



The
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THE PRICE WE PAID

AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE
DESEGREGATION OF
MISSISSIPPI STATE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN



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THE DESEGREGATION OF
MISSISSIPPI STATE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN

THOSE
who
DARED

CELEBRATING THE W's PIONEERS

Mississippi University
for Women

FOUNDED 1884 COEDUCATIONAL SINCE 1982

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This anthology is dedicated to Barbara Turner Bankhead, Laverne Greene Leech, and the late Diane Hardy Thompson, for a debt we can never repay.

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Preface

This anthology follows three years of research by students in numerous courses as part of what has come to be called “The Integration Project.” The Integration Project is an effort spearheaded by faculty in the History, Political Science, and Geography Department, along with the University Archives, to unearth the hidden history of desegregation and racial integration of The W using “archives to podium” projects for students as a component of their coursework. In these projects, students conduct original research in the archives and mold that research for public consumption via papers, but also panel presentations, exhibits, and other forms of creative output. The research is kept and published online, and students in subsequent courses build on the research of their predecessors. Eventually the project was expanded to include a course in oral history, in which the students interviewed some of the pioneers of integration at MSCW. In this way, students built a body of scholarship on a timely and important unresearched topic, while gaining experience not just in research but in public speaking, exhibit-crafting, editing, and other skills.

While The W’s own story of racial integration may not feature dogs or firehoses or governors at schoolhouse doors, it is a history that is harrowing and enlightening in its own right. We have heroes of our own, who toiled in isolation punctuated by open hostility. They sometimes won and sometimes lost, but bit by bit, year by year, they carved out space for themselves in numerous parts of the university. By the 50 year anniversary of their first admission, they transformed a segregated Mississippi women’s college into a university that mirrors the demographic breakdown of the state as a whole. It is clear that “the work” of integration and the diversity of The W today is due to these women’s efforts.

That is not to say that integration at The W is a completed process. We seek to recognize the accomplishments made without minimizing the distance yet to go.

The work included in this anthology is as diverse as our student body. They come to this research from different places and have taken different lessons from it, as you will find. We have presented their work here as lightly edited as possible, comingled with the relevant creative and journalistic work of previous generations of students and a few helpful primary sources.

Our anthology, and the greater Integration Project, is the work of many hands, all of whom deserve our thanks but are too many to mention by name. A few of note: Jessica Thornhill and Emily Ferguson,

the student editors who hunted down relevant items, selected pieces for inclusion, edited copy, and organized a sprawling array of images and text into a coherent, thematically oriented collection. They also selected the title of this work, which is an adaptation of a phrase used by Diane Hardy in her oral history. Our faculty judges, Drs. Beverly Joyce, Kendall Dunkelberg, and Mr. Todd Bunnell, were most generous in being willing to select winners on short notice. Dr. Erin Kempker has been the primary director of the Project, helping the faculty in creating a student-powered, pedagogy-centered commemoration for an event we did not even know anything about five years ago. This entire project has been conducted with the monetary support of our provost, Dr. Thomas Richardson, as well as the enthusiastic support of our university president, Dr. James Borsig.

Thank you for reading, and thank you to our students and the Long Blue Line for sharing your experiences and artistic vision with us.

Derek Webb
Editor
University Archivist, Mississippi University for Women
May 25, 2016

A Special Thanks

Thank you to all the students who took part in the individual research projects, oral history projects, and public history projects over the course of the last few years that brought this history to light. There are too many to name, but they include the following:

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Ashley G. Smith
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Introduction

The following entries comprise an anthology of creative endeavor compiled in anticipation, and commemoration, of the 50th anniversary of the desegregation of Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW). Work in numerous genres and formats will be found here, including historical research, oral interview transcripts, news stories, administrative reports, creative nonfiction, poetry, and illustrations. Much of the recent work was created as part of the ongoing “Integration Project,” wherein faculty, staff, and students have worked since 2012 to uncover the history of desegregation at The W. Sixteen entries are new works created by current students and faculty in spring of 2016; others were mined from previous decades of the *Dilettanti* literary journal published annually in the Department of Languages, Literature, and Philosophy; and still others are primary sources and oral histories discovered and crafted in history courses over the last several years.

For the first 82 years of its existence, Mississippi University for Women was a whites-only institution. The enabling legislation of 1884 explicitly established it as “the Mississippi Industrial Institute and College for the Education of White Girls in the State of Mississippi in the Arts and Sciences,” and throughout the twentieth century evidence suggests that significant proportions of the student body and administration were unfriendly to the notion of racial integration. Even after passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, there were extensive efforts by the Hogarth administration to identify African Americans from the larger pool of prospective students and prevent them from formally applying by ensuring that they never gain access to application material. The exact reasoning of the administration is unclear, but it might have looked something like this: without an application, black women could not apply; if they could not apply, they could not be rejected because of their race and, therefore, could not sue the college for discrimination.

Perhaps because of the violence associated with the desegregation of institutions like the University of Mississippi (1962), the administration of MSCW desired that it be accomplished gradually and as quietly as possible. By 1966, after the desegregation of Mississippi State University the previous year, the desegregation of MSCW must have seemed all but inevitable to Hogarth. That spring he began to select the applicants who would be the first black W students. In September of 1966, MSCW admitted three local graduates of R.E. Hunt High School as undergraduates -- Diane Hardy, Barbara Turner, and Laverne Greene -- who had applied for admission months before. At the same time, the administration admitted Jacqueline Edwards, Mary L. Flowers, and Eula M. Houser as graduate students. All three graduate students were

teachers at Hunt High School. The undergraduates were registered as “day students,” meaning they were locals living off-campus, chosen by design, it would seem, to delay the need to desegregate the dorms, which did not happen until 1968. The oral interviews of the first freshman reveal that their experience included much ostracism, isolation, and discrimination. They also describe a frightening incident that occurred on the way back to campus from a political event they attended in Memphis with the Young Democrats.

None of the initial three freshmen graduated at the time, which made Shirley Walker James the first undergraduate student to graduate in 1969. Of the initial graduate student cohort, Edwards and Houser graduated. Despite leaving the college after the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, Diane Hardy Thompson, one of the initial three freshmen, made a promise to herself that she would graduate from Mississippi University for Women no matter what it cost her in personal suffering. She returned decades later and realized her goal in 1996, graduating with teacher certification. By that time, few on campus even remembered the story of desegregation, much less the major part she played in the drama. Nevertheless, the trail that she and others blazed remained open. Increasing numbers of students joined the original six, as enrollment of African Americans skyrocketed beginning in 1967, and graduation of African American W students steadily increased over the first decade.

While desegregation of the student body occurred in 1966, integration has been a much slower process. White students had conflicting feelings and impressions of integration, which they aired in the *Dilettanti*, the literary collection published annually by the Language, Literature, and Philosophy Department. At least some white students made an effort to challenge the discrimination they witnessed. In 1969, several students protested de facto segregation in the social clubs by boycotting the clubs and resigning their pledges. These incidents, however, were atypical. On the whole, the inroads by which African Americans came to participate in the larger life of the campus and academic community were carved out by the black students themselves.

Bit by bit, African American students made a place for themselves at The W. The first organization to accept African American members was the Young Democrats in 1967. Because of their inability to gain access to the white social clubs, students formed the Corettas in 1969, notably not as a blacks-only social club but as club for students of all races. Not until 1975 did integration of the white social clubs begin, with a single black member of the Hottentots. In 1976, Las Amigas, the first all-African-American social club, was founded, and in more recent years several black sororities have come to campus. Integration proceeded in an especially public way in the Modeling Squad, where Jackie

Wilson was crowned Miss W in the same year as the first black social club member (1975), and 10 years later Toni Seawright went to the state competition where she would become the first black Miss Mississippi.

We know little about integration entering into the 1980s and 1990s. Today African Americans account for 38 percent of The W student body and organizations and student groups demonstrate more proportional numbers in the yearbooks and other publications. Some firsts have been made quite recently, such as the election of Phillip “Flapp” Cockrell as the first black Student Government Association president in 2002. Noting the progress made toward integration and thanking those who have worked so hard to get us thus far should not blind us to the reality that much work remains, and it will be the task of current and future students, faculty, staff, and alumni to do it.

The various historiographical and artistic entries contained herein are organized into broadly chronological and thematic sections roughly mirroring the process of integration, both individual and institutional. Following Jessica Thornhill’s summary of how desegregation progressed at women’s colleges across the United States, we focus for the rest of the anthology on what happened specifically at MSCW. In every section there is a mélange of new student writing and artwork, quotations from oral histories, work from the *Dilettanti* literary journal from the 1960s-1990s, transcribed articles from *The Spectator* student newspaper, and even the occasional transcribed archival document. Newspaper transcriptions have been formatted in double columns and typeface to resemble the original.

These W-specific sections begin with 1966, the year of desegregation. Here we also include discussion of some of the other notable people and events during those first months.

The three following sections are dedicated to the behavioral and emotional responses to desegregation, both from the white majority and from the black students. In “Isolation,” the students discuss how they felt closed off from their peers and from faculty and staff. “Making Their Way” concerns the efforts of early black students -- not just Greene, Hardy, and Thompson, but the rapidly increasing number of students following the trail they blazed -- to find a place for themselves on campus, and the racism and resistance they met along the way. “Anger” follows that racism and resistance, in life and on the page.

Starting in these sections we folded in quotes and research from students who followed the trail blazed by the first three and who in turn blazed trails of their own, as well as white students and faculty. Arelya Mitchell, Antoinette “Toni” Harrison, and Dianne Adams are founding members of the Corettas Social Club, the first integrated social club. Susie Shelton was an early student and Earlene Friday desegregated of

the dorms. Vicki Winter was a white ally commonly thought (erroneously, it turns out) to have been a niece of Governor William Winter.

We turn from there to the reaction from the wider community, both white and black, which leads into a trio of sections dedicated to the more uplifting parts of the experience. “Support” covers the numerous people who proved to be allies of early black W students, and “Acceptance” discusses some of the inroads those students made in their initially hostile campus. “Triumph” is perhaps more checkered than the name implies, but showcases the ways in which current and former students feel vindicated in their decision to attend MSCW/MUW. Finally, in “Remembrance,” we see what some of those students think of the university and their experiences fifty years later.

In every section, we open with a selection of quotations from oral histories conducted by recent history students. Quotes from the oral histories are also interspersed throughout the sections to provide context or additional detail. These quotations are left near verbatim from the transcripts of the interviews, with a few modifications: omission of verbal disfluencies (“um,” “uh,” stutters), omission of prompts by the interviewer (“mm-hmm,” “uh-huh,” “yeah,” “OK”), and occasional omission of off-hand remarks and other irrelevant commentary marked with ellipses. Excerpts from the interviews of Diane Hardy Thompson, Laverne Greene Leech, Susie Shelton, and Dr. Robert Gilbert are provided courtesy of the Billups-Garth Archives, Columbus-Lowndes County Public Library.

This anthology and the Integration Project make a distinction between “desegregation” and “integration,” but are concerned with both. “Desegregation” is the moment when a unit is no longer exclusive to one group. “Integration,” however, is the culmination of a much longer process at which point the formerly excluded group feels fully included in the institution, like it belongs to them as much as anyone else. The desegregation of MSCW happened in September 1966. Its integration, on the other hand, is still continuing to this day, and students in 2016 are just as much a part of that process as students in 1966.

Scholars and the general public disagree as to whether and how to use the terms “African American” and “black.” We have opted to use the two interchangeably, but to refrain from using “black” as a noun. In addition, language describing people of color from within the sources has been left unedited even when using terms now considered dated and/or offensive, in order to provide an accurate record of the voices preserved herein.

Editing of student work and of primary sources was kept to a minimum to preserve their voices, with changes mainly being made to correct clear typos and grammar problems. In the historiographical

works, a few poorly supported sections have been excised. In the primary sources in particular, there are a few places where student names were redacted. Balancing privacy with truth-telling is difficult, but we felt that pinning alumnae to retrograde views they held 50 years ago or exposing the names of students who lodged complaints in confidence crossed the line.

We hope this collection manages to convey the continuing story of our integration, and to keep the memory of the struggle alive.

Derek Webb

Editor

Prize Winners

As part of the submissions process, a contest was held for three outstanding pieces with cash prizes of \$300, \$150, and \$50. After the editorial staff reviewed submissions, the items accepted for entry were forwarded to faculty judges to evaluate. Based on their recommendations:

1st Prize: Betsy MacLellan, "Sisters True: Integration through Social Club Sisterhood: 'Are there even any white girls in that club?'"

2nd Prize: Jessica Thornhill, "A History of Desegregation at Women's Colleges"

3rd Prize: Demyia Graham, "My Integration to Mississippi University for Women"

Honorable Mention: Quoc Nguyen, "Charles P. Hogarth and Arguments in Silence"

Segregation

A History of Desegregation at Women's Colleges

JESSICA THORNHILL (2016)

The topic of segregation and desegregation is a touchy subject that most people do not wish to study or talk about. This includes the history of the desegregation of women's colleges. The lack of scholarly research that has been done on the subject, which is almost non-existent, is evidence of this. Though there is some scholarly research and student research that can be found on the desegregation of northern women's colleges, which only consists of the Seven Sister colleges, there has been no scholarly research done on southern women's colleges. The only information that is available is through websites -- some official university websites but mostly unofficial websites -- that usually include a few sentences that mention when the college was desegregated and how many students desegregated it. This makes it incredibly hard to learn anything about the history of the desegregation process of women's colleges.

What little information that is out there indicates that for both the North and the South, women's colleges were reluctant to desegregate. There is also a history of segregation of the African American students who attended these colleges, who were most often allowed to attend only after they agreed to live off campus or were forced to live in separate dormitories. Northern women's colleges seemed to desegregate earlier, usually unknowingly, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, though it was met with great resistance from some of the northern women's colleges. Southern women's colleges only did so in the late 1950's and 1960's after the ruling of Brown v. Board of Education in 1954 and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which finally forced them to desegregate.

Historic, private, northern women's colleges began to desegregate in the late 1800's and early 1900's, including the Seven Sister colleges - Wellesley College, Radcliffe College, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, Vassar College, Barnard College and Bryn Mawr College, which are all located in New England. Though some of these colleges did allow African American women to attend in the late 1800s, most were either unaware of the fact that these women were African American or were openly against the idea of African Americans attending their college.

Historian Linda M. Perkins states that the leader among the Seven Sisters in African American women graduates was Radcliffe College, which began to regularly enroll African American women in their college in the 1890s.¹ She also notes that Radcliffe "barred" students

from "campus housing."² The first African American to graduate from Radcliffe was Alberta Scott in 1898.³ Perkins goes on to state that

By the second decade of the twentieth century, Radcliffe graduated more than one black woman each year. By 1920, four black women graduated in the same class. This was unheard of at the other Seven Sister colleges, where such numbers would not be achieved until the 1940s and 1950s.⁴

Wellesley College has the next highest African American graduate rate of the Seven Sisters. The first African American student to graduate from Wellesley was Harriett Alleyne Rice, who graduated in the late nineteenth century.⁵ Perkins states that "By 1960, 75 black women had attended Wellesley; 45 earned baccalaureate degrees."⁶ The first African American woman to graduate from Smith College was Otelia Cromwell in 1900, who was not allowed to live on campus.⁷ However, Perkins states that "by 1964, 69 black women (including African women) had attended and/or graduated from Smith."⁸

Both Mount Holyoke College and Vassar College unknowingly had African American women attend their colleges in the late 1800s. Hortense Parker was the first African American woman to graduate from Mount Holyoke in 1883 and Martha Ralston was the first African American to obtain a collegiate degree in 1898.⁹ Perkins states that "According to a letter from the dean of Mount Holyoke in 1913 to Ada Comstock, dean of Smith College, the race of both Ralston and Parker was a surprise to the officials of the college when they first arrived."¹⁰ She adds that "... by 1964, only 39 had graduated since Hortense Parker in 1883."¹¹ The first African American student to graduate from Vassar College was Anita Florence Hemmings in 1897.¹² Perkins states that "A scandal erupted throughout New England when it was discovered that Hemmings, who was light-skinned and passed for white, was actually African American."¹³ She goes on to state that "By 1960 only 23 African American women had graduated from Vassar."¹⁴

Both Barnard College and Bryn Mawr were the last of the Seven Sisters to allow African American students to attend their colleges. Zora

Journal of Blacks in Higher Education 19, (Spring 1998), 104-105.

