

Law students saw doors open

BY NATALIE HAMMEL
STAFF WRITER

1951 was a catalyst year for social change at the University.

That spring, a federal court reversed the decision of a lower court and mandated that the University grant full admission to graduate students when equal facilities did not exist elsewhere.

And that summer, when five black students enrolled in UNC's School of Law, they broke a more than 150-year tradition of segregation at the University.

It was a victory for civil rights that cost almost a quarter of a million dollars in legal fees and took several years, but its full value cannot be measured in time or money alone.

"If you think about social change as an ongoing process, this case was one more step in a forward movement to open up avenues of education to African Americans," said Charles Daye, a law professor who has researched and examined integration at the University.

Still, while unequal education may have been ruled unlawful in the courtroom, this did not mean that discrimination did not still persist elsewhere.

J. Kenneth Lee, one of the first black students that summer and a 27-year-old father and husband at

the time, said people would "drop bombs" in his yard in Greensboro. Lee also received threatening phone calls.

"I still remember the time (my son) became hysterical when he was alone in the house, answered the phone and someone told him, using the most vile language possible, what they were going to do to his father," he said in "Offshoots: the H. F. Lee family book."

Although academically part of the University, Lee — and the other black students, Harvey Beech, Floyd McKissick, James Walker Jr. and James Lassiter — were separated from the rest of the student body in other manners.

Lee and Beech applied for campus housing and received a whole floor to themselves in Steele Building, which was a dormitory at the time.

"This was right after the war, and there were students standing on each others' heads to get in, and they gave us the entire third floor," Lee said in a past interview at the Greensboro Public Library.

The black students also were initially excluded from sitting in the student section during football games and were given tickets to sit in the "colored section."

Walker turned in his tickets in protest.

"I feel I am a part of the student body and want to cheer and express school spirit as a part of the student body and not be set apart down behind the goal posts in an undignified and humiliating manner," he told The Daily Tar Heel in September 1951.

Walker and the others were eventually given tickets, but in a letter with the tickets, Chancellor Robert B. House urged them to use caution, implicitly saying that they should not use them. They didn't heed his request.

As recounted by Lee, the white students generally were accepting of the presence of the black students on campus, though he did say that he was a "novelty" in the beginning.

The first time he entered Lenoir Dining Hall, he recalled in a past interview that "a deathly silence fell over the entire room."

"This was the first time I realized that my shoes squeaked," he said.

But before he graduated, Lee jokingly confessed that he could have "jumped up and down on the dining table ... and nobody would have missed a bite."

"This proves that people can accept change if they have to," he said.

Don Fowler, student government president at the time, described the

white student body as unconcerned with the presence of the black students.

"The presence of these Negroes causes so little interest that most of us are unaware they are here unless we happen to have a class with them," he told the DTH in 1951.

But the students' trial and acceptance into the law school was front-page news, and they received a bombardment of media coverage.

"There was always 10 or 12 newspaper people when we'd come up to the dorms," Lee said in a recent interview. "It just always made it impossible to study."

And in the beginning, the black students had extra security from police officers and highway patrol guards.

"There were threats and that sort of thing, but we were not physically harmed," Lee said in the interview at the Greensboro library.

Lee and the other black law students came to a university far different from the one today, which was ranked first among top public universities in overall measures of racial integration by the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education in 2002.

But Daye said this by no means implies that the University has finished its work toward complete integration.

"As all social change takes time, we are still in the process of becoming a better place."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.



DTH FILE PHOTO
Students eat in Lenoir Dining Hall in 1966, three years before state troopers took over campus on the orders of then-Gov. Robert Scott.

Activism aided dining hall strike

BY TORRYE JONES
ASSISTANT FEATURES EDITOR

Fistfights, overturned tables and food throwing marked the scene at Lenoir Dining Hall on March 5, 1969.

But Buck Goldstein, a UNC junior at the time, said his most memorable moment was when armed state troopers took over campus, following the orders of Gov. Robert Scott to keep guard.

The outbreak stemmed from a strike in February of 140 food service workers who claimed that previous efforts to bring attention to their problems with racism and exploitation were ignored by University officials.

The strike ended in late March, when Scott announced that all of the lowest-paid state workers would receive raises.

But it took a month of strife to reach this conclusion.

"It was quite a time," said Virginia Carson, a sophomore at UNC during the strike and now director of the Campus Y. "For workers to assert their rights, it came threatening to folks who had been in charge of things for a very long time. They weren't too keen on that."

Workers — who were mostly black women — demanded better working conditions and a pay raise from \$1.60 to \$1.80.

Grievances also included a request for courtesy titles of Mr. or Miss for each worker, a lack of black supervisors and a dislike of UNC Food Service Director George Prillaman.

The workers teamed up with leaders of the Black Student Movement, urging them and other students to boycott the dining halls until their needs were met.

Elizabeth Brooks, one of the striking workers who worked in the Pine Room cafeteria, told The (Raleigh) News & Observer in March 1969 that she and her co-workers would not return to work until the food service director was fired.

She said she had a check stub showing that she worked 105 hours in two weeks and received no overtime compensation. "We just can't go back on a lot of promises," Brooks said in the interview.

With hardly any staff, University officials were forced to shut down the four campus dining halls — Chase Cafeteria, Lenoir Dining Hall, Pine Room and the Monogram Club.

This angered many students, who had to find alternate places to eat. Fearing more outbreaks of violence, Scott ordered that Lenoir be reopened. He also called about 350 National Guard members to stay on call in Durham in case riots escalated.

