

Black youth must learn to deal with bias

Racism is once again becoming a major problem for the black community. Anti-black signs and posters, racial slurs and even racial violence are all resurfacing in our society. At predominantly white institutions, black students are having to go through many of the same problems their parents faced in the '60s.

They are being driven away by white students who feel that blacks don't belong in classroom, especially their classrooms. We, at Bennett, have been lucky. There are no racist remarks spoken to us, no bricks and stones thrown into our classrooms, and we are not stared at on our way to classes. Yet, the problem still exists.

Maybe because our generation has never had to actually deal with racism, we have taken a nonchalant attitude towards the existing racism in South Africa. Racism that was so strongly fought against in our own country, just 20 years ago.

Letters to the editor:

Misconceptions are brought to light

To the editor:

It has been brought to my attention that my story on "Students choosing between soap operas and class" has made certain members of the faculty think that students have been purposely cutting class to watch television. I know that this title may sound a bit misleading, but the story was not about students cutting class.

The first sentence of this particular story was "The '80s are full of day-time soap operas which students find interesting enough to schedule classes around." This simply states that students have been making an effort to choose classes that do not fall under the same time as their favorite program. There is the notion that the students residing in Reynolds Hall are the only people guilty of this action, but it is an act that students at all institutions are guilty of. This is a fact that has been mentioned on talk shows and in magazines.

There are some students who have already been approached by some of their instructors and have been told that action will be taken against those students who are missing class just to watch television. But, this is not what is going on. The point is that the class schedules are so flexible that there is enough room for students to fix their classes around each program they would like to see.

The only action I could see taking place is the rearrangement of classes so that there will not be enough room for students to have so much free time during the day.

Tondalayo Clark

To the editor:

What four attributes do Andre Dawson, Doug Williams, Jerry Rice, Dennis "Oil Can" Boyd, Walter Payton, Vince Coleman and Willis Reed have in common? They are all male. That's one. Black. That's two. Athletes. That's three. What's four?

Every one of them entered professional sports from historically black colleges. Namely, Florida A&M, Grambling, Jackson State and Mississippi Valley State.

I bring that up to poke a hole in a myth. A mistaken notion that a black athlete must attend a predominantly white college or university to be able to success-

fully pursue a career in professional sports after graduation.

If that myth were reality, the Andre Dawsons' (the National League's MVP in 1987) and the Doug Williams' (MVP for Super Bowl XXII) of this world would enjoy a rewarding college career then drop from sight. The reality is that a good athlete will get noticed no matter which school he attends. That brings up another very important point: attending and graduating from a historically black school is no less valuable — either athletically or academically — than attending a predominantly white school.

Before I began my own business last year, I was a vice president of Personnel and Organization for Xerox Corporation. In that capacity, I met and worked with engineers from Prairie View, math majors from Jackson State and Lincoln University, systems analysts from Hampton and Grambling and a Xerox business division president, Bernard Kinsey, who graduated from Florida A&M. And three graduates of my alma mater, Lincoln University in Missouri — Earl Wilson, the European director of marketing for IBM; Stan Scott and Thomas Shrosphere, senior vice presidents of Philip Morris — have also made solid contributions in the business world.

These people are certainly just as successful, and in some cases more so, than their black friends who went to predominantly white colleges or universities.

I am proud to be an alumni of Lincoln and my graduation from a black university certainly didn't hold me back, isn't holding me back and won't ever hold me back.

What can hold blacks back is — all too frequently — their inability to get a quality education at a predominantly white college.

That's brought about because they must — because of the environment — deal with race relations issues, which take time and sap energy. At a black college, race isn't an issue. Getting a good education is.

Athletically and academically, black colleges have a role to play. More of our black young people should recognize this fact and take advantage of one of the best kept secrets in America.

Joseph D. Johnson

Some of us say, "It's not happening to me, so why should I worry about it?" We should worry about it because the same racism that the black South Africans are going through, and that our parents already went through, is now about to enter our lives.

Racism of the '60s is coming to the '90s, and if it is not stopped while it is in its early stages, we could lose everything that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., died for.

So withdrawing from, and even denying racism, will not make it go away. That only demonstrates the intimidation of the mere word. We, the future leaders of America, should address the problem and look for ways of overcoming racism through unity and strength.

For, as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said: "A man can't ride your back unless it's bent." (Yvette N. Freeman)

Age is only a number

a narrative essay

by Candra Ruffin

Once my friends and I became sophomores in high school and were allowed to date, we decided on one basic rule: no underclassmen. We never went out with underclassmen males and we had no intention of doing so.

During that same year, a short and very skinny freshman asked me to the J.R.O.T.C. Ball. Every tooth in his mouth was crooked and he didn't look like he believed in haircuts. In short (no pun intended), he wasn't very attractive. "Lewis," I said, not looking him directly in the face, "I already have a date, but thanks for asking." I figured lying was better than, "Hell, no, you know where to go!"

