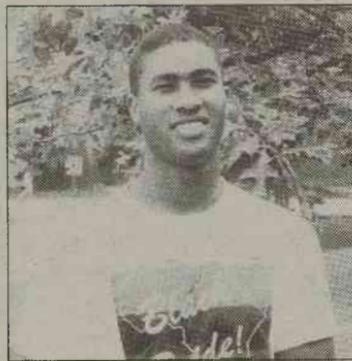


# Endsights:

*"So how exactly does one achieve academic success without completely sacrificing their social life? The answer is two-fold"*



## An Academic Challenge to the Class of '94

By Peter Blair Henry  
Contributor

As another academic year rolls around one can not help but be overwhelmed by the tradition and excitement that surrounds Chapel Hill—the Old Well and Bell Tower stand as perennial symbols of the tradition that is UNC, while Franklin Street is filled with the clamor of hundreds of thrill-seeking students. And of course, who can forget the roar of the Kenan crowd on Saturday afternoons, as they cheer on the Heels and sing nostalgic favorites such as "Hark the Sound."

Unfortunately, every fall since I have been at this university the UNC black community has been humming quite a different tune; it's called "Where Did Last Year's Freshman Go?" Cynical, perhaps, but the fact remains that every year a large portion of the incoming black freshman class drops out of UNC within one year. The overriding factor in the high attrition rate—poor grades. One particularly salient case is that of the class of '92.

Proclaimed as one of the most promising black freshman classes in UNC history, the Class of '92 fell miserably short of the expectations of faculty, administrators and themselves. The purpose of bringing this matter to the fore is not to disparage those individuals who are members of this group. Rather, the intent is to warn this year's freshmen about the potential pitfalls that await them at UNC and provide some helpful advice to help them avoid the academic woes which befell the class of '92.

Contrary to popular opinion, the primary purpose in attending an institution of higher learning is the pursuit of academic excellence. Of course one ought not live in academic seclusion, but scholastic performance should be a top priority. It is alot easier to start off the semester with "your head in the books," and gradually find your social niche than it is to party the first month or so and then try to play catch-up. Not only will you be behind in terms of course material but your study skills and discipline will also be sorely lacking.

So how exactly does one achieve academic success without completely sacrificing their social life? The answer is two-fold. The crucial factor in this process is so simple that to state it seems almost vacuous. Nonetheless, it needs to be said. Go to classes!

There will be numerous times when, perhaps after staying up late talking to friends, playing cards or just hanging out, you will not feel like getting up to go to that 8:00 or 9:00 class. Get up! Like so many other things, missing classes is habit forming—once you miss one, it becomes commonplace. The easiest way to place yourself in an academic bind is to skip classes.

While going to class and paying attention may have been sufficient effort for success in high school, such is not the case here at Chapel Hill. Study time is a must. Set aside a period each day, from 2:00 to 4:00 in the afternoon for example, where you do nothing but homework. That way you get your work out of the way early on and have the nights free to socialize. Of course, exactly how much you study will be determined by the quantity of work you have.

Making a commitment to academia is the first and hardest step in having a successful four years at UNC; if you prepare for class and stay on top of your work performance will take its due course. Not everyone is capable of getting straight A's but, all are capable of doing decent work.

If for no other reason, devote time to your studies because it is a challenge. It is a challenge to enter into a predominantly white institution and prove that you belong academically. Take pride in your ability to compete in the classroom. Don't allow yourself to become "just another black who failed out of UNC." Rather, be a role model for your peers; instead of hanging out in front of the Undergrad, be the one who goes inside and studies. As a moderately well known black minister puts it, "You can make a difference!" Make a difference this semester; for the university, your friends, and most importantly for yourself.

Peter Henry is a senior Economics/Math major from Wilmette, IL.

Express yourself about issues that concern Black Ink readers. Articles should be three pages long, typed double spaced (include year, major, and hometown). Drop your article by Suite 108-D Student Union, or mail to Black Ink, CB# 5210, Student Union, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

### What You Don't Know About Black People

Black students at a predominantly white university must be prepared to counter criticism from prominent graduates and students of black universities that we do not have a sense of our history and culture. While this true (as I will readily establish later in this article), it is applicable to all Americans regardless of what type of university they attended and what race they happen to be. It is a well known fact that the absence of a well documented history of achievement and discovery from the textbooks of American classrooms (at black and white universities) has led blacks and whites to think that the dark skinned people of the world have contributed nothing. This has led to widespread low self esteem and self-confidence. Sure, Eurocentric perspectives of world history have granted us with token credit for such inventions as Lewis Latimer's light bulb filament and peanut butter (guess who?). It is time, however, to correct the wrongs and claim our rightful place and fair share as the founders of civilization.

Within recent years it has been discovered, once and for all, that a seminal black kingdom in the Nile Valley, existed before and served as the roots of classical Egypt which in turn gave rise to the periods of enlightenment in Ancient Greece and Rome. It has also been discovered that advanced steel smelting took place in Tanzania nearly 2000 years before its discovery in Europe. Africans cultivated crops 7000 years before any other civilization, domesticated cattle in Kenya 15,000 years ago, used fire 1,400,000 years ago (1 million years before its first known use in Asia) invented a glider-plane 2,300 years ago in Egypt (where the pyramids are), used tetracycline 1,400 years before its rediscovery in the western world and visited North and South America well before Christopher Columbus or the alleged Viking discovery. In fact the oral tradition and art work of the Dogon people of Mali, West Africa show a 2000 year old understanding of astronomy which includes scientifically sound concepts of the rings of Saturn and the moons of Jupiter, as well as the nature of stars 2000 years before their re-discovery. Surprisingly, Dogon astronomy, although 2000 years old, goes beyond what we presently know about some things and is continually being authenticated by observations using modern equipment.

Some will dismiss this as useless speculation despite the fact that it has been scientifically proven. Many Eurocentric (racist) scientists have attempted to discredit the contributions of Africans and African Americans. Many Africans and African Americans themselves have fallen prey to the image of Africa as a land inhabited by Tarzan and bushmen. The story of how Africans and people of color molded the world and were denied their rights to it is complicated and never ending and therefore not within the scope of this article. It should be noted, however, that as recent as 1913, African Americans received over one thousand inventions (some were not granted patents). It was ruled in 1858, by the U.S. Attorney General that a patent was a contract between an inventor and the government, and since slaves were not U.S. citizens, they could not have a contract with the government. As a consequence many devices invented by slaves were patented under white peoples names or not patented at all.

The aforementioned revelations should remind us that as Jesse Jackson often says, we are not up from slavery. We are tenacious, intelligent, strong people who were sold by Africans to white people and survived 200 years of slavery to emerge as governors, candidates for president, astronauts and CEO's of billion dollar multi-national corporations. Slavery represents a very small portion of our rich history and does not constitute our history. With the achievements of the ancient past and the present in mind, let us proudly wear our African medallions, "kinky" hair, thick lips, and brown eyes as we march onward and upward. Let us look back to the future, be black for the future and remember that the will to achieve comes from the knowledge that we can.— Terrence E. Garrison, Junior Political Science/Afro-American Studies major from Henderson, NC.

## Think Black Ink....

# TODAY!!

Black Ink will hold its first meeting today in room 210 of the Carolina Union at 6:30. All interested students and UNC staff are welcome.