Although University officials hired about 60 students and several cafeteria supervisors to man the cafeteria lines and help cook at Lenoir for \$1.60 an hour, it was still hard to get a meal on campus, Carson said.

Student groups such as BSM and the YMCA on campus started a "slowdown" in the cafeteria's serving lines where students walked through lines slowly so fewer could be served — a successful attempt to reduce the number of students who ate at Lenoir.

Workers and BSM members also set up a "Freedom Kitchen" in Manning Hall, where they served lunch and dinner to students supporting their cause.

Norman Gustavson, who was a YMCA director at the Campus Y at the time, said he's sure workers at UNC today are still not getting a fair shake.

"(The strike) illustrated a deeper problem that is still persistent today," he said. "Often, service workers at the University have talents and possibilities that call for far more opportunity than what they are engaged in."

Goldstein said the success of the strike was due to the remarkable leadership of the workers and students. "It was on the one hand, a very empowering time where I think students had the sense of responsibility to do things right."

"Students had, for the same reason, a sense of what you said and what you did could make a difference," he said. "People were watching, the press was watching, the state and even the nation was watching — the stakes were high."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

THE Daily Crossword

By Doug Peterson

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ACROSS

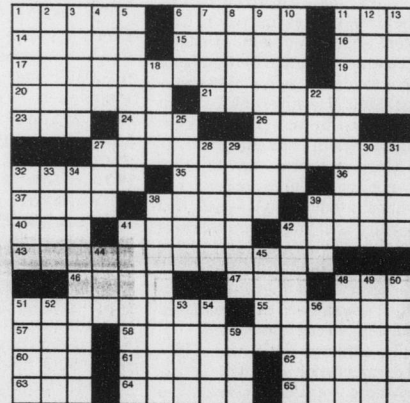
- 1 Scale
- 6 Vote in
- 11 "Fawltly Towers" net-work
- 14 "Chicago" star Zellweger
- 15 Singer Jones
- 16 Opposite of 'neath
- 17 Ireland
- 19 Thai language
- 20 Matador
- 21 Stockpiles
- 23 Tolkien's tree
- 24 Skirt's edge
- 26 Impulsive
- 27 Dorothy Gale's footwear
- 32 Secure again, as a tent
- 35 Aviator Post
- 36 Itinerary word
- 37 Urgent acronym
- 38 Fizzy drinks
- 39 One from the sticks
- 40 Day break?
- 41 Muslim female quarters
- 42 Northern India monotheists
- 43 Arizona team
- 46 Part of AARP
- 47 Lanka
- 48 Exclamation of contempt
- 51 Greaseproof paper
- 55 Chevy model
- 57 Peri on "Frasier"
- 58 "Carmen Jones"

DOWN

- 1 Minotaur's isle
- 2 Whiskey sour ingredient
- 3 Like some gases
- 4 No more than
- 5 Enthusiastic greeting
- 6 Cut short
- 7 Ms. Nettleton
- 8 Formerly, formerly
- 9 Heat units
- 10 Shrink session
- 11 October Revolution participant
- 12 Suitor
- 13 Field yield

TRAP ELBA SQUAB
HOPI XITI AURAE
AMEX PEAR TIARA
WAREHOUSEOUTLET
LAN SLR
BED MESS ADRIPT
OTIC NOLO AIMER
WHERE THE BOYS ARE
LEGAL ODOR EMMA
SLOWED SETT SIT
COS HOP
WEARTHE TROUSERS
ANWAR CHAD AREA
VOLVO TACO LINK
ESSEN STYX METE

- 18 Leopold's co-defendant
- 22 Psychic letters
- 25 Goodness me!
- 27 Corded fabric
- 28 Back of a tape
- 29 Andean pack
- 30 Wealthy
- 31 Fifth Avenue retailer
- 32 Author Ayn
- 33 Actor Morales
- 34 Those shooting stars?
- 38 California port
- 39 Towel ID
- 41 Lively nightclub
- 42 Head glove?
- 44 French pronoun
- 45 Corn bin
- 48 Michael of "Pole to Pole"
- 49 On one's toes
- 50 Grant's follower
- 51 Alum
- 52 Mineral vein
- 53 "The Lion King" lioness
- 54 "Tu" (1974 hit)
- 56 Bubble maker
- 59 D-Day transport



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KEEPING YOUR CAREER OPTIONS OPEN: Learn how to develop a career plan tailored especially for you that will help you expand your career possibilities and increase your competitiveness for internships and jobs. Tues. Mar. 1 4p 239B Hanes

HOW TO GET A JOB IN LOCAL, STATE, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: Learn from professionals with experience working for the government about their careers and their suggestions on how to get a job in this field. Wed. Mar. 2 4p 239B Hanes

HOW TO FIND AN INTERNSHIP: Learn how to find internships and how to decide which one is best for you in this interactive session. Please bring your laptop! Thurs. Mar. 3 3:30p 239B Hanes

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR INTERVIEWING SKILLS: Learn how to interview effectively for jobs and internships. Thurs. Mar. 3 4:30p 239B Hanes

SUMMER INTERNSHIP STIPENDS FOR NON PROFITS AND THE ARTS: UCS is offering stipends of up to \$1,000 to support undergraduates who will be performing unpaid internships in Non Profits or the arts this summer. Students must be returning to UNC in the fall. Further information and applications are available at the UCS front desk. Applications are due by 5 pm on March 31, 2005.

ON-CAMPUS INTERVIEWS
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for Employers Interviewing Mar. 28 — Apr. 2

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