

# The New W&L

BY JOHNNY E. MORRISON

The turn of the sixties brought about a change among the previously all-white institutions of higher learning. This has caused some white intellectuals and students to rejoice because of this "new era" and some to be the victims of "a back to normalcy" desire.

This new era is the presence of Black students on formerly all-white colleges and universities. When I speak of back to normalcy, I am referring to those students who still have their mothers' and fathers' sickness—the belief that white people are superior and Blacks are inferior. The purpose of this concise, but provocative editorial is to expose the true experiences of a Black student on a previously all-white and now a predominately white campus such as Washington and Lee University. This vis-a-vis essay will only touch upon some of the things which we Blacks encounter at Washington and Lee.

I will try to cause the reader to use the mechanics of his intellect to ponder upon the matter. My only hope is that those who have never gone through this experience do not say "I know how you feel" because that will be a lie beyond comprehension. I think it will be more appropriate for you to say "I am in sympathy with you."

When one touches upon the social aspects of the Black students, he will find a consensus of "not too good and sometimes very bothersome." The following are responses

from some Black students to the question, "How has social life been at Washington and Lee University?"

Student I: "As far as getting down to girls' schools, it was difficult because no brother has a car, but you could sometimes get a ride with a white guy. On that angle, you never knew when you had a date. In general, social life was a day here because this is where we are based at."

Student II: "Miserable, unthinkable. The most exciting things were being turned away from a free concert, kicked out of a fraternity's open party and occasional encounters with red-necks."

Student III: "There is no social life for a Black student. The geographical location of Washington and Lee is geared for the middle and upper-class white students who can afford to get a car. I do not consider it a social life to sit around and watch white guys have fun."

The social life at Washington and Lee has changed to a large degree for the best. Now that Black students see themselves as not only students of Washington and Lee but also as an integral part of the Black citizens of the communities, there are more things to get involved in and more places to go. All of the Blacks here agree in general that besides being bogged down with arduous study to make decent grades, playing pool, going to a movie, playing basketball or sitting together talking among ourselves, we are finding a much better social atmosphere be-

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cause we know most of the Blacks in the community.

The educational aspects relating to Black students can be shown by simply saying that the Black, upon entering a school with Washington and Lee's caliber realize that he is behind. He is behind in his education because his secondary education gave him limited access to quality educational material and facilities simply because the school was predominantly Black. Since calculus is the lowest math course here and no remedial course is offered in English, the Black student has to spend some of his time trying to learn what was not offered in his high school.

We now generally agree that the administration and the faculty is seeing that this is no longer a homogeneous student body but is now a heterogeneous student body. When we Blacks first entered Washington and Lee University and discovered the problems which existed, we gave the administration and the faculty a chance to alleviate them. Although the administration and faculty are not faultless and flawless, all of us — Black students — recognize their help and determination to get rid of the problems. Unlike most administrations and faculties at predominately white institutions, Washington and Lee recognizes that she is dealing with something unique and is trying to work out things in re-

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absolute penalty. He said that it would be a rare instance in which he would agree with permanent dismissal as an appropriate penalty, and expressed the opinion that the ostracism resulting from widespread scrutiny of a public notice of an honor violation would be a sufficient penalty in nearly all cases.

"B" also suggested several procedural changes in the EC's job of administering the Honor System. He advised that a much more intensive and lengthy orientation program be implemented and re-emphasized throughout the year. It was also his idea that a "pre-trial hearing" would be valuable in considering a possible violation, and that, in the event it was determined by the EC to proceed to a private hearing, the accused be permitted to have advisors, probably law students, sitting as advisors. He also felt that, in the event of a public hearing, the first twelve students chosen at random by the computer with no prior knowledge of the case be taken as jurors, and that the hearing should remain public, with the accused having the option of determining its location.

sponse to this uniqueness. Many problems still remain and many obstacles still block the road to success but we as Black students hope that the administration will continue to communicate and work along with us so we can have an amelioration of these problems and obstacles.

Black students have come a long way since last year. Other than the two Black students in law and the two Black seniors, all the other Blacks are freshmen and sophomores. Organizing ourselves into a group whose goal is to facilitate the eradication of the problems came quite easy. We, the Student Association for Black Unity, conceive of ourselves as an essential organization for both the University and the Black community. Our intention is to show the things needed at the University—from curriculum revision to recruitment and to propagate throughout the whole and the community what Blackness really is. This is one of the main reasons for Black Culture Week.

This week began on Monday, February 28 and will end March 4. Professor Herbert Marshall of Norfolk State College will be the guest speaker tonight. This speech is in the memory of Leslie Smith, the first Black Law student to graduate from Washington and Lee University. Smith was slain while working for the Justice Department in Washington, D.C. this year. The Black students from the Roanoke Public school will give their Black History Presentation titled "Legacy of Freedom" on Thursday.

We previously tried to get I.C. Norcom High School from Portsmouth, Virginia. This fell through because of our—Student Association for Black Unity—lack of funds to meet the cost. We hope and are diligently working towards having them during the latter part of March. There will be a symposium Friday and its theme will be "**On Being Black—In a White Society**". The Black students of Washington and Lee and surrounding colleges will make up the panel. The last event of Black Culture Week will be held on Saturday night. This will be a formal or semi-formal Ball and the music will be given by The Dynamics of Lynchburg.

Yes, this is the first time that something of this nature has ever been given at Washington and Lee University. I did not elaborate on the white students' concern and attitude towards Blacks and Blackness but their concern or indifference will be shown by their presence and support during the first Black Culture Week at Washington and Lee University. This school is no longer the same as it was five years ago. This is now the new Washington and Lee University.