

# Snap Judgements Do Nothing But Cause Problems

By Kimberly Maxwell  
Staff

Within the past year and a half, I've become addicted to "The Arsenio Hall Show." If I'm home at 11 p.m., I'm usually glued to the television, watching him clown around in his Armani suits or strategically-ripped jeans. I particularly enjoy the songs he plays during his monologue. About a year ago for a week, Arsenio seemed to play the song "I'm Not Souped" by Troop often. At the time, I thought he might have had a particular motive, but after an experience last summer, I now understand.

Last summer, I interned in Charleston, South Carolina at The News and Courier and Evening Post newspapers, a position I got through the National Association of Black Journalists. Because of Hurricane Hugo the previous September, I had difficulty finding an apartment in the city and ended up staying in a dormitory at the College of Charleston.

While in the dorm, I met a group of black students who were participating in a minority program at the Medical University of South Carolina. Most of these students had either graduated or

were preparing to graduate from college, from schools all over the country. I was impressed with the group as a whole, because they all were intelligent people. For a time, we would eat together in the cafeteria, but a possession of mine began to cause problems.

As a part of my internship, it was necessary for me to have a car. My parents felt I needed another one, because the car I had wasn't dependable, especially since I'd be away from home for 12 weeks. I ended up with a car that was new only to me, but I was thankful to have it.

In addition, after putting 7.5 hours at the newspaper, I would journey to a nearby Boys and Girls Club three times a week for an hour to do volunteer work. I taught Afro-American history to a group of elementary school students, or scholars, as I called them. After schooling my scholars, I would drive directly to the cafeteria and eat dinner. I figured, why park at the dorm and walk to the cafeteria, when I could just ride there and drive home when I was done. It made sense to me.

On occasion, I would run into people in the medical program at dinner, and we'd eat together. Not wanting to be

rude, I would offer them a ride back to the dormitory, which was a block away. Within the course of the summer, insinuations were made about the fact that I would drive to dinner, especially since the dorm was so close by. Next thing I know, I'm judged to be stuck up, because I'm showing off my car. Shocked the hell out of me—but it also made me angry.

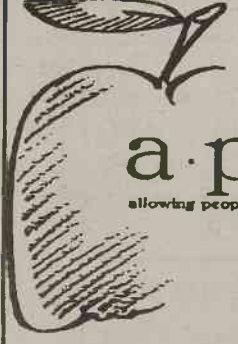
Now, the people I was dealing with in this unpleasant situation were all much like me—black and trying to be successful. These weren't potential ditch-diggers I was dealing with; these were potential doctors, pharmacists and health care professionals. People who would enjoy the fruits of their hard work someday, like I intend to do.

But our main tie was our skin color. We were still black Americans with the same trials and tribulations, especially when trying to be successful. Some of these students didn't realize that, because their visions were blurred by the car I drive. I just couldn't understand why another black person would want to bring another down based on a material possession. What made matters worse was their perception of me was made from assumptions. These people didn't even take the opportunity

to really find out what I'm about. I know there's more substance to Kimberley Maxwell than just a car, but to them, that's all I was.

It is easy to make assumptions about people. However, an assumption can label a person indefinitely, which is especially dangerous if it is untrue, and eventually lead to rumors, which is always bad news. Unfortunately, the person and their friends are the only ones who know—or believe—the truth. However, there's a person on the inside. Before making a snap judgment about someone, make sure you know that person, or at least have given them an opportunity to show differently. As college students, the majority of us want to hear both sides of a conflict before making an informed decision. The same should apply when dealing with the people around us.

I now know why Arsenio liked the song "I'm Not Souped" so much. The problem: believing snap judgments that aren't always true. And during a time when we all need to pull together to handle a racist society, we're doing just that. And pulling each other down in the process.



**a.p.p.l.e.s**  
allowing people to plan learning experiences in service

*Service is one of the things that this University wants to teach young people in addition to good studies, and the book knowledge. Another critical part of your experience is, to define it for you. Thomas Jefferson's great principle of public service. That is, every American owes his community, his state, his nation, some time in return for the blessings of democracy and freedom. This is so important, and it's not understood today.*  
— President Emeritus William Friday (1/8/90)

We are a nation founded upon active citizenship and participation in community life. We have always believed that individuals can and should serve. Furthermore, our University is founded upon academic excellence through higher education. We have always promoted challenging thought and expanding knowledge.

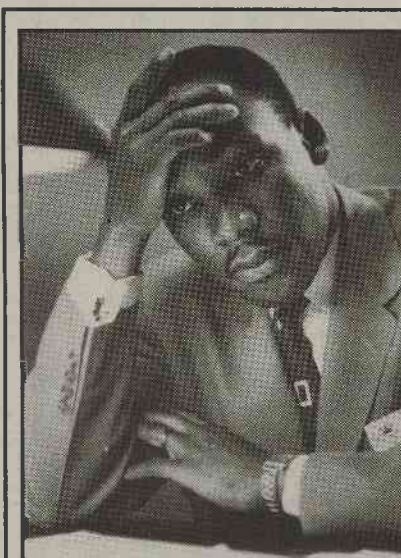
In the academic atmosphere of the University of North Carolina, a structured combination of learning and service would add value to each and transform both. Service translates philosophical and academic ideas into active and tangible results. In turn, these results add new dimensions to the structure of education.

It is crucial that service toward the common good be combined with reflective learning in order to assure that service programs of high quality are created and sustained over time. This combination would demonstrate how service can be a significant and ongoing part of life.

With learning through service, students will develop informed judgments, enriched imaginations, and sustained skills that will provide them with a greater capacity for contributing to the common good.

Based on the Preamble of the Wingspread report:  
Principles of Good Practice for Qualifying Service and Learning

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## 1991 Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

Activities and events for the university's annual observance of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday are now being planned by the Martin Luther King, Jr. Planning Committee. This committee is officially charged by the Chancellor with the responsibility to plan university-wide activities as a part of the university's of the late Dr. King's birthday. The committee invites interested individuals and groups who plan to sponsor similar activities to contact the committee chair at 962-6962 for further information.

## 1991 Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship

Nominations for the 1991 Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship are now being accepted through November 16, 1990 at 5:00 p.m. This scholarship is awarded annually to recognize students whose civic activities and academic accomplishments best exemplify the ideals and aspirations of the slain civil rights leader. Nominees must be juniors who have demonstrated a commitment to civil rights and equality and must have made an effort to improve the quality of life in the university community. Nominees must also have demonstrated leadership abilities and show promise of becoming a leader in his or her chosen field or endeavor. Nomination forms are available at the Black Cultural Center and at 03 South Building. Nominations may also be made by writing or calling: Ms. Carolyn Briggs, Office of University Affairs, 03 South Building, 962-6962.