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| 2 | Ibid., 104. |
| 3 | Ibid., 104. |
| 4 | Ibid., 105. |
| 5 | Ibid., 104. |
| 6 | Ibid. |
| 7 | Ibid., 105. |
| 8 | Ibid. |
| 9 | Ibid. |
| 10 | Ibid. |
| 11 | Ibid., 106. |
| 12 | Ibid., 106-107. |
| 13 | Ibid., 107. |
| 14 | Ibid. |

1 Linda M. Perkins, "The Racial Integration of the Seven Sister Colleges,"

Neale Hurston was the first African American student to attend Barnard College, transferring to the school in 1925 and graduating in 1928.¹⁵ No other African American students attended the college while Hurston did; however, Belle Tobias and Vera Joseph attended the college in 1928 after Hurston's graduation.¹⁶ Bryn Mawr seemed to be the most reluctant out of all of the Seven Sisters to allow African Americans into their college. Perkins states that

*In 1903, Jessie Fauset... graduated at the top of her class at the city's Girls' High. It was customary that the school's top student would enter Bryn Mawr on scholarship, but when it was discovered that Fauset was black, President Thomas raised money for Fauset to attend Cornell rather than have a black woman attend Bryn Mawr.*¹⁷

In 1922, an unnamed African American student attended Bryn Mawr for a week before leaving the school and requesting that her name not appear in any of Bryn Mawr's records.¹⁸ In 1926, Enid Cook was only allowed to apply to Bryn Mawr after she agreed to live off campus.¹⁹ However, she was denied entrance into the college after her exam scores were deemed not high enough to attend, with the faculty expressing a great deal of relief in a series of letters.²⁰ In 1927 a committee of faculty members decided that African American students would be allowed to attend Bryn Mawr only if they lived off campus, allowing Enid Cook to apply again and become the first African American woman to attend Bryn Mawr.²¹ She graduated in 1931.²² However, it was decided that there would be no effort to publicly announce that Bryn Mawr now allowed African Americans to attend.²³ It is not surprising then that "By 1960, only nine African American women had graduated from the institution..."²⁴

Though there are some scholarly sources available for historic, private, northern women's colleges that reveals that they did desegregate earlier, it is clear that this process was met with a lot of resistance from the faculty at these institutions and some colleges, such as Bryn Mawr, did not have a lot of African American students who enrolled or graduated from the college until after the 1960s. However, there appears to be no scholarly research done on the desegregation of historic, southern

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 106.

18 Ibid.

19 Grace Pusey, "Enid Cook, 1927-1931: Bryn Mawr's First Black Graduate," Black at Bryn Mawr, last modified 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://blackatbryn-mawr.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2015/02/09/enid-cook-first-blackgraduate/#more-28>.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Perkins, "The Racial Integration," 106.

women's colleges, private or public. Only a brief history of desegregation, usually consisting of a few sentences, appears on websites for some colleges or, more commonly, there is no information at all. The evidence that is available shows that southern women's colleges did not usually allow African Americans to attend until after the Civil Rights Act in 1964 forced them to desegregate.

What little desegregation history there is available for southern women's colleges attempts to paint a picture of a calm transition from segregation to desegregation with little to no resistance specifically mentioned in any of the college's websites. This is true for Judson College and the University of Montevallo in Alabama, Texas Women's University (TWU), and the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. The first of these southern women's colleges to desegregate was the University of North Carolina in 1956.²⁵ Though the website is quick to claim that most of the faculty and students attending the university at the time were supportive of the desegregation of the school, it was only desegregated by two African American females, Joanne Smart and Bettye Tillman, after a court ruling forced it to.²⁶ It is then mentioned that, though these women were supposed to be fully integrated into the university, they were instead segregated in separate dormitories from the white students.²⁷ The rest of the website mentions student sit-ins, protests, and boycotts at local segregated businesses and the transformation of the university into a co-ed school, which was met with even more opposition when black male students began to integrate.²⁸ This is the only southern women's college that, though they do try to word their desegregation history in a positive light like the other southern colleges, admits that there was clearly opposition and resistance by placing these details on their official website. The other colleges have either very little or no information about desegregation on their official websites.

The next southern women's college to desegregate was Texas Women's University (TWU) in 1961. Though there is an historical timeline of the university available on their website marking important transitional periods for the university, such as school name changes and when the university became co-ed, allowing men to attend the school, there is no mention of the desegregation of the university.²⁹ The only mention of desegregation is a news article mentioning an integration

25 Samantha Way, "The Integration of Women's College," University Libraries: Online Exhibits, last modified 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, https://library.uncg.edu/collection/exhibits/Integration_of_WC.aspx.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Texas Women's University, "TWU History," Marketing and Communication: TWU History, last modified October 8, 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www.twu.edu/twunews/twu-timeline.asp>.

exhibit, which was created in 2011 and cannot be viewed online, under the "News Releases" tab. It states that

*In 1961, the TWU Board of Regents voted to change the admissions policy to allow black women to apply to the university. In September 1961, Alsenia Dowells became the first African-American woman to enroll at TWU, and by the next year six more African-American students were accepted to the university. In 1966, TWU had its first African-American graduates.*³⁰

There is no mention of what else the integration exhibit might have included or if this small description basically covered the information that the exhibit provided — just basic facts about the desegregation of the university with no insight into what kind of opposition there was. It is clear from this short article about the exhibit that they know when the university was desegregated and by whom and it seems that the timeline has been updated recently, but there is still no mention of when the university became integrated. Why this was not updated in 2011 when the integration exhibit took place is not known. This information certainly counts as an important historical marker for the university that one would think would be important enough to include in the university's timeline.

The last of these four southern women's colleges to desegregate were the Alabama colleges. Desegregation at Judson College in Marion, Alabama began in 1968 and the only mention of the desegregation of the college are two short sentences that state that during this transitional period "Judson remained relatively calm... because of its philosophy of open communication among students and faculty. In 1968, Judson accepted six African American women as students, and references in the charter to 'white females' were revised to read 'females' in 1973."³¹ However, there is no information printed on Judson's official website about the desegregation of the college, even under its "heritage" tab, which gives a detailed summary of the college's history.

The same can be said for the University of Montevallo in Alabama. During the desegregation of the university, which was named Alabama College at the time, it states that

Montevallo did not experience the turbulence seen on other college campuses during the 1960s. In 1965, the board of trustees authorized President D. P. Culp to sign the Certificates of Assurance of

³⁰ Texas Women's University, "TWU Library exhibit highlights the 50th anniversary of TWU's integration," Marketing and Communication: News Releases, last modified October 2, 2014, accessed October 9, 2015, http://www.twu.edu/twunews/press_releases/11-libraryintegration-exhibit.asp.

³¹ Elizabeth Crabtree Wells, "Judson College," Encyclopedia of Alabama, last modified September 22, 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2492>.

*Compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. In the fall of 1968, three African American women, Carolyn Buprop, Ruby Kennbrew, and Dorothy (Lilly) Turner, enrolled in the university.*³²

This is all of the history of desegregation that is listed about the university — just three short sentences painting a pretty picture of a calm transition into desegregation. However, just like Judson College, the University of Montevallo does not mention the desegregation on their official website, though, like TWU, it does list when the university became co-ed. It states that "... a new era had begun for the school" when two men enrolled in 1956.³³ Surely the desegregation of the university would have also marked "a new era" and should be included in that description. It is unclear why the desegregation of the university would not be mentioned but transformation from a women's university to a co-ed one is.

The subject of desegregation is a complicated one and the lack of secondary sources for historic, public, southern women's colleges is evidence that the colleges, even now, do not like to research this past. What little information there is on the desegregation of these colleges is portrayed in a positive and welcoming light, something that was surely not the case for most students and faculty during the time desegregation was taking place. The fact that there is a history of both northern and southern colleges actively trying to remain a segregated and white only school is further proof that these colleges went through a much more turbulent and complicated time then they are willing to admit in the brief histories that are available online.

³² Rosemary H. Arneson, "University of Montevallo," Encyclopedia of Alabama, last modified May 5, 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h1827>.

³³ University of Montevallo, "History," UM at a Glance: History, last modified 2015, accessed October 9, 2015, <http://www.montevallo.edu/about-um/um-at-a-glance/history-mission/>.

Desegregating

[On the Faculty Perspective] “Actually, I don’t remember any great discussions with students... I mean, among students or faculty about... the possibility of integration. I’m sure it was discussed, but I don’t remember any faculty meetings or anything like that in which we said, ‘This is coming. This is what you’ve got to prepare for’... I don’t remember at all ever having a special meeting focusing on the coming integration...”

[What went wrong with integration, if anything?] “I don’t think anything went wrong. I think it worked very smoothly.” --- **Dr. Robert Gilbert, faculty on campus in 1966**

[White Student Perspective] “I just remember that they decided they were going to integrate it with ... three black girls. When I look back, I see there’s more, but originally, what we had heard was three girls. And they were going to be from town, so they weren’t going to live in the dorms, which they’d carefully worked out...” --- **Vicki Winter Pekurney**

“The first few days that I was there, it was a loneliness. Because we were pretty much separated, and everybody else just kind of ignored me. It was like I wasn’t even there. You know? And this included students, faculty, and everybody.” --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

[On meeting President Hogarth] “They had a tea, or reception, for freshman... There are all these young ladies in line waiting to go in, and as you go in, the president and his wife would greet you... I get up to Dr. Hogarth... and I introduced myself, you know, as Diane Hardy, and then he looked at me and he said, ‘So you’re the one that started all this?’ Of course, I didn’t know what to say. I don’t even know if I responded.” --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

“I never had a partner [in dance class], ‘cause nobody wanted to touch me. Because everybody was afraid to touch me...” --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

“There was absolutely nothing nice about the way I was treated. I had one professor that said, ‘Unless I call your name, unless I recognize you, you may not speak in my class.’ And I sat in the class, day after day, with my hand extended, and was never recognized.” --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

“I felt a part of the class, generally as much as I wanted to be. Certainly the instructors made sure that I was included in the class, all except one, but generally I, I’m the kind of person that I’m rather quiet, so, I would not have imposed myself on anyone else in the class... If they didn’t say anything that was fine. I probably would not have, just, gone up and said a whole, a whole lot... But I don’t think, from what I could gather, that

they had any problem with me in that class. I, I don't know. They may. If so, they did not show that...

Well, that was Dr. Durfee and the class was the history and development of the English Language... I was not doing very well in that class, and, I could not understand why.

Went in to talk to him about that, and, ultimately in the conversation, it appeared that, you know, he was, rather nice... but he ended up telling me that I did not belong in that class. And, he gathered his books and put them in a bag — because he was noted for catching the bus just outside of Parkinson — and, you know, he rode the bus to and from work every day... But anyway, he gathered his books, told me that I did not belong in the class, gathered his bag, and walked out.” --- **Eula M. Houser Thompson**

“Let me give you an example of the first graduate class I taught, just to show you how integration was difficult in coming. I mean, it's just something that's inbred in us, and it's just hard to overcome...

And in the summer of '66, I was teaching a class — a graduate class. I had three blacks and twelve whites. And I didn't know what was going to happen, you know, [since] I'd never taught an integrated class. The students came to class, [and] the three blacks sat on this side of the room; the twelve whites sat on this side of the room.

One student, a white student, came up to me and she said, “Mrs. Pope, if you think I'm going to work with these blacks, you got another thought coming.” She said, “I'll leave the class.” And so I didn't answer her, and she said, “What are you going to say?” And I said, “Elizabeth, I'm here to teach, and they're paying me to teach. And if you choose a project and it's the same project as a black [student] teaches, and you all won't work together,” I said, “then I'm not going to stop it.” I said, “I'm gonna let the chips fall where they may.” And she says, “Well, I'll leave the class.” And I said, “You'll have to leave the class, then.”

So you see how we had those feelings, and it's hard to get rid of them.”
--- **Mary Ellen Weathersby Pope, faculty on campus in 1966**

Why The W?

"It was just divine intervention... in our English class, we had to write letters of application to various colleges. That's what our teacher had us to do that day. And I wrote just like everybody else, but I would start laughing to myself. I said, what if I wrote to Mississippi State College for Women? I wonder how would they react. So it was really a joke that I did it. I went ahead and wrote to them and mailed it... not thinking anything about it... I could just see their reaction when they get this letter from this colored girl from R.E. Hunt High School.

So that was the end of it. Never thought any more about it at all. And a few weeks later... the principal calls for me over the intercom... when I got to the office... he asked me, 'Did you... apply for admission to that white school?' ... I had to think. I said, 'Well, I did send a letter,' you know. He said, 'Well, I just got a call from the superintendent'... and he got a call from the college inquiring about me. Said they had received a letter asking for... [an] application... I said, you know, 'If I don't get accepted to Tennessee State, then I'll go.'

So that's how it happened, and I say divine intervention because I never heard from Tennessee State... " --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

"I don't know if it was really my decision to integrate the W... as much as it was just to go to a school that was close to home. The fees were very low, and I could afford it. And the school was right down the street from where I lived, so there was no reason why I shouldn't go to that particular school. So that was it, it wasn't really just to call attention to integration or anything, or the fact that no one had gone before. It was just that this was a school close to home, and I decided I wanted to go."
--- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"I knew that I would not, did not have any desire to go to a predominantly black school. That is what it was called at the time. And I was not getting a very [good] education where I was... I started looking through the booklet to find out which college I was going to. Keep in mind, I did not think about desegregation. I did not think about integration. I did not think about anything but looking for a place to land after I graduated from high school. Knowing that I wanted to go to college... that I was going to go to college, come heck or high water... and saw Mississippi University for Women and thought, 'Hmm. That should be interesting. I wonder what that would be like.' And decided I think I'll go there. How's that for being impulsive?" --- **Earlene Friday**

"I did not choose the W. The W was nowhere on my mind... When I got toward college... [my father] said that I was going to go to the W... What he said made me want to go for his sake. Now, he's from Columbus,

from this area... he said that when he was a little boy... only white girls could go to the W... and he said that no black man could cross the campus of the W when he was growing up... He said they were not even allowed to... look that way. Now he had always taught me that black women were just as much southern belles as white women... So he said... to himself as a little boy that... his oldest daughter was going to go to the W whether it was integrated or not..." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"Well, I attended the W primarily because of its convenience. My in-laws lived on the South Side [of Columbus] and I passed, I guess it was Parkinson Hall, every, every day. The street ran right by it and, so, when I guess there was maybe an announcement or so that the school was opening for everyone. It was just the convenience of getting graduate credit and, I don't really... recall any movement... in Columbus to recruit individuals to integrate or anything of that sort. I simply applied and was accepted and showed up to class." --- **Eula M. Houser Thompson**



"Ho Hum," by Liza Lai-Har Lam (*Dilettanti*, 1978)

And they were scared!

E. A. WHITTINGTON (1977)

It wasn't long ago
That men thought they knew
All they had to know,
But from their midst arose
 The Dreamer
And through his dreams,
Those he had the chance to share,
They saw how far they had to go.
And they were scared.

Slowly all the men began to think,
And a few wrote it down,
Some with blood instead of
 Pen and ink.
It seemed as though
They all thought that
They had to fight to grow.
And they were scared.

It takes so much to learn,
So much time
So many obstacles to climb.
And with man sometimes
So many lives to lose.
But perhaps from our midst too, there must arise
 A Dreamer.

An Incident in Batesville, Mississippi, 1966

“The Young Democrats brought speakers in, including controversial ones — Richmond Flowers, who was the Attorney General of Alabama and fought for voting rights. He fought the KKK and school desegregation. We brought in Arthur Schlesinger who had worked with John Kennedy when he was in office and ended up writing the history of the Kennedy administration — ‘A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House,’ which he won a Pulitzer prize for later.

We took a group of the W Young Democrats to Ole Miss because the Ole Miss chapter of Young Democrats brought Bobby Kennedy in, and we hosted Bobby Kennedy. So, we had a chance to meet him and actually shake hands with him. That was a really inspiring moment. Some of us did voter registration, and we worked Head Start in the city of Columbus. I mean, literally, we walked the streets in Columbus, and two of my suitemates did that with me, Paula Morgan and Renee Sargent.

