the wrong end of the legal system.

"Any time you want to make a comparison between Blacks and whites who get the death penalty, you have to look at crimes committed," he pointed out. "A lot of people look up and see the number of Blacks on death row and say there's racial bias in the courts."

Hardy, who is currently working on a book about the death penalty in the state with UNC law professor Barry Nakell, said, "You've got to look at a bunch of known homicides and look at the sentencing from there.

"If the Black-white capital crime ratio is 50/50, and the sentencing of Blacks to the death penalty is 70 percent, then you may have a problem."

Neither the state Correction's department nor the office of the courts keep statistics on capital crimes convictions broken down by race. The state Department of Justice does publish statistics on arrests with Blacks arrested for first second degree murders and negligent manslaughters 345 times in 1982 and whites arrested 235 times. But, the department does not categorizes such statistics by capital versus noncapital crime.

"But if you want to investigate the disproportionality of Blacks receiving the death penalty, you have to do that vis a vis capital crimes committed and convictions," Hardy asserted.

Hardy said of his research, "We've found that you can't make a general statement about such sentencing in this state for that period."

He refused to comment further.

On the other hand, the state's Black population maintains the belief that racism decides the fate of a Black defendant convicted of a capital offense.

According to the February 1984 Carolina Poll conducted by the UNC School of Journalism, white North Carolinians favored the death penalty twice as often as the state's Blacks did.

In addition, the Poll showed that the Black-white difference transcended class lines. White respondents in all income categories favored the death penalty 70 percent of the time while Black respondents favored the death penalty only 30 percent of the time.

Thirteen percent of the Blacks and 10 percent of the whites said they didn't know whether they favored or opposed capital punishment.

The Black-white difference, based on a sampling of 1,003 whites and 192 Blacks, was highly unlikely to be due to chance.

"Those figures are consistent with national samples," said Dr. Darnell Hawkins, associate professor in the UNC sociology department. "Blacks are often less likely to support the death penalty. Some surveys show a 20 percent difference between Blacks and whites...in some cases, a 40 percent difference between races."

Hawkins, whose area of study is sociology of the law, said: "One thing Blacks see is that capital punishment has been used disproportionately against them, and historically Blacks

have thought of the Death penalty as...the execution of Black people for discriminatory purposes."

On the other hand, Hawkins said, whites are more in favor of the death penalty, because they don't believe it will be used against them.

Dr. Charles Phillips, assistant professor in the UNC-CH political science department, said, "Everybody agrees that prior to World War II and up until the 1950s, the court system was discriminatory in its use of the death penalty."

"After that time, agreement falls off," he said.

However, he said agreement didn't fall off so sharply in cases where Blacks were accused of rape. "Discrimination is awfully clear when the death penalty is given for rape up until about 1972; 90 percent of the executions for rape were of nonwhites up until then."

According to state Correction's department statistics, 68 percent of defendants given the death penalty for rape between 1964 and 1974 were Black with 13 Blacks, five whites and one Indian.

Hawkins said the legal debate over capital punishment was far from decided. He said the debate had often centered on sentencing and one of the few studies on the Black-white sentencing difference had been done in Florida.

"That study found that Blacks were not more likely to commit capital crimes than whites, although they did slightly-but not significantly," he said. "In fact, the problem