

Letters To the Editor

**FRATS AND COURTS GET
BAD RAP ON CAMPUS**

Race relations have been a central issue for campus debate for at least the last year, especially since the recent stand-off between the administration and the BSM/BAC coalition regarding a free-standing BCC. Race relations is a subject that evokes strong feelings in most of us due to the ignorance, misunderstanding, and the misinformation often associated with a discussion of the topic.

I had originally planned to write an article for submission to the Black Ink concerning the delicate balance of race relations on campus. However, after reading Karen Greene's article entitled "What Not To Do as a Freshman Sista..." I was sure that I was being summoned to battle misinformation and misunderstanding on another front.

The aforementioned article struck me as more as an opportunity for the author to mimic a segment of The Oprah Winfrey Show by bashing black men rather than an attempt to truly "drop a few words of wisdom" on incoming black women. Ms. Greene's "Philosophy of the Yard" is a list of five rules that act as an all out assault on every segment of Carolina's black male population, from athletes, to Greeks, to freshmen.

Although I would like to, it would take far too long and far too much space for me to defend all of my innocent brothers on campus. Consequently, I will limit my argument to the defense of Black Greek fraternities, indicted in "Rule No. 1". It is no secret to anyone who knows me that I am a proud member of a black fraternity on campus.

My fraternity, like many fraternities, black and white, on college campuses across the nation, has traditionally had an auxiliary group made up of women on campus that are commonly called "sweethearts," "court members," "little sisters," etc. The purpose of this group of women is to work in conjunction with the brothers in a number of activities, both service and socially oriented. The "Courts" are designed to establish a symbiotic relationship between fraternity members and court members. They not only work to help the fraternity

increase its participation in service projects, but provide the (often) underclassmen court members a vehicle of integration and familiarization into and with the campus.

In my fraternity, the two groups share participation in such activities as visiting rest homes and prison inmates, cleaning an adopted highway, distributing information for human rights week, tutoring elementary school children in reading, math, and science, as well as having cookouts, mixers, and parties. In addition, fraternity members often act as peer counselors or "big brothers" for court members. Many times lasting friendships develop between court members and fraternity brothers. Contrary to popular belief, court members, on the whole, are seldom romantically involved with fraternity brothers. We refer to the brothers and the court as the "Kappa Family" in my fraternity. And I am sure that we are not the only such group that embraces this feeling of family. We never think of our court as "frat ho's" as Ms. Greene referred to them!!

Just as you would not want your own sister to be known as a "ho" by your other brothers or by anyone outside the family, so too do we feel about our court members. These women have earned our respect and that of the people who benefit from their hard work and dedication to service. They hardly deserve to be labeled and stigmatized as "frat ho's" simply because Ms. Greene has an opinion she wanted to make known! This "frat ho" myth is one of many that continues to be propagated by malicious outsiders such as sorority members (who on many campuses, including this one, have had male auxiliary groups called "beaus," "gents," etc.), rival fraternities, and envious non-Greeks that see very little and know even less about the real relationship fraternities share with their Courts.

If Ms. Greene was sincerely concerned with positively informing or advising Black freshman women on this campus, she might have turned her attention to a number of more important topics that our young sisters should consider. Ms. Greene could have chosen to advise

our newly enrolled sisters about the importance of academics first and foremost during their time at UNC, especially during freshman year. She could have listed the Office of Student Counseling, the BSM, the BBSA, or any other organizations on campus designed to offer support to black students. She could have advised the young women to avoid extended periods of idleness with friends on the infamous yard instead of preparing for the next class in the library. The author could have even offered some words of warning concerning the danger of date rape, and its prevalence on college campuses across the country. But instead she chose to attack her brothers. Well, in spite of this attack, and many like it, I believe I speak for most of my fellow black men when I say..."We still love our sisters, despite our common faults and often inability to get along." Or as some of my brothers might put it, "Sticks and stones may break our bones but names will never hurt us!"

