

# Study: Black elite born 20 years after civil rights movement

By **BRYAN WILDER**  
Associated Press Writer

NEW ORLEANS — A new study of black college graduates concludes that 20 years after the civil rights movement, a growing black middle class promises to be the first black generation to leave something for its children to inherit.

Daniel C. Thompson, a professor of sociology at Dillard University in New Orleans, calls it: "a black elite" and has published a book by that title.

It's based on a survey of 2,089 graduates of 42 United Negro College Fund institutions, with 40 formal interviews and an equal number of informal ones.

Thompson's definition of the elite is similar to that of the late W.E.B. Du Bois, who predicted 80 years ago that a "talented tenth" of the black population would emerge as advocates and leaders of the black cause.

But where Du Bois said the group would consist of the "well bred" and "well born" of the more affluent black families, Thompson says today's black elite comes from all social and economic classes.

He says black colleges, rather than prominent families, have nurtured the group.

"Graduates of black colleges emerge with both academic credentials and leadership skills, and the ability to cultivate networks supporting their personal goals and the cause of advancement for blacks generally," Thompson says.

In his survey, Thompson asked what was the most reliable means of achieving success in the United States. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents said it's a good education, 27 percent said it's knowing the right people, and 26 percent said it's hard work and sacrifice.

Thompson concludes that, in addition to educating their students, "black colleges have taught their students how to use their connections."

"Those graduates we surveyed are joiners. Over 90 percent belong to an organization such as a church, social fraternity or political group, and 16 percent belong to five or more organizations."

A major ambition of the

graduates surveyed appears to be transferring their knowledge to others. Thirty-four percent said they had become grade-school teachers and 11 percent college teachers.

Twenty-one percent said they had gone into government and 15 percent into business.

Thompson said in an interview that he believes the civil rights movement did not benefit non-

college blacks nearly as much as it did those with an education.

"Black college graduates are now taking over the leadership of the civil rights movement, instead of the preachers and working-class blacks of the 1960s," he said.

He said one of the most encouraging trends today is the number of blacks going into business and politics.

## Black student enrollment holding steady since 1983

By The Associated Press

Despite the efforts to boost minority enrollment, the percentage of blacks attending North Carolina community colleges has remained steady since 1983, according to a North Carolina Department of Community Colleges report.

Black enrollment at the state's 58 schools has hovered at 19 percent for the past three years, said the report, released last week.

The figure falls short of the community college system's 20-percent goal, which was established as part of the system's agreement with the U.S. Education Department to desegregate state community colleges and technical institutes.

"It's a vexing problem," said

former Gov. Bob Scott, head of the N.C. Department of Community Colleges. "The same pattern is true all over the nation."

According to the report, the number of blacks attending North Carolina community colleges has dropped slightly during the three-year period, from 6,868 students in 1983 to 6,811 students in 1985.

The report also found the percentage of blacks enrolled in programs that will allow them to transfer to four-year colleges fell from 13 percent of total enrollment in 1983 to 12 percent in 1985 -- from 817 students to 799.

The number of students in technical education programs increased from 19 percent or 5,697 in 1983 to 20 percent or 5,709 in 1985.



Bessie Rhyne serves WSSU defensive back Derrick Beasley a plate at a recent luncheon which she gave for the entire team and staff in the Old Gym on campus (photo by James Parker).

"The pattern is an American pattern," Thompson said. "When there are opportunities in business, you go into business. When there are opportunities in politics, you go into politics. "It is one of the most unique American success stories -- it

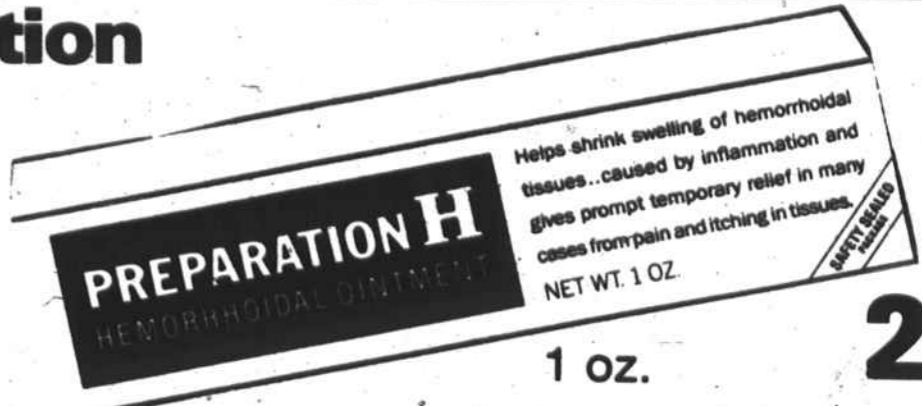
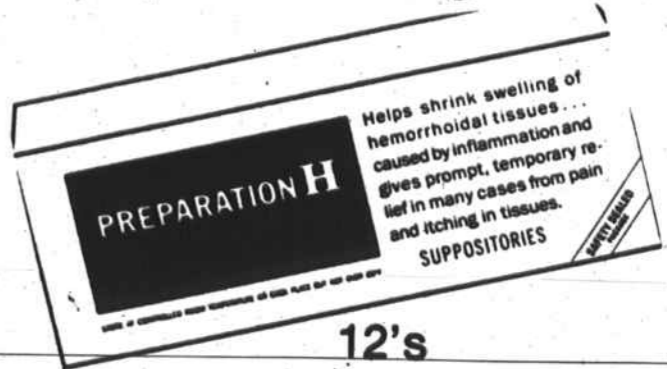


