



Road to justice winds through Carolinas

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conveyed through the students, not just through their tour of Levine Museum of the New South, but prominent speakers as well. Summerton, S.C. native B.B. DeLaine joined the students for lunch, and gave them a rousing history lesson.

"How many of you can imagine what it's like to be in Charlotte and be on Tryon Street and be hungry, because they won't serve you in a restaurant, because of the color of your skin," he asked. DeLaine, who lives in Charlotte, was one of the children whose parents sued Clarendon County, S.C., schools to desegregate in the 1950s. Their case, *Briggs v. Elliott*, ended up being one of the five cases consolidated into one case in 1954, more widely known as *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*. DeLaine talked about how Clarendon County parents pursued the case, despite knowing they may be lynched, and asked the students if they could do the same.

"My grandmother always used to say, 'Ain't nothing worth having if it's not worth dying for,'" said DeLaine. "You are tomorrow's leaders. You are at a point in your lives that you need to start thinking about issues you care about that are worth fighting for."

Despite the gravity of the information they are learning, and the vigorous schedule, the students have a positive outlook. "It's not overwhelming, though at times it is strenuous," said Melissa Fuller. "It's wonderful to hear what people have to offer. This chance is a once in a lifetime type of thing."

In addition to DeLaine, Charlotte's first black mayor, Harvey Gantt, discussed public service and his experiences desegregating Clemson University. They also met with Susan Jacobs and Norm Levin at Temple Beth El in Shalom Park, who discussed the Jewish communities' involvement in the civil rights movement.

Operation Understanding is a decade-old educational leadership development program whose mission is to bridge racial, religious, and cultural divisions by engaging young people in dialogue that leads to increased understanding. OUDC uses a two-community model to explore African American and Jewish cultures, religion and histories.

"We find that blacks and Jews have somewhat of a special relationship," said program director Rael Nelson James. "They have similar histories; narratives of oppression, discrimination, being maligned by the larger community, which allows for a common ground that wouldn't be there otherwise if you chose two communities that just existed in the world. Because of that, we are able to nurture and foster a level of deep communication between the kids."

Students were chosen for the year-long program by demonstrating responsibility, leader-

ship potential and a "change the world" attitude.

"This time in high school is when people are really deciding what kind of path they are going to take in their lives, and weather or not issues of justice and issues of working on behalf of their communities or other communities is something they will be committed to," James said. "I think this program allows for kids to examine their place within their own community, and decide what types of things they will be involved in college, which will then shape their adulthood."

Marcus McNair learned about the program when James spoke at his school, and after discussing it with his mom, decided to apply.

"I wanted to get more information on the Jewish community and the civil rights movement," he said. "My family is from North Carolina, and I was hoping, maybe I might find somebody from my family who was important in the civil rights movement."

Though Marcus didn't find a family member, the group did find a wealth of knowledge.

"I think Charlotte is important not only for the history it has here," said James, who has led the trip to Charlotte the last three years. "But it's also important for the kids to see a thriving urban center in the South. I think a lot of people who are from the cities in the North don't have a good idea of resettlement in the South, and that's what Charlotte gives them a sense of. A new city, a growing city, a changing city, a young city, and that's an important message, not only the history, but to think of the South as how it is in 2006. And how that re-growth is shaped by the past as well."

"I hope we can create more of a black/Jewish coalition," said Aleinikoff. "I know there was one during the civil rights movement, and we learned how it fell apart. I want to try to bring it back together."

From Charlotte, the contingent will travel by bus to 11 cities in four states starting with Atlanta and continuing to Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma, Ala.; Meridian, Jackson, and the Mississippi Delta to Memphis, Tenn., before returning to Washington on July 28.

"I hope that they take from this a willingness and enthusiasm to create change in some small or large way in their lives in the future," said James. "The most important thing is that they get the message that change is possible, dialogue is possible. Creating bonds with people who are seemingly different for you is a possibility in your life."

"I really want my sister to join OUDC next year," said Deborah Krat. "I would love for her to experience this, and to be able to pass on information to her about my summer trip, and that you learn so much more than you'd ever learn from your history classes in school."

Year	Shirts	Pants	Underwear	Shorts	Skirts	Blouses	Lost Per Load
1988	352	112	405	105	119	152	267
1989	325	115	285	153	127	161	422
2001	263	123	415	162	124	143	237
2002	233	104	357	134	134	154	301
2003	283	5	420	125	131	140	410
2004	341	117	408	148	102	124	384

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Airmen blazed astronaut trail

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quickly. The fellow overshot me, and this left me on his tail." He machine-gunned the Messerschmitt down.

According to another account, he passed up a third "kill" that day to stick with his primary mission: protecting the bomber.

He deflects questions about his postwar military career, preferring to focus on the

unit. "I did a lot of stuff in intelligence," he said.

The Tuskegee Airmen - also referred to as the schwartzze Vogelmenschen ("black bird-men") and the Red-Tail Angels - have become the stuff of myth and made-for-TV movies. Laurence Fishburne played the lead in a 1995 HBO film.

Image mattered to the black men and women fight-

ing for civil rights at home. The first black fighter pilots, grinning for the cameras, were charismatic, but not too cocky.

For the flesh-and-blood men, the saga is winding down. "There's only a few of us left," Weathers said.

He will be on hand to receive the medal. "If the president calls you, know you've got to go," he said.

Whites may have been driven by hate in rapes of two blacks

By Katrina Goggins

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA, S.C. — Two white men suspected of sexually assaulting a 15-year-old black girl and a black woman appear to have targeted victims because of their race, officials said.

Dustin L. Evans, 21, and Jeremy Shaw Sweat, 24, have been charged with kidnapping, sexual misconduct and assault with intent to kill the teenager on July 3. They will also be charged with sexually assaulting a 45-year-old woman on June 20, said Joe Bradham, chief deputy in Clarendon County.

"Over the weekend we've had others come to us saying they were approached but did not go with them," Bradham said Monday. "All four of those women were black."

The girl told deputies two men offered her a ride but took her to a home and repeatedly raped her, authorities said.

The victim said the men then told her to get in the shower and began stabbing her, deputies said. She fell into the tub and played dead.

As she was lying in the tub, she said, she overheard the men talk about getting trash bags and dumping her body in a lake, deputies said.

When the men left, the girl ran next door for help, authorities said. She has been released from the hospital.

The 45-year-old woman also said the men offered her a ride home, then took her to a home and raped her, authorities said.

Evans was arrested Thursday and Sweat was arrested July 3. They are being held without bail at the Clarendon County jail.

Investigators have obtained letters written by Sweat in which he claims to be linked with the Ku Klux Klan, Bradham said.

A counselor at a behavioral facility in Louisiana, where Sweat received treatment as a teen, also wrote that Sweat talked about involvement with the Klan, Bradham said.

Investigators have not found any information to connect Evans to white supremacist groups, Bradham said. Evans' wife, Crystal, said Monday that her husband is not a racist.

Sweat's last known address has an unpublished phone number.

Deputies are investigating the case against the 15-year-old girl as a hate crime, Bradham said.

The state attorney general's office cannot prosecute cases as hate crimes because South Carolina law does not address them, but federal law does.

A call to the U.S. attorney's office was not immediately returned.

Caucus meeting Sunday

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Black Political Caucus will meet Sunday at Little Rock A.M.E. Zion Church at 6 p.m.

For information, call Danielle Obiorah at (704) 752-8953.

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- Elisa Rodriguez, Allstate Insurance, Latin American Chamber of Commerce
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