

CAMPUS NEWS/FEATURES



1970 photograph showing people gathered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial with a banner for the Revolutionary People's Constitutional Convention.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

SECCA exhibit showcases the history of Black Panther movement of '60s

Tiffany Ross
NEWS ARGUS STAFF

Huey P. Newton, co-founder of the Black Panther Party once stated "Revolution has always been in the hands of the young. The young always inherit the revolution."

In July, the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art of Winston Salem opened an exhibit titled "Black Panther: Rank and File."

The Black Panther exhibit provides youth of today with a revelation of Huey's statement. It includes documents, photos, recordings, film and artworks inspired by the movement.

The Black Panther Party was founded during the forceful era of the 1960s in California by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. The organization was assembled after the assassination of Malcolm X in 1966, which sparked an increase in uprising in Wake, California and the strengthening of civil rights. Founders of the party desired an effective leadership in the African American community during a time of fuming societal inequalities.

Originally called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, the armed resistance political organization promoted revolution and there-

fore became the center of enormous controversy. The Black Panther's objective was to fight for equality, justice, and freedom. Despite the controversy the Black Panther Party provided its black communities with opportunities and services that were denied to them through the government.

During their assembly, the party developed more than 35 social programs that provided services to black and poor individuals within the community. They held clothing distributions, taught classes on politics and economics, as well as opening free medical clinics and testing sites for sickle-cell disease before it was acknowledged by the medical field as a threat to the black community.

One of its most successful social programs was the Free Breakfast program for children in the Filmore districts of San Francisco. The impact of this social program later led to its adoption of that program by the government which provided free meals plans in public schools.

Outside awareness of the Black Panther Party increased after Newton was arrested and charged with voluntary manslaughter of John Frey, a white Oakland police

officer who was shot and killed during a gun battle during a traffic stop. After the February 1968 rally for Huey in Oakland many other chapters of the Black Panther Party were developed around the country.

One of those new chapters was the Winston Salem Chapter, which was one of the first Black Panther Party chapters in the South. The chapter was founded by Larry Little, now a professor at Winston Salem State University.

Little joined the party in 1969. He felt it was his duty to fight against the convictions of blacks in America and to help fight against police brutality. The Winston Salem chapter's vision was to "appeal black liberation, and to stand up against police brutality and the Ku Klux Klan with the community," Little said.

The Winston Salem chapter of Black Panther party became one of the top chapters in the nation standing beside the Chicago and Boston chapters. Some people have questioned why Winston-Salem's own chapter was not recognized in SECCA's exhibit, since the chapter was named the top chapter in the South during the organization's 40th anniversary.

The exhibit will run until Sept. 28.

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Courtesy of Library of Congress
George Washington presiding at the signing of the Constitution of the United States in Philadelphia on Sept. 17, 1787.

WSSU celebrates Constitution Day

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As required by the federal government, Winston-Salem State University will have events on Tuesday, Sept. 18, to educate students about the Constitution. The events will take place in the Thompson Center.

West Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) assured the passage of a bill mandating all government-funded schools and colleges to teach about the Constitution one day out of the year.

According to the 10th Amendment to the Constitution:

"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."

The federal government is limited to instructing states on curriculum in the schools and colleges on educating students on the Constitution.

Donald Mac-Thompson, Associate Professor of Political Science, who has helped set up events for Constitution Day at WSSU, said that he does not believe the federal government is breaking any laws because "The federal government is not dictating on curriculum."

Professor Mac-Thompson is asking all instructors to allow their students to participate in the events

planned for Constitution Day.

Some of the events planned for Sept. 18 will include a re-enactment of the Constitutional Convention, a quiz bowl, and a poster and essay contest. Students from Mac-Thompson's American Presidency students are writing the questions for the quiz bowl. This class will not be able to participate in the quiz bowl.

WSSU students will be expected to participate in the Constitution Day events. There will be morning, noon, and evening events in the Thompson Center room 207.

The re-enactment of the Constitutional convention will be at 9:45 a.m. in the Thompson center. It will be a panel of students role-playing delegates who had actually attended the first Constitutional convention. They will review the draft of the Constitution and come up with ideas of what they feel the Constitution should have been like.

In the noon event, which will last for about 30 minutes, there will be a speaker who will represent campus organizations, discussing whether or not the Constitution is serving its purpose. The 6 p.m. activities will have the quiz bowl and will hold a panel discussion that will address the audience.

The News Argus

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