

OP/ED



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WSSU graduates celebrate on commencement day.

WSSU Photo by Garrett Garmis

Commencement's shortcoming

Meteorologists are likely attributing the Jekyll and Hyde variance between last Thursday and last Friday's weather to some sort of pressure system.

We think that the ultimate weatherman — the Man upstairs — saw fit to lift the clouds and pour in the sunshine so that Winston-Salem State's momentous commencement would go as planned, without a hitch.

For the first time, the school held commencement at Bowman Gray Stadium, which has long been considered a part of the ever-growing WSSU campus. The site was awe-inspiring; the more than 1,000 graduates beamed even brighter under sunlight as their families and friends packed the stands (the way we wish the community would for Rams' home football games). There was plenty of space for everyone, unlike the past few commencements at the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, when space became so limited that graduates — to their chagrin — were allotted a limited number of tickets for guests.

There is one thing that would have made the day even more special. WSSU is still a Bowman Gray lease-holder, more than a year after the city agreed to sell the stadium to the university. Certainly, the school had anticipated that it would hold the deed to the stadium when plans were put into place to hold last week's landmark commencement there.

City and school officials say the State is holding up the deal. We can thank Forsyth County's very own Dale Folwell for much of the delay. He has not tried to hide his disdain of the sale, and as a Speaker Pro Tempore in the N.C. House, he worked to derail it. He's now the head of the state's Employment Security division, a position with regular access to the people — the governor among them — who must green-light the stadium sale.

It's too bad that such an important decision for the school has to be made in Raleigh at this time. This long season of mean-spiritedness, spitefulness and political recalcitrance has already claimed a long list of victims.

Lawmakers, Gov. McCrory and his cabinet don't want their borderline-biased constituents to hear of them doing anything remotely close to helping a black school. Many also don't believe an HBCU deserves a stadium of its own — especially not a \$6 million one. Some will argue that the fact that WSSU is a historically black school has little to do with the hold up, but we find it hard believe that lawmakers would keep UNCG or App State hanging by a string for such a long period of time.

60 Years After Brown



Julianne Malveaux
 Guest Columnist

Because I was a horribly ill-behaved child, I found myself shipped from San Francisco to Moss Point, Miss. in August 1969. My mother's plan was that I'd spend my junior year in high school there and live with my schoolteacher aunt Annie Mae Randall, who was somewhat affectionally known as the "kid breaker." It was legend that if you did not understand rules, she would beat them into you. But her method was unlimited interrogation, not (much) physical correction.

In any case, I landed in Moss Point 15 years after the Supreme Court ruled that legal segregation was illegal. However, by ruling that the Brown decision should be implemented with "all deliberate speed," many towns in Mississippi saw this as a signal to "take (their) own sweet time." I ended up attending all-black Magnolia High School, while the all-white Moss Point High School was in rather close proximity. A year later, Magnolia became the town's junior high school, and Moss Point High was the school for everyone.

Until 1970, though, the city's educators had come up with truly bizarre ways to give a polite nod to integration. For a period, black teachers went to teach in white schools, while white ones taught in the black schools. To this day, I can't figure out the

proportional representation that had black teachers in the white schools about a third of the time, with white teachers in the black schools about half of the time. My numbers may be wrong, but both black and white students were short-changed when they were robbed of the continuity of instruction.

On the days that Auntie Annie Mae had to go to the white schools, she woke up muttering that this was not integration and mumbling that "all these years after Brown" integration had not happened in Moss Point schools. Since the "kid breaker" didn't really yell, she took her frustration out on anyone who would listen, talking legalisms, history and the way it ought to be.

Occasionally Auntie would say, "at least we aren't in Virginia," then she would talk about the schools that actually closed rather than admit black students. In that state, there was a plan of "massive resistance" that denied funds to integrated schools, which had the effect of denying education to black children for at least four years.

In 1969, most African Americans had experienced de facto segregation, but few Californians had experienced the de jure segregation that Brown ended. Had I not had the Mississippi experience, I would have thought that segregation was as much a fairy tale as Santa Claus or as distant as "the old days." Neither fairy tale, nor distant fact, de jure segregation is alive and well today.

Today, schools are segregated by income and zip codes, not by race. Cash-strapped urban school sys-

tems, largely funded by eroding property taxes, have fewer resources than well-funded suburban schools. There are also oases in urban public schools where higher income parents come together to fund activities at their neighborhood schools, such as sports and music, which have been eliminated from other public schools for financial reasons.

