

96-97

Welcome back
Alumni!



The Eagle Train
rolls on...

'96

Issue 61

North Carolina Central University
Durham, NC 27707

Friday, November 1, 1996

Coming Home

Eagle family members return to nest for annual bonding celebration

By Kifimbo Holloway
Staff Reporter

Homecoming is a time to reflect on the past and to cherish the present. It's a time when students and alumni alike soar with Eagle pride.

For generations, Homecoming has been bringing smiles to former students as well as new students at North Carolina Central University.

However, Homecoming has not always been a time to look forward to concerts featuring artists such as, "The Queen of the Pack," better known as the sexy Patra, Ghost Face Killa or rapper MC Lyte.

The old North Carolina Central during the time of our founder, Dr. James Edward Shepard, had an enrollment of only 500 students.

Academic activity was the major emphasis of the university. Homecoming only allowed students a mini-break from their academic curriculum to witness the crowning of Miss Homecoming and Miss NCCU, the parade and the game.

Alumnus Rose Mary



Photo by Robert Lawson

We got that feeling: Students throw up the funk and show their Eagle pride at an Orientation Rally.

Johnson, who attended NCCU while Shepard was chancellor, recalls her first two years of college without Homecoming activities because of World War II.

Things have certainly changed since the time when women were not allowed to wear slacks.

University archivist Brooklyn

T. Macmillan, said that Homecoming has evolved into a "student generated" event. It is no longer just a time reserved for alumni, it is a celebration for everyone to take part in.

Roger Bryant, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, has watched the

evolution of Homecoming since 1976, the year he came to work for the university.

"Homecoming was the big event of the year," Bryant said. During his early years working for the university, he also worked on the Homecoming committee.

He assisted in the planning

of the pep rally, the mock funeral, the barn fire and the greatly anticipated pre-dawn dance.

He remembers a time when both students and alumni worked together in lifting up the name of the university.

The mock funeral, a time when students would assist in the burial of the opposing team is no longer a listed activity.

Students dressed in black, one taking the role of a minister, while the band played something quite lamenting, serenading the opposing team into the grave.

Although this event is no longer performed, as is the fire works show, (which at one time signaled the celebration of Homecoming) doesn't mean our students lack Eagle pride.

Hubie Mercado, an NCCU law student definitely feels E-funk.

He is looking forward to reuniting with old friends and bringing his wife to the game.

Miss Lou Barnes, program director of the Alphonso Elder Student Union, encourages students to be more like Mercado, who is proud of his alma mater

By all means, exercise your Eagle pride!

Scholars, activists gather to review effects of landmark segregation case

By Shelvia Dancy
Staff Reporter

Civil rights activists, scholars and community leaders gathered on the campus of North Carolina Central University on Friday, Oct. 26, for recognition of the 100th anniversary of Plessy vs Ferguson.

The all-day conference, held in the Miller-Morgan Health Science Building, celebrated the landmark court decision that legalized the "separate but equal" ideology. The conference hosted more than 20 speakers and half a dozen seminars.

Speakers included NCCU Chancellor Julius Chambers, and C. D. Spangler, President of the University of North Carolina System

One seminar focused on recent court decisions affecting race-based congressional districts.

"We are in trouble," seminar moderator Ernestine S. Sapp said.

"This is really an assault on black progress."

Penda Hair, Director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, agreed.

"If districts have to be redrawn, it has to be done in a way to protect the interests of the African-American population," Hair said.

Wade Henderson, Executive Director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, said the U. S. Supreme Court will continue ruling against race-based congressional voting districts.

Henderson urged the audience to participate in the 1996 Presidential Election, pointing out the President of the United States plays an important part in nominating Supreme Court Justices.

"The 1996 federal election is probably the most important election between the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the modern day," Henderson said.

Earlier this year, the U. S. Supreme Court declared voter districts with a majority of minority voters unconstitutional.

North Carolina has two predominantly black voting districts.

The 1st District stretches from the Virginia border almost to South Carolina, and the 12th District, which snakes through Mecklenburg from Gaston and Durham counties.

In 1992 the 1st and 12th districts elected Republican Eva Clayton and Democrat Mel Watt, respectively, to Congress—the first blacks from North Carolina elected to Congress since 1901.

Redistricting North Carolina's predominantly black voting districts could jeopardize the seats Clayton and Watt hold in Congress.

The General Assembly will not address the Supreme Court's decision until after the fall elections.

Henderson advised participants not to become complacent in the use of voting power.

"As we're beginning to feel good about where we are as a people in the body politic, let us not forget there is still work to be done."



Founder's Day

Founder's Day at NCCU honors the memory of James E. Shepard, who obtained a charter for the National Training School and Chataqua in 1909 and opened the institution's doors in 1910.

Shepard served as president of the school until his death in 1947, when the institution was North Carolina College at Durham. The first Founder's Day was held in 1948, one year after Dr. Shepard's death.