And then, we took a trip to Batesville to do some campaigning for George Gryder[?], and we were nearly killed on that little trip.” --- **Vicki Winter Pekurney**

“We were members of the Young Democrats... The three of us had gone to Memphis to help campaign for someone, and we went with a white student from the W, and with a... white professor from Mississippi State. And... we stayed the weekend in Memphis, and we were coming back through Batesville, Mississippi, late Sunday night, about ten or something like that I would say. We stopped for gasoline at a service station, and when we got ready to go, the car wouldn’t start... because apparently the gas attendant had done something to the car and had called the sheriff. We were surrounded by, I think, three police cars. Evidently, he had called and said Freedom Riders were coming through Batesville...

[The driver] just told us, ‘Don’t get out. When I get out of the car, we want you to lock it.’ He was telling the young lady — and by the way, maybe she won’t mind me saying her name. The white girl was Vicki Winter... And so he got out the car, and we locked ourselves in, and Barbara, knowing how scared and timid I was, she just kept saying, ‘Now, Diane, if they try to pull us out of this car, promise me you won’t let them take you without a fight.’ I said, ‘I promise, Barbara, I promise.’ She said, ‘All I have is a nail file.’ And I had long fingernails. I said, ‘Well, all I have are my fingernails. But I promise you I’ll fight.’ ...

Anyway, they questioned our driver, and he explained that we were just students. He was from Mississippi State, and we were from the W, and then he looked in the car and he said, ‘I didn’t know they had colored people at the W.’ And... he said, ‘Let me see your IDs.’ So we all showed

our student IDs and what have you. Then I guess they knew then that we were not Freedom Riders. And so whatever had been done to the car, the gas attendant, he raised the hood, did something. Then the car started. And then he told us, ‘You get out of my town. Don’t you ever come back. If you do, you will be arrested.’

Hey, we got out of there and we made a deal, the three of us. The three of us were in the backseat, and we promised to never tell our parents. Because we knew if we had told them, they wouldn’t let us go back to the W the next day. So we never, ever told them.” --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

“Any minute they could have snatched us from that car, and nobody would have ever known what happened.” --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

“That was not a pleasant ride, because we kept looking back to see if cars were following us, because if they had really wanted to, they could have killed us all. You know, including the white kids. And nobody would have known anything. But we made it home safe.” --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

“Batesville and the circumstances around it taught me that change just really doesn’t come easily and that those who are resistant to change will resort to extreme measures to intimidate and to manipulate anyone trying to make something. The Batesville incident also scared the hell out of all of us. Made us realize that we weren’t indestructible because at that age you think that you are, and we weren’t immune to the horrifying stuff that was going on around us. The people there were obviously watching us closely, looking for an opportunity to scare us or even worse.

I know God was watching over us that night because he protected us as we attempted to do a small part in doing the right thing in helping make Mississippi and the Deep South a better place for the citizens, and I know Joanne Morgan was in the car with us... and Diane Hardy and Laverne Greene, who I cannot say enough about how courageous and brave they had to be because that was one of the scariest nights ever. And a young man from Ole Miss drove us... His name was Bob Boyd...” --- **Vicki Winter Pekurney**

[After Batesville] “I think I was more determined. I thought to myself, ‘Yes, this is what they do to scare you off then it must be important to do.’ And I’ve always felt that way. It’s hard for me to believe we’re still fighting some of that still today.” --- **Vicki Winter Pekurney**

Charles P. Hogarth and Arguments in Silence

QUOC NGUYEN (2016)

This research will uncover some of the history on the integration of Mississippi State College for Women (MSCW, now known as Mississippi University for Women since 1974) under President Charles P. Hogarth (1952-1977). Despite the vast amount of research that can be found about the surrounding schools, MSCW has little to no study of the integration of its campus. The materials found in the archives and special collections of the university are analyzed here to determine the mindset of the president, Charles P. Hogarth. The research mostly provides assumptions and impressions by cross referencing the newspapers and the files from the archives. Then, using the information I collected, I deliberate the reasoning for the decision leading up to the integration of MSCW in 1966. By using the resources available, I am determined to recover and uncover some important pieces of information that can be added to the university's history. Other sources besides the campus newspaper are used to strengthen the validity of some of the information found in the newspapers and the archives. Gathering all these pieces of material paints an image of how Dr. Hogarth may have felt about integration and other important events during his tenure as President of MSCW. His words on integration were few and his actions even less, but the university did see some improvement in enrollment of students and its facilities during his time as President. Lastly, the research will provide my interpretation of whether Dr. Hogarth intended to keep quiet about integration because he disagreed with it, or if he believed that keeping silent would protect the black female students and the university from any controversy.

As a biology major, I did not think archival research was going to be on my list of things to do, but it was something I delved into willingly. The research started mostly with the Hogarth files of which there are literally hundreds of boxes. Other research materials that were used were the Special Collections at the Fant Library on the MUW campus. I sifted through countless old local newspapers from the *Commercial Dispatch* dating back from January to August of 1966 using a microfilm reader. There was a plethora of information on serious topics, such as desegregation and the way people felt about the Vietnam War. Unfortunately, even though there was plenty of information on them, there was little news about how it related to the university or the surrounding area. There was a steady stream of information on James Meredith, Medgar Evers, the Ku Klux Klan, federal guidelines on desegregation and much more, but little led to any evidence about how it may have affected Mississippi State College for Women. I dug through the

Hogarth files with persistence hoping that it would lead to any relevant information on the school and how it came to be desegregated in 1966. But the research only turned up bits and pieces of information that are still difficult to connect. It was unnerving to find nothing relevant about how Dr. Hogarth felt about these important events circulating around him.

Materials regarding desegregation of schools mostly came from the local papers of the *Commercial Dispatch*. A considerable amount of the information that could be gathered stated that the government wanted schools to end racial segregation in the classrooms and faculties by the fall school year and if a school did not comply, then they would lose federal funding. This statement was made on March 10, 1966 in the *Commercial Dispatch*.¹ This was an ongoing message to schools around the country that were still segregated and it was a message mostly directed at the reluctant southern states.

President Hogarth had done a lot of good for the university. During his tenure at MSCW from 1952 to 1977, he was able to increase the enrollment of students at the school, obtained funds to construct new facilities, provided new ideas for the general education curriculum, and increased staff and faculty salaries, all of which were positive for the school. Growth was such that the school had to pack three to four students into a single dorm room due to the influx of new students during 1959 and upwards.² Taking in all these students and exceeding the dormitories' capacity could be used to request more financial aid from the Board of Trustees. When it came to the topic of integration, however, there was little information or public action from him.

When Dr. Hogarth did touch upon the subject about the students at the school and its minority races, it seemed to be made only for the moment to appease the community. Any physical evidence to back up his words and actions were deficient. One of the examples of a statement he made was found in a booklet in the archives where it states, "Dr. Hogarth relied on the college's heritage to safely steer through troubled waters. He ever held before the college, community and the townspeople the school's founding principles of fairness and sensitivity to the needs of each student – white, black, or oriental".³ Perhaps this university publication was trying to connect the president's actions to the Student Movements of the 1960s that were growing into large organizations. The truth of the matter, however, was that the three black freshmen girls who integrated MSCW in 1966 were not treated fairly, but very harshly. The

1 *Commercial Dispatch*, March 10, 1966, Special Collections, Fant Library, MUW, Columbus, Mississippi.

2 Dormitory Room Weekly Reports, Hogarth Collections C122, MUW Archives, Columbus, Mississippi [hereafter cited as the Hogarth Collection].

3 Booklet, 1960, Box C179 Hogarth Collections, pg.6.

three freshmen girls' names were Diane Hardy, Laverne Greene, and Barbara Turner and their time at MSCW was mostly traumatic.⁴ After hearing and reading their accounts here at the school, it appears that their safety and education was not a priority to Dr. Hogarth; they were mistreated, neglected, and ignored at the campus.

Examination of how the process of admissions worked between 1960 and 1970 showed that the Admissions Office at MSCW tried several ways to deny admission to black students. One account discovered from a student's research paper shows that during 1964 to 1966, if the student's name even sounded black, the application was rejected.⁵ Other ways that the Admissions Office determined if a student was black were to look at the racial composition of the high school they went to.⁶ With the processes they were using, the admissions went through a lot of trouble to keep the school segregated, even potentially inadvertently barring potential white student from attending MSCW. Further investigation of the Hogarth Collections revealed that they kept track of black students all the way up to the 1970s.⁷ Some of the students' names on a list had been marked with the word "colored" or the letter "c" indicating that they were black students, but the reasons to continue keeping track of these students even after the school desegregated are still unknown.

A few years after the integration of the three freshmen girls, a Civil Rights Committee was created in the fall of 1969.⁸ This committee was constructed due to the intervention of the federal Department of Housing, Education, and Welfare (HEW), and it seems that the department served an integral role to quicken the pace of integration at MSCW and provided a push that would lead to the college slowly opening its doors. As Arelya Mitchell explained in her oral history, the committee did not serve any real purpose and was only created when complaints from black students were flooding into the administration. Dr. Hogarth may have been forced to act upon these complaints due to the concern of losing federal funding, because at the time he was also trying to request more funds from the Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning to be allocated to MSCW for the construction of new buildings, more scholarships, and increased pay for teachers. If complaints about racial discrimination were to leak out to HEW, then Dr. Hogarth could have lost his chance at the much needed funds to improve the facilities on

4 Chelsea Collins, "Working History of the Desegregation of MUW," MUW Student Research, available online at https://muwintegrationhistory.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/deseg-narrative_collins.pdf.

5 Anna Curtis, "Administrative Control," MUW Student Research, available online at <https://muwintegrationhistory.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/anna.pdf>.

6 Ibid., 12

7 Current Lists, Hogarth Collection, Box C167.

8 Ibid; Melissa Luke, "The Creation of the Committee on Civil Rights," student essay for history course "America Since 1940," personal collection of Erin Kempker..

campus.

The government was no longer issuing empty threats as more schools were notified that they would lose federal assistance for suspected racial discrimination. An example of schools that were in danger of losing aid was stated in the *Commercial Dispatch* on May 15, 1966, "Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) secretary John W. Gardner has approved decisions to end federal financial aid to 12 Southern school districts for failure to comply with the 1964 civil rights act."⁹ Many other schools in the South were in danger of losing aid if they did not pledge to comply with the Civil Rights Act. As these stories and articles continued to circulate, it is doubtful that Dr. Hogarth would have missed such important news about the surrounding area. Even though the school did integrate, it did so at a slow pace and it would seem that Dr. Hogarth did the bare minimum to appease HEW and the black students on campus.

Another area to look at in the school's history is the enrolling of international students at MSCW. It appeared that Dr. Hogarth had no problems with international students and actually pushed to get more to attend the college. Some of the first potential international students came up around 1959-1960 when the Student Christian Association (SCA) wanted to raise money to bring two foreign students to MSCW to receive an education. One girl named Tomiko Mita was from Togato Shiguoko, Japan and the other was Esin Maral from Istanbul, Turkey.¹⁰ The SCA established a fund to raise money for the two "foreign" students because there was no scholarship at MSCW for that purpose. The question that arises from this is why were there no complaints or problems when it came to enrolling international students, whose skin color may be different, but such secrecy and obvious neglect when it came to accepting black students? However, in the end, there is no evidence that international students were treated with or without discrimination. Nevertheless, they were accepted to the school without complication and with the backing of the SCA and Dr. Hogarth. These foreign students and many others after Tomiko and Esin can be found in the *Meh Lady* yearbooks in the MUW archives.¹¹

The mindset of students on the campus is another source to look at to understand how they reacted or felt about the idea of desegregation. An article from the school's paper, *The Spectator*, had a poll which asked the students of MSCW, "What is your reaction to the Health, Education, and Welfare Department's demand for new integration

9 *Commercial Dispatch*, May 15, 1966, Special Collections, MUW Fant Library, Columbus, Mississippi.

10 Student Christian Association, March 4, 1960, Hogarth Collections C122.

11 Jessica Thornhill, "The History of International Students at MSCW," MUW Student Research, found at <https://muwintegrationhistory.files.wordpress.com/2015/01/thornhill-final-research-paper-1.pdf>.

plans for Mississippi institutions of higher learning?"¹² Some students proposed that the schools go ahead and accept the changes, while other students believed that it was not necessary because they believed that the colleges' admissions were not prejudiced against black applicants.¹³ Most mentioned that the schools should follow HEW's new plan, because the schools would likely lose federal aid if they did not comply. The students understood and knew what was going on around them, and even some were optimistic about integrating the schools. However, even though some students seemed optimistic and happy to have their schools integrated, some did not share the same view which is evident when the early students that integrated the school were discriminated against by faculty and students.

Near the end of the 2015 fall semester at MUW, one of the most relevant files that I discovered on Dr. Hogarth was found in the archives. It was a memo sent out by a Betty Tate to Dr. Craft, Mr. Knight, and Mr. West that asked, "...please read the attached President's Message and make any corrections that you deem necessary."¹⁴ In this President's Message in 1974, Dr. Hogarth says, "We have gone through desegregation and as far as I know, we do not have a problem with it."¹⁵ It continues to mention how HEW recommends that the school adds more minority races to the faculty, and Dr. Hogarth goes on to say that he is complying with their request. He carries on about how he added a counselor and a full professor which increases the count up to seven faculty members who are black and that 368 of the student body are black. This message is probably the most that Dr. Hogarth ever mentions on desegregation publicly that is still extant.

Dr. Hogarth's contribution to the school has been positive overall in terms of providing improved facilities, increased salary, and increased enrollment, but he was neglectful of the early black students' plight. Most of them had to suffer in silence and only recently it was rediscovered that they were the first black freshmen to desegregate MSCW. These stories would have gone by the wayside if these files were left unturned and untouched, and some believe that it is best laid to rest. But in all honesty, suffering in silence is a traumatic and painful loneliness that no one wants to experience. Uncovering these files and stories provide closure and ideas on how to avoid such problems in the future and help those that need it.

It is still too early to come to a conclusion on Dr. Hogarth's decision to desegregate the school, as there may still be more evidence to find.

It seems Dr. Hogarth and the Admissions Office at MSCW did as much as they could to keep out potential black students during 1964 to 1966. Then when they finally decided to integrate the school, it was only done because of the threat of losing federal funding. There is other information that should be looked into concerning the influence of Peggy Wallace, the daughter of segregationist Alabama governor George Wallace, at MSCW and if her attendance at the school affected Dr. Hogarth's mind-set on integration. It would seem that the president of the school tried his hardest to improve the campus and keep the atmosphere of MSCW in his own Southern Belle image. He appeared to be a person who meant well for the school, but he neglected the safety and education of the early black students. He should be complimented for the work he has done for the school, but he could have done more for the integration of MSCW. I am proud that MUW has such a diverse group of students and hope it keeps it that way for years to come.

12 "HEW Statement Polled," *The Spectator*, March 27, 1969, Special Collections, Fant Library, Columbus, Mississippi.

13 Ibid

14 Inter-Office Memo, President's Message, Box C199, Hogarth Collections.

15 Ibid., 15

A Question of Equality

BARBARA HARRIS (1977)

If everyone in the world
could work out their lives
like algebraic equations,
subtracting here,
dividing there,
fixing everything just right,
we would all be equal.
But who would we be?



Untitled Pen and Ink Drawing by Patti Henson (Dilettanti, 1973)

HEW Statement Polled

[The Spectator, March 27, 1969]

To satisfy its curiosity concerning student opinion on a recent controversial issue of national import, The Spectator polled a current events class on this question: What is your reaction to the Health, Education, and Welfare Department's demand for new integration plans for Mississippi institutions of higher learning?

[Student 1]: I feel that it's coming in the future anyway, so why not integrate and not lose federal funds. The important thing is to keep Mississippi colleges and universities open.

[Student 2]: I think it is a great step forward if the students are ready for it — and I believe they are! Now that Mississippi schools have admitted Negro students, why not go ahead for a complete cultural exchange. It is a sad commentary on those in positions of authority in the Mississippi educational system that the federal government has to force its plans on our state.