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COLUMNIST MISGUIDED

If this were a perfect world and we were perfect people I guess a lot of things would change: there would be one man for every woman, people would respect each others privacy, and no one would pass judgment on anyone else. Oh well, the world we live in is far from perfect. This was blatantly obvious to me a couple of weeks ago. A friend of mine hesitantly asked me to read an article in the season's first Black Ink, you know the "What not to do..." blurb. After digesting Ms. Greene's article my immediate question was "who is she?" Even after getting the low down on who she was I really wanted to know who she thought she was. Ms. Greene's "Philosophy of The Yard," although well-intentioned, is slightly misguided. The whole of her advise to freshmen women is summed up in one sentence—Don't allow yourself to be used or manipulated. This is basically fine, but in her facade as some hard core "sista" Ms. Greene chose to offend and alienate the reader while droppin' her knowledge about

campus life. Well, I think there are some things that Ms. Greene, freshman women, and anyone else who cares to read need to know.

First of all, the freshman women on this campus should always remember to make well-informed choices. If one of them happens to be joining a sweetheart organization—fine. It is a great way to meet people and make friends, and is a far cry from slanderous to your reputation. Ms. Greene—who was never a sweetheart on this campus—has failed, as a woman, to realize that if you have respect for yourself then others will have respect for you. Ms. Greene would also have you believe there is no purpose in being a sweetheart. I believe the purpose is to aid the fraternity on a service and social basis. As a former sweetheart I can confirm that everything you do may not make the paper, but does it need to? Helping others is a selfless act, why make it selfish by constantly publicizing your deeds? All that matters is that you assisted someone in accomplishing something beneficial. Do people really need to know things like, you licked the stamp that was on an envelope holding a letter to the president? One more thing, always remember, never forget, you can be labeled a "ho" without the aid of a sweetheart organization.

As for the rest of Ms. Greene's "rules"—which come under one general category of MEN—her heart was again in the right place, apparently some distance from her keyboard. Although less than tactful, some of her advice was...well advice. For instance, my sixteen year old sister knows not to fall for those "tired" lines, so I am sure the young ladies here are quite aware. As far as "latching" on to an athlete, you shouldn't "latch" on to any man thinking you will share his career. That is not a good way to build a relationship, just a good way to end it. Focus on making your own career a success. Ladies, your personal preferences are up to you but don't go around thinking every man you meet is your African king. Because both things and people change, the man you are with today may not be "yo man" tomorrow.

Just think about it, and please try to keep your private and personal business private and personal.

Everyone here, freshman through senior, male and female, should realize no one is perfect. All the choices we make in life are not necessarily the right ones, but it is through making mistakes that we grow and learn. Just because people are not doing what you deem is right does not make them wrong. Ms. Greene's rules are what she lives by; how she deals with life at Carolina and my "words of wisdom" are how I try to make it here. Make up your own rules—with a little help from your friends—and don't be afraid to be wrong just always try to be right.

Rolanda C. Burney
Senior
English

A PLEA FOR SUPPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last spring I participated in the first Communiversity. It was an enriching experience for me. As a staff volunteer, I helped to teach our younger brothers and sisters about our African heritage.

It wasn't your normal classroom session, but more like an informal rap session. The kids were able to discuss their everyday life. They also had someone to listen and give positive feedback to them.

One of our participants, Terrence Jones, a 10-year-old fifth grader from Carrboro, wrote a letter to The Chapel Hill Herald in support of UNC having a free-standing Black Cultural Center. Therefore this makes me feel that my works with him and others like him were not in vain.

However, this fall we are running short of volunteers. I'm asking you to contribute to the awakening of our African-American heritage. I feel that we owe this to the next generation.

Come and be a part of this enlightening and rewarding experience.

For more information please contact Denise Mathewson or Michelle Thomas in the Black Cultural Center.

Moses Norman
Chapel Hill Transit