

Letters to the Editor

Belles Concerned Over NAACP, Pride

Dear Editor:

Bennett College was the host of a N.A.A.C.P. on the weekend of March 31-April 1. It seems strange that there was very little publicity for the conference and zero support from the faculty and staff of a predominantly black women's college. For us, the students, it was truly a disgrace for our poor support; and as for the faculty and staff, it has permanently scarred their record with the N.A.A.C.P. and with me as a student. Although it seems that they could really care less. But they really should for I'm sure that during their day and time the N.A.A.C.P. was the backbone of Negro advancement, and supported all black-oriented businesses, and schools in their struggle to grow and prosper.

When they asked our school to host the conference, we accepted gladly. Obviously it must have been for the publicity. Because when it came down to the planning, and carrying out the plans and promises made, there was no staff or faculty support. When the leaders needed some necessary equipment, or some trivial materials for the conference, no one was there to aid them. Of course there were a few students there who tried to help and assist in any way possible, but they could only do so much without the approval of a staff or faculty member.

It is truly a shame and it brings tears to my eyes to think that we as a black institution, which I am sure has asked the N.A.A.C.P. for aid in some form or fashion, or at least gained something from their struggle, turned our backs when they called on us for our support. Such a small favor they asked, only that we sponsor their conference that would in turn benefit us. It should have been an honor. It really seemed to me such a trivial favor to ask of your own, after that particular organization has done so much for so many of

us. Maybe not on a personal level, but they certainly have helped to "bring us thus far on our way."

The faculty and staff always complain that students don't engage in worthwhile activities, that we don't know how to budget our time, and that we don't know our priorities. Should our priorities be put upon A.C.E.S. programs consisting of faculty recitals, or some unknown group of strange people playing chamber music, or should they be put on the N.A.A.C.P.'s plea to gain student and faculty support in the struggle of the plight of today's black youth? Tell me, which is more important to you? Well for me it is certainly not a faculty recital; neither is it to sit an hour listening to chamber music. But I guess that the faculty and staff do not agree with me, because not one of them was present at the seminars and workshops that were held.

Let us not forget from which we came. Let us not feel so secure in our present status or position that we feel that we can turn our back on the hand that once supported and still supports us, for we never know when we may need that hand again.

Upon arrival at Bennett we are always reminded that we are proud black women. We are to walk with our heads up high, for we have progressed and will continue to progress. We are supposed to be tomorrow's leaders. Yes, the black woman as well as the black race as a whole has definitely come a long way. But who helped to throw the first blows at society to make us black and proud? Who organized in a strong group, to benefit their people so that we would be heard? Who has struggled long and hard to see that blacks have equal rights? Who fought so hard for desegregation, and higher levels of education for blacks? Who has taken more cases to the federal courts to fight for civil rights?

And who has made it possible for an institution such as Bennett to survive and function freely as the institution chooses to?

Who? I will tell you who. It's an organization that was in existence before we students were ever thought of, and over the years it has grown and prospered. And from this growth we as a people have prospered too. There should be pride whenever its name is spoken from our lips. That organization is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, better known as the N.A.A.C.P. So why is it that the faculty and staff of Bennett College, who are predominantly black acted as though they had never heard of the organization? And tell me how it is that the Bennett College staff and administrators did not have the time to welcome any of the officers to Bennett College nor did they attend any of scheduled activities. Why also was there so much friction between our college leaders and the leaders of the N.A.A.C.P.? I cannot and will not ever be able to comprehend the injustice that we rendered to our own organization.

But to top everything off it was really ironic that we as a college did nothing to make them feel comfortable nor let them know that we were interested. Yet we received from the N.A.A.C.P. a trophy and a certificate with which the organization thanks us (Bennett College) for our cordial attitude and our outstanding achievements for a college chapter.

Maybe some of our past achievements are commendable, and as a college chapter we have progressed and have contributed. But as for the campus as a whole, we have done nothing to deserve a trophy or a certificate. As for our cordial attitude, half of the faculty and staff did not even know or care enough to take time out to let the organization know that they knew that it still existed.

Only a few students are able to say that they helped to make the visitors feel comfortable, but at least there was some type of representation from the students. Faculty and staff where were you? Maybe you need to take time out to be aware of things that happen on the college campus, your college campus. We as students take time out; we are aware, we have to determine our priorities. So faculty and staff tell us, exactly where do your priorities lie?

Signed
Ashamed

Dear Editor:

What has happened to our school spirit as compared to that of the enthusiastic 50's? What has happened to the forces that motivated students toward excellence? Why have our students become so apathetic? What about self-respect and respecting others?

It appears that as each year passes our students are showing more and more apathy. Where do we begin to start a re-awakening to our campus involvement? How can we limit the negative attitudes and complaints? Where would we be today if we had a "Gung-Ho" attitude throughout the year.

We return each Fall term with revived faith in our planned activities toward achieving our goals, but somewhere during the passage-of-time we seem to falter and fall.