[Student 3]: I feel their demands are unnecessary because college admission regulations in general are not prejudice toward the Negro.

[Student 4]: The HEW is stepping out of place because integration should be a gradual thing in the whole country.

[Student 5]: I think it's merely an action on the part of Sec. Finch and

President Nixon to show that when the administration promised to "get busy right away" it did so — even if Mississippi happened to be the poor recipient once again!

[Student 6]: I don't like the new plan. It is not fair to the schools. Some teachers that are good are forced to teach in poor schools and students could be sent to unaccredited schools.

[Student 7]: I think it's a bit excessive.

[Student 8]: I agree with the demands but I don't think it is fair to the students to threaten their educations with a 90-day deadline.

[Student 9]: If the states refuse to comply they will do more harm to the schools than if they comply peacefully — the state will probably do something stupid — like refusing to comply — they usually do!

[Student 10]: I think that Mississippi should try to go along with the Department of HEW because if it doesn't, it will most likely lose federal aid.

Isolation

In Their Own Words

"All we had was each other. We did talk to... the Young Democrats. As much as they could. You know, it was dangerous. So, they didn't want to be labeled, either. So, it was just us." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

[Arriving at dorms in 1968] "I go up on the fourth floor and I get to my room, and... when you pass by people... they kinda scatter... they kinda look at you..." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"I got sick. I had a sore throat all the time. I was always having mono... The nurse told me... I had to have my tonsils... taken out when I was in school at the W. And I was petrified... And I don't know the reason why, but I was afraid of being sick when I was at The W. So I always made sure that I was healthy... That's the only thing that made me uncomfortable outside of the prejudice was being sick at The W... I... got the impression that I wouldn't have the care maybe, of... who was supposed to be around... Because I didn't have a doctor in the Columbus area... My doctor... was here in Tupelo and I knew how it... was with doctors here in Tupelo that... you didn't go through the same door as white people, you know, there's ... a special... entrance for you... so that's why I didn't want to [be] sick in Columbus because of what I experienced there." --- **Dianne Adams**

"A lot of times the subject that we were kind of struggling with, it wasn't easy to get the help, because I know that I made lots of appointments with teachers, you know, come in after class. And I've gone to their office and they're not opening their door... And sometimes you could see people, you know, certain time of evening... you knew somebody was there because you could see the... movement up under the door." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"One teacher wouldn't look at me. She would never look me in the eye. She would turn her head... I was very, very quiet in that class... I don't remember her addressing me at all, but... I read people's energy, and... I picked up very bad energy from her, so I avoided her as much as I possibly could... [I] did not participate in class. That was my history class... She never talked to me about my grade. She never asked me what the problem was. She never said anything, and I never said anything to her either, that I can remember." --- **Earlene Friday**

"So when we sat down at the table... if there was anybody sitting at the table, they would get up and leave. They would... actually get up and leave... And then we made a joke out of it. You know what? We're gonna have a whole table. Where else can you go and get the whole table?" --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"I had an overload of hours... I had more than 18 hours... I later learned that 15 was about the norm... And did I think about it at the time? I didn't know any better... And when I look back on it, was that racism? I don't know. Perhaps it was. Maybe it was a reason to set me up for failure? I didn't think about it at that time. I only thought about it later when I started reading your questions and maybe a time or two before" --- **Earlene Friday**



"Isolation" by Akiko Nishijima (Dilettanti 1999)

Poem

DEANA PATTERSON (1979)

ref-use (rèf-yüs) n. the worthless or useless part of something

Sometimes we throw gum wrappers
in your driveway just to see you
scurry out on your chicken legs,
squawking and pecking at our mischief,
spring worms after a cool rain.
Sometimes we swerve at you as
you stand in the street,
a pimp to a prostituted beer.
We've all heard the stories
about you and him, the stories
about what he did to you and why
you've never married.
But he's stuck around anyway like
a piece of cotton lint on a cheap
wool jacket.
You still wear your hair
long and black, pulled up on the sides
and puffed high on the top like one
of the Andrews Sisters,
the way he liked it then.
Your red-blue lipstick turns purple
under the glare of our headlights,
and you stare at us with your
dark, wild eyes, but you never say
a word.
You never flinch.
You simply turn, trophy in hand,
to deposit your life in a heap.

Striking Voice of the Outsiders

SAVANNAH DUPONT (2016)

This is for the three black women who unknowingly made one
of the most important changes at Mississippi State College for Women
(MSCW).

Have you seen the clock tower?
Standing tall at MSCW?
The place where women can follow their dreams,
And get their own education.

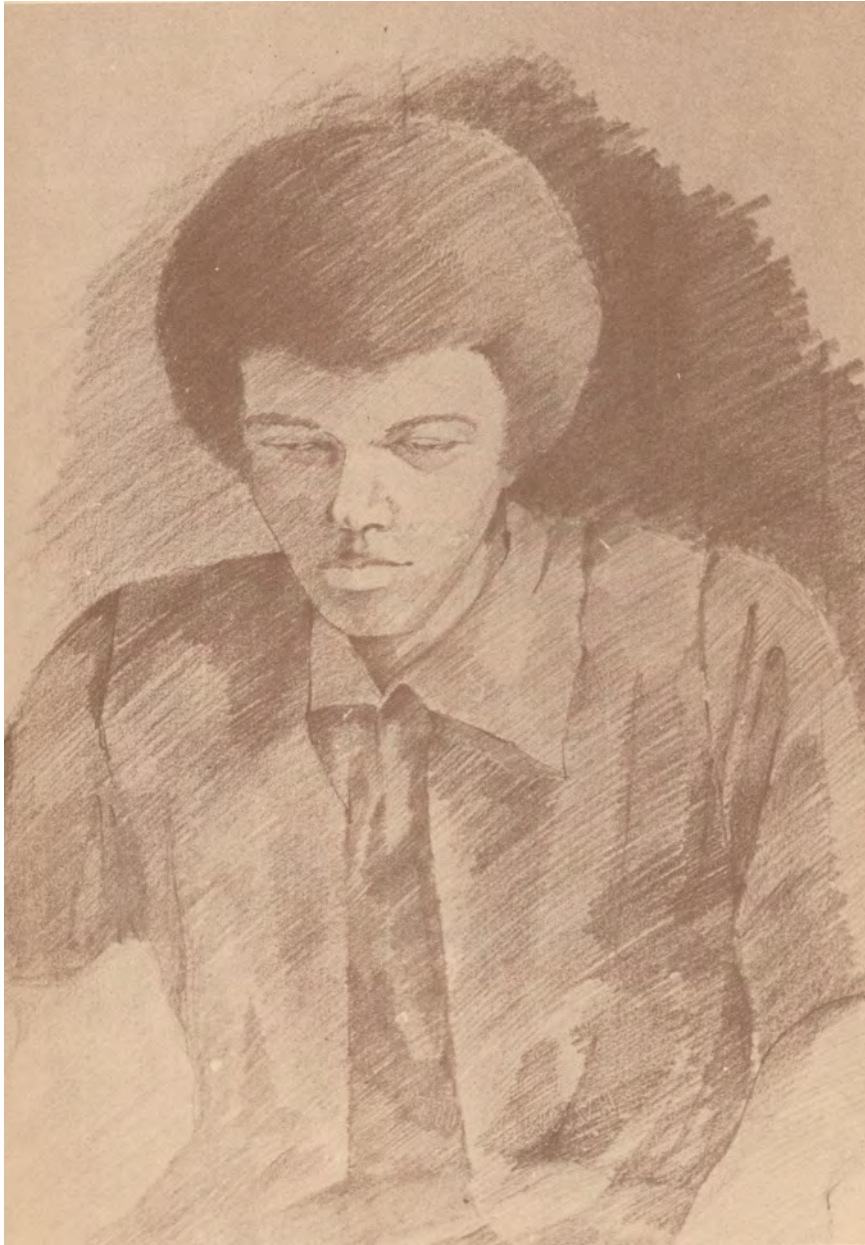
Look at the clock tower?
Its hands up high, ready to strike.
Like the ones who laughed and pushed
The outsiders, because they're a different color.

Do you see the clock tower?
Looming over the campus?
It reminds the outsiders of the times,
They no longer care to remember.

Have you heard the clock tower?
As its voice speaks among the hours?
For most it brings good memories,
But the outsiders are not most.

There stands the clock tower,
And its shadowed silhouette.
At the place where the outsiders should have received their dreams,
Instead of haunting memories every night.

Have you seen the clock tower?



Untitled Charcoal Drawing by Vicki Pavlov (Dilettanti 1975)

Making Their Way

In Their Own Words

"One day, we were in there watching TV, and some girls just came in, and they said, 'This TV is not for niggers.' And they turned it toward the wall. And I, being the rebel kind of person, I turned it back around. And a few minutes later, they just unplugged it. So then I realized, they aren't going to leave it alone." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"When it comes to the administrators, it was a whole different... most of them were my enemy — to me." --- **Susie Shelton**

"And so they were telling me who my advisor was and everything. They're going to help me... do my scheduling, because I didn't know exactly what to take. So, they helped me with my schedule and everything. Then later on, when I went to class... some of them... were saying, 'This... schedule's not correct,' or something.' So [you] had to go back.

So this is where my problem started, right there, when my schedule was all twisted and messed up. So I was like in and out, in and out, just, you know, until I got my schedule right...

So this particular teacher... I can see the expression on his face. He said, 'They just messed up your schedule. Come over here'... He wasn't my advisor. But he helped me do my schedule... Because I was just gettin' the runaround... But after he did my schedule, things started going... pretty smooth.

And then I met my teachers. Some of my teachers wouldn't... come near me." --- **Susie Shelton**

"We've never had that much problem with the students. I never had that much problems with the students. The teachers on the other hand..." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"Walking on campus you'd hear 'Hey darkie.'" --- **Dianne Adams**

"I was art student league president. And I was choosing... the pieces for exhibit and... I chose things that... identify that student's work and understanding. So I took a lot of thought in what I was going to exhibit and it was a success but... some of the students... didn't like the idea of me being president of our student league for one thing, and they... intentionally said they would not exhibit anything in my exhibit.

So it was fine. You know, you don't have to do that.

But, afterwards, when they saw the attention that the students that were exhibiting were having, then they wanted to put their works in there. But... they didn't come exactly to me, they tried to come in the back door and ask the professors to ask me if they could exhibit their work.

After the way that they acted, I really didn't want to exhibit them. But... I accepted them but I put their work under the staircase... anybody want to see what they did, they look out there under the stairs. I didn't put it... on the main floor or anything like that. So, I felt like that was a test."

--- **Dianne Adams**

"I was visiting one of my friends in the Magnolia and I walked across the lobby to the elevator, 'cause she was up on the fourth floor. And, got on the elevator and I noticed one of those girls get on the elevator with me and they plastered themselves against the wall... We got to the fourth floor... they just burst out from the elevator hollering, 'Spook on the hall! Spook on the hall!' and never knowing, you know, they were referring to a person, I said, 'Where?' and I kept flinging out my arms, you know. And I think someone got hit. But they didn't try that no more. My girlfriend's room was right near the elevators, you know, standing in her doorway she said, 'D.C., you are so crazy. Don't you know they were talking about you?' I said, 'I'm not a spook.'" --- **Dianne Adams**

"I'm gonna tell you how they did me... They were mostly staring... and they would stare at me and I'd stare too... what got me... was that smile, a cold smile, like a forced smile... That wasn't from the heart." --- **Susie Shelton**

"We had a beautician in the Mag but there was also a beautician deal on campus for you to go and get your hair done. So, that's where that deal was supposed to be...

So my roommate is there telling the teacher... 'Is there going to be a black person in there?... the white [person]... doesn't know how to do our hair.' And she wasn't getting it, she wasn't understanding. So we... tell her that we need to go out into the city, you know, find our own beautician and that's what we needed... I had a black roommate...

One day she decided, okay, they're not listening to what we're saying so she goes to the beauty shop on campus... So we're sitting there waiting. The lady took us... When she put that water on her hair, it drew up... the curly kink... And this lady... put this water on her hair, and now she doesn't know what to do with it... And so, my roommate, she's just about on the floor... I'm really trying to be cool... Now she's trying to comb it. She doesn't know which way to go with this... Of course she's getting hot. She's getting red. She's getting all messed up in the head... I mean, this went on for the longest time. And, God forbid, don't put her under the dryer. You gonna make it worse... So she put her under the dryer. And now she got a fro...

You better believe before we could get in the door that following Wednesday, all the black girls... got that card to go off campus to get their hair done." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**



Untitled Collograph by Jessie Whitehead (Dilettanti 1975)

"Dirty"

"One day, I was sitting there, alone... at a table... eating my hamburger and fries. There were some other kids... right over from me, and they started laughing, and poking fun... why are you here, and what are you eating, and you're just garbage... And they picked up a garbage can, and walked over to my table, and dumped it right on my food. And they thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever seen. And I started to walk away from it, and then the cashier informed me that I needed to clean up that mess. So I did." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

[On Dance class] "I never had a partner, 'cause nobody wanted to touch me. Because everybody was afraid to touch me..." --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

"I had another instructor who chose to talk about the Negroes at that time, in a kind of sarcastic way, that we were dirty, or whatever, you know, and just things like that. And I sat through it, because I had no other choice." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"And then I met my teachers. Some of my teachers wouldn't... come near me... they would go all around." --- **Susie Shelton**

[On arriving at dorms] "... my roommate was already there. And when I went on the fourth floor, you know, getting my things in... the thing about it is that it's almost like you have a disease, like nobody don't wanna be near you because they think that, you know, you gonna change them or something." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"You would see the way ... if you touched something ... [they] would wipe it all way up. And we had to remind people that this does not wash off. I took baths every day and it's still the same color." --- **Dianne Adams**

Poem

DONNA BRIDGES (1973)

I wonder sometimes maybe if
we took a group of children -
10 boys, 10 girls, black and white
and shades of in between
and raised them up
without some words
like war and hate
or gun and fight
Teaching them instead
love and happy,
kind and tolerant,
equality and compassion
And never let them see
the ugliness we know
in word or what we do
What kind of games they'd play.
Would they play cowboys and Indians
with no word for gun
or bows and arrows?
Would they play GI Joe
without a word for army
Would Jane and Tim
laugh at Billy and Sue
because their skin was yellow?
And after that
it saddens me
to think:
 they prob'ly would.

Low Expectations

"If you have the wrong type of white teachers, they, to me, for the most part, feel like you can't learn anyway, so they're gonna always teach... that white student more than they teach that black student and they will also make their time more available to that white student..." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"Now when I first came in... the English department was saying... you need to take a remedial course. And I said, no I do not... so I didn't take that but then, they thought perhaps I would just maybe flunk out but I ended up making very good grades in that course." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"I started off as... a business major. And I took some business class[es]... And... I noticed in the business department that... the scene was just they was very prejudiced... And so I didn't really pursue it and then I didn't really like it." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"I think they didn't think I would graduate as quickly as I did... if they had known that I was getting through as quickly as I was, I think there might have been some stumbling blocks there." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"You could tell some teachers just didn't think you were supposed to be there." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"I studied very hard in my music theory class, and no matter what I did, I only received a C. I learned the scales. I learned a lot of the information and, as I recall, received good grades on my tests and exams, but I received a C. And especially times that I just knew that I had a good solid B, I still received a C. Was that racism? Was that discrimination? I don't know." --- **Earlene Friday**

"There was one course all journalists had to take... And that was advanced grammar and English... so I took the course during the summer and... I passed... after I had taken the course and I was walking along the campus, and the teacher said... I never thought you would have passed my course. And this was one of these strict, hard, mean teachers... She didn't play. But I always appreciated her. I could tell she didn't want me there... But for her to have been... woman enough to have stopped me during that time, she said, you really surprised me. You passed my course. She said, you are one of the few students that have ever passed my course." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

Poem

SHEILA DICKENS (1973)

It's times like these
that make me wonder
what it's all about:

Were we put here
to help or hurt each other,

Both or neither?

Then what?

Why didn't we come with labels of instruction
like everything else.

Perhaps we did
but like everything else
the writing has faded
in the washing
of time and our minds.

