

Black Ink

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Stewart's death not seen as a racial issue

by Joy Thompson
Managing Editor

The recent murder of graduate student Sharon Stewart is one of several recent brutal murders in Chapel Hill that is causing students much concern about the safety of Chapel Hill.

One cannot ignore the fact that in the cases involving last spring's stabbing death of sophomore Freshteh Golko and this fall's stabbing death of Stewart the assailants were both Black.

Less than ten Blacks were among the almost 300 students who attended Stewart's memorial service, held on Sept. 4 in Memorial Hall.

What does this mean?

Are Black students on campus simply apathetic, or is there a deeper, psychological reason for so few Blacks attending the service?

Some students who attended the service indicated that some Black students feel guilty that the youth convicted of the Stewart stabbing was Black.

"I think Blacks are saddened to see a member of their own race come to the spotlight for doing something wrong, evil, bad," Tim Cobb, president of the Resident Hall Association, said.

"But that is no different from a white person feeling the same way when they see a member of the human race doing something wrong, evil, bad," Cobb said.

Cobb, who attended the memorial service, said he thinks the Stewart murder is generally seen as a tragedy. If it was 1968, people would have turned this tragedy into a racial issue, he said.

But the potential to make this incident a racial issue today is there, Cobb said.

"I hope that the press does not blow this (tragedy) into that type of a situation where they're trying to make it into a racial issue when it is not," Cobb said.

Cobb said he didn't think white students see the Stewart incident as a Black/white issue. Several white students interviewed after the memorial service agreed.

"I never really considered race (as an issue) at all," Emily Tobias, a junior journalism major from

Oberlin, Ohio, said. "All it did for me was increase my awareness of me as a woman, and that it could have been me."

Wendy Moore, a second year speech and pathology student from Rock Hill, S.C., was a therapy classmate of Stewart's. Moore said she too did not feel any hostility toward Blacks as a result of the incident.

"I've been more concerned about safety," Moore said. She added that she has not felt safe since the incident.

"I don't have a parking permit," Moore said. "I depend on someone else to take me home."

Craig Hyatt, a junior American Studies major from Oberlin, Ohio, said he knew the area Stewart was from. He said he hoped people did not generalize that all Black people were violent.

Hyatt said he felt that would represent a "hateful attitude" among whites and he hoped that would not occur.

"I think it is a matter of responsibility not to generalize (the situation)," Hyatt said.

The reason why Stewart's murder was such a shock to many people was that "Chapel Hill fosters such a sense of trust and openness," Hyatt said. The murder is also difficult to accept, because Chapel Hill has very high ideal about education and is an intelligent community, he added.

Hyatt said he hadn't heard any white students express any hostile sentiments toward Blacks because of this incident, but he had heard some Black students say that they felt whites would be more hostile to Blacks.

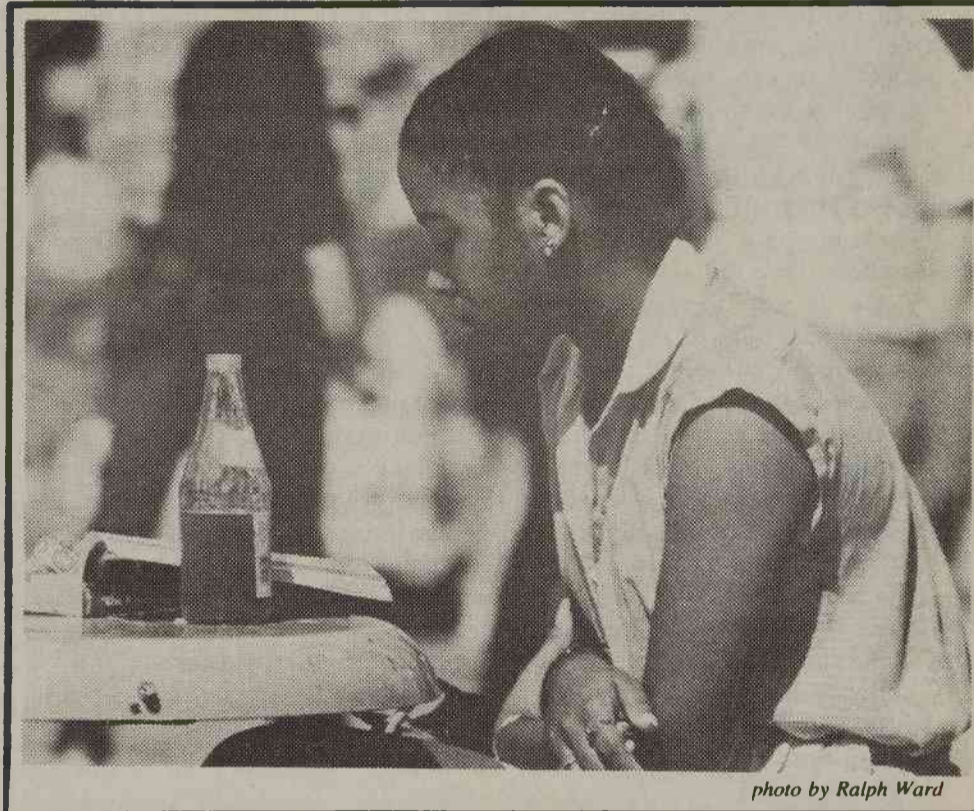


photo by Ralph Ward

Resist or Submit? What should Women Do?

by Bonnie Foust
Staff Writer

When the man pointed the knife at the back of Sharon Lynn Stewart late on the night of August 24, 1985, she had 20 to 30 seconds to decide how to react. She chose to be passive, to submit. And she died.

The same man allegedly tried to kidnap and kill Terry Giles at a supermarket parking lot in Fayetteville, N.C. a month earlier. Giles fought with her attacker. She was stabbed a few times. But she lived.

Did Stewart, a graduate student at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, make a mistake? Could she have saved her own life by resisting her attacker as Giles did? The experts overwhelming answer yes.

"Statistics across the country show that 80 percent of all women who resist attack avoid rape," said SGT. Ned Comar of the University Police. "I definitely think Sharon Stewart would have been better off to resist."

"I won't get into some of the character problems Stewart might have had, but I think she was a little too cool and planned to strategically get away later," COMAR SAID.

While Comar does not mean to criticize Stewart, he said one of methods she could have used to hold off her attacker would have been to scream. Screaming and running are the best defenses a woman has in an attack, said law enforcement officials and sociologists.

In extensive interviews with 94 women who had been attacked, sociologists Pauline B. Bart, visiting

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Number of Black RAs Continues to Increase

by Nancy Harrington
Staff Writer

The number of Black resident assistants at UNC-CH has more than tripled over the past four years, according to Allan Calarco, associate director of University Housing.

Four years ago there were fewer than 10 black students on staff as RAs.

This year, Black students comprise 17 percent of the 185 RAs on

campus. While there are 17 Black RAs in the four South Campus dorms, there are only 11 Black RAs in the 20 North campus dorms, according to statistics from the Department of University Housing.

Although there is an increase in the number of Black RAs, Calarco said that there is a need for more minority role models on north campus. Agreeing with Calarco is Ken-

neth Smigh, a junior comparative literature/pre law major from Charlotte, who has been an RA for almost 2 years on north campus. "There is a serious lack of Black role models on north campus. Most of

what white students know about Blacks is from rumors or what they see on television," Smigh said.

It takes a "special person" to be an RA and role model, according to

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