

Woolworth museum honors protestors of injustice

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Design Intern

History happens fast. Fifteen to 20 years after the Woolworth sit-ins, the lunch counter and store were integrated. Elon communications professor Anthony Hatcher, then a student of UNC Greensboro, sat down at the store in 1975, but now remembers the store without segregation.

"No doubt that the 1960s was a decade of change," Hatcher said. "People don't give the 1970s credit, with Watergate, the Vietnam War ending, but a lot of racial barriers were finally knocked down."

The first exhibit in the International Civil Rights Center and Museum prepares visitors to enter the horrors and courage of the 1960s civil rights movement and beyond.

The exhibit begins with a sign that states the constitutional right, "All men are created equal." Behind the statement, signs announcing "white only" and "no colored allowed" light up, signifying the dissonance between alleged inalienable rights and the reality of early America. The museum opened on Feb. 1, and guided tours are currently in place.

The Gala and Banquet, originally scheduled for Jan. 30, has been rescheduled because of inclement weather. It will take place Feb. 13 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, N.C. from 7-9 p.m. Tickets are \$100 and can be ordered from www.sitinmovement.org or at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro.

Assistant account executive for RLS Communication RoKeya Worthy, said an estimated 3,000 people attended the grand opening events for the museum.

"It was good, considering the weather," Worthy said. "Everybody was so excited. It was almost like inauguration all over again. Being there to see a historic event."

Worthy said there was considerable national media coverage. There was a lot of media coverage for the event including CBS Today, NBC Nightly News, Diane Sawyer, ABC, CNN and the New York Times.

"At one point, (the tour guide) was talking about the Birmingham church bombings," Ann Morris, a visitor, said. "She pointed at my child, saying the girls who were killed were not older than her. It really brings it close to home."

A younger visitor described what was most significant to her.

"The two-sided Coke machine," Gracie Anderson said. "One side was for African-Americans and one side was for white people. They could not use the same side."

As visitor, Thomas Hay, exited the museum, he described the era as a trying time. He participated in demonstrations in Maryland when he was younger. Hay said the most powerful exhibit to him was the re-enactment of the original four Greensboro non-violent protestors, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair Jr. and David Richmond.

"The idea where they were going to challenge the system, challenge something they saw wrong is so impactful," Hay said.



Several pictures by Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Matthew Lewis, line an entire room in the International Civil Rights Center and Museum. LAUREN RAMSDELL | Photographer

Worthy describes one exhibit, the Hall of Fame, in detail. She uses words such as "intense" and "graphic" to give a better picture. Children are not recommended to go through that part of the museum.

"(It is) a heart-wrenching exhibit. Right in your face, tough to look at," Worthy said.

The exhibit shows what happened to the people who stood up for their rights, such as church bombings, murders or high-pressure hoses being turned on marchers. The effects were devastating, Worthy said.

The ending image is one of Emmett Till, a black 14-year-old brutally murdered in Mississippi in 1955 for allegedly whistling at a white woman.

The last exhibit meshes numerous photographs of faces from the civil rights movement. As one backs away from the smaller pictures, the faces create a larger picture of President Barack Obama with a statement when he was a senator about overcoming barriers. Photographs in the room depict non-violent protests around the world. The museum comes full circle, illustrating how the struggle for human rights internationally continues.

Curatorial Program Associate Lolita Watkins said the original men from N.C. A&T University, who conducted the first sit-in, visit the museum all the time.

"They've been back since the effort started 17 years ago," Watkins said. "They were here on Monday, Feb. 1."

McCain, McNeil and Blair Jr. attended the museum's opening events.

"They were overcome, joyful, proud and energized in terms of hoping we will have people walk in their footsteps and strive to achieve to make America a better place," Watkins said.



Visitors wait for the museum's guided tour beside the famous photograph of the four N.C. A&T University students, Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair Jr. and David Richmond. LAUREN RAMSDELL | Photographer



This exhibit, named "The Civil Rights Movement Through the Lens of Pulitzer-Winning Photographer Mathew Lewis," captures several moments of the social movement. LAUREN RAMSDELL | Photographer

Local 'internetainers' use the Internet to spread laughter

Mariah Irvin
Reporter

Rhett McLaughlin and Link Neal have been best friends since they were detained from recess in first grade for writing bad words on their desks. Now, the pair creates humorous musical parodies and gets paid for it.

McLaughlin and Neal, better known on the Web as Rhett & Link, are involved in self-coined "Internetainment" with more than 200 Web videos that have been featured on CNN, BBC, Fox News, WGN, TV Guide and G4's Attack of the Show. The local North Carolinians write, edit and produce all of their videos.

They also hosted a TV show on the

CW in 2007, called "Online Nation," and were musical correspondents for the Science Channel's "Brink" last year.

In addition to online sketches and musical parodies, Rhett & Link has made two award-winning films, "Looking for Mrs. Locklear" and "One Man's Trash."

McLaughlin and Neal weren't always Internet stars. Both worked as engineers after graduating from North Carolina State University. They knew that they didn't want to be engineers forever, and the transition from engineers to owning and operating a company was not easy.

"It was a process," McLaughlin and Neal said. "Going from engineering to working with the campus ministry

we'd been involved with as college students, to hosting a network television show, to starting our own Web production company."

As best friends, McLaughlin and Neal knew they had "something special." Having a long history together allows them to be more comfortable as business partners.

"Knowing one another so well also helps to make communication efficient," McLaughlin said. "We know how to read one another. We disagree a lot, but that back and forth is one of the keys of our creative process."

McLaughlin and Neal agree when creating videos, they enjoy working with people. They cannot choose any part of the production process they enjoy more than another part.

"Every stage has its benefits and frustrations," Neal said. "But it's always fun to see a video finally come together and be launched out there for everyone to experience."

Although they spend most of their time being funny, McLaughlin and Neal have some advice for college students.

"The key to college is striking a balance between enjoying yourself and working hard," Neal said. "People who let the pendulum swing too far in either direction are some of the most unhappy people you'll ever meet."

McLaughlin and Neal said they enjoy making videos and entertaining the masses. At the end of the day the two of them agreed, "We make them for you," they said.