A Report From Executive Vice President E. A. Knight, 1969

Confidential

March 11, 1969, Tuesday, 3:45 p.m.

The following negro students, [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted], came to the office and requested to see the President, however, in his absence they talked with me.

It is their belief that they are definitely discriminated against, (1) by the faculty in the classroom, (2) in the Tearoom, (3) in the Social Clubs.

1. As for the classroom they stated instances where the professors were literally teaching around them and never recognizing the fact that they are in the classroom and, for the most part, are always on the bottom end of the grading scale. Other instances were cited where white and negro students have compared papers and it was evident that the negro student's paper had been graded much more strictly than the white student's paper. They did not prefer to call names of faculty members, however, I was able to determine that the biggest complaint was with the English Department first, and the Psychology Department second. As far as they were able to determine by talking with the other negro students these were the only two departments in which there was evidence of pure discrimination. They stated also that the white students, for the most part, were completely prejudiced and that they were usually seated in a section of the room alone. In group work, if there is only one negro student in the class, then that student must work alone. However, they were not asking that any action be taken on this because they felt that it was an impossible situation and they could cope with this. However, as to discrimination by the faculty and by the grading they felt that they were being deprived of their opportunity to enter graduate school because of the low grades which they were receiving.

2. Golden Goose Tearoom. The students repeated the complaint they made to the H.E.W. Committee that they were not being waited on in the Tearoom and cited incidents where they were the only ones standing at the counter and the ladies employed in the Tearoom ignored them completely and it was necessary for them to walk away without being waited on. They cited instances where there was evidence of discrimination in the size portions of ice cream being served by the same employee to a white student and a negro student. They called attention to the fact of unstable prices in the Tearoom where students were being charged different amounts for food.

3. It was pointed out by the students that it was their desire to organize their own Social Club and requested information as to the procedure. I assured them that I would have that information today. I asked if any of them indicated that they wanted to be "rushed" and although they did not they were assured by some white students that if a white student was caught associating with the negro students they would be "black-balled" from any Social Club.

In general conversation they told me of the tremendous pressure being placed upon them by the negro community to do well and to participate in everything in which they could. Also the questions which were being asked of them by the local negro citizens as to how they were being treated. They stated that none of the better students from Hunt High would enroll at M.S.C.W. because of the grading situation and that they were missing some excellent students because of this.

I assured them that any time they had a problem we would be willing to discuss it with them.

E. A. Knight



"Ruby" by Desarea Guyton (2016)

Founding the Corettas, 1968

"Because we would get resisted — the social club, like the Hottentots, the Gauntlets, and all that, they just weren't ready to receive anything like us entering into those kind of things..." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"We founded... the Corettas because there were no black... social clubs... I think it was Toni's idea. Toni [Harrison] and maybe Dianne [Adams] ... So we went over to the student center one night... And we pulled up these orange chairs... and so we sat there. And... we were asking what should we call ourselves. And I said... Corettas. The Corettas. Let's call it in honor of Mrs. Martin Luther King, Coretta Scott King... we agreed to that so... that's how we became the Corettas." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"You never know what you gotta go through... to start a club... It's not just... I wanna start it and here it is. There's a procedure... You know, your bylaws and all that kind of stuff and so every corner that we would go, they told us this is what you need, you got to have a sponsor. Now who could we possibly get on campus that's willing to stand up to do this? And, well we found one... So it ended up that we got everything going except the approval of the president... And so finally we got an appointment, so we go in and sit down with him [Hogarth]... He wasn't too happy. But he approved it and... that was the final touch that we needed..." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"You know, I experienced prejudice there — the social clubs. I thought they were just a haven for people hiding behind, well, you know, prejudice... I was not interested in the Corettas, because black students there at the W could be just as prejudice as the whites... They got mad with me — one girl got really mad with me because I wouldn't join the Corettas. I told her... 'my name is Dianne Adams, I'm not a Coretta.'" --- **Dianne Adams**

Sisters True: Integration through Social Club Sisterhood: “Are there even any white girls in that club?”

BETSIE MACLELLAN (2016)

Sisters true we will be

I now pledge my love to thee

Never will I forget

This vow I made to you

I flushed, feeling sick. I was a freshman in the fall of 2013 when I heard a whisper that continues to haunt me.

Bid Day came and went and on the other side of it I found myself standing with a group of girls in whose faces I saw my own excitement mirrored. In front of the steps of Cochran, the active members assured each of us that soon enough, we would not be strangers, but true sisters. That sweltering afternoon, I could not have known how right they were. The days began to fly by, August passing with my sister Christa perched on my dorm bathroom counter as she made me privy to the mysteries of ethnic hair keeping, oil in one hand and a comb being offered to me in the other. Then, there was September and the night that I turned around to find my Big Sister, the member who would graft me into the Troubadour family tree forever; I cried tears of joy because while my Big was someone who no one could mistake as a biological sister of mine, she was already family in my heart. Then, October passed with laughs and tears and songs sung around the cafeteria tables together. Finally, there was November and the semester nearly over, but before we left the active members told us that we had finished pledging and handed us our white sweatshirts.

I will remember that moment forever, standing in a line beside those girls who indeed were strangers no more and never would be again.

We stood together that night, unified by the name “Troubadour” across each of our white sweatshirts, and those same girls have stood beside me every moment since. When my family moved overseas, they saw to moving me in and out of my dorm at the beginning and end of each semester and sharing their own brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers with me whenever I grew lonely. At each award ceremony, if I looked into the crowd, I was guaranteed to see my salt-and-pepper

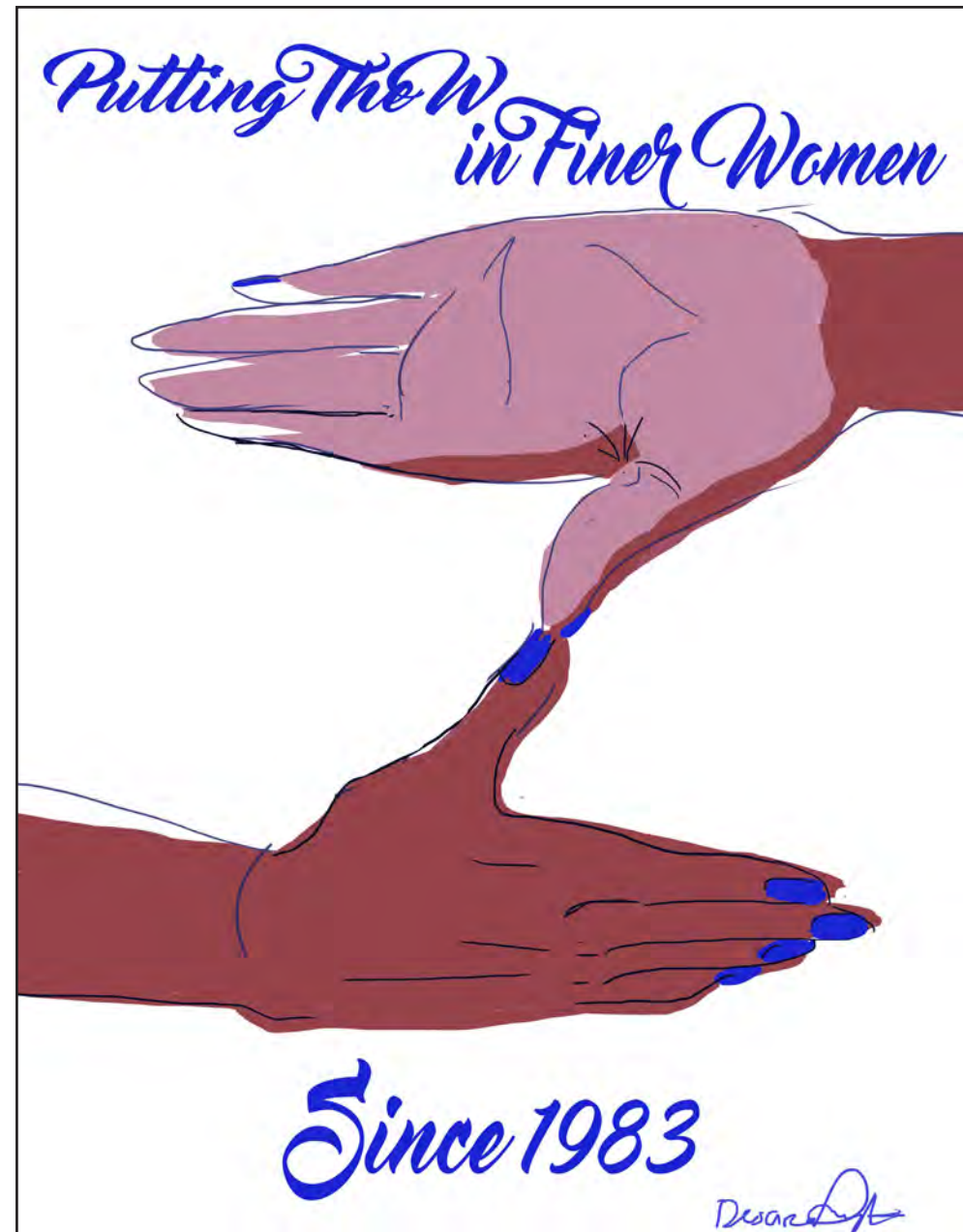
sisters smiling and waving back at me, just as proud as can be. Those are the moments of triumph, and in the moments of failure they are even quicker to support me. I sift through the memories of being held by my sister Christa as we both cried on the third floor of Callaway at 6:00 a.m., both our hearts broken for different reasons and for each other, them “accidentally forgetting” a dollar or two on my bed when they knew that I was not going to be able to pay my bills on my own that month, of bringing me medicine as I lay in bed sick because if they did not there was no one else who would. Through the semesters, we have shared so much more than just scantrons and index cards, the knowledge that collard greens taste better with hot sauce than without, sweaters and secrets; we have shared our lives.

Each of them have stood beside me for the past two and a half years, and I have stood beside each of them and it did not matter to any of us that we were each a different shade because we shared a common goal and that was to serve each other, our club, and our campus community.

It was not how we looked or where we came from that cemented our bond, but rather the fact that I needed those four girls, and they needed me because in our own ways, we were a “breakfast club,” too, and each of them brought something to the sisterhood that the other could not. Each of them was different from me in both appearance and personality, but it is within that group that I was given the freedom to embrace myself as I embraced each of my sisters. Ethnicity is not included as a qualification to be a Troubadour accidentally but intentionally, as it is not color that makes a girl a Troubadour, but rather, it is character, and it was because of the content of our character that we were given the opportunity to join its sisterhood.

When I was a freshman, I was a white girl sitting beside a white girl in UN 101 and because we shared the same shade of skin, she assumed I would also share the same opinion on race relations. But I did not. So when the professor turned her back, and the white girl whispered, “Are there even any white girls in that club?” I did not understand how that could be a negative, but rather I wondered, “Why does that even matter?” Even though I was appalled at the whispered question, in actuality, I was not that different from that girl, and our reasons for going through Recruitment Weekend were similar, one being that we were both looking for a group of girls like us. It is just that she was looking for a group of girls that looked like her whereas I was looking for a group of girls that thought like me. That was the only difference, but I cannot begin to fathom what a difference that made. So when I walked into the Troubadour’s first party, I did not see black and white. Rather, I saw young women standing before me, women that I wished to be like come one, two years. And when they told me smilingly

that their sisterhood could be mine if I so wished, I truly believed it. I realized that ethnicity was not included amongst the qualifications of a Troubadour not accidentally, but intentionally, as it was not the color of a girl that made her a Troubadour, but rather, it was her character, and it was because of the content of my character that I was given the opportunity to join its sisterhood. If they were willing to look past how my skin pigmentation differentiated from theirs to see that our hearts were similar, then so was I.



"ZETA" by Desarea Guyton (2016)

On The Formation of a Civil Rights Committee

"... I... got President Hogarth to start that civil rights committee... Now how that had happened was Dianne... had gone to a concert... in Whitfield... And shortly thereafter, she came back I mean furious, and just upset.

I said, well what happened?

She said, there were some boys at State that would not let her really watch the concert, they kept just banging on her... chair and just knocking up against her and all of that — calling her names and all the rest of this stuff.

And of course, being furious... I got out... my typewriter... and wrote President Hogarth... the letter was like... we are not going to tolerate this mess and I... put down the whole incident...

And so then, he wrote me a letter saying that he was going to form a civil rights committee and he wanted me to be on it and I said sure so that's how that came about." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

Civil Rights Committee Named [*The Spectator*, October 16, 1969]

President Charles P. Hogarth announces the appointment of a Committee on Civil Rights for MSCW.

He added, "If any occur this year or at any time in the future, I want them corrected without hesitation."

Members of this committee are Dr. Donald A. King, Chairman; Mr. E. A. Knight, Vice Chairman; Dianne Adams, Edna Joy Caperton, Paula Jones, Arelya Mitchell, Susan Stone, and Vivian Thornton.

The purpose of the committee is to listen to any "W" student who claims that her Civil Rights have been violated and to report any violations immediately to the president for action.

President Hogarth asked the committee to remain on call for the entire 1969-70 academic year and hold meetings when anyone reports any violation to any member of the committee, who who will in turn report it to the chairman.

The committee will also try to determine, if possible, what action would be needed to correct any reported violation.

In the event the committee could not determine corrective measures, the violation will be reported to the president for immediate action.

President Hogarth stated, "I have not heard of any violation of Civil Rights this year, but the three violations reported last year were corrected immediately."

In Their Own Words

"Dr. King was assassinated during that semester. And I was in my sociology class, and the word came to us in class that he had been assassinated... The teacher couldn't teach anymore, because the whole class started celebrating... They just screamed and hollered and said how happy they were that he was dead, and a lot of them started admitting, 'Yes, my father's a member of the Klan... and I'm proud of it.' So that just went around the room... In fact, nobody could have class anywhere on campus that afternoon.

I started crying, and the instructor escorted me out of class. Dr. Edmundson. I remember his name, because he was so kind. He walked me to the Goose, and then he said... 'I apologize for my people.' ... I'll never forget those words that he said.

But... that sealed it for me. And I said, 'Well, that's it.' I dropped out right then and there, and that was in April, I think, and we only had another month to go. I just didn't care." --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

Anger



"Why Are You Doing This to Me" by Akiko Nishijima (1999)

"The school taught me — I think I always say that — taught me hatred, and I began to hate white people with a passion that I never thought I had. I mean, it was to the point — I mean, just total rage hatred." ---
Diane Hardy Thompson

"That just made me mad [being refused service at a Columbus restaurant] because this man is on my television every night talking about that Ed's Grill and I can't even go in his joint and be served a hamburger. So I don't even know what his hamburgers tasted like because I've never tasted one. But... stuff like that made me mad." --- **Dianne Adams**

"Somebody had the nerve... I don't know which... one of those girls or who all it was that had a confrontation with their teacher. And so the teacher said, 'You ought to be thankful that you're here' — a teacher telling a black woman... Thanks for what? 'This is not your school.'" ---
Susie Shelton

Look at Me

ALICIA CHANDLER (2016)

Look at me what do you see?
I see a person standing next to a tree
Look at me what do you see?
I see a person who does not look like me
Look at me what do you see?

Does it matter what I see?
Yes, you see
Because for someone like me
I am more than someone standing next to a tree
Yes, I am someone that does not look like you
But I am human too
Oh. Wait does that bother you?
Yes, I do not have the same skin as you
But does that bother you too?
I am a free man and my life matters
Does that make your world rattle?

Look at me

LOOK at me

Look at me what do you see?
Why does it matter we all bleed the same you see
Black, Asian, Mexican, Russian, Nepalese, or White...all of our lives
matter
Yes, you're right.

MARA

HAYLEY HAMPTON (2016)

How long? I heard a faint voice call to me.

How long what? I thought through the haze of my dream.

How long will you be their slave?

I'm not a slave.

Yes you are, you weak bitch. Look at me!

