

...And HEW Came

by Lillie Booth

HEW's visit recently called the public's attention to the numerous problems that we here at Fayetteville State University are plagued with every day. Even so, no one can tell us better than we can tell ourselves what it is like to work with inadequate materials and inadequate facilities. We know the feeling of signing up for a course with no teacher available to teach it for four weeks or more. We know the feeling of waiting for a book that a teacher ordered for the library to supplement the course, only to have it available at the end of the course. We know the futility of trying to have a conference with a teacher in an office that is shared by a host of others. We know first hand the frustrations of having a class in the lobby of a building instead of a classroom. But most of all, we know the feeling better than anyone else of having the community tell us that "Fayetteville State is not worth a damn and that it is a waste of time to attend it." Yes, we know that feeling more than any of the others.

Perhaps it is this negative attitude of the community that has helped Fayetteville State to gradually inch rather than flourish and blossom into a wider and more serviceable university. Fayetteville State has the claim of being the oldest Black school in the Southeast but the progress has been slow and unequal.

The recent protest in Raleigh by students of the five

predominately black universities demonstrated that black students are not willing to see a part of their heritage succumb without a fight. I hope that these students realize that they can reaffirm this commitment by supporting their alma mater when they graduate. We, too, owe it to ourselves to make sure that the growth of our school is even more evident than when we were in school.

HEW came and they pointed out many of the facts that we were aware of. They undressed us in public and made us and them more aware of the odds that are against us. Nevertheless, through all of this I keep remembering the many doctors, lawyers, teachers and other professionals that the Black universities and colleges produced and continue to produce despite the odds. Even so, it is not enough to say that it can be done. Fortunately, some of us will succeed despite the odds. Unfortunately, many will adopt the negative attitude that may still have and will continue to tell themselves that "Fayetteville State is not worth a damn" and will therefore produce accordingly.

HEW's visit reflected that we deserve a fighting chance. I challenge each student to prove that we deserve it—not because we are Black—but because we should have and want an education that is equal to the best that the University system has to offer.

LETTER

To The Editor:

Yesterday's (March 29) election of members of the Board of Governors and the University of North Carolina reflects an alarming trend and points up two major issues that must be addressed.

In 1972, when the Board of Governors was first formed, there were thirty-two members including seven black members. Four of these (two each from N.C.C.U. and N.C. A&T) and three others (one each from Elizabeth City, Fayetteville State and Winston-Salem) were elected by the trustees of these five campuses. This represented 22 percent of the membership and was the same as the percentage of the black population statewide.

Unfortunately, the election occurring in the last three sessions of the legislature (1975, 1977 and 1979) have not only reduced the number of black members on the Board from seven to four but at the same time, ignored the black leadership. In 1975, two black incumbents were up for re-election and only one was re-elected; in 1979, two black incumbents were up for re-election and only one was re-elected. Blacks now represent only 12½ percent of the Board membership down from 22 percent.

In the election yesterday, the two minority members elected were not only elected by the majority race, they were also nominated by the majority race. The nominees of the minority leadership were either defeated or declared "unqualified" to be elected.

News releases this week indicate that the G.O.P.

political minority party does not and will not tolerate the nominations of their members by the Democrat majority. It does seem that a political leadership sensitive to the needs of the state and committed to fairness and equity would permit and accept the nominations of the black leadership as it does the nomination of the Republican leadership. It is highly desirable that the destiny of the black population should be...must be in the hands of the elected black leadership just as the destiny of the Republican party must be in the hands of the Republican leadership.

My nomination by Senator Fred Alexander, endorsed also by the three minority members in the House, was deleted from the list of nominees in the Senate Committee by saying only that I was "unqualified." I can only say that Senator Alexander's nominee was as qualified as the nominee of Senator Ralph Scott whose name was not deleted. Is the nomination and election of the minority member by the majority race the meaning of minority representation in the N.C. Legislature? That question needs an answer.