My girl friends and I had nothing against the younger guys except that they were immature and stupid-acting, and they thought the word "gentleman" meant saying "Excuse me" if I happened to accidentally walk past one of their after-lunch belching contests. We dated to learn, not to teach. So, freshmen's phone numbers went into file 13.

One day in my junior year, I was sitting in the lunchroom, talking to one of my friend's younger brothers about the basketball game we attended the night before. Suddenly, right in the middle of my eating my raspberry jello, he burst out with how much he liked me and he asked me out. I said, "Come on now, be serious!" but then he told me he was. After thinking for only a milli-second about how cute his curly hair and thin lips were, I came back to reality and told him that there was no way on God's green earth it would work, and that the answer was no.

One summer day before my

senior year, my best friend's boyfriend introduced me to the finest dude I had ever seen. He was so cute I thought I was going to pass out right there in front of my car in the middle of the street.

He was about 6'2" and he looked like he weighed at least 190 pounds. His skin color looked like coffee with just a little cream. And there wasn't a place on his body (and believe you me, I was checking it all out) that I didn't see muscles, big muscles!

There was a little bit more than peach fuzz right above his top lip and on the sides of his face going down, joining at his chin. And that smile of his just wouldn't quit. The best part was that he had the most gorgeous eyes I had ever seen. Not only were they the same color as his handsome light brown skin, but they had a little hint of baby blue in them.

Being the sexy, single senior I was, as he walked off, I thought I had it all figured out. He had just come from out of town and was going to attend our school.

Later on that day, after volleyball practice, while I was making my plans about how Michael (that was his name) and I could get together, my friend Traei came running over to me in the gym. "Girl!" she said, "you will never, never believe this one." "What is it?" "I just can't believe it. Candi, you will not believe it!" I grabbed her shoulders and said, "Would you please tell me before Christmas." And then I got the shock of my life. Michael was only fifteen years old! "He's only a freshman," I said over and over to myself.

Michael broke my heart without saying one word. My dreams of going to prom, homecoming, and winter sports events with this gorgeous male were shattered. And as fast as lightning across the sky, he was out of my mind, for

a while.

Summer was over, and it was back to school for me. I found that my craze for Michael had not ended. I saw him everywhere I went — the lunchroom, the halls, the gym and at pep rallies.

I couldn't get Michael out of my mind, so I started teasing and flirting. Everytime I saw him, I smiled or winked. To my surprise, he flirted in return. Then we started holding conversations. The more I got to know him, the more I felt differently toward him. He wasn't my little freshman brother anymore, but a true close friend. I realized I could talk to him about things I thought a freshman male couldn't understand. He turned out to be very caring, considerate and helpful.

Right before Christmas vacation the second shock hit me. I liked Michael as a boy friend for the first time. But, at the time, I didn't know if I could handle the relationship. I mean, what would people say? A senior going out with a freshman? "Can't she get someone her own age?"

On Jan. 7, 1987, at 9:30 p.m., to be exact, Michael asked me to be his girl friend. I thought of all my old rules and principles, the comments and snickers I would get from people, the rumors and put-downs that surely would be coming my way, but I said, "Yes!"

Even though the relationship didn't last very long, it was no different from any other relationship I have had. We had our good times and our bad and I would be lying if I said I didn't learn and grow from Michael, because I really did.

And now in my new book of rules and principles, the title of the first chapter is the cliché, "Age is Nothing but a Number."

Honors dorm possibility stirs Belle's resistance

by Robin Jackson

A number of students feel that there should not be a residence hall for honors students.

The students responded negatively when Dr. Gloria Dean Randle Scott introduced the idea of opening an honors residence hall for the fall semester of 1988 in her address during Honors Convocation.

The reasons for the negative reaction range from discrimination against non-honor students to the inadequacy of Merner Hall, the proposed site for the honors dorm.

Valarie Jones, a junior honor student, says, "I do not think we should have an

honors residence hall, because an honors residence hall says that the rest of the campus is stupid and it will alienate the other students."

Jones also maintained that she will not live in the honors residence hall.

Junior LaShawn Barber says, "If we are going to have an honors residence hall, then we should have the correct facilities to fit the needs of an honor student."

Barber went on to say, "Merner Hall should be more modernized so the students will want to excel higher."

Other students expressed misgivings about Merner, which many Belles feel is in poor condition.

"If I were an honor stu-

dent, I would not want to live in Merner Hall because it needs to be fixed up in a more fashionable way," says junior Lynn Bolden.

Sophomore honor student Taue Simmons says, "I think it is kind of good that they are having an honors residence hall because the halls are usually so noisy, but I myself am not staying in Merner Hall."

One student said, that having an honors residence hall could put stress on the friendships around the campus.

Sophomore Donna Wilson stated, "I am against having an honors residence hall because most honor students will not want to live separated from their friends who are not honor students."

The Bennett Banner

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