In my dream, I opened my eyes and saw a body strung up by a ragged rope. I could tell by the shapely form that it was a woman, but her back was to me. Morbidly fascinated I moved closer. The wooly hair was unkempt and matted. The soft copper skin on her arms and legs were covered in scratches. She wore nothing but a large flour sack, and it was torn in several places on her back from what looked like a merciless beating. Her feet were swollen and bloodied, as if she had been running. As I studied her, she slowly turned on the rope until she was facing me. I felt bile rise up in my throat. She was me! I screamed.

"Marie! Marie!" I felt someone firmly grasp my shoulders as I thrashed wildly on my bed, trying to get away from that horrible sight of myself. "Marie wake up!"

I opened my eyes and stared into my roommate's dark frightened face, "Candice? My God what happened?" I looked around to make sure that I was still in my dorm room. She took her hands from my shoulders and eyed me warily.

"You were having some kind of nightmare. What the hell were you dreaming about?"

I shook my head, not ready to talk about what I had seen. This had not been like any other dream that I usually had. This one had been so clear and real. Candice would think that I had lost my mind.

"I'll tell you about it later."

"Ugh, I have too much crap to do," my friend Val pouted before she took a sip of her coffee. It was a pretty spring day. Val and I had decided to get coffee and sit in the Gazebo.

"I do too," I sat my cup down and rested my head on her shoulder, "but a little break will do us some good." We sat there in silence for a moment and watched a campus police car drive by. It flashed its lights at someone getting ready to park in the wrong direction.

"Oh! Did you hear about that Sandra Bland case?"

My stomach tightened and I sat up and looked Valerie in the face, "Yea? What about it?"

She blinked at me and cocked her head to the side, her pale and pretty face looking confused, "I mean, how did you feel about it?" I shrugged and looked away uncomfortably, but I spoke anyway.

"I mean you know that whole thing was fishy," I watched a mockingbird land on a railing a few feet from us. "I mean they arrested a black woman over a little traffic violation and found her hanging in her cell and then," I tossed my head angrily, "had the nerve to say that it was a suicide!"

"Yea that was pretty bogus," she nodded. "but did you see those questions that they had her answering? One asked 'Have you ever thought about suicide?' and she said 'Yes'."

"Oh come on Valerie!" I couldn't believe her. "The woman was an activist. Why wait 'til you're in a jail cell to kill yourself? Why kill yourself at all?"

"I don't know girl, but there are a bunch of people angry about the way that case played out." She smirked to herself, "some black girl that goes here called me a 'privileged white bitch' the other day."

I frowned, but she was right. Lately, with the new buzz of the Black Lives Matter movement and the many new hate crimes, the student body had seemed to divide itself into sides.

"They're doing it on purpose you know, putting all these black cases on TV," she watched my face carefully for a reaction before going on. "It's to divide the people. There are just as many whites, Hispanics, and other races being gunned down and mistreated."

I don't know why but what she said infuriated me. She then went on to say that whites were actually the ones becoming a minority.

"I mean the next thing you know white people are going to be enslaved for what our ancestors did hundreds of years ago."

"Hmm," I pursed my lips, slightly annoyed.

Listen to her.

"So you're saying that there isn't really a problem with racism in America?"

She shook her head, saying that that wasn't the case at all.

"I just feel like racism can be felt from both sides, like the situation I was telling you about earlier," she turned to look me full in the face. "Just like there are white people that hate blacks there are blacks that hate whites."

And we have a right to hate you.

I felt the hairs tingle at the nape of my neck. Where was that voice coming from?

I then heard a bout of maniacal laughter from all around. I asked Valerie had she heard anything to which she replied no.

Look at me, a familiar voice rasped close by.

"What?" I frantically scanned the gazebo and the surrounding greenery. There was nothing but the occasional student on their way to class.

"Marie what's wrong?" Valerie had stood up anxiously, and that's when I saw her. She had seemed to fall away from Valerie and now occupied the spot where she had once sat.

What's my name? she demanded as leered at me with those dark and glistening eyes that were also mine. It looked as if she had taken another severe beating since I had last seen her in my dream. The skin around her eyes was almost black and her lips were dry and cracked. Her flour sack dress hung from her in shreds, and I could very well see the scars that marked her body. Some were fresh. I closed my eyes and shook my head furiously, trying to dispel what had to be a hallucination. My attempts were only met with more laughter.

"Stop it," I whispered brokenly, suddenly afraid for my sanity.

"Look at me", she said again, aloud this time. When I did, there was no trace of laughter in her battered face. She reached for me with a scarred hand and pressed it to my heart. I wanted to back away and couldn't. "I am Mara. I am bitter, because we've paid for our existence in tears, sweat, and blood, rivers of it. Isn't it only right that we hate them in return?" She ground out these last words in between clenched, yellowed teeth. I then felt like liquid fire had been poured into my veins. I wanted to roar in savage approval because what she said was true. Why shouldn't I.....

"Marieeeeeee," a sweet voiced washed over me like cascades of rainwater, cooling me. "Come back to earth, babe!" I blinked and stared into Valerie's gentle brown eyes. When I asked what had happened, she said that I had only spaced out for a few seconds. I glanced around, looking for my abused self, but she was gone.

"Of course black people can't be racist!" Candice squeaked as she sat her food down across from me. It was fried chicken Tuesday and we had made sure that we came early in order to beat the crowds of MSMS students and guests.

I rolled my eyes and smirked at my roommate as she struggled into her

high seat. "You need help?"

She paused and scowled at me for a moment before taking her seat. I giggled at her.

"Anyway. Black people can't be racist because they're the minority." Candice explained as she delicately shoveled a spoonful of mashed potatoes into her mouth. I told her to please explain herself.

"Racism is a system of oppression, and black people have never been put in the position of oppressing anyone, especially not the white man," she said the last part a bit too loud as a blond girl walked by. She gave a Candice a slight quizzical look. In a gesture not short on attitude, Candice raised her perfect brows and cocked her head to the side at the girl. The latter hurried off. We were soon joined by the rest of our group of friends.

"Okay, lemme get this straight," Adriana's face, normally light and creamy, had developed a slight blush from her rising emotions. "I'm the bully and you," here she gestured towards Kendra, "are the poor under-dog?"

I sighed aloud. The conversation wasn't supposed to go this far. Kendra's eyes were bulging with agitation as she responded. "I wasn't specifically referring to you". She made it a point to throw her hands in the same fashion as Adriana had done earlier. "I was speaking in general."

"Well it might as well include me. I am after all white, a child of 'the white man', the oppressor, the great white father!" Adriana's voice had grown shrill, almost to the level of shouting.

"Uhhh guys?" Louisa self-consciously adjusted her glasses and hit her face behind her long dark hair. "People are starting to stare at us." We had indeed become a kind of spectacle, but that didn't keep Candice and Adriana from continuing their disagreement.

"Let them stare!" Adriana was almost nose to nose with Candice as she leaned slightly forward over the table. "I want them to hear this load of crap she's got to say!"

"I mean at least you're a topic within the conversation," Louisa laughed good-naturedly, trying to lighten the mood. "I'm Hispanic! You don't see anybody saying 'Eses Lives Matter' now do you?"

Candice, surprisingly, was holding to her composure and giving only cool and calculated responses. "You're taking what I'm saying out of context, but it's whatever. Hear what you wanna hear. I'm just being real."

Adriana had turned almost red in the face. "Real?! See that's what's

wrong with you people! You're always trying to be real and make everything about you!" The girl jumped from her seat and slammed the chair under the table, but she was far from done.

"Give you the same rights as everyone else? Not satisfied. Dedicate an entire month to you and your history? Still not satisfied! Hell, last time I checked, there was no white history month!"

You hear that? Mara was back again. You people. This time she was standing on the table, balancing on her blistered toes and reaching for something above her. At the moment, I only had eyes for Adriana. I couldn't believe that she'd say such a thing!

Immediately, Mara dropped to her knees until her face was level with mine. She planted a soft kiss on my lips and said, "Don't be silent. Tell her how you feel." I blinked in bewilderment and she was gone.

"Last time I checked you all had an entire year, monuments, businesses, and damn near everything else to match," I growled, surprising myself. What surprised me even more was finding that I had grabbed a knife and was pointing it at her. I again felt the sensation of burning from within. I was tired of saying nothing while everyone else got to speak their minds. No matter how ignorant the words were, they still spoke. So why shouldn't I?

Why shouldn't you hate them? Why not fight them? Why not hurt them?

Like they've done to you? I thought, looking at my hands. Somehow they had become gnarled and twisted, as if they had been broken, and they were covered in scratches. They looked exactly like Mara's.

Us, she said firmly in my head. Look at what they're doing to us.

"Marie?" Candice waved a hand in front my face bringing me back to reality once again. "You look like you're about to kill somebody. What's wrong with you?" Adriana had left, freaked out by my reaction. Suddenly I felt ashamed. I dropped the knife, and without another word, I left my friends in the cafeteria.

Mara was waiting for me in my room. She looked warily at me as I walked past her and climbed into bed. I needed to hear my father's voice.

"What are you doing?" she demanded. I ignored her as I reached from under the covers to grab my phone. Dad answered on the second ring.

"What's wrong baby girl?" his voice was so soft and gentle that I cried. I told him how I felt about everything. How I sometimes felt like people pitied me for the color of my skin. How I hated the news and how it seemed to announce of more black corpses than any others. I told him

how I sometimes felt powerless as a black woman and how it made me want to hate anything and anyone who tried to put some kind of barrier in my way.

"What are we called to do?" my Dad asked simply. "What's the most good and unnatural thing that a human can do?"

"Love their enemy," I sniffled and peeked out from under the covers. Mara's raw back was to me.

"Exactly" Dad whispered fiercely. "Don't be bitter. There's more than one way to fight, baby girl." I smiled as I said goodbye. That was all I needed to hear.

Mara was looking at me with loathing in her eyes and I watched as she fashioned a noose for herself.

"You weak bitch," she sneered and shook her head in contempt.

"Go on and hang yourself Mara." I gave her one last look and dropped the sheets over my face. The last thing I heard before falling asleep was the creak of the rope and Mara choking.

A Report from the Dean of Students to President Hogarth, Late 1972

December 19, 1972

Dear Dr. Hogarth,

Attached are notes from a three-hour conference with three black students on Thursday, December 14... I feel that there has been a definite increase in racial tension on the campus during the past two years. I believe that this conference again points to the need for positive action by the college community directed toward improving race relations on campus...

I believe that this is a serious problem which deserves the attention of the Administrative Council and the entire academic community. I do not feel that we can continue to "explain these problems away."

Sincerely yours,

Miss Linda O. Dye

Acting Dean of Students

December 14, 1972 - 11:45 a.m. A call was received in the Dean of Students' office from a black student who wanted to know what the penalty was for "hitting" someone. Miss Duclos indicated to the student that it was a serious offense and asked that she come to the office to discuss the matter. The student indicated that she did not want to discuss the situation but merely wanted to speak to the dean and find out what the penalty was for striking someone. Approximately five minutes later, the student called the office again and asked to speak with me. She again posed the same question. I indicated to the student that it was a most serious offense, that it would not serve any purpose in solving the real problems and that it would only create problems for her. I asked the student to identify herself, which she refused to do; however, she did indicate that she was a junior commuting student and that I knew her. I indicated to the student that if the problem was so serious that she wanted to take physical action, I thought the first step was to come to the office and discuss the situation with me. After talking with her along these lines for some time, the student began to relate to me that she was fed up with being discriminated against on the MSCW campus. She indicated to me that blacks were discriminated against in grading and in receiving financial aid. She raised questions as to why there were no blacks in social clubs or living in Callaway Hall. After talking on the phone with the student for approximately thirty minutes, I again asked

her to come to the office and discuss the situation with me, that I felt it would be much [better] for both of us to sit down and talk about the matter rather than discussing it over the telephone. Even though the student still would not identify herself, she did indicate that she would not strike anyone and that she would be at my office the next morning at 8:00 a.m. to meet with me as requested.

Approximately fifteen minutes later, three black students came to the office and requested to talk with me. They indicated that they had decided to come right on over rather than wait until the next morning. The three-hour conference was mainly one of listening to their complaints. In some instances I was able to give them very definite answers concerning misinformation that they had in some areas. The main question and complaints raised by these students were:

- 1) Why there were no black faculty members and why MSCW had not made an effort to recruit black faculty and staff members. They indicated a real need for having someone on the campus with whom they could identify and relate.
- 2) They questioned why campus jobs were for the most part unavailable to blacks except in the cafeteria and indicated that even in the cafeteria they had to do the hardest jobs and were scheduled for less work time than white students.
- 3) They questioned why there were no black students residing in Callaway Hall and why none have lived there in previous years. They do not believe it is because the building fills up so far in advance. They indicated that the rumor was that the Alumnae Association had said that no blacks would live in Callaway.
- 4) They questioned why no blacks had been accepted to social clubs. I explained to them that we had not had any blacks go out for rush, but that they might well go out and not get a bid as some white students are not accepted to social clubs. I explained to them the procedures for establishing social clubs and informed them that a group of black students were presently pursuing the establishment of a social club.
- 5) They questioned why the placement office made little or no effort to find jobs for black graduates.

Other ... complaints included such things as having been referred to as a "nigger" by one faculty member, being referred to as "colored" and having faculty members say they could not tell them apart.

I asked the students why they did not take their complaints to the Civil Rights Committee. They indicated that they felt it was of no use to appeal to this group as nothing was ever done. One student indicated to me that she had carried a complaint to the committee and was told, "We do not have that problem on this campus." they indicated that a lot of

talk was done but that there would be no action to help race relations on the campus.

I took the opportunity to point out several areas in which progress has been made within the last two years. In talking with the students, I did not feel that they were in any way making threats; however, they did indicate that unless some changes were made, we could definitely expect trouble, that the freshmen students were not content to sit back and wait as they had been. I asked the students for positive ideas that could be implemented in improving race relations. Ideas discussed in the student activities area included:

- 1) A black representative on Senate.
- 2) A column in the Spectator publicizing the activities of the Corettas.

I indicated to the students that of course the problem was not going to be solved this year or even for many years to come but that if any progress was going to be made, it would have to be a joint effort by both races. I asked that they meet with me again after the Christmas holidays to discuss their concerns further and to discuss positive solutions for some of the problems. LOD [Linda Dye, Acting Dean of Students]

Community Reaction

The White Community

"My father... would have notes in his locker at work, anonymous notes, telling him... 'If your daughter goes to that white school, you're gonna lose your job.' Of course, they used the word 'nigger' and 'colored'...

And of course, he wasn't fazed by it one bit. Not at all. He would just come home and share. We would get phone calls. You know, anonymous phone calls throughout the night... threatening mostly my father about his job. Because... as far as back during that time, you know, that was power, because the whites were in control of all the jobs or what have you. But he would never let it bother him." --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

"I would walk home from school each afternoon, and I had to walk through the white community, and there was this old couple that always sat on the porch, and every afternoon, I'd come by, he would decide that he wanted to water his flowers just as I got there. And you know, when you're spraying water on the ground, dirt will pop up, and so each day, my feet got dirt on them. And each day he told me to get off the sidewalk and get in the street, so the cars could run over me. He said I had no business going to that school, and each day, he asked me if I was the one that was going to that school...

Finally one day, it was kind of raining. And he was out watering flowers. Now, anybody know you don't water flowers in the rain, so this was just to wet me up. And when he walked up to the sidewalk to wet me up, that's when I took my umbrella. And I said, 'If you put water on me today, I'm going to forget that you're an old white man, and I'm going to beat your butt.' And he realized that I meant it, because I looked him directly in his face, I throwed my umbrella down, and I was ready to go to him. And he said, 'Get off the sidewalk, and get on down the road.'

And after that, my mother said I should not go back that way again. Because, you know, anything could happen. So I didn't go back." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

The Black Community

"They were kind of scared. My black community. They — I have to be frank. They didn't rally around us." --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

"I almost felt like I had done something wrong, because everybody was afraid — I didn't realize that everybody was afraid to associate with you, or be seen with you, or whatever. You know, there were other kids in the neighborhood whose parents did not want them to even hang around our house, because we could be bombed, anything could happen." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"People were scared. My family was scared for me." --- **Susie Shelton**

"When we first applied, our principal said, 'You don't need to go.' He said, 'Why don't you just go to Jackson State, or why don't you go to The Valley... you don't need to do this.' And we didn't understand why, and then the superintendent... had told him to discourage us.

