

At Charlotte Area Schools

Black Student Enrollment Increasing

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer
A charted decrease in the number of blacks enrolling in most of the nation's colleges, what is being called a "national crisis" by some educators, is fortunately not the case at Charlotte's four-year institutions of higher education.

This city's three colleges: Johnson C. Smith University, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and Queens College, all give reports that the number of black students entering these schools is not declining.

In contrast, black students in Charlotte's colleges are increasing. It is a stark difference to figures quoted in a Wall Street Journal article titled, "Minorities' Enrollment in College Retreats After Its Surge in '70s," which reported, "although the number of black high school graduates grew substantially between 1975 and 1982, the percentage enrolling in college declined to 28 percent from 31.5 percent." Alarmed by those figures, Samuel Myers, president of the National Association of Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, predicts "economic repercussions if the nation's rapidly growing minority populations don't advance educationally." He explains, "They will lose purchasing power," be sicker and poorer.

However, in spite of the gloomy national forecast of minority enrollment in colleges, in Charlotte, Ken Sanford, public information director of UNCC, reports a 3 percent increase of black student enrollment from last year; Moses Jones, director of admission at JCSU, reveals that black enrollment this year held

steady with an outstanding increase of 127 percent at Smith which occurred in 1984-85; and Anne Matthews of Queens College charted an increase of black students at Queens up from 36 students in 1982 to 91 black students in 1985.

Problems which are blamed for the nation decline of blacks enrolling in colleges, such as, financial aid cutbacks, softened recruitment efforts and poor secondary school training, apparently have not stricken Charlotte's institutions of higher education.

According to Jones, who has been director of JCSU admissions for 12 years, Smith's main problem has been housing the many students that enter the predominantly black university each year. He concedes to a recent surge in enrollment at Smith and he credits it to the college's new president Dr. Robert Albright. "Smith has been getting a lot of exposure due to our new president," says Jones. He also claims, "There has been a branching out in our recruiting efforts. Many people are working to make things strong at Smith."

Sanford, of UNCC, asserts, "If one was to chart on a graph black student enrollment at UNCC over the last few years it would show a slow and steady increase. Except for one year," he points out, "there was a decline for no apparent reason. We'd like it to be more," admits the public information director. Black enrollment at UNCC is currently 8.9 percent, up from last year's 8.6 percent.

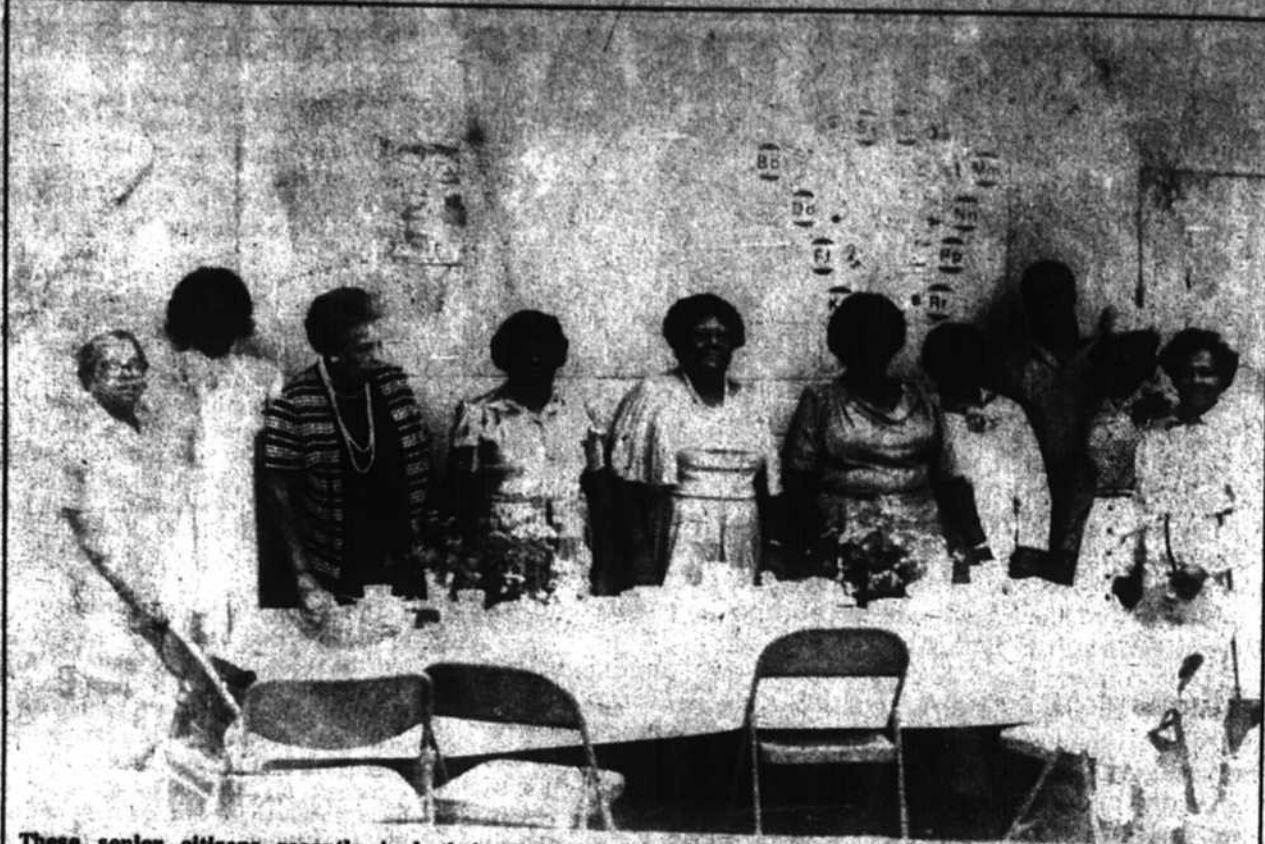
Jean Frye handles minority recruitment at UNCC and she relates that the college actively seeks black

