

# Black Ink

The essence of freedom is understanding

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## Leroi Douglass—One Last Stand

By Victor E. Blue

[NOTE: This story is fictitious and represents the opinion of the writer.]

When Leroi Douglass entered his office Feb. 2 he had a lot on his mind. The usually genteel president of the African-American Society (AAS) slammed the door behind him. It did not matter to him if the groundhog had seen its shadow or not; he was furious at the university's lack of action concerning the Center for African-American Culture (CAC). By January 31, 1989, the university was to have found a permanent site for the CAC. Two days later, Leroi still had received no word from Chancellor Pardon or Dean Moulton. He wanted to call, he wanted to get upset; instead he remained calm and decided to wait for them to call. A general body meeting of the AAS had been planned for Feb. 8. He would disclose his plans for action then.

Would it be worth it, he asked himself, as he chewed nervously on his pen. Black students on this campus had proved to be very apathetic. Attendance at AAS meetings and the general awareness of black students was falling. After all, only 1/3 of black students asked in an AAS survey even knew that Margarita Lawford was the director of the CAC.

Leroi's two-year tenure as AAS president was about to end in March, and he could easily drift into contentment at his past success. During his stay in office the AAS had progressed over previous years. Interest in the AAS Choir, the Yoruba Dancers and other AAS sub-groups had increased tremendously. He had even lifted the CAC from being an unnecessary triviality to a productive learning center.

Leroi could not wait until Feb. 8; he had to make one last stand for the CAC. He picked up the phone and

buzzed the AAS secretary just outside his office. "Call all central committee members. Tell them we will have an emergency meeting this evening to discuss the CAC at 6 p.m. in Upendo," he said.

While Leroi and the AAS continued to fight for a cultural center, opponents were preparing to gun down the CAC. Back in October, university trustee Don Hope said publicly that he did not see the need for a CAC, and black students should go to a black school if they wanted one.

Apathy among black students also hurt the CAC. The black class of 1992 was touted to be the best ever to enter the university. They had the best SAT scores and the highest GPAs. After the fall semester, 40 percent of the black freshmen had below a 2.0 GPA.

At the meeting, Leroi adamantly decided to protest the university's procrastination. Leroi's fiery tone dominated the meeting. Most members agreed with Leroi's suggestion to stop recruiting black students for the university since it does not honor the requests of its current black population. He also suggested that students stage a massive protest on the steps of North Building before a television audience.

Immediately, Leroi and the members of the central committee began drafting a letter of grievances to Chancellor Pardon:

"We, members of the African-American Society and representatives of the university's black student community, are appalled that the university has not honored our request to find a permanent site for the CAC. As a viable part of the university community we feel our importance has been overlooked. As a result, we have decided to discontinue our participation in the recruitment of black students. Why should we encourage our younger brothers and sisters to consider a university that consistently lies to

blacks?

The African-American Society"

Only time would reveal the answers to the problems of the university's black students. Would the university respond

favorably to the AAS' actions? Would a site be found for the CAC? One thing was certain—Leroi would continue his struggle until his last day in office.

## The Plight of Black Freshmen

By Timika Shafeek, Managing Editor

During the past few years, UNC has implemented several programs to attract black students. These programs include a minority recruitment committee, Decision Days, the building of the BCC, and Summer Bridge, which acts not only as an aid to attract black students, but which also attempts to give them a head start.

However successful UNC's attempt to attract black students is, the attempt is being undermined by the alarming number of students who drop out of school before graduation.

A major reason for this drop-out rate is the students' inability to make the grade. In order to return after one semester, a 1.0 G.P.A. is required, a 1.5 after three semesters, a 1.75 after four, and a cumulative 2.0 is necessary to graduate.

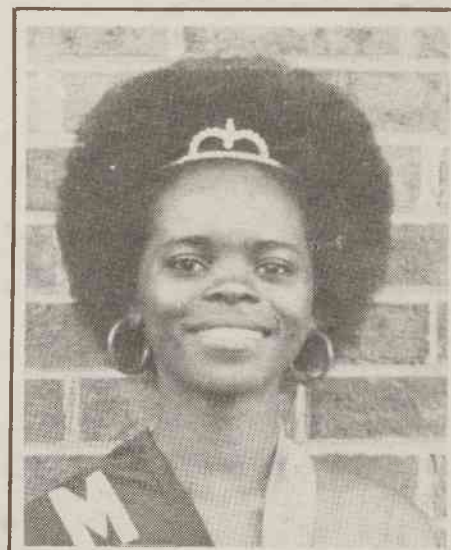
Whose fault and whose problem is it that these students are not making the grades, do not have sufficient funds to complete their tenure at UNC, or just do not have the desire to remain at UNC once here?

One might wonder whether or not the University has considered the fact that until it solves its internal problem of keeping black students here, it does no good to attract new black students. The percentage growth of black students who apply and who are accepted to UNC is not a measure of actual growth

if those students do not graduate.

One might also wonder whether more black students would choose UNC if they knew that the needs of black students already here were being met, if they knew that UNC's current black students felt as though Carolina was as much theirs as anyone else's.

Although UNC has provided minority students with the Office of Student Affairs and with various tutoring programs, solving the problem of retaining minority students appears to be no more imminent.



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