After he couldn't the superintendent said we needed to come to his office before we go... and we walked up to his office, and he wanted to know if Dr. Martin Luther King, or any of the other people, had put us up to this, and we're standing here like what? You know, we don't even know these people." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"I guess it was the summer of '66 that I realized... the impact that it would have, because my parents were kind of discouraging. They didn't necessarily want this, because they felt that it was dangerous, and that's when it really set in that this is not the usual thing that you do." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"They, under their breath, they said they were happy. But, there was a fear. Everybody was afraid of everything then. I now realize just how much fear my parents went through, but I didn't realize it at that time. Because I just wanted to go to school." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"My mom, my dad... didn't think that I should have gone and stuff. I sai[d] 'Mm-mm!' ... 'Ain't nobody gonna stop me. I'm going anyway!'" --- **Susie Shelton**

My Integration to Mississippi University for Women

DEMYIA GRAHAM (2016)

My name is Demyia Graham. I graduated from Port Gibson High School in May 2015. I am currently an African-American freshman biology major at Mississippi University for Women and this is my integration story about becoming a student at The W.

Around April 2015, I finally faced the fact that I didn't know what to do with my future. I had a week left to report to the school newspaper where I planned to attend. As the valedictorian of my graduating class, the valedictorian not pursuing a higher education was unheard of. I received offers for a full ride to every community college, every public university (except Mississippi University for Women), and some private universities (such as Millsaps and Tougaloo College) located in Mississippi.

You might be wondering, with all these offers, how come I had such a hard time choosing what I was going to do for the future. In all actuality, I really wasn't considering college as an option. In my mind, I was tired of school and really wanted to take a year off. I received both criticism and praise for this decision, but in the end peer pressure won and I had to choose a college. My parents, grandparents, family, and friends placed all of their hopes and dreams in my one college decision. I couldn't just let them down, so I made a decision on which college to attend. I was going to be a part of the Tougaloo College class of 2019. It was a free ride and I would rather start on my bachelor's than an associate's degree. Giving my decision to the school and local newspaper, my family and friends were relieved. I was as well, because I finally had peace for the next four years before this whole process would begin again.

Now you might be wondering how I originally planned to attend Tougaloo College but somehow ended up at The W. I come from a small town in Mississippi named Port Gibson; it's about four hours and three hundred miles away from Columbus, MS. My hometown university is Alcorn State University, which is one of the one hundred forty seven Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States. It is an unwritten rule that all 'smart African-American students' must contribute to their HBCUs. Any students who do not follow this tradition tend to be more shunned than praised, so my decision to attend Tougaloo College (another HBCU) was deemed acceptable by my community's social standards.



"3 Figures" by Jessie Whitehead (1981)

Every year there is the annual celebration of the Top Ten from the neighboring counties Claiborne and Jefferson. It is expected for the Top Ten to attend and announce their future goals, plans, careers, and scholarships. My sister, Dameia Graham, was also in the Top Ten of our graduating class, so when she announced that she was attending Mississippi University for Women; it came as a shock and a surprise to everyone (myself included). At first there was an awkward silence followed by slow sounded claps, but never a full applause. She was going against what everybody lived by, the unwritten rule which was now written and present. The stares and whispers became immediately visible and many couldn't even hide their shocked expressions if they tried. It was as if she was directly affecting their future.

I personally at that time have never even heard of Mississippi University for Women but when it became my turn, I decided that was where I was going, too. Now I know that you should never make decisions on impulse because they almost never turn out right, but when it became my turn, I walked on that stage and announced that I too was going with my sister to Mississippi University for Women. Looking back on it now it's kind of funny, the stunned silence of the audience, I the valedictorian not attending an HBCU. I come from an old-fashioned town that has certain traditions that are rarely broken. Where everyone knows everybody and surprises rarely occur. A town that everyone claims they hate, but never leaves. Anybody (myself included) that goes against these traditions will always receive some type of backlash.

So with this new plan I applied to Mississippi University for Women. I received the Presidential Award for my GPA and ACT score and re-informed every one of my plans. Honestly, I was nervous and petrified. I hoped for the best but expected the worst.

I received all kinds of disapproval and praise because many people took my decision very personally. It was like in some way I was personally affecting them, as if I was betraying my culture, identity, and traditions. I remember hearing an old woman say, "These new generations always go support the white man," but I believe Mrs. Racheal had the best story of all. She asked me, "Where are you attending school?" I know that she already knew (and I felt as if she was mocking me) but I said, "Mississippi University for Women." She replied "So it is true, that you're going to that white school. What's wrong with our HBCU?" I replied, "Nothing is wrong with them of course, I actually think they're great and was planning to attend Tougaloo College." She then replies, "Must not have been that great if you aren't going." I just walked away after she said that. It was not the first time I've heard it and probably not the last.

I did receive a lot of support as well. My parents wanted me to

leave and experience life outside Port Gibson, MS.

I packed everything I owned that the morning I was leaving and drove up here. I arrived nervous, not knowing what to expect. The whispers of my town suddenly came upon me. I'm at a "white campus" and not sure at all how they would treat me. Luckily for me, my worries were for nothing. I have grown to love The W as my home away from home. I have my moments when I don't feel like I fit in. I struggled a lot my first semester here because I realized that at home I was at the top of my school, but here I was not, and I learned that's ok. My professors for my first and current semesters worked with me to make sure that I wouldn't fall behind. I made friends with different types of people from different cultures and learned to respect and admire their beliefs. I experienced things I normally wouldn't in my home town and learned to view things, outside my culture, in a different perspective.

I wrote this paper to explain how my integration to The W came about. I feel like it is important to know about how past African-American W students arrived here and their experiences, but also about how the present and future ones come here as well. My journey to The W was not an easy one. I faced discrimination and harassment for my own personal decision to come continue my education at a predominantly white institution. I related very strongly when hearing how the first three African-Americans students' families felt when they announced their college decision to their families. Their families were so concerned about their safety that they blatantly criticized them instead of supporting them. I know that they were doing it out of love and concern, but I know that the ladies were pursuing what they considered the best option for themselves. Sometimes just knowing that people support your decision is enough, even if it's scary, outside of social norms, community's traditions, or goes against what everyone believes in. I don't regret my decision of attending Mississippi University for Women and I'm blessed to share my story on how I face discrimination to come here.

In Their Own Words

"We [Laverne, Dianne, and Barbara] would talk when we got the opportunity, and compare incidents that had happened to all of us, cry on each others' shoulders. We were all we had." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"I'm thankful that there was a minister, a reverend, Marcel Keller... He was the person. He made sure that we had extra spending money, he made sure that we had snacks and supplies. He was a great man..." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"There was also another faculty member from my high school that would help me with homework. And his name was Ollie Underwood. He would spend a lot of time helping." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"I don't know whether it was because she felt good about it, or if she just didn't have any other choice, but... my PE teacher, her name was Pina Hornsby. We had square dancing, and nobody would dance with me, so she danced with me. We played tennis, and nobody would play tennis with me, she did. When we had to ride a bus to the bowling alley out in East Columbus, and there was a bunch of us on there, nobody would sit next to me, she did.

So, I don't know if she felt like this was the thing to do because she was a faculty member, or if she realized that I was in pain. I hope she did." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"My first day in the art department, I was walking to class... When I walked in somebody come in and [said], 'I didn't know they were coordinated enough to major in art.' The professor was behind me and heard the comment. At the beginning of the lecture she said, 'Ms. Adams has more creativity in her little finger than you will have in a lifetime.' After that, I didn't hear any comments." --- **Dianne Adams**

"I majored in sociology and I minored in speech drama. And in the speech drama department, it seemed to be a little bit more liberal minded... And... that's what kept me there... that's really what kept me there." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"I liked my English teacher. He was my favorite teacher — one of my favorites. I liked my orchestra teacher. That was Dr. Graves... Mr. Carlton... was my English teacher. As I mentioned before, by midterms, I had a D in English, and by the end of the semester, I believe I had a C." --- **Earlene Friday**

"I decided that I learned so much in English that I did not know — I decided to take Mr. Carlton again because I had improved so much from the moment I started in that English class... and I got a B the second semester. And he later told me that I had improved in English more than

Support

any other freshmen that he had ever encountered. And I just loved Mr. Carlton because he graded my paper, and he circled what I had done wrong. He made me write the rule and go back and correct my paper and go back and basically rewrite it, which was a great learning experience for me, and I love Mr. Carlton to this day..." --- **Earlene Friday**

"From day one when I met [Peggy Sue Wallace], she spoke and she had the nicest smile. And her housekeeper, who was a black lady who came with her parents I believe... she could make the best chocolate-chip cookies and brownies. And I remember Peggy Sue offering me some... if anybody I would say on campus, in the beginning... that gave you a smile, she would be among those that I said did. And we would talk."

--- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"Some of the students treated me with indifference, which was okay because I did not expect to be treated any other way... Some of the students... were very, very nice to me, though. Befriended me. One person in particular was going to school to be a doctor, and I think... her name was Mary... Ruth? If memory serves me right... And she was very nice.

There was another young lady in my music theory and music history class who was very, very nice. We studied together. I quizzed her on the... music scales. She quizzed me. And I knew my scales, and she was struggling with hers. But she got a B in the class, and I got a C. But she was very nice to me as well.

And I befriended some of the black African American young ladies... Arelya was very, very nice. Of course, Toni was, too, but as far as any of the others, there was one music major. She was a sophomore — Celestine House... she was nice...

And there was a graduate student who lived in the Magnolia, also, who was very nice, and I would go and visit her. And not cry on her shoulder, but tell her some of the experiences that I was having.

And that was it, but other than that and getting over being homesick and crying one time, everything went well." --- **Earlene Friday**

"I had a house mother, Mrs. Kungers... And the reason I know Mrs. Kungers is because she was from Ruleville, Mississippi, as well, and she knew my parents and made sure that I was okay." --- **Earlene Friday**

"The maids were happy to see us. They were delighted. They were some of the best people... they were so happy because they... never thought we'll see little black girls here..." --- **Arelya Mitchell**

"Of course there was blacks — well, people working in the back with the food and you know what? We would go, Marion and I would go through the line... and sometimes when there was something that the workers knew that we would really like, they knew how to put it on

our plates... to make it appear that it wasn't as much as it was." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"I didn't have a strong American Lit background, so when it was time for my comps, I remember one of the students who had had her comps prior to my taking the comp, gave me her notes. So, you know it was that kind of, relationship. And, as I said, we would — I would arrive for class, and, generally, we just kinda talked about... what was going on in the classroom in terms of the subject matter... That was almost, probably, almost fifty years ago! And it's kind of a blur ... [chuckles]." --- **Eula M. Houser Thompson**

"Society Needs More Dialogue Than Monologue" by Arelya Mitchell

[*The Spectator*, February 26, 1970]



"Thank You" by Desarea Guyton (2016)

"Perhaps we may not have been a dialogue but we ceased to be an echo," commented Dr. Charles Prestwood.

"I liked the way we kept stressing dialogue among people rather than just among black and white," said Diane Freeman, president of the Young Democrats.

"I thought it was evident that somebody is really aware of racial problems and wants to do something about it," stated sophomore Annie Otis.

These are only a few reactions to the Young Democrats Black and White Dialogue.

Dr. Prestwood began the program by stating: "There is a lot of talk going on among black and white but it's more monologue and not very much dialogue. Strangely enough in our society, people are more united in vice rather than virtue."

He stressed the need for people to be completely honest with each other regardless of race. His stress really helped to begin the dialogue later in the program.

"You know, I really didn't like you the first time I met you," one girl told one of her now best friends, "but somehow I felt I should cover it up with a fake smile."

"The first time I read your poetry," another began to tell one of her friends, "I wanted to tell you so much that I hated it, but I didn't want to because you were a Negro."

Even though some of the statements were harsh, everyone felt relieved to get a few chips off her shoulder.

The issue of Mississippi's recent school desegregation broke into the dialogue.

"Freedom of choice has not worked," said Dr. Prestwood. "Freedom of choice not only includes freedom for a person to choose a school but also includes harassment to keep him from choosing a school."

One student agreed that perhaps it wouldn't work now but later on it probably would.

Most didn't have too much to say about the topic so the discussion led to religion.

Churches became a big question in the racial controversy.

"It seems to me that our churches took a major role in civil rights; whereas, your churches took minor or no roles — I mean that you didn't even want Negroes in your churches," voiced one black student who later asked, "Are your ministers allowed to speak out on

civil rights in the churches?"

"We have the kind of church where we meet to see how we're going to handle a situation if a Negro tries to come in then we have a prayer meeting asking God to make harmony among the races!" one girl exclaimed angrily. "I just don't understand that!"

"My minister would probably get kicked out if he said anything," another spoke.

Most agreed with her. Most of them also expressed a desire to continue the dialogue.

"I hope we can have more dialogue in the future because I think blacks and whites need to meet on an individual basis," said Diane.

"The Philosophy Club and the Young Democrats have expressed a desire to continue the dialogue."

Letters to the Editor

[*The Spectator*, February 20, 1969]

An open letter:

This letter should, perhaps, be written by a committee of the people involved. However, compositions by committee must wait 'til we all "remember at any convenient time," and this is too important to lay fallow.

Last week, February 10-14, a few members of a social club gave up their memberships and I, the undersigned, dropped my bid. We all did this for trifling points, a sense of honor and a desire to stand for our convictions.

The convictions in question are basic: (1) that we have the right to choose friends; (2) that we and our friends should be judged on the basis of our personal merits, not according to race, and because we aren't carbons if the "W" image; and (3) that the right to deny others their rights is, for us, non-existent.

Speaking for myself alone, I will add a fourth conviction. Liberty, though spiritually inalienable, is in a physical and political sense very evanescent. The only way to preserve this delicate state of being is to stand ready to defend it at all costs every moment. In this we are all lax.

We have stood by our convictions and for honor and affection defended our friends.

Now I, personally, challenge every person on this campus to diligently examine their ethics, their religious beliefs, and their attitudes. I challenge them to accept nothing as true only because it has been decided or is an ingrained belief. If, after you have honestly inquired of your mind and soul, you have a defense for denying humans their liberties, you should leave the country. It is the worst crime to accept the joys of liberty without its responsibilities. If you have no defense for this injustice, then be reaffirmed in a hatred of hypocrisy, stand by your convictions.

This letter is not intended as an attack on the right of club members to choose pledges or with whom to associate, this is a right in which I believe most strongly. The purpose of this letter is to shed the light of honest doubt upon the legitimacy of their motives.

In answer to my own challenge, I say, mea culpa. If you will pardon a quote Mr. Paul Simon, "I have tended my own garden much too long."

May God give you peace,

Janet M. Wilder

In Their Own Words

Acceptance

"The first time I felt like that school was a part of my life was when the multi-culture group... decided to give us a plaque, and I went, and I for the first time realized that... this is my school, too." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"A lot of the people that I really, in the beginning, became friends with because I would have my music on in my room and... the door is cracked... at the bottom of the door there was a light, you could see that somebody was there and were listening. And as time went by, they would knock on the door, and the next thing I know, I got a room full of people that, you know, 'Show me how to do this.' And 'Show me how to do that.' So, we learned real quick that one of the ways of us making friends was the dancing." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"You know what? You feel what you don't know.... Or you don't understand.... So at the W... you know there might be one white girl sitting there, and we have conversation. And then she sees that I am a human being just like she is, that we speak and do some of the same things.

So I acquired some really nice white friends at the W, and by the second semester, I had me a nice little group of friends who was of a different race because we communicated... it was just getting used to that idea... and once you get to know a person, it makes a difference, but you gotta put forth that effort.