My fellow students, we need to ponder the above questions if we are to return to excellence; and excellence is needed to insure the on-going future of black institutions.

We as students have a great responsibility to Bennett and her reputation as an institution of higher learning steeped in the

practice of academic excellence.

Let's spend this summer thinking and planning ways to abolish this apathy. Let's stop complaining about the lack of activities, conditions, and other pettiness and become involved to find solutions.

Thomasina Stallings

Dear Editor:

Everyone's talking about getting back to the basics in education. Granted that it is needed in the areas of grammar, reading and computation. But on the other side of the coin there is also the need to get back to sound value systems. Whatever happened to self-pride and good manners in young black people?

While it is noticeable in many women on this campus, a significant number of students fail to demonstrate such habits. It was quite evident at the recent performance of the Morehouse College Glee Club. After nearly 18 years or more, some people still do not realize that "there is a time for all things." And a formal concert is not the time to wear jogging shorts, jeans, head rags and such. Nor is it the time to demonstrate one's enjoyment by screaming.

One really questions whether a junior in college—the one in jogging shorts—knows what is appropriate attire. Well, it may have been that she didn't know (although common sense teaches some things) or she just didn't care. Then, there are those people who do not know the meaning of punctuality, those inconsiderate people who walk in during the performance. What about those people who applaud after each selection rather than at the completion of the groupings?

A liberal arts education should expose students to a well-rounded college experience that is representative of life in the professional world. While many students fail to realize the purpose of lyceum presentations, we must attempt to instill in them "the ways of intelligent black women."

Certainly, these may appear trivial concerns in the face of demanding academic and social challenges. But college graduates find themselves in a variety of environments which demand knowledge of social etiquette. What better time to practice such behavior.

What's wrong with finer womanhood? Is it something to be ashamed of? I don't think so. In fact, it attracts more attention than uncouth behavior and certainly gains more respect. In the future, let's hope that instructors, residence hall personnel, alumnae, and sorority women will work to bring some of the "finer things back to the college experience."

Is it really trivial? Don't fool yourself that it is. You set the image of Bennett College by your actions. This image follows you when you apply for employment, when the recruiters visit high schools and when the president seeks additional funds. So it seems reasonable to assume that we should all be willing to do something about this public image. If you are not able to comprehend this relationship, then you should question your presence here.

Someone must say to the negative image bearers—those who

do not know or who do not care—that we can no longer ignore their ignorance and callousness. After all, the future of Bennett College is affected. And that someone is YOU.

Miss Myra Davis

Dear Editor:

Recently, Dr. Carolyn Payton, Director of the Peace Corps and a former Bennett graduate, addressed the student body and guests during the Women's Studies week of activities. There were several remarks in her speech which left me quite disillusioned. I am referring to her attack on black studies.

Presently, I am enrolled in every class offered on Bennett's campus pertaining to black studies (Afro-American History, Afro-American Literature, Harlem Renaissance Honors Colloquium). I love these courses because I am discovering all the great accomplishments that black people have made to make this country what it is today. I am not saying that all of it is good, but at least I have knowledge of my past and can feel proud of it.

Dr. Payton used the example of teaching a class in black home economics in which students would learn how to clean chitterlings and pick worms out of collard greens. I think that was an unfair example to dissuade students from seeking these courses.

I do agree with her in thinking that just a knowledge of black subjects will not get you through life; but I think that the great examples of black leaders, both past and present, will encourage students to strive harder to be successful.

When I first came to Bennett, I found it unbelievable when several of my peers were unable to relate to many of our present black leaders. I cannot solely blame them for not learning this in public schools since many of them come from places where black studies are extracted from the curriculum; but I do not understand why they do not read newspapers, magazines or books that contain pertinent information about our history. If they are too lazy to read, then the television can serve as a tool for becoming more aware of what blacks are accomplishing.

By learning about our past, students will realize that history is constantly repeated. They will learn that Dr. Martin Luther King's marches in the 50's and 60's were not the only non-violent marches but there was a Silent March in 1917 for the same purposes. They will also learn that **Purlie** and **The Wiz** are not among the first black musical Broadway plays, but **Shuffle Along** was the first.

I get the impression that students feel that Afro-American history is only for history majors and Afro-American literature is only for English majors.

I encourage Bennett students to take advantage of the courses to give them more knowledge of the accomplishments and defeats of our race. We are of a beautiful race and should know our roots and feel proud of being black.

Very Concerned Student

Belle Wins A&T Engineering Award; Wins Second Award for High Grades

Linda Smith, a sophomore electrical engineering and mathematics major at Bennett College, was recently honored as the most outstanding freshman in the Electrical Engineering Department at N. C. A&T State University.

In addition to the trophy she received for this accom-

plishment, Linda received a second trophy for maintaining a grade point average which qualified her for membership in the 3.8 Club.

Linda, a Greensboro native, is one of the first two students who have elected a major in Bennett's new Dual Degree Engineering Program.



Members of the freshman class boosted a "Look at the '50's" Day to lead into spring.

photo by Joyce Bass