

OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Hard Lessons in Educational Equity

Class is in session. And Winston-Salem residents are learning some hard lessons in educational equity. Let's review.

History

In the 1954 case *Brown v. Board of Education*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that separate but equal schools are unconstitutional. That landmark decision sparked school desegregation efforts across the U.S.

Forty years later, America is turning back the clock on school integration.

Attendance zones created by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school system's 1995 redistricting plan led to white flight from inner-city schools. The plan virtually eliminated busing in favor of neighborhood schools. Now, the NAACP is suing the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school system for resegregating the schools.

History repeats itself.

Mathematics

In the current climate of resegregation, inner-city schools, losses have been suburban schools, gains. Since implementation of the redistricting plan; the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County system has seen the redistribution of both students and resources, resulting in overcrowded suburban schools and underutilized inner-city schools.

As enrollments declines and diversity decreases at inner-city schools, fundraising efforts suffer and parental involvement falter. A study by the school system's Equity Committee showed that the schools with the highest percentage of minority students had the lowest volunteerism rates and raised the least PTA funds last school year. This disparity stems from both race and class.

English

Webster's Dictionary defines equity as "that which is fair and just."

On the other hand, equality is defined as "correspondence in quantity, degree, value, rank, ability, etc."

In American politics, integration has come to mean, "the combination of educational and other public facilities, previously segregated by race, into one unified system."

In the 1961 book "Nobody Knows My Name," author James Baldwin asserted, "Integration and education are not synonymous."

That may be true, but segregation and education are not synonymous either.

Science

Learning does not occur just because black and white students sit side by side. There is no secret formula for educating children. Countless studies show that quality curriculum, early intervention, small classes, dedicated staff, involved parents, high expectations and adequate facilities and resources lift student achievement.

Civics

Education for African Americans is a question of power. Thus, we support the NAACP's school desegregation lawsuit and the organization's efforts to help our students and improve our schools.

As the late NAACP leader Roy Wilkins stated, "Nothing should be overlooked in fighting for better education. Be persistent and ornery; this will be good for the lethargic educational establishment and will aid the whole cause of public education."

Letters to the Editor:

To the Editor:

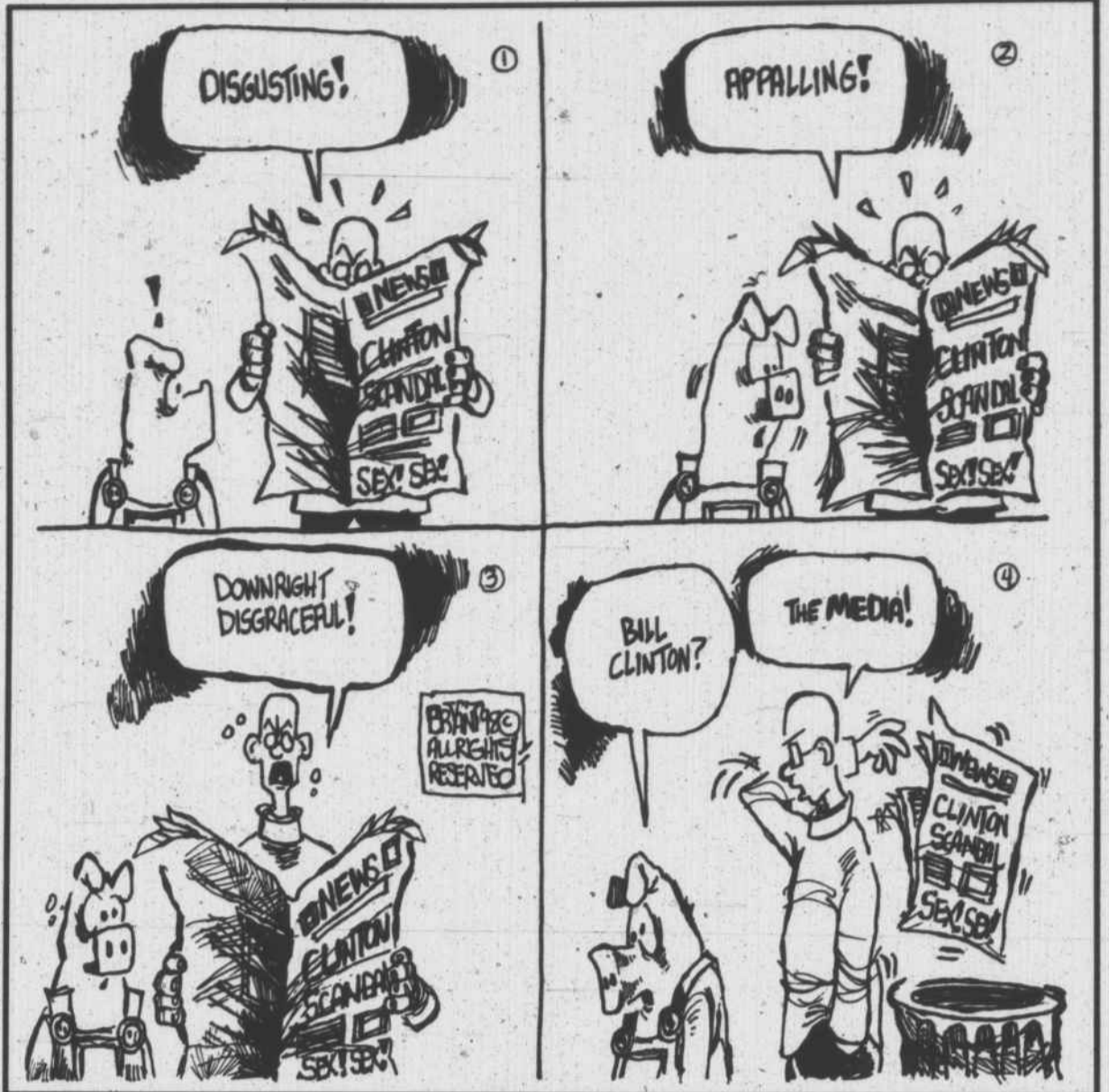
Observing the national holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. is neither a white nor a black celebration. Rather, it is a reminder to ALL of us that we have started — but not completed — our nationwide journey of reconciliation and justice. There are several opportunities coming up, and I hope that these services are not considered as being just for African Americans.