K-12 school segregation transfers into an advantage for students from the best-financed schools. These young people have the advantage of Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes that are not often offered in those urban school districts that are struggling to provide bare basics. When colleges give students with advanced classes extra admissions consideration, they implicitly disadvantage those who did not have the opportunity to take advanced classes because of where they live.

There are dozens of other consequences of de facto segregation. They include the racial achievement gap and unequal access to scholarship, internship, networking and employment opportunities. Brown opened the door and, by ending de facto segregation, changed the terms and conditions of African American life. It got us to the starting line, but we are still a long way from the finish line.

Julianne Malveaux is a Washington, D.C.-based economist and writer. She is President Emerita of Bennett College for Women in Greensboro.



Community servant Mildred Hash is the church mother at St. Peter's World Outreach.

Awards

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City Council member Molly Leight; the Shirley Shouse Career Award will be presented to Ann Fritchman-Merkel, chief customer officer at Hanesbrands; the Student Leadership Award will be presented to Danielle Winter, a senior at the Early College of Forsyth. This year's Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Mother Mildred T. Hash, a minister and devoted humanitarian.

Meredith Dolhare is slated to deliver the keynote speech. She is the founder of RunningWorks, a non-profit organization that encourages the homeless to rediscover the power of teamwork, discipline, confidence and respect for each other one stride at a time.

Hatch

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and 600 Foreign Honorary Members and reflects the full range of disciplines and professions: mathematics, the physical and biological sciences, medicine, the social sciences and humanities, business, government, public affairs and the arts.

Members of the 2014 class include winners of the Nobel Prize, the Wolf Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Medal of the Arts, MacArthur, Guggenheim, and

Fulbright Fellowships and Grammy, Emmy, Oscar and Tony Awards.

"I'm thrilled to be named to one of the oldest and most prestigious honorary societies in America," said President Nathan Hatch. "To join the company of such extraordinary leaders is an honor and a privilege."

The new class will be inducted at a ceremony on Oct. 11 at the Academy's headquarters in Cambridge, Mass.

Since its founding in 1780, the Academy has elected leading "thinkers and doers" from each

generation — from its founders John Adams, James Bowdoin, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Maria Mitchell and Alexander Graham Bell. Other distinguished members include Margaret Mead, Jonas Salk, Barbara McClintock, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Aaron Copland, Martha Graham, John Updike, Georgia O'Keeffe and John Hope Franklin.

Hall

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1989.

"I went from not making it to the pit to being a national runner to being able to attend college for free and get an education for free," he said about his athletic scholarship to the University of South Carolina.

Sutton now inspires youth to follow in his footsteps as the coach for the Winston-Salem Road Runners Track Club.

A former Glenn High School wrestling star, Reed finished his high school career with an amazing 127 wins and only 21 losses.

"Wrestling was my entire life in high school and college; everyday was another opportunity to practice. I eventually stopped wrestling. I found that all though the various wrestling moves had limited application in the real world, I did find the coaching and perseverance required to succeed in sports were also required to succeed in life," said Reed, an Army Ranger who received a Bronze Star for his actions in combat in Afghanistan.

For 78-year-old Westmoreland, high school was so long ago that most people haven't even heard of the sport in which he excelled — six man football.

"Earlier, someone asked me, 'What was six man football? We had more people on the line than you had on the whole team,'" he said.

Two thousand students in smaller rural Forsyth County schools — like the now defunct Rural Hall High School that Westmoreland attended — played six man football from 1947-1956, Westmoreland said.

He said the sport had a loyal following and fans regularly packed the stands.

When Westmoreland played defensive back at the 1951 State Championship, 1,500 fans cheered from the bleachers. The Hall of Fame honor was the first award he'd received for his football feats since high school.

The most poignant moment of the evening was the presentation to the family of Walker, who died in 2006 in a canoeing accident. The former



Peggy Smith and Larry Walker accept for their late son, Erik Walker.

West Forsyth baseball standout went on to UNC-Charlotte before fulfilling his lifelong dream of playing the Big Leagues. He was drafted by the Tampa Bay Rays in 2006. He died after playing just one summer for the team.

His parents, Peggy Smith and Larry Walker, accepted his award. They said that though he's received other posthumous honors, the local recognition was especially moving.

"This means the world," said Smith.

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