

The Wellspring

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Inclusion is the Wellspring of Democracy

Third Annual Civil Rights Education Summit Held in Oxford

By Susan M. Glisson

The Third Annual Civil Rights Education Summit commemorated a milestone year in the life of the University of Mississippi. Held on the Oxford campus June 27-29, the teachers' summit celebrated the 10th anniversary of *One America: the President's Initiative on Race*. Announced by President Bill Clinton in June 1997, One America was an effort to prod national dialogue on race. The University of



Civil Rights Education Summit panelists Angela Oh, Dr. John Hope Franklin, former Mississippi governor William Winter, and Michael Wenger

Mississippi hosted the only Deep-South public forum for the Initiative. Ultimately, more than 160 citizens participated in racial dialogue groups, and the success of the public forum prompted the university to create the Winter Institute.

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Tallahatchie County's Emmett Till Memorial Commission Plans Historic Ceremony

By Susan M. Glisson

On October 2 at 10 a.m. at the courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, the Emmett Till Memorial Commission of Tallahatchie County will host an historic ceremony, calling for an honest investigation into the county's history. The biracial commission has been meeting and planning since last year to commemorate the life and tragic murder of Emmett Till. More than 51 years ago, on August 28, 1955, 14-year-old Till was kidnapped in the middle of the night from his uncle's home near Money, Mississippi, by at least two men, one from LeFlore County and one from Tallahatchie County. Till, a black youth from Chicago visiting family in Mississippi, was kidnapped and murdered, and his body thrown into the Tallahatchie River. He had been accused of whistling at a white woman in Money. His badly beaten body was found days later in Tallahatchie County.

The grand jury meeting in Sumner indicted Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam for murder. The two men were then tried on these charges and were acquitted by an all-white, all-male jury after a deliberation of just over an hour. Within three months of their acquittal the two men confessed to the kidnapping and murder.

In 2004, the Federal Bureau of Investigation reopened the case at the insistence of the Emmett Till Justice Campaign. The investigation resulted in a grand jury hearing this past spring, but the jury refused to return a bill of indictment.

Despite that development, the local community is eager to understand this history and how it shapes the area today. Representatives from the Commission have visited with the Philadelphia Coalition in Neshoba County to learn about the work in that community surrounding the 1964 civil rights murders. Members of the Coalition also have visited

Tallahatchie County. Among the Till Commission's efforts is a drive to restore the Sumner Courthouse to its 1955 appearance and establish a civil rights museum within the building.

There are also efforts underway to create a community center with programming for young people.

In addition to the October ceremony calling for truthful dialogue about the case, the group is creating a civil rights

The courthouse at Sumner, Mississippi, will be restored to its 1955 status so it will be both a museum and a functioning seat of government.



Members of the Emmett Till Memorial Commission in a meeting.

driving tour in the county, establishing an historic marker at the Sumner courthouse, and working with the local school district to develop a civil rights curriculum. Belinda Stewart, the architect overseeing the restoration of the courthouse, said, "The Tallahatchie County Courthouse in Sumner, Mississippi, is nationally significant because of events occurring there at the beginning of the civil rights movement in the United States. The Till case was highly publicized internationally and the acquittal of the defendants changed the course of history for this nation."

Civil Rights Education Summit *continued from Front Cover*

Sessions for the education summit featured reflections from members of the One America Advisory Board, including former Governor William Winter, Los Angeles attorney and Buddhist priest Angela Oh, and Harlem-based minister Rev. Suzan Johnson Cook. The chair of the advisory board, historian Dr. John Hope Franklin, gave the summit's keynote address, which was a retrospective on America's racial past and present.

Another speaker was James Loewen, co-author of the American history textbook "Mississippi: Conflict and Change." The book, co-authored with Charles Sallis in 1974, won the Lillian Smith Award for Best Southern Nonfiction, but was not approved for use in the Mississippi school system at the time. This led to the lawsuit *Loewen v. Turnipseed*, in which Judge Orma R. Smith of the U.S. District Court ruled that the rejection of the textbook was not based on "justi-

for the authors who presented workshops at the summit.