The following services will be held in the Triad and Mecklenberg areas:

- The Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church will hold its MLK service at University City UMC in Charlotte, starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 16. From Winston-Salem, the Green Street Church van will leave from 639 S. Green St. at 8 a.m. To sign up for the van, folks can call Pastor Mike Goode at (336) 722-8379 by noon Jan 15. The guest speaker will be the Rev. Dr. J. D. Ballard, pastor of United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church.

- The Citywide MLK celebration sponsored by WAAA will be held at the Benton Convention Center at noon on Monday, Jan 18. I am not satisfied with what it says about our citizenry when there are so few white faces present.

• At 7:30 p.m. Jan. 18, the



Ministers' Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity will sponsor a service at Saint Stephen Missionary Baptist Church, 5000 Noble St. The Rev. Paul Lowe, pastor of

Shiloh Baptist Church, will be the guest speaker.

Please consider this a personal invitation to join me in at least one of these celebra-

tions.
 Ellen Yarborough,
 Minister for Church and
 Community Relations
 Green Street United
 Methodist Church

Confederate flag may fly on N.C. license plates



Val Atkinson
Jones Street

The N.C. Court of Appeals ruled that the Sons of the Confederacy could be issued a North Carolina Civic License Plate with their logo — the Confederate Flag — on it.

The North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles denied the SOTC's initial request on the grounds that the organization was not a civic organization. The SOTC appealed the decision through the court system a

received a favorable ruling by the N.C. Court of Appeals.

Appellate Court Judge Patricia Timmons-Goodson dissented on the grounds that the Sons of the Confederacy did not qualify for issuance of a North Carolina Civic License Plate because they did not meet the definition of a "Civic Club" under General Statute 20-79-4 (3a).

Timmons-Goodson feels, and I agree, that the SOTC is a historical rather than a civic organization. Civic plate applicants must answer the following questions regarding their organization: Is this a tax-exempt organization? Does your organization have a local charter? Is your organization a part of a nationally recognized civic organization? How does your organization qualify as a civic club under General Statute 20-79-4 (3a)? What is the primary function of your organization? Is this a non-profit organization?

These six questions must be answered to the satisfaction of the N.C. DMV before a civic plate can be issued. When I was Assistant Director for the Vehicle

Registration Section of the N.C. DMV, I didn't think that the SOTC's answers to these six questions qualified them for issuance of a civic plate. I didn't think so then and I feel even stronger about their disqualification now.

There's very little civic about trying to justify fighting for the preservation of a way of life that enslaved human beings so that their enslavers could enjoy a life of wealth and privilege.

That position certainly doesn't represent or promote ideas of civic or racial harmony.

The Confederate flag has different meanings to different groups in America. For many African Americans the Confederate flag represents slavery, antebellum oppression, Jim Crow, The Ku Klux Klan and a modern-day link to a past of degradation, bigotry and racism. North Carolina has made great strides over the past couple of decades to rid itself of antebellum images and labels. To have the SOTC parading across this state displaying the Confederate flag on their license plate would send the

wrong message to African Americans and other minorities, and to the nation at large.

The constitutionality of this case is clear, and Timmons-Goodson was right — the Sons of the Confederacy do not meet the provision of General Statute 20-79-4 (3a). But in addition to the constitutionality of this case, North Carolinians should be concerned about the state's image and the impact of the court's decision on whether we're headed towards the "New South" or slipping back into the Old South.

The decision made by the State Supreme Court will send a strong message to North Carolinians and the rest of the world. I think the high court has no choice but to rule in favor of the DMV and disallow the issuance of a civic plate to the group.

It's the best decision for the N.C. DMV and it's the best decision for North Carolina.

Val Atkins is columnist for Consolidated Media Group

Voices from the community...

As we approach the year 2000, there is growing concern over the Y2K bug, a glitch in some computers that could render them useless. Some think the bug could paralyze everything from bank machines to airplanes. We asked local residents if they were concerned about the Y2K bug.



Wyvern Anthony

"If they do shut down, that will let man know that we are suppose to have it up here (pointing to head) not all in computers. Computers have destroyed a lot of minds because they can do everything for us."



Raymona Brown

"God is in control of things, but we aren't promised tomorrow, much less the year 2000. And as smart as man is and as gracious as God is, He'll bless us with the wisdom that we need."



J. Ray Butler

"I think that computers will continue to progress. It is one of the most profitable entities that we have in the world. There is no way in the world that they will shut down."



Ronald Fluit

"I have heard a lot of talk about this issue. Everyone's focused on the bad, we should be looking at where we are spiritually in the millennium. It doesn't have to happen. If we all get together we can turn this thing around."



Velma Fluit

"The only ones that would really concerned about it are the ones who have daily uses of computers. I do work on a computer. My coworkers think it is a big deal, but it doesn't concern me."