And now... nobody gets up when we come out and watch this... Nobody necessarily get up and move from the table when we sit down. Now there's always gonna be those that will continue on but then for the most part... they would... start sitting with us." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"When you actually live on campus... It's a different experience... it was scary, because I'm going into the unknown, but, at the same time that it's scary, it's also very fulfilling. And, they didn't want us there, I mean, they wasn't opening arms saying, 'Hey.' You know, with time, it made that difference." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

"I wasn't going to let anybody steal my joy. And... I made... friends... as I say, even in some of the social clubs. I had friends in there, real good friends." --- **Dianne Adams**

"My experiences at the W was outstanding to me. I still communicate and keep in touch with quite a few of the students I went to school with... black and white." --- **Dianne Adams**

"I will talk to people anytime. They could be purple with pink polka dots, and I will talk — I'll talk to them. So, I don't meet strangers, and I

didn't meet strangers then. I just felt like the young ladies were going to befriend or talk to me or not talk to me, and if they didn't talk to me, it was okay. I was not upset with them, and if they did, I was very glad."
 --- Earlene Friday



"Project" by Desarea Guyton (2016)

Ode to Freckles, Or, Being Spotted Is An Honorable Condition

VERA E. SCHULTZ (1981)

O spot, God wrought you here and there
 To spatter face from chin to hair,
 From shoulder down to fingertip,
 From twinkling toe to swinging hip.

Our Maker did not give a jot
 Whereon my bod, he put a spot,
 And like some frenzied artist new
 He flung the paint about like dew.

Now be-spotted with my pigment
 Separated like a figment
 Of an imagination wild;
 Why did He do this to His child?

I think He must have thought it plain
 To have our covers all the same,
 "Would it show variety
 A monotone society?"

So, some are white and some are black,
 And some are brown, and oh! alack!
 Some of us are pied or spotted,
 Freckled, patched, striped or dotted.

Calico cats and masked racoons,
 And peacocks' glorioso plumes
 With eyes that see not, though we see.
 They are all freckled, just like me.

Pigmentation, does it matter
 How the good Lord deems to scatter?
 All at once or patchwork quilted
 We are all his own anointed.

The Line

ANONYMOUS (1999)

Love is the answer.
Love is the way; then why the
 Hell am I so lost?
I know the answer.
I know the way; why can't
 I see?
Love is blind.
Why must we love in relation
 to standards.
Standards set by those closed
 minded people too scared
 to feel, too ignorant to care.
They are the little children
 that never grow up.
Why must I cross that
 imaginary line that I have
 been raised to stay to the right of.
Because I love and know
 what makes me happy.
Because I am a better person,
 to the left of that line,
than those who can only
sit and stare, like cows
 gazing at the grass
 on the other side of the
 barbed wire fence.
I have found the love.
I have found the way.
I am only lost to those
 flock of sheep who can
 only walk around in their pasture of shit
 They created.

Not Fittin' in

QUOC NGUYEN (2016)

Fittin' right in this world just isn't for me
They laugh and holler! I just want them to let me be
Let me learn, let me see, let me hide under the shade of the magnolia tree
I move along minding my own business
But they follow with abuses and they all seem vicious
I'm the same as everyone, there's no need to be suspicious
But I am me
Just please let me be
I'm the same as you, you're the same as me
So why can't we all be under the same magnolia tree?

In Their Own Words

"I knew I could have gotten my education anyplace else, but it's like, I'm not going to let that school defeat me. I have got to go back. And I tried three or four times before I finally graduated. But I couldn't stay. I would break down and cry...

The last time was in... '92. I said, 'I'm going back.'... I was in my forties then. I said, 'I don't care what — I don't care how much I cry. I don't care how it gets on my nerves. I am going to make it.'... And I would cry, I would break down... But I made it." --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

"I'm very, very proud of what it stands for today. You know, we've come a long way. And I hope that those of you young people that are there now will realize that it wasn't that way always. It wasn't that way. I'm glad it happened, it was a learning experience. For a long time, it left a bad taste in my mouth, but today I'm thankful. I'm thankful." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"We from time to time would run into different things but somehow it didn't stop us from what we needed to do." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

Triumph



"Street Dream" by Marsha Alcox (1985)

Chased by Demons

NIKITA AANGDEMBE SUBBA (2016)

I say that I am chased by demons,

Demons who are not willing to look past the color of my skin.

All those chasing demons will not be able to notice my struggles that helped me chisel all the beautiful things in my life. They do not know my long lists of achievement, or the problems that I have efficiently resolved.

Neither will those chasing demons ever be able to reach out to my mind to hear my brilliant thoughts or be able to relinquish the world in my perspective.

The demons that chase me will only refuse to address my strong and my beautiful personality that I behold and could share with the world.

All that those chasing demons can do is limit me, my capabilities, my potential, my strength and my dreams to the mere color tone of my skin. They say, my skin color is a little too dark. Did you visualize the irony of the situation yet, oh chasing demons?

I have been chased by demons for a long time, demons who tighten my lips and shaken up my feelings for myself. But maybe those demons taught me a better lesson, a lesson to believe in myself. For what those chasing demons have not realized yet, is that no limitations have even a fickle of strength to smolder the love I have for myself. For, this girl, the girl who is a little too dark, has gained enough courage to uplift the darkness of those chasing demons with only the aspiration that burn through her heart.



Untitled Silkscreen by Janice Kraft (1976)

Summer, 2009, Friday Morning Assembly

AMAN KHAN (2016)

“.....thank you everybody.”

(For a moment I felt the land under my feet had been seized and the entire universe was over me. All of a sudden, I compare myself with the frog in the well, who wants to scrutinize the world outside, for it to understand and get understood. But no matter how much she bounces, ultimately never rescues herself. That had been happening with my life. I also want to speak up because the world wants to hear me. Something happens in life that triggers a U-turn. As soon as I abandoned the stage, a voice echoed, “Mr. Khan, you are not good enough”. Enough to demotivate me. Finally the assembly was over and I was left unheard, uncherished and unrecognized.)

Poor English skill was one of the reasons, I discovered later. No doubt at all, since English isn't my native language. Sometimes the nightmare of not being accepted to your university also frightens me just because I am not born in America and English is not in my genes, therefore I couldn't write a great essay. English sucked me all the time. The incidence of my first interview in 2004 is still hovering around my brain.

“Namaste sir, sir and madam.”

(They smiled, but not the genuine one, I thought. I had no option but to smile back. The lady in the middle, I guessed, was principal. She asked me non-stop questions. I replied all in my broken English. After all, I was a non-English type.)

“Your answers are sensible, but your English is terrible” said she.

“That's why I am here, madam.” I responded reluctantly in Hindi-Nepali-English mixed tone.

One can fancy how appalling life would be when someone isolated himself in classroom just because he couldn't communicate in English and surrounded himself with fear of abating his pocket money as penalty for each time speaking in other language. Whatever. I accepted the challenge. I made a strong commitment. I brainstormed all the ideas to boost up my English skills.

The first idea hit me while the class was playing the word game. This idea proved to be worth a million dollars for SAT preparation. The second idea hit me when I saw a street boy delivering the newspaper to my neighbor. I would just pick up a paper in one hand and dictionary on the other, facing the mirror and reading out the articles aloud. For a moment, I felt as if someone from BBC updating you with world events.

The third idea I discovered while a few people came to our shop for help to set up their community library. I was impatient and visited ours. The old man there guided me to the English section. After scanning all the books, my eyes landed on a giant book, “My Experiment with Truth” portraying a black and white picture of Gandhi, whose origin we both share. As soon as I started flipping the pages, I felt like throwing it out of the window because first, it was so boring, and second, I could understand nothing. But promptly, I would remind myself about the commitment. I would repeat this phrase time and again. And finally it worked. Among all the novels I read, *Sophie's world* and *Alchemist* had immense influence on me. The details of struggling with my terrible English have been described in my autobiography: *Ups And Downs of my Life*, which I am completing in my gap year.

The incredible journey of life began the first time I stepped out of my comfort zone and expressed myself to the audience, befuddling them with my speech. Not surprisingly, within a year of my relentless effort, determination and motivation, I proved people wrong. At the end of the year, I was awarded with the “Best Volunteer Speaker of the Year 2010”. First time in life, I felt, “wow, I am stepping one step ahead!”



"Ginkgo" by Desarea Guyton (2016)

Glory Be

KATE BROWN (2016)

[Disclosure: this fictional piece was inspired by the history of the desegregation at MSCW. It is not intended to be an accurate reflection of real events or persons.]

My great-granddaughter, Beatrice, will be the first in our family to receive a college degree. Here in Mississippi in 1966, some colored girls are filled with hope for change and dream of opportunities their parents never dared. My Beatrice is one of those girls. All through high school, she followed the work of the brave pioneers of The Movement and would say to me, "B, I'm going to college. B, I'm going to be something someday. B, things are a-changing." I would shake my head at her naïve optimism, whispering prayers under my breath that she would remember her place and remain safe. When she graduated high school last year, she was at the top of her class, beating out even the smartest of the boys. I sat at that ceremony, pride and the beginnings of hope stirring in my chest, closed my eyes, and let 18 years fall away to find myself in a small hospital room, shared by my laboring granddaughter and three other colored women.

When she was born, I took one look and said, "I've heard that Beatrice is the name of a princess, and that right there is what a Beatrice looks like." She had a perfect rosebud mouth, creamy mocha skin, and eyes that drew you into their inky depths. She was a princess, just as I'd always heard a Beatrice should be. Her parents looked at me and nodded. They knew it too. She was perfection. Sheer perfection. And she deserved a royal name. "B," they said, "You're right. She will be called Beatrice."

And so it began for my great granddaughter. She grew up calling me B in a world so very different from my own. Beatrice received the best education her parents could provide, and as she grew, we hoped and prayed that she would have opportunities that we had not.

I once had a different life and a different name. If I close my eyes, I can flash back to that life. I can see mama's face and hear her voice. "Glory," she shouted as she called me to dinner. "Glory," she prayed as she tucked me in and stroked my cheek each night. "Glory," she whispered when she could no longer get out of bed. That was my mama: holding on tightly and fighting for herself until the end. Born into slavery, mama lost ten of her children over the years. The first son was born strong and big for his age. He was sold when he was just seven. They say mama never quite recovered. Over the next fifteen years, six more sons and three daughters were ripped from her arms and taken as

she begged and pleaded and wailed and cursed and screamed. They say she never gave one up easily and that each time, they thought she would die from the grief of it. Eventually, she had no more children to lose.

When she realized she was carrying me, shock filled her — shock and a strong resolve. At 48 years of age, the pregnancy surprised her and came amidst whispers of the end of the War Between the States and the growing hope of freedom. My mama had a will of iron, and they said she used that obstinacy to keep me from getting born until I could be born free. Mama's stubbornness was a family legend. They say she kept me inside of her by sheer willpower for weeks after I should've been born — weeks that meant I was born a free woman.

Just hours after word of emancipation reached our farm, mama went into labor. The midwife grabbed me as I was pushed into freedom, announced a healthy baby girl, and asked mama what I would be called. "Glory," mama whispered, "Glory be." Confused, the midwife began to write, her damp fingers carefully forming each letter. G L O R Y, she penned. "Glory be," mama continued to murmur, her voice strengthening with each repetition and resounding with awe and gratitude. The midwife, anxious to return home, shrugged and finished writing. B E, she wrote, and paused before adding A T R I C E with a flourish. With a satisfied nod, she reviewed her work: Glory Beatrice. She'd heard of an English princess called Beatrice, and in that moment gave me the name. It had a nice ring she thought, Glory Beatrice.

Mama called me Glory and raised me on a plot of land surrounded by a handful of others freed from her farm. Our cabin was small but tidy and filled with love. The younger people all struck out for new beginnings, but mama loved the land where she grew up and was able to rent our tiny cabin and pay for it with her washing and cleaning and mending work. Opening our door each morning, I would go from cabin to cabin, and the oldies would stroke my head and say, "Glory be. Glory be." I never doubted that I was loved and wanted. Treasured, even.

When I was six, Mama fell ill and never recovered. She went to be with the Lord the next year. The oldies shook their silver heads regretfully as mama's cousin came to take me away. She was called Birdie, and I'd only met her once. A kind woman, Birdie didn't have children of her own and took me in out of a sense of family obligation. When she came to pick me up, she lifted my chin, looked me up and down, and demanded to know my name. "Glory," I whispered. "Glory," she repeated, "Glory is no name for a child. What is your second name?" Meeting her eyes, I said boldly, "Beatrice. I was named for a princess." She harrumphed and blinked and shook her head. Eyeing my tattered dress and tangled hair, she pronounced that I was no princess. "B," she

said, "You will be called B." And so I came to be known only as B. I never saw the oldies again, and I pushed the painful memories of mama far from my mind.

Birdie was a strict taskmaster but loved me in her own way. She was intent on putting as much distance between slavery and our new life as she could. We never talked about the oldies or mama or freedom or Jim Crow. Instead, she taught me to keep my head and eyes lowered, to say "ma'am and sir" with respect, to remember my place, and to stay safe in an unsteady world. I learned to value that security, the knowing how to avoid trouble and how to survive amidst the tension of being colored in the Deep South. I grew up, married, and worked for a family raising their babies. "B," everyone called me. At times, wisps of memory would stir within me, teasing with their hints of strength and independence. It was easier, though, to remember my place and to keep the peace. "You're no Glory. You're no princess," I would remind myself.

It is 1966, and Beatrice is among the brave few integrating our state women's college. Today, my Beatrice came home for the weekend, still filled with hope but beginning to feel disheartened. "Progress is so slow," she said, and I could see the doubt in her eyes. I felt that flicker of rebellious will that was my legacy. I thought about the decades of keeping my eyes down, of not taking up too much space in a room, of restraint and denial and refusing to challenge or even to hope. And I was ashamed. My mama had wanted more for me, I knew. My mama would have expected more of me. I took her hands and looked into those inky depths and asked, "Beatrice, what is my name?" Confused, her eyes met mine full of question and worry. "B," she said, "that's your name. What's going on, B?" I stared at my princess, the hope of my family, born just generations from enslavement, my brave fighter. "Beatrice," I began, "My mama had a will of iron." I told her then that I had been called Glory. I told her the story from the beginning, as it should have always been told. As I spoke, haltingly at first, that tiny ember banked into a roaring fire, and I almost couldn't get the words out quickly enough. I felt the iron will of my mama surge through my veins, and I raised my head, eyes flashing, and repeated, "I am called Glory. My name is Glory." Over the thunderous pounding of my heart, I could hear mama's whisper, "Glory be. Glory be." I closed my eyes and savored the sound of her voice. Rolled the letters around my tongue, until they settled into that word: Glory. My name. My legacy. Mama's whispered prayer of gratitude. For the first time in my life, I recognized freedom, and I knew my Beatrice was headed toward freedom. True freedom.

Glory be.

In Their Own Words

Remembering

"It just was kind of a bad taste in my mouth. I went back, and it was anxiety, I guess. Just being there. Just remembering everything, and until just a few years ago, I was not a happy camper to even go on that campus."

--- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"My only thing that used to bother me — I worked a long time in Sears. I would see the black girls come in who were attending the W, and a lot of them had a little arrogance about them.

Now, I resented that. I resented the fact that, you know, they walked around with a lot of arrogance. You know, and I would go, 'You don't even know what price was paid for you to be able to attend that school.' I said, 'You know, you just don't know what we went through.'

No, it was never put in a newspaper. It was never violence with demonstrations and riot, but we paid our own kinda price, and it's still there with us." --- **Diane Hardy Thompson**

"I'm happy to see that you're there. And I hope you will remember that there was a price paid for the experiences that you're enjoying." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"If I could, would I change anything? No, I would do it all over again. I would just do it with a little more determination." --- **Laverne Greene Leech**

"If I had to do it over again, I would do it again. Because the experience... and getting to be able... to travel and participate, you can't beat it... I'm glad I was among the first to actually... live on campus as a freshman. And then to live in the Mag and... I wouldn't trade that experience." --- **Toni Harrison Moss**

[Recommending the W] "Not at that time. Nope. I thought about that when I thought of that question... I wouldn't.

I tell you why, it's because a lot of the girls at that time that I knew, especially in D.C., they wouldn't survive the W. Being down South, it's blatant there, the prejudice was, you know what I mean... I was afraid to invite any of them to come to the W because of the experiences there, because... Prejudice was so blatant down here that I felt like it'd put them in danger. You know, despite the experiences they've had, even the experiences on the campus." --- **Dianne Adams**

"I associate the W with all of my successes and everything, you know. It's... because of my experiences that I enjoy doing things for people." --- **Dianne Adams**



Untitled Oil by Jessie Whitehead (1976)