Michael Wenger, who served as one of three deputy directors of One America, said, "The summit revealed how far we have come, yet how far we still have to go, in bridging racial divisions and achieving enduring racial justice. The



Teachers participate in a workshop at the third annual Civil Rights Education Summit.



fiable grounds" and that the authors were denied their right to free speech and press.

Dr. James Campbell also offered a plenary session on confronting the legacies of historical justice, based on his work chairing Brown University's effort to explore its ties to slavery.

A variety of workshops ranged from oral history, to curriculum development at the elementary through college levels, to the music of the Civil Rights Movement. Two booksignings rounded out the program, one with Dr. Andy Mullins and Governor Winter for *The Measure of Our Days*, and one

Winter Institute is performing a great service in convening these annual summits and in demonstrating to the nation the importance of meaningful interracial communication and interaction as the road to the fair and just society we seek."

Next year marks the 200th anniversary of the legal end of United States involvement in the transatlantic slave trade. It thus also marks an increase in the domestic slave trade. As we continue to live with the legacies of such atrocities,

the Institute will continue to offer appropriate tools for teachers and communities to teach and to learn about this painful but important history. Next year, UNESCO's Transatlantic Slave Trade Project and the Rosa Parks Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, will join the Winter Institute in sponsoring the 4th Annual Civil Rights Education Summit. The event will mark the important anniversary and place it in the contemporary context of the post Hurricane Katrina Gulf Coast. We hope you will join us for this significant gathering.

Institute Helps Kick Off Year of Dialogue on Race

By Patrick Weems

“It takes no special genius, it takes no great quality of leadership to tell our fellow man what is wrong, but it does take a superior quality of leadership and a deep insight into history and unto people to provide effective answers.”

—WILLIAM WINTER, 1966

The official start of the “Welcome Table: A Year of Dialogue on Race” was June 21, 2007, on the steps of the Mississippi State Capitol. With hundreds in attendance—including several choirs, interfaith religious leaders, former and current state elected officials, and students from high schools, colleges, and universities—the event was both a celebration and a challenge to help make our state a better place for all its citizens.

For most Mississippians dialogue on race did not start on that day in June, 2007, and will not end on June 21, 2008. Racial dialogue has been part of our Mississippi history for centuries.

But along the way in our history we’ve found it hard to communicate about matters of race. Rather than engage issues for the benefit of the state and its people, many Mississippians historically employed violence to maintain a white supremacist hierarchy begun in slavery. In the present, many Mississippians continue to avoid balanced dialogue, using more subtle tactics such as white flight and private academies.

As a letter inviting participation in the Welcome Table states, today in Mississippi “we stand on the cusp of change, which could be positive or negative. Leadership will make the difference. We can be better together than we were apart. We can build a beloved [Mississippi].”

We desperately need leaders to make a difference. Leaders are not necessarily politicians—in fact, leaders usually aren’t politicians. A leader is a person who has vision and

follows that vision in cooperation with those around him or her. Proverbs 29:18 states “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

The road to dialogue and progress in Mississippi will not be easy. As former governor William Winter said, “We must



Sababu Rashid delivers a Muslim call to prayer as members of a youth choir listen.



Participants at the kick-off of the Welcome Table year sign the commitment statement.

be willing to take chances and defy risks, stretching ourselves at times to limits that may exceed our grasp but that in the stretching will add to our strength and resiliency.”

I believe in Mississippians. We have come further than any state when it comes to racial dialogue, and with vision and continued action we can go further still. Let’s help Mississippi be the leading state on race relations.

The Mississippi Coalition for Racial Justice hopes that people of all different races and backgrounds will come to the Welcome Table sharing in the vision of a dialogue that can change our state. We need students, teachers, business people, and retirees to come to the Welcome Table and provide answers to the problems that face Mississippi.

Race Writing Workshop Separates Civil Rights Myths from Truth

By Ginny Miller

Reprinted with permission from the *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*.

What she's heard about the Civil Rights Movement and what's truth about the Civil Rights Movement aren't the same thing for Patsy Pipkin, and she's black. "I learned about some of the things that happened before Rosa Parks," said Pipkin, an English teacher at Oxford Middle School participating in a June "Rethinking Race & Writing in Rural Schools" workshop sponsored by the University of Mississippi Writing Project and the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation.

