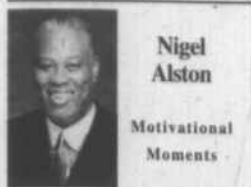


# Film captures HBCU experience



**Nigel Alston**

Motivational Moments

"He will challenge their traditions. Their traditions will change his life."  
— from the movie, "Stomp The Yard"

I was reminded of the rich experience gained from attending a black college this weekend after seeing the movie, "Stomp The Yard." The movie is a love story between DJ Williams (Columbus Short) and April (Meagan Good). It is also about a rivalry of fraternities and their quest to be recognized as the best steppers in a national competition. And, it is about being part of something bigger than you. A lesson DJ finally comes to understand.

It took me back, way back to a time of meeting new people, developing relationships that have weathered the test of time, finding love and falling in love, finding myself, pledging a fraternity and living up to its cardinal principles. The movie is about all those things and more. By the time it was over, my wife and I were ready to do a two-person step show; then we came to our senses and laughed out loud, realizing that stepping has passed us by.

Drew Belton introduced me to Omega Psi Phi Fraternity. Like me, he was a member of the football team, and for some reason, decided to invite me to an Omega party early in my freshman year. That was all it took for me to know what fraternity I would join. It was and is common for fraternities and sororities to recruit those they would like to join their organization and invite them to events.

That's the hook that captivated DJ after enrolling in Truth University. Rival fraternity leaders attempted to recruit him



Nigel, left, with a frat brother at Livingstone College.

with promises of being the best, with lasting friendships that would prove beneficial, and, of course, the opportunity to step against the other fraternity.

The movie does an excellent job of being authentic in portraying black college life and not just with the phenomenal stepping it showcases. It would be easy to get caught up in the stepping competition and phenomenal moves and miss the heart of the message — character building and what it takes to succeed — teamwork.

I learned similar lessons while pledging. At the time, in April 1972, there were three guys pledging — one Alpha, one Kappa and one Omega. That was it. The Kappa was a friend of mine and also a fellow football player. I would often hide in his room late at night to avoid my "big brothers." It was difficult pledging with 32 big brothers always after you, studying and playing football.

I was number one on my line. Actually, I was the only ONE. I pledged by myself. I was the "Only Commandment," which was my line name. My wife, Sarah,

also pledged at the same time on a line of 17, known as the "17 Drops of Soul." I could identify with DJ, who saw a beautiful girl (April) walk by as he was standing in line to register for classes. He had to meet her and he did. She would play an important role in his life. I saw a similar young woman walking across the campus of Livingstone College my freshman year, in a mini skirt. She captured my attention. I would later meet her and become engaged years later. We have been married for 29 years now.

I did quit once though. I just couldn't take it any longer. I wrote a long letter explaining that I was not going to continue. I would pledge later, I told them. I couldn't make the connection between what I was going through and the bigger picture of brotherhood. Those from the "old school" know what I am talking about. Fortunately for me, I was talked out of quitting and made it across those "burning sands." I persevered. I am glad I did.

And that is what DJ did. Questioning why he should pledge a fraternity, April asks

him if he has been to Heritage Hall. He had not. Visiting it later would be a pivotal moment in the movie and in his life. It is in this hall full of history — a photo exhibit — that he examines and connects the dots and sees all the different fraternity and sorority members from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Rosa Parks, and Dr. Betty Shabazz to Michael Jordan. It is that sense of history that inspires him to take the next step.

It was that sense of history for me too and the principles of manhood, scholarship, perseverance and uplift that appealed to me. The one thing I have quit though was stepping. It is hard for one person to put on a dynamic step show. I tried once. It wasn't pretty. Of course, the value in pledging is bigger than stepping. That's what DJ learned at Truth University.

Nigel Alston is a radio talk-show host, columnist and motivational speaker. He is a member of the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees. Visit his Web site at [www.motivationalmoments.com](http://www.motivationalmoments.com).

