



By Peter Henry
Contributor

On Oct. 23, 1990, a sculpture called "The Student Body" was mounted in front of Davis Library. Since that time, there has been exhaustive debate over the merits and faults of this work. Although no consensus has been reached as to whether the statues constitute a racist/sexist piece of work or simply an innocuous artistic expression, Chancellor Hardin has recognized that more than an insignificant portion of the student body takes great offense to the placement of "The Student Body" in front of their library.

The purpose of this commentary is not to debate whether the decision to move the statues to a new, less conspicuous site — between Hamilton and Bynum halls — is sufficient redress to those

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were White, because everybody knows that Blacks can play basketball ..." Mr. Hunsaker also tells us that when asked why the player was carrying a book, his little buddy responded that the player needed to study in order to graduate before going to the NBA.

Furthermore, Mr. Hunsaker ends his letter by asserting that his little buddy "... has a better grip on the statues and what they are all about than a lot of people on this campus...."

First of all, it is nothing short of amazing that the statements by the 11-year-old, whom Mr. Hunsaker views as having a healthy understanding of the statues, represent precisely the kind of narrow-minded thinking that Black students are constantly trying to dispel. This kind of thinking is insulting. It is insulting because Black men do more than play

some White athletes) who view higher education as nothing more than a four-year hiatus between high school and professional sports, it is wrong to perceive all Black athletes in this manner. To laud a young boy for harboring such thoughts is patently evil.

The fact that the statements in the letter that reflect negatively on Black men came from a young Black boy underscores the danger of allowing stereotypical statements to go unchecked. The only statue of a Black male on this campus is of a basketball player; it reinforces and perpetuates the idea that the only important Black males are those who play basketball. The statue does not let the 11-year-old know that there are very few Black males who possess the talent that will afford them a level of proficiency in their sport that, in turn, merits their immortalization in bronze.

Furthermore, the statue does precious little to make the youngster cognizant of the fact that "Blacks can play basketball" not because their innate gifts lie in athletic expression, but rather because a cruel system of cyclo-poverty and other factors too extensive to enumerate excludes vast numbers of Black males from traditional sectors of opportunity. Consequently, Black male youths have concentrated on developing their skills in other areas.

There are many cases throughout history of oppressed peoples attaining disproportionately high success rates in certain professions because they were banned from other avenues of opportunity. This theory has been espoused by scholars such as the great West Indian economist Sir Walter Arthur Lewis, who is Black. (His basketball career was cut short when he won the Nobel Prize for Econom-

ics in 1979.)

Unfortunately, the most dangerous thing about allowing people to believe that it is acceptable to portray Black men exclusively as athletes (even if they graduate before they go to the NBA) is that it brooks racial ignorance. This writer has no personal quarrel with Mr. Hunsaker, but as long as he believes that his little buddy's opinion on the statue of the male basketball player is healthy, then Mr. Hunsaker is doing a disservice to that young Black man.

Rather than extolling his little buddy for his narrow conceptualization of Black athletes, Mr. Hunsaker ought to make sure his little buddy is aware of "other great Black men" such as Marcus Garvey, Michael Manley and Malcolm X. Perhaps Mr. Hunsaker might profit from such an awareness himself. He will then be better equipped to help his little buddy overcome the forces that threaten to keep him, and countless other Black males, from achieving their academic potential.

Base Scholarships On Need, Not Race

To the Editors,

First of all, congratulations for putting together a thought-provoking and well-written magazine. And what's more—putting it together weekly! I hope (and believe) *Black Ink* will have continued success.

But this is not my reason for writing. I'd like to bring up some questions about Debbie Baker's article supporting racially-based scholarships. I can understand that many poor African Americans deserve financial aid to get an education. But why should a poor African American be given preference over an equally poor white? Or, for that matter, a poor Asian, Hispanic or Native American? To say that African Americans deserve special scholarships simply because they are African American strikes me as degrading and racist. It seems to imply that African Americans are somehow disabled and require special help. It may seem to confirm the patronizing, racist views of many whites. A disproportionate number of African Americans deserve financial help—but because they are poor, not because they are African American.

One more point: I don't think Ms. Baker should personally attack Michael Williams (the federal official who stated that racially-based scholarships are illegal). Ms. Baker called Mr. Williams an "Uncle Tom" and said that "...he has no soul nor any compassion or concern for people of African descent." I think Mr. Williams can disagree with Ms. Baker and still have a soul and concern for other African Americans. In any case, who cares about Mr. Williams? He's not the issue. The problems African Americans face is the issue. Throwing around accusations like 'Uncle Tom' and 'Oreo' does nothing to solve these problems. In fact, by attacking the individual instead of the argument, I think one tends to confuse real and troubling issues.— Grant Thompson

Express yourself about issues that concern *Black Ink* readers. 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

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who have been offended. Rather, this editorial will address a much larger problem, one of which the statue is merely a symptom.

Racial ignorance continues to plague our campus and community. The letter to *The Daily Tar Heel*, "11-year-old has a firm grip on statue issue," is a disheartening reminder that all the debate and protest evoked by the statue issue has failed to affect at least one individual.

In the letter, Mr. Eric Hunsaker tells us that he is tired of the statue ordeal and relays an account of his 11-year-old little buddy's reaction to the Black basketball player. Mr. Hunsaker's little buddy (who is Black) likes the statue and thinks "... it wouldn't make sense if the statue

basketball (or any other sport), and some athletes are genuinely interested in their classes and do not simply view education as an eventuality on the road to a professional career.

About a month ago, I had the pleasure of having breakfast with a Carolina football recruit. This young Black man scored 790 on the mathematics section of the SAT and wants to major in math education. Not once in our conversation was there a mention of professional or even college football. This young man is one example, although others can be cited, of the fact that Black athletes and Blacks in general, are capable of genuine intellectual curiosity. Although there are some Black athletes (just as there are