Traditional narrative tells us that seamstress Parks sparked a boycott when she wouldn't give up her seat for a white passenger on a Montgomery bus in 1955, but it was the lesser known Claudette Colvin, a black teenager, who first refused to do so, said Dr. Susan Glisson of the Winter Institute, based on the Ole Miss campus. Black leaders preparing to boycott waited for a more opportune moment, Glisson said, because of rumors the 15-year-old Colvin was pregnant.

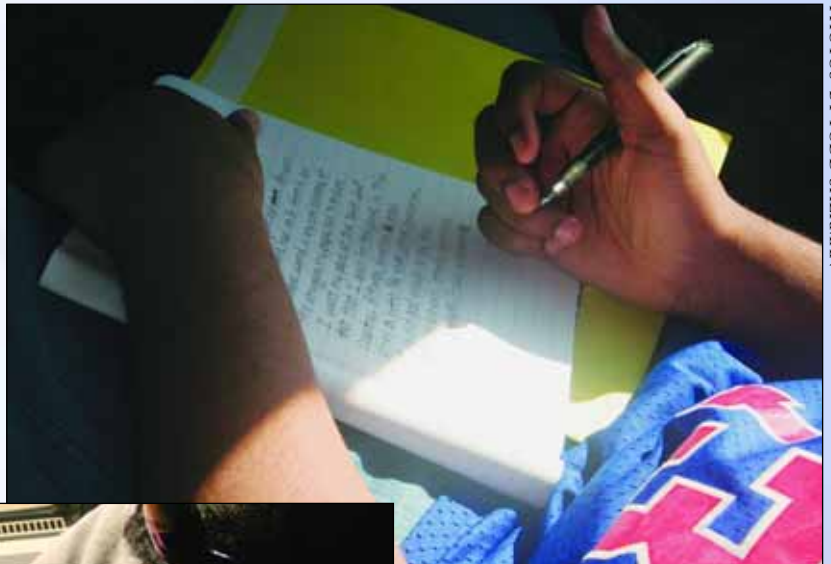
"I had never heard that before," a surprised Pipkin said after Glisson's Tuesday morning lecture. "She allowed us to tell what we knew and had us separate myth from truth."

Finding the hidden story, as well as using writing and other materials to study race, civil rights and Mississippi history, were the workshop's goals, said Allison Movitz, co-director of the Mississippi Writing Project.

"We wanted to come together and have these really tough conversations that need to be happening in the classrooms, but because of the controversial nature of it, to use writing as

a vehicle for thinking and rethinking," Movitz explained.

On Monday, day one of the five-day workshop, the group took a walking tour of the UM campus with people



PHOTOS BY TODD SHERMAN



Participant in the Rethinking Race & Writing in Rural Schools workshop.

familiar with the riots that broke out when James Meredith enrolled as the university's first black student in 1962. They also visited the library's Special Collections, viewing a slave ledger and historic photographs.

Starkville's Emily Noble, who is white, said she signed up for the workshop because her work with

the Mississippi Writing Thinking Institute takes her to three predominantly black schools. "I strongly believe in relevancy to where I am," she said.

"We don't have integration, at least not in Marshall County," said Michelle Hancock of Holly Springs, a white teacher who has taught at the nearly all-white Marshall Academy and mostly black H.W. Byers High School. "Teaching this to children will deepen their understanding."

Cultivating Criticism: Two Years of The Jim

By David Molina

For a while, it seemed as if I'd never find a narrative vehicle for this article; writes and rewrites have mostly hovered around uncomfortably fast-paced personal histories—texts that anxiously try and get to the point, all the while clear that the point has plenty to do with my work, but little to do with me. This is fitting; my work in Mississippi for the past two years has been dedicated to creating spaces for others to fill, and to assist them in filling it with whatever they find most appropriate. So it is with the beginning to this article: a stage in which someone else is most appropriately the primary voice. This morning, a student of mine—from Jim Hill High School in Jackson, Mississippi—commented on a recent blogpost, which led me to her own newly formed blog, in which she writes: “I have a confession to make: I love Ole Miss. I’ve only visited the campus once, but I fell in love with the place. I’m a high school junior now, so I’m going to do my best this year so I can get a chance to go to Ole Miss. The reason why I am going to choose Ole Miss as a first choice is because of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation. Two fantastic teachers of mine have worked with them and I want to follow the trend and work for them also.”