In this era of rapid and racial change, there is a great need for diverse and proportional representation on the Board of Governors of our beloved university system...Thus, it is imperative that the black leadership be recognized and the representation reflect at least the make-up of the state's population.

While I could say much about the defeat of the bill by the House Committee defining

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White Justice in the "New South"

With the election of Jimmy Carter to the White House in 1976, the myth of a "New South" has been permanently etched in the public mind. Demographic statistics were used to point out that more Afro-Americans were moving to the South than were leaving. The appointments of former civil rights activists such as John Lewis and Andrew Young in the federal hierarchy also helped to heal the ugly image of the South created by the white police attacks against nonviolent black protestors.

Beneath the fragile facade of biracial unity and political harmony resides a seldom discussed fact—the continued and growing use of official violence and physical assaults against the black community, and especially aimed at black youth. Despite the passage of civil rights legislation and the subsequent end of de jure segregation,

police violence against black people remains a major concern of black activists in the South. Unreported incidents occur across the region, day after day, forming a pattern of racism's oppression which reinforces the de facto segregation between the races.

This February in Miami, Florida, five policemen raided the home of a middle aged, black school teacher, National La Fleur. Stating that they were searching for drugs, the police officers proceeded to destroy the furniture. When La Fleur resisted, he was severely beaten, suffering a broken rib, neck and head injuries. La Fleur's twenty one year old son Hollice came to his father's defense and was also beaten. Both men were charged with battery against arresting officers.

No drugs were found in the home, and the police later confessed that they had raided the wrong address. The La Fleurs have filed a \$3 million suit against local authorities for their mistreatment. The police have since suspended four of the officers involved temporarily, but have not explained why the La Fleurs were treated so roughly.

In Charleston, Mississippi last month, a white deputy sheriff arrested ten year old Lovely Taylor, a student in the fifth grade. Lovely Taylor's mother was informed that her son had verbally insulted a white girl and that he was charged with "malicious mischief." The ten year old boy was forced to spend a night in jail while his mother was raising \$500 bail.

In Prince Georges County, Maryland, sixteen year old Terrence Johnson and his older brother Kevin were stopped by two white policemen on suspicion of robbery last June. Terrence was threatened and then beaten by the arresting officers. Walking into the processing room at the police station, one policeman warned the black youth that he might "break his neck." A struggle ensued, and both police were killed with one of the officer's revolvers. Terrence Johnson claimed

that he was acting in self defense. Local prosecutors argue that the case is simply one of double homicide.

The brutality against black youth sometimes cuts across the color line. This February, a Montgomery, Alabama grand jury charged two Tuskegee policemen and a former deputy sheriff with the violation of the civil rights of a Tuskegee Institute black student. According to the indictment, four Tuskegee Institute students were arrested in October, 1978, for burglary at a local motel. One eighteen year old suspect, Dwight Earl Blakely, was not driven to the police station, but was taken into the deserted Tuskegee Industrial Park. Blakely was taken from the automobile, and he alleges that the three black law officers "did willfully strike, assault, beat and kick" him. Blakely filed a complaint with the FBI, which led to the grand jury indictments.

Occasionally, the plight of an individual black prisoner will attract some national or regional attention. This occurred last autumn in the case of Tommy Lee Hines of Cullman, Alabama. Hines was convicted by an all-white jury for rape, although medical experts testified that the twenty-six year old Hines was too mentally retarded to have planned and committed the crime. Similarly, the cases of Joanne Little, the Wilmington Ten and Imani Harris have made headlines, and have sparked support from black and white progressives.

Yet for every Joanne Little there are a hundred other incidents of brutality that go unreported. The myth of racial equality and black achievement obscures the reality of the "New South." It becomes obvious, from the perspective of the grassroots, that a new political movement of the oppressed must take place, inspired partially by the legacy of the desegregation campaigns of the 1960s. The use of violence against black youth, adults and the poor will stop only when we reassert the power of our own humanity through uncompromising struggle.

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