

North and South: The Black/South Campus-

By Myron B. Pitts
Staff

In 1951, four black aspiring law students sued the University and gained admittance, by way of a court order, to the UNC Law School, and segregation was officially abolished at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. But in 1990, a clear pattern has emerged showing that a campus division has nevertheless occurred with a glaringly disproportionate number of blacks living on South Campus in respect to those living on North Campus.

The number of African-Americans applying to live on North and Mid-Campus is on the rise, but this marginal increase will not likely overcome the huge disparity between the numbers of black North and South Campus residents anytime soon, if figures provided by the University's Administrative Data Processing are any indication. According to the most recent report, 67.4 percent of black campus residents live in the four highrises of Craige, Ehringhaus, Hinton James and

Morrison, with nearly one quarter of them living in Morrison alone. Nineteen percent of black residents stay in James, 13 percent in Ehringhaus, and 11 percent in Craige, while the other 25 dormitories contain the remaining 32.6 percent. Eight North Campus dorms house three or fewer blacks, and two of them, Lewis and Old West, have only one.

The hotly-contested issue of the preponderance of African-Americans on South Campus has given rise to two opposing viewpoints explaining the causes: either the University is deliberately separating the campus through a biased housing admissions policy, or blacks are voluntarily choosing South Campus as their first area of choice.

The Housing Application Policy: Not a Factor.

According to Wayne Kuncl, director of housing, the applications of freshman seeking housing are processed completely by computers which group people based on their social security number, smoking habits and roommate preference. Upperclassmen's

applications are handled by area directors who try to place students in dorms based on the amount of available spaces left, and generally there are always open rooms in South Campus halls because of their distance from the main campus and classrooms.

"The one thing we can't do is put everybody where they want to be," Kuncl said. "Some halls are invariably popular than the others."

But halls sought after by one race of people seem to be largely ignored by the other. White students tend to choose North Campus more readily than their dark-skinned counterparts, who, from observable evidence are definitely making the choice to stay south of the Avery-Carmichael line.

"We know that we have a larger percentage of minority students living in South Campus halls," Kuncl said. "I would think a higher percentage of black students are requesting South Campus."

Results supporting this assumption were obtained from a random poll of black and white South Campus residents who were asked, "What was your first choice resident hall this year?" Forty-seven out of 50 African-Americans (94 percent) said they chose a South Campus hall as their first pick, while only 24 (48 percent) of whites answered likewise. Why blacks flock down South is an oft-asked question and one answer seems to be prevalent among all those interviewed: blacks want to be around others sharing their background and experiences.

It's a black bonding thing.

"They move down there for the comfort factor," said Harold Wallace, vice chancellor of University Affairs. "The black students have discovered they are comfortable there."

Comfort comes in the form of associating with people who are similar to yourself in terms of cultural heritage, black students said, and South Campus is a place where blacks can unite and socialize with one another.

Shawn Williams, a freshman Morrison resident, noted that black students share "common bonds and common likenesses. Most blacks want to be around people they can associate with."

Both Kuncl and Wallace said black students probably hear about the virtues of South Campus through their friendship or kinship ties with the University. Black UNC graduates appear to be telling their incoming

freshman brothers, sisters, children and friends that the "Southern Part of Heaven" is literally southernmost.

Williams said he was informed about South Campus and its considerable black population by a UNC alumnus and Shelly Faulcon, a junior who lives in Hinton James, said her cousin told her. "I had heard that most blacks stay there."

In reference to the continuing cycle of former black South Campus residents influencing the next generation of African-Americans, Kuncl said, "We have a historical pattern that's been established." The exact starting point of the Black South Campus Residency Cycle is not really known, but some have proposed explanatory theories.

Possible origins of an actual black student movement.

Wallace, who has been part of the UNC community for 18 years, and was around shortly after the four highrises were constructed in the mid-1960's, suggested that blacks did not share the tradition associated with North Campus dorms. Having come to the University in the 50's, black students a decade later could not claim that their elders had lived in the North Campus resident halls which have long and nostalgic histories only for some white students, Wallace added. South Campus buildings were not only big (both Morrison and James have 10 floors, while Craige and Ehringhaus have six apiece) but modernized, and this prompted black families, who had no particular ties to any dorm, to prefer the highrises. Wallace recalls the story of a campus tour he once conducted during which he was told by one black mother of a prospective student that Old East, the campus' oldest dorm, was simply a "crummy-looking building" to her and that she liked the nice dorms with washers and dryers on South Campus.

Kuncl said he thought the black movement Southward could be possibly traced to minority orientation programs which were at one time provided on South Campus. The blacks discovered that they liked the halls in which they first experienced the University, so they decided to stay there.

"As the numbers began to increase, I think students began to feel a sense of support as well," he said. "You might feel more comfortable living in an environment with people like