Just barely beneath the surface of this “confession” are undercurrents of those crucial things I’ve been delighted to assist in cultivating within the Jim Hill community for the past two years. I could not have illustrated any better by personal history or anecdote that the effects of a commitment within teachers and students to engage in a candid process of critical inquiry and open dialogue are deep and far-reaching. Clearly, conflicts of race and identity run strong within and between us, and I find it meaningful that a student of mine—currently attending a dominantly African-American high school—can engage in the richness and complexity of Ole Miss with a sense of genuine optimism and motivation (as very well she should), instead of the cynicism and hesitance that I so often see in her peers (and even her elders) regarding the university. It should be noted, moreover, that her visit to the campus came as part of a field trip with the Jim Hill Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Club (CRCL), of which I am co-facilitator. During our stop at Ole Miss (en route to the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis) we spent time with Dr. Andy Mullins reflecting on the University Greys and the James Meredith controver-

sy, and with Dr. Don Cole, reflecting on his process of student radicalization/activism and eventual reconciliation with the University. So it was not just a walk in the Grove that has led this student to declare, “I love Ole Miss”—and rightly so.

My ostensible role for the past two years at Jim Hill was that of mathematics teacher—leading courses in Algebra, Trigonometry, Calculus, and the like. However, as many (though not nearly enough) teachers will tell you, the school



David Molina (second from left) with members of the Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Club at a meeting of the Mississippi Coalition

day neither began at 8:15 nor ended at 3:30. It was within those spaces before, between, and after school that CRCL began. During the 2005-2006 school year, my colleague Jacob Roth and I—both first-year teachers and participants in the Mississippi Teacher Corps—found ourselves quickly and intensely fixed within the dilemma that a teacher won’t get much done in a school building without engaging in and coming to terms with the community he or she is serving. However, throughout this process of engagement, Jacob and I became deeply interested in complex issues that appeared strongly tangled within our students’ identities and their community—e.g. teenage pregnancy, a culture of violence/machismo, hip hop and misogyny, racial signifiers and academic success, etc., what Cornel West refers to as the “nihilistic threat in Black America.” Though we wanted more and more to engage our students in dialogue about these and other topics, Jacob and I realized that it would have been wildly inappropriate for us to impose a particular agenda for approaching issues that clearly belonged to our students. The agenda itself had to come from within them as well (if at all),

Hill Civil Rights/Civil Liberties Club

and all we could do was hope to craft and maintain a space wherein interested students could safely and productively engage in a critical look at themselves and their own community. From within this abstracted space—dedicated to cultivating critical inquiry and intercommunity dialogue—CRCL began to meet every Wednesday after school in Jake’s room.

Over a span of two years, CRCL expanded to include active participation from three high schools in the Jackson Metro area: two public, predominantly black—Jim Hill and Murrah High School—and one independently private, predominantly white—St. Andrew’s Episcopal School. We met week after week in either Jake’s or my room at Jim Hill—expanding to the library whenever we ran out of space. Topics of inquiry and dialogue ranged from school resegregation, to organic farming, to hip-hop and misogyny, to the importance of voting, to Don Imus/Michael Richards, to global warming. Speakers ranged from area hip-hop artist Kamikaze, to Mississippi Supreme Court Justice James Graves, to former Mississippi governors William Winter and Ray Mabus, to NAACP State Congress President Derrick Johnson, to Civil Rights Movement activists Lawrence Guyot and Rims Barber. Activities ranged from Holocaust memorial services at the local synagogue, to young voter registration, to assistance with the 2006 Jackson Public School Bond Issue campaign, to community service at a food bank,



Civil Rights/Civil Liberties club members on a tour at The University of Mississippi.

to participation in the Mississippi Coalition for Racial Justice, to Movement-focused field trips to Ole Miss, Memphis, Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma.

