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James Baldwin

Noted Black Author Visits

James Baldwin Raps With Rams

"Your style is the way that you look at the world. Trust your vision..." - James Baldwin

James Baldwin, who is considered one of the finest black writers of today, spoke before a crowd of anxious and alert Rams on November 9. As people pushed and shoved their way into the Ballroom of the Student Union, all eyes and ears were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the

unique and talented James Baldwin.

After moments of staring toward the empty stage, the announcer finally introduced Mr. Baldwin. Upon entering the stage, the talented Mr. Baldwin faced his audience in a very relaxed manner. The audience rose to their feet with earth-shaking applause as their admiring and intellectual star greeted them with a smile.

The short and rather thin James Baldwin, in a very shy manner said, "I would like to take this time to have a question and answer period, although I know that I can not answer all your questions." The Rams seemed to like this idea and before too long questions were being thrown back and forth, from corner to corner, and even from the far back of the room.

One of Mr. Baldwin's fans wanted to know where his hometown was and what he considered his greatest piece of work. Mr. Baldwin stated that he was from New York City and with a shy smile replied, "My greatest piece of work is the work that I'm working on."

When Mr. Baldwin was asked to state some of his views of Jimmy Carter, he hesitantly replied, "I know little about him. It was the black vote however, that put him into office. He is debted to us." As Mr. Baldwin turned to recognize another hand, he puffed on his cigarette and responded to a question concerning his start as a writer. He stated that the only way to become a writer was to begin to write. He acknowledged that he had worked several odd jobs. "I got small things published here and there. After publishing my first novel, I was well on my way."

Although Mr. Baldwin did not attend college, his response to the question, "If you had been educated do you think you would have been a better writer?", led the Rams

to shouts of laughter and bursts of applause. With a smile on his face as though he had anticipated the response of the crowd, Mr. Baldwin replied, "I believe that if I had attended college my life would have been more confused!"

Aside from being a well known writer, Mr. Baldwin has had the opportunity to visit various countries. He briefly discussed some of his views on the United States as compared to those of other countries. Mr. Baldwin stated that he left the U.S. in 1948 for the first time. His first stop took him to Paris where everything appeared to be rationed. Mr. Baldwin found himself miles away from everything that he had known. He was compelled with the fear that he would never see his country again. A country that he missed very desperately. He felt that the doctrine of "White Supremacy" came from Europe and that "The real agony of it all was due to a failure of identity." Mr. Baldwin felt that American tragedy was the American effort to pretend that a certain boy, girl, woman or man, were not really humans, but mules. This Baldwin called "A recipe for madness!"

Memories from Baldwin's childhood seemed to excite the crowd as he replied, "When I was growing up, it was a blessing for me never to have gone to Africa. My father was a black Baptist preacher and I seemed to be trapped in the fantasy of white minds. We were not born in that fantasy however. We survived because of what was handed down to us." Baldwin stated in a dignified manner that his novel, **Return to the Mountain** was written as a result of things he had experienced throughout his early life. "I was born in church or raised in the church because I once was a preacher. From age 17 to 34 I was in constant battle trying to deal with my parents and

See BALDWIN, Page 7

WSSU Band Welcomes Carter



WSSU Majorette and Carter...

WSSU majorette, Geraldine Gates, and then Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter join hands to form an arch as one of Carter's Secret Service protective agents walks under the arch. Carter had just arrived for a Democratic rally at the Benton Convention Center. [AP Wirephoto - Herald, Durham, N.C., 10/20/76.]

In early October, Jimmy Carter made his first appearance in Winston-Salem. This visit was part of his presidential campaign. The now president-elect arrived at the Smith-Reynolds Airport in his privately owned plane he called "The Peanut One". A large crowd came to the

airport to welcome and support Mr. Carter. The Winston-Salem State University Marching Rams had been invited to play for the occasion. The band played several selections including "Everything is Coming Up Roses" and "Harvest for the World." Jimmy Carter walked

around thanking members of the band for coming out to greet him.

The president-elect departed only minutes after his arrival to prepare for his campaign speech later that evening at the Benton Convention Center.