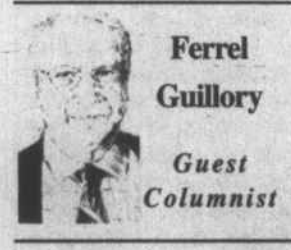


FORUM



From segregation to desegregation to resegregation



Ferrel Guillory
Guest Columnist

the separate-but-equal fiction of the Jim Crow era. In a follow-up order in 1955, the high court instructed Southern states to dismantle racially segregated schools "with all deliberate speed." The court intended "speed," while the South chose "deliberate."

Still, writes John E. Batchelor, "by the end of the 1973-74 school year, North Carolina was operating the most thoroughly desegregated school system in the South, and the South was the most thoroughly desegregated region in the nation."

In a book published toward the end of last year, Batchelor, a veteran teacher, administrator and education consultant, tells the story of how North Carolina moved — and was pulled — away from schools separated by race over those 20 years. His book, "Race and Education in North Carolina: From Segregation to Desegregation," was published by Louisiana State University Press in its Making the Modern South series.

The initial response of North Carolina officialdom to the Brown rulings — the state's version of deliberateness — was the establishment of two committees chaired by Thomas J. Pearsall of Rocky Mount. In telling how the state came to adopt the Pearsall Plan, Batchelor emphasizes the extent of white resistance to desegregation, even within committee staff. The plan that emerged placed sole responsibility for student assignments with local school boards; it allowed local boards to close schools; and it provided tuition grants for students to attend segregated private schools.

The Pearsall Plan resulted in little more than token integration.

It put the burden on black leaders, parents, and students to apply to local boards for assignment to all-white schools. North Carolina's public schools remained opened; 230 private academies sprung up, but the tuition grants were voided before being implemented.

Years of litigation ensued, and Batchelor documents the cases, even meticulously recording the attorneys representing each side. He reports that the North Carolina branch of the NAACP sponsored more desegregation lawsuits than any other state chapter in the South in the 1950s. Eventually basic elements of the Pearsall Plan would be held unconstitutional.

"The white public reacted bitterly," Batchelor reports. "A bomb exploded at Julius Chamber's office in 1971." (Chambers was a leading black civil rights lawyer, who served subsequently as chancellor of North Carolina Central University)... "Moderate leadership prevailed, though, and a constructive response emerged. Editorials in the Charlotte Observer helped set the stage. In February 1972, C.D. Spangler Jr., a prominent real estate developer, announced his candidacy for the Board of Education, advising citizens that the court had spoken and the law had to be obeyed." (Spangler later served as president of the University of North Carolina.)

consider equal educational opportunities for children in a framework of how they would want their own children to be treated."

The importance of school desegregation to North Carolina's two major metropolitan areas falls outside the scope of Batchelor's book. Yet, it is difficult to imagine that the Charlotte region and the Raleigh-Research Triangle would emerge as nationally ranked in so many economic and quality-of-life measures absent critical decisions in the 1970s: First, that Charlotte's civic and business leadership pulled together to make the busing order work; then, five years later a white-black coalition forged a merger of the Wake County and Raleigh city school systems as a prelude to assuring an integrated system. The local decisions to desegregate, rather than resist, surely helped position Wake and Mecklenburg counties for their growth in population, jobs, and reputation.

And yet, as studies over more than a decade have documented, and as Batchelor laments in his epilogue, a process of resegregation has taken hold in North Carolina.

As courts have released state and local authorities from judicial orders and as the state's population has expanded with new residents without memory of or a sense of responsibility for old-time segregation, pressure to sustain desegregation has fallen dramatically. Batchelor has an especially pointed comment about the upshot:

"When boards create school assignment patterns that highly concentrate pupils on the basis of race, ethnicity and poverty, therefore, boards are not only reinstating de jure segregation, albeit at the local level, they are creating schools that are, in their design, predisposed to fail."

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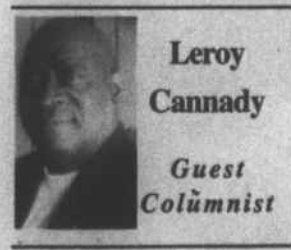
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Batchelor rightfully focuses on three sets of court rulings: first, of course, Brown. Next came a pair of cases in 1968-69 in which the Supreme Court stripped away the "all deliberate speed" standard, told Southern districts they had to desegregate at once, and districts had to come up with plans that actually worked to desegregate. An especially significant ruling came with the Supreme Court upholding Judge James B. McMillan's order in the Swann case that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools use busing as a tool to desegregate.

To sum up how North Carolina moved from segregation to desegregation, Batchelor cites three forces:

1. Lawsuits that produced court-ordered desegregation,
2. Economic considerations among business and community leaders who "realized that racial disruption threatened progress," and
3. Moral-religious sentiments that lead impelled "leaders as well as rank-and-file, especially mothers and fathers...to

Life-changing experience gives man second chance



Leroy Cannady
Guest Columnist

I grew up in a home that sold bootleg whiskey. My mother and father were alcoholic and I witnessed the stabbing of my father at the age of 13. I got involved with drugs, alcohol, and prostitution at an early age. I stole money from my church to support my drug problem, and they discharged me from the Army after only eight weeks because of my drug problems.

When I got back on the street, I started working with Joe Frazier. Joe tried to convince me to leave the

drugs and get into the gym, but I did not listen! Joe went on to win the Gold Medal in the Olympics and later Heavyweight Champ of the World. I continued my life of drugs, alcohol, and prostitution.

I got married, had three children, but my wife kicked me out after I spent all my kids' Christmas money on drugs and I ended up in a homeless shelter. I met a woman who was doing volunteer counseling and after 18 months of marriage and one kid, she kicked me out.

At the age of 30, I was on my third marriage. My wife came to know Jesus as her Lord and Savior and she began having Bible study in our home. I did not like her Christian friends coming over so I invited my drug and alcoholic

friends over the same night.

My wife would tell me that Jesus could change my life. I said, "NO ONE CAN CHANGE ME!"

After a few weeks, she noticed that I was not making any effort to change life, so she moved back to southern Illinois.

That following morning I got up early, rolled me a joint, tooted some coke, and took a hit of blotted acid. I was stoned out of my mind. I went for a walk to a park occupied by the

"I concluded that I would be better off if I was dead."

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homeless.

These thoughts were going through my mind as I sat on that park bench;

"YOU ARE USELESS, YOU ARE NO GOOD, AND YOU WILL NEVER AMOUNT TO NOTHING!"

I concluded that I would be better off if I was dead!

I was on my way home to commit suicide when a man came up to me with a Bible. He told me that Jesus loves me; I knocked the Bible out of his hand.

When I reached down to pick it up. My eyes were glued to the page of Isaiah. 1:18-19.

"Come now, and let us reason together says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool, if ye be willing and obedient, you shall eat the good from the land."

Those words did surgery on my soul.

I've written a book and shared my story with

inmates, businessmen on Wall Street, ministerial and pastor's banquets, churches, Christian TV, homeless shelters, and Winston-Salem Street School. I am a retired Walmart store manager and district supervisor. I moved to N.C. to open the first Walmart Super Center in the state in Aberdeen, and the first one in Fayetteville.

Here I am a drug addict, an alcoholic from the streets of North Philadelphia, a reject from the military, but the Lord gave me a promise, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good from the land!"

Leroy Cannady is with Gideons International. For more information, visit his website at <http://www.leroycannady.com>.