Sometime in November of 2006, I—in a moment of deep



Civil Rights/Civil Liberties club members helped with a bond vote for the Jackson Public Schools.

frustration—gave Susan Glisson at the Winter Institute a call. I told Susan the following: that I loved my students, I loved the work that I was doing, and I loved the community that I was working in, but that being a full-time classroom teacher was not something I wanted to continue doing. The aspects of my job I was passionate about—everything associated with CRCL as well my growing interest in education resource reform—seemed irreconcilably at the periphery of my work. Susan and the Institute had worked with and supported CRCL previously, and I wanted to know if she had any advice as to how I could find a way to make community dialogue and education resource reform at the center of my workday.

Seven months later, I happily joined the Institute as a project coordinator—working on developing a state network of CRCL-like groups and developing a web-based teacher facilitation model to help integrate civil rights data and concepts into the classroom. I am all the more excited that in the process of opening up spaces for inquiry and dialogue, young people may value that process enough to “continue the trend”—as my student posted on her blog this morning. It is encouraging to know that in this space—the Institute, yet another structure filled with vastly different and thus differently effective voices—I can participate in its development, continuing to connect with young people that will become passionate about the roles they play at the University and throughout the state, and that they in turn will continue to preserve the Institute’s commitment to critical inquiry and intercommunity dialogue, continuing it within their own community, and taking it to others.

Regional Alliance Gains Momentum, Plans Fall Gathering in Oxford

By Susan M. Glisson

The Alliance for Truth and Racial Reconciliation (ATRR), a coalition of organizations dedicated to responding to the historic and continuing racial traumas in the region, continues to grow and expand. In April, the group held a planning session at Emory University in Atlanta. Topics of discussion included the recent U.S. Social Forum in Atlanta, the planned “Solving the Crimes of the Civil Rights Era” conference held at Harvard and Northeastern Law Schools, the efforts of the Liberian Truth Commission to reach out to citizens now residing in the U.S., and lobbying efforts to secure passage of the Emmett Till Bill.

At the conference in Boston, alliance members Andy Sheldon from Southern Truth and Reconciliation (STAR), Ed Whitfield from the Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Leroy Clemons from the Philadelphia Coalition, and Susan Glisson

Winter Institute began planning a pilot research project on the Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission, which spied on and intimidated civil rights activists as an arm of the state government. Jackson State University and Tougaloo College soon joined the collaborative, which will both establish a research agenda and support community efforts at prosecution, restitution, and reconciliation.

The Emmett Till Bill, which has passed the House of



ATRR member Andrew Sheldon speaking on a panel at the Solving the Crimes of the Civil Rights Era conference at Harvard Law School.



Alvin Sykes, Margaret Burnham, Susan Glisson, and Manning Marable participate in a panel at the Solving the Crimes of the Civil Rights Era conference at Northeastern Law School.

from the Winter Institute participated in sessions on recent and upcoming civil rights prosecutions. In addition, a researchers roundtable centered on current academic work around these cases. By the end of the Boston conference, representatives from Northeastern School of Law and UM’s

Representatives and awaits passage in the Senate, establishes a cold-case unit in the Department of Justice to investigate and help prosecute historic civil rights cases. Spearheaded by Kansas City-based Alvin Sykes of the Emmett Till Justice Campaign, the bill has gained many supporters, and members of the ATRR have consistently lobbied for its passage in Congress. Members continue to encourage support of the bill’s enactment.

At the April planning meeting in Atlanta, the group determined to host a conference every two years, selecting as host sites those states in which ATRR hopes to prod increased work. The 2008 conference will be held in Georgia, and conference organizers will gather this fall on November 9-11 at

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Moving Forward on the Mississippi Gulf Coast

by Jordan Butler

One of the worst national disasters in U.S. history. The largest displacement of people since the Great Depression. An event that created a negative economic impact felt nationwide. A storm with winds reaching 140 miles per hour, destroying homes, lives, and communities. Katrina. She was impartial in her path of ruin, leaving visible destruction of physical property but