

# Ain't I a Woman

## *The Absence of Gender in the Black Campus Community*

By  
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"What's up with all the black men? I'm looking for a husband!" proclaimed one first year woman at a recent forum hosted by Delta Sigma Theta and Alpha Kappa Alpha sororities Incorporated. I thought to myself, "What an interesting concept? Come to college not to get an education in order to achieve equality and a better way of life, but to please a man." I have to admit, I have never looked at it this way before for a variety of—let's just call them different—reasons I suppose. But it was somewhat intriguing to hear it admitted openly and publicly. In fact, it was so intriguing that I lost a bit of sleep trying to understand why young black women are still thinking this way. Wasn't there a feminist movement or something? Oh, I forgot that was just a white girl thing from the 70s.

Another question came up. "What if I get pregnant? Will I have to drop out of school?" That's a legitimate question. Panelists? "You can raise your child in family housing at Odum Village. We have wonderful doctors in Student Health that will help you during each stage of your pregnancy."

Though answers to this question were adequate, they were only half-adequate. All of the possible choices were not given. Only after a little prodding did even the medical representative remind the young women that, "you don't have to stay pregnant." *Roe v. Wade* was decided back in 1973; yet the idea of having an abortion is still a new concept - or maybe it's just one of those hush-hush subjects. You know the ones. Everybody's doing it, but nobody's talking about it, kind of like sex. Regardless of the excuse, it seems as if the entire American Women's Rights Movement effectively passed through one ear of the black community and

out the other.

We see ourselves as black before we identify with being a woman. Obviously stated, it seems the only possible excuse for why we still see ourselves as inferior to men. Why else would we come to such a prestigious university in search of a man to make us whole? When one says black, one thinks of a race of men. When one says woman, one thinks of white women. In fact, black women really don't have a place in society, except maybe behind a black man. What an atrocity!

We should appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. But wait, the Constitution wasn't written for us. Even still, as a few black men grudgingly mentioned when I ran in last year's campus election, "who would take you seriously?"

Louis Farrakhan definitely aren't helping. He is one of the most influential figures among black men in our generation. This is somewhat scary considering the patriarchal themes of his Million Man March. Men were told to go out, be good providers and to take care of their women and children. I didn't realize women were possessions to be claimed, did you?

It seems that some of this would have made black women angry by now. But what is it about the Feminist Movement that we didn't like? I suppose when Betty Friedan wrote the *Feminist Mystique* calling for women to get out of the kitchen, black women missed it because they were at work. The Feminist Movement was for white women. That is evident. But what about the Black Radical Feminist Movement? Why have black women been so quick to criticize and turn away from Black Feminism? To answer this, let us review some myths about feminism and black women outlined by the *Thistle* newspaper of MIT.