

Former student writes book after racially-motivated prom controversy

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Since her time in the international media spotlight, Revonda Bowen has had a child, dropped out of college, taken jobs as a nude model and exotic dancer, and lost custody of her child.

Since then she has also found religion, become a motivational speaker and written a new book: "No Mistakes, No More Tears."

Bowen, whose mother is black and whose father is white, became a heroine in civil rights circles in 1994, when she stood up to Randolph County High School Principal Hulond Humphries. Humphries had threatened to call off the prom if interracial couples planned to attend.

"Who am I supposed to take to the prom?" Bowen asked defiantly. According to Bowen and several of her friends, Humphries responded by saying her parents had made "a mistake."

The firestorm that followed brought national networks and newspapers to sleepy 800-resident Wedowee. Outlets as varied as the BBC, Rolling Stone, Jet magazine, and MTV covered the events that followed: marches and lawsuits, emotionally charged school board showdowns, and ultimately the torching of the high school.

In 1995, when Bowen arrived on the Alabama State University campus on scholarship, the campus newspaper compared her to Rosa Parks.

But contrary to that image, Bowen wasn't a civil rights crusader. She wasn't prominently involved in the protests on her behalf. Like most teenagers, she was more interested in having fun.

As the public pressure of the

situation increased, she indulged in a wild streak, smoking marijuana and drinking. By the time she arrived at ASU, she was pregnant.

Bowen's book, which was edited by Vickie Cox

Edmondson, a family friend and an associate professor of management at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, chronicles her struggles to come to terms with her past and embrace

her identity.

She had trouble making ends meet and hung out with friends who liked the fast-paced nightlife in Atlanta. Unhappy she began going to church and praying.

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