**STEWART BAIL BONDING**  
Selester Stewart, Jr.

Office: (336) 727-0606  
Pager: (866) 304-0973  
Cell: (336) 399-2889  
E-mail: [selesterb@aol.com](mailto:selesterb@aol.com)

**POSITIVE IMAGE PERFORMING ARTS**  
"DOWNTOWN WINSTON SALEM'S NEWEST PERFORMING ARTS FACILITY"

HOME OF THE NEW HATER BLOCKER T-SHIRTS

[WWW.COMINGEVENTZ.COM/POSITIVE.HTM](http://WWW.COMINGEVENTZ.COM/POSITIVE.HTM)

FALL REGISTRATION CALL 336-917-3005 OR EMAIL US AT [PIPARTS@CS.COM](mailto:PIPARTS@CS.COM)

**Jessie Draft & Associates LLC**

Jessie Draft/Broker  
CRS, GRI, REALTOR

[RNJDRAFT@MSN.COM](mailto:RNJDRAFT@MSN.COM)  
3750 Beeson Dairy Rd  
Winston-Salem, NC 27105

(336) 403-1254 Business  
(336) 748-0871 Fax

MULTIMILLION DOLLAR PRODUCER

**S. Wayne Patterson**  
Attorney At Law

- Immigration •Social Security •Civil Rights
- EEOC Claims •Non-Profit/501c(3)
- Employment Discrimination

235 Peachtree St. Suite 400  
Atlanta, GA 30303

301 North Main St. Suite 2420  
Winston-Salem, NC 27127

1-877-SWP-4LAW  
or local number (336) 714-8858  
[www.swaynepatterson4law.com](http://www.swaynepatterson4law.com)

**BANKRUPTCY**  
Legal Help For Your Debt Problems

**DONALD R. BUIE,**  
Attorney At Law

[www.donaldrbuie.com](http://www.donaldrbuie.com)

★ Free Initial Consultation  
★ Stop Repossession & Foreclosure

**773-1398**  
8 W. 3rd St., Ste. 100

The Law Office of Donald R. Buie is a Federally designated Debt Relief Agency under Title 11 United States Code Section 528(a). We help people file for bankruptcy relief under the bankruptcy code.

**Rep. Larry Womble**  
NC House of Representatives

71st District  
Tel: (336) 784-9373  
Fax: (336) 784-1626  
E-Mail: [LWistm@aol.com](mailto:LWistm@aol.com)

Home Address  
1294 Salem Lake Road  
Winston-Salem, NC 27107

**LOUISE E. HARRIS**  
Attorney at Law

- Debt Relief under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code
- Consumer Problems
- Traffic Tickets & DWI
- Divorce
- Wills & Probate

**17 Years Of Experience**

Winston Tower Suite 2223, 301 N. Main Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Call 24 Hours  
**(336) 761-0222**

# Apologizing for slavery isn't enough



**George Curry**

Guest Columnist

A Virginia legislator created a stir recently when said Whites living today shouldn't apologize for slavery. If subjugation of African-Americans had ended with slavery, that would be one thing. But the rancid stench of state-sponsored racism extended well into the 1960s. So, if there is to be an apology in Virginia or any other state, it should not be limited to slavery.

Consider the following, taken from the National Park Service Web site, that I recount in some of my speeches:

From the 1800s into the mid-1960s, there were Jim Crow laws mandating separation of the races. They were comprehensive, covering every imaginable circumstance such as toilet facilities, railroads, buses, education, the selling of wine and beer, restaurants, housing, parks, hospital entrances, prisons, textbooks, libraries, circus tickets, theaters, reform school, fishing, lunch counters, theaters, telephone booths, cemeteries, and, above all intermarriage.

Let's look at a few of them: North Carolina had a law that said: "Books shall not be interchangeable between the

white and colored schools, but shall continue to be used by the race first using them."

Mississippi: "There shall be maintained by the governing authorities of every hospital maintained by the state for treatment of white and colored patients separate entrances for white and colored patients and visitors, and such entrances shall be used by the race only for which they are prepared."

Georgia had one governing mental hospital that provided: "The Board of Control shall see that proper and distinct apartments are arranged for said patients, so that in no case shall Negroes and white persons be together."

So if you were mentally ill, you couldn't be together in Georgia. Louisiana even kept blind people apart. Its law stated, "The board of trustees shall...maintain a separate building...on separate ground for the admission, care, instruction, and support of all blind persons of the colored or black race."

Blacks and Whites not only couldn't interact on a normal basis while they were alive, they were even kept apart after they had died.

A Georgia law stated, "The officer in charge shall not bury, or allow to be buried, any colored persons upon ground set apart or used for the burial of white persons."

These Jim Crow laws were rigorously enforced against children as well as adults.

Not only could the Jim Crow laws not be violated, Southern customs were also enforced.

In 1951 — three years before the Brown decision — Mark Ingram, a Black man in Yanceyville, N.C., was prosecuted for assault with intent to rape because, standing 70 feet away, he supposedly "undressed" a 17-year-old, White girl with his eyes. That became known as reckless eyeballing [Randall Kennedy, *Interracial Intimacies*, p. 196 and Jack Greenberg, *Crusaders in the Courts*, P.101].

We all know about Emmett Till the 14-year-old boy who was murdered in Mississippi in 1955 for allegedly whistling at a White woman. He was brutally beaten, shot in the head, and thrown into a river.

In 1958, in Monroe, N.C., two Black boys — Fuzzy Simpson, age 7, and Hanover Thompson, age 9, were invited to join a group of five White children, including two girls. One of the girls remembered that she had played with Hanover when his mother worked as a maid in her family's house. Overjoyed at being reunited with her old playmate, she kissed him on the cheek.

That wasn't quite the kiss of death but it was close. When the girl innocently told her mother, the two boys were arrested, and convicted of attempted rape. The Juvenile Court judge sentenced Fuzzy to 12 years in jail and Hanover to 14. Fortunately,

there was a public outcry and President Eisenhower got the governor to intervene [Kennedy, P. 197-198].

What we collectively refer to as Brown et al. v. Board of Education of Topeka et al produced three Brown decisions. The first one in 1954 outlawed "separate but equal" schools because they violated the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. The second one, handed down on May 31, 1955, held that school must be desegregated "with all deliberate speed." Of course, "all deliberate speed" ended up being almost no speed at all. The third Brown case was filed in U.S. District Court in Topeka on Nov. 19, 1979 by a group of parents, including Linda Brown, whose father was the lead plaintiff in the original case. They charged that Topeka still refused "to fully carry out" the 1954 court decision. An appeals court agreed with them, saying: "Topeka has not sufficiently countered the effects of both the momentum of its pre-Brown segregation and its subsequent acts in the 1960s." That order was not lifted until 1999.

Yes, there is plenty to apologize for, but it doesn't stop with slavery.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and [BlackPressUSA.com](http://BlackPressUSA.com). To contact, go to his Web site, [www.georgecurry.com](http://www.georgecurry.com).

The Choice for African-American News

617 N. Liberty Street  
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

The Chronicle was established by Ernest Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974, and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co., Inc.

The Chronicle is a proud member of National Newspapers Publishers Association • North Carolina Press Association • North Carolina Black Publishers Association • Inland Press Association

Business Office 723-8428, ext. 100 PAULETTE LEWIS  
Business Office 723-8428, ext. 101 ANDREA MOSES

**THE CHRONICLE** Celebrating 31 Years of Community Journalism

HOME DELIVERY SUBSCRIPTION ORDER

YES, Please send me The Chronicle

2 years: \$40.95  
 1 year: \$30.72  
 6 months: \$20.48

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

VISA  Mastercard  American Express  Check enclosed  Please bill me

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

SEND TO: The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636, Winston-Salem, NC 27102