students for the university. "We contact all minority students in the state who've taken the PSAT and SAT and send them general information and an application. This information is followed up with a phone call by a UNCC student. We also recruit through minority alumni, and currently enrolled students. UNCC sponsors Minority Recruitment Day, also."

"Some of these things we are required to do under the Consent Decree," acknowledges Frye. "All schools in the University system have things to do to encourage minority enrollment whether it is a predominately black or white institution. However, we will continue to encourage black students to enroll at UNCC after the decree is up (in 1988)," maintains Frye. "Increase in minority enrollment leads to increase in cultural exchange at college. A good university should reflect the society in which it exists," she concludes.

The steady climb in the number of black students at Queens College since 1982, states Anne Matthews, is reflective of Queens effort to increase enrollment overall. She says that no special efforts are made to recruit specifically black students at the college. "As the number of students increase at Queens," reveals Matthews, "so do the number of black students." There are 64 black students in Queens' undergraduate program, five in its graduate program and 22 black students in the college's New College (coed) program, totaling 91 students among the college's overall population for 1985-86 of 1,297.

All admissions persons interviewed could not point to any particular reason why Charlotte's colleges and universities are not affected by national trends of declining minority enrollment.



These senior citizens recently had their monthly birthday celebration at the Belvedere Community Center. They are members of the Salvation Army Senior Citizens Program. Pictured from left to right are: Mary Blakeney, Jessie Heath, Serena Lee, Lucy Goodwin, Vera Hunter, Rosetta Witherspoon, Altonia McKissick, Sam Watts-program director for the Salvation Army, Hattie Staggs and Winnie Floyd.

Charlotte's CROP Walk Shatters State Record

Charlotte's CROP walk of October 13 set a record for the largest in the Carolinas, and perhaps in the nation. With Mayor Harvey Gantt setting the pace for 100 runners and Congressman Alex McMullan leading an estimated 5,000 walkers, participants brought in a record \$114,619.35 in pledges.

CROP Walk representative Howard Virkler expressed delight at the turn-out and the support from churches, corporations, schools, and civic groups. He especially commended Coca-Cola, which not only helped financially, but also provided refreshments.

"We want to stress," Virkler continued, "that it is essential that recruiters and individuals get funds in as quickly as possible. We can only translate the energy of WalkDay into help for the hungry when the funds are sent in. We don't want to starve the hunger-fighting agencies."

Corporate sponsors and supporters included United Carolina Bank, Harris Teeter Supermarkets, Hendrick MBW, Coca Cola, Charlotte Motor Speedway, NCNB National Bank, Lance, Inc., IBM, WBTV, Virkler Chemical Co., Wachovia Bank and Trust, Hardee's Hamburgers, and Belk of Charlotte.

Entertainment included performances by the Children's Theatre Clowns, Johnson C. Smith University Cheerleaders, the Garinger High School Band and Letter Girls, the Charlotte Caledonian Pipe Band, and a bluegrass group led by Jim Whitley. There was also a "crazy

costume" contest judged by Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Bodine.

This year at least one church had 100 percent participation, with everyone in the congregation either walking or sponsoring a walker.

Long-time member of Matthews-Murkland Presbyterian Church, 102 year old Emma Jackson, was present to wish the walkers well, and was driven over part of the route. Several years ago, Ms. Jackson walked the first mile. Growing up in South Carolina, she knew hunger personally and has sought to do something about it by supporting CROP.

Contributions can be made at any branch of United Carolina Bank or mailed directly to CROP, Box 52, Davidson, NC 28038.

The walker who turns in the most funds by November 15 will be treated to a free balloon ride over Charlotte.

Assertive Job Search

WomanReach will offer a seminar November 13 (Wed.) from 4:30-6 p.m. called "The Nuts & Bolts of Job Hunting: The Assertive Job Search," facilitated by Sonja White, at the WomanReach Center. The WomanReach Center is a United Way Agency.

The facilities are handicapped accessible and services are freely given and freely received. For more information call a WomanReach peer counselor Mon-Sat from 10 - 4 p.m. at 334-3614.

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BENEFIT PREVIEW for Charlotte Observer Empty Stocking Fund 5:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13. Tickets \$6 in advance, \$8 at the door (tax deductible).

For more information call 376-6594; 800-532-0189 (N.C.); 800-334-0248 (U.S.)