shows what happens when you compete."

He said part of that is due to the intensity of corporate recruiting on black campuses during the 1960s and 1970s. In 1973, he said, the average income of black college graduates was 8

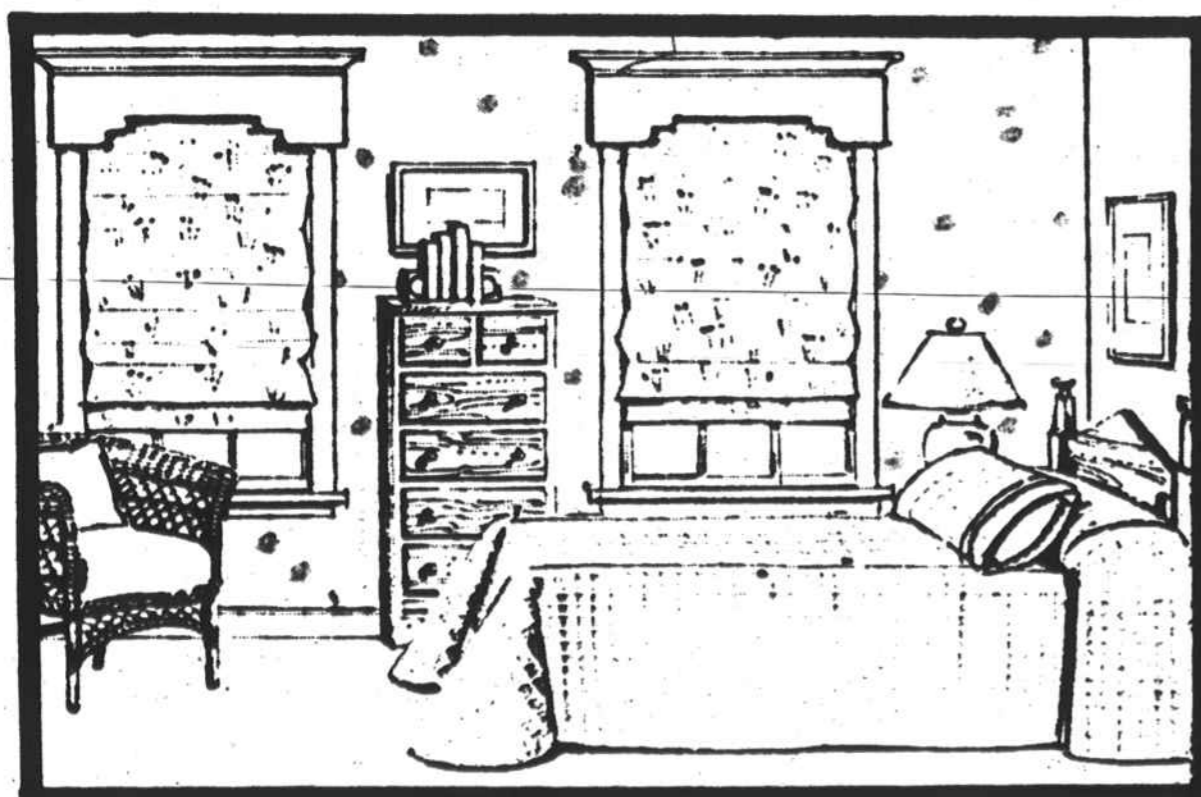
percent to 9 percent higher than for white graduates.

"At that time, you could hardly afford not to have blacks on your staff," Thompson said.

However, the corporations are not recruiting as vigorously today, he said.

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