

# S. Africans recall apartheid

By Melde Rutledge

THE CAROLINA PEACEMAKER

GREENSBORO — Nalini Dorasamy said that her first realization of apartheid in South Africa struck her at the age of 14, while she and her family were preparing to order food at a takeout restaurant.

"We weren't allowed to buy stuff through the main entrance," she recalled, "because we were non-white."

Only whites were allowed to enter the main entrance of the restaurant to buy food. Dorasamy, a second generation South African now residing in the United States, is of Indian descent.

"So somebody had to explain to me at age 14 that this is our plight. As non-whites in South Africa, we were not allowed to use the same entrance as white South Africans."

Apartheid, which means "separateness," was a social policy enforced by the white, minority-ruled government in South Africa. Races were segregated, and the non-white majority was denied common rights, such as voting or owning a business in white populated areas.

During the apartheid era, South Africa's population was divided into four groups: black, white, Indian and "coloured." The coloured group included people of mixed Bantu, Khoisan and

European ancestry.

"I think my fear and ignorance kept lots of things oppressed," Dorasamy explained about her belated awareness of apartheid.

Along with Dorasamy, fellow South Africans Dr. Bheki Langa and Winlyn Manveld were at N.C. A&T State University to also give personal accounts of their life under apartheid.

The program, called "My Life Under Apartheid," also gave the audience of about 100 or so — mostly A&T students — the opportunity to ask questions of the panelists.

"At a very early age it was important, at least for me and for many of my peers, to be cognizant of the role that young people were supposed to play," said Langa, who is also a visual and performing arts professor at Bennett College for Women.

As a teenager, Langa was a member of the Pan African Congress, an organization that advocated open resistance to apartheid through strikes and protest marches.

For his involvement in the PAC, which was banned by the South African government, he told the audience that he had to flee the country, relocating to Swaziland.

A close friend of his wasn't as fortunate, and was captured by police.

"And I never heard of him since," he said.

In contrast, Maneveld, who lived in a small town about an hour away from Cape Town, said that during her early years, she lived a very sheltered life. She explained that this was due in part because the National Party, the ruling party at that time, "did a perfect job of dividing the people and conquering them."

In 1976, she took part in student movements, which disputed the highly Eurocentric curriculums in the schools.

Maneveld was considered to be "coloured." She told how her fair complexion gave her a tad more access than an Indian or black person.

However, her husband is fairly darker than she. And because sex and marriage between the races were prohibited, she said that such things as walking on the beach together was out of the question for fear of mistakenly being thought of as a black and white couple.

Maneveld is now an instructor at Hampton University, but plans on returning to South Africa.

"South Africa is my home," she said.

Apartheid was officially dismantled in 1994 when the country's first free elections led to the selection of Nelson Mandela as president.

Thousands of victims of

apartheid recounted their stories in 1995 when the country held the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It was considered to be very successful.

Langa commended the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission for their examination of the shootings of 15 people in Greensboro by Ku Klux Klan/Nazi members. Five were killed as a result.

Joya Wesley, moderator for the program, is the communication's director for the Greensboro TRC.

Langa told the audience that the racial tension in the United States could be eased if people from both sides simply talked and listened to each other.



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## Hampton students punished

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"On November 2, there were a lot of students in the student center, passing out information about Hurricane Katrina, the War in Iraq, the crisis in Sudan, homophobia, AIDS and other issues that affect our communities," said Aaron Ray, one of the seven, in an interview with Bruce Burch, co-host of Fourth Estate Radio.

Sheridan Owens, another one of the seven, says that they were notified on Nov. 18 that they would face a discipline hearing the follow-

ing Monday, giving them little or no time to contact parents, lawyers or administrators. After complaints about the time limitations, the hearing was postponed to Dec. 2.

After the hearing, the university issued a statement acknowledging that seven students had been charged with what it called "a minor procedural violation" and none had been expelled as a result of their actions. Five of the students reportedly were ordered to do community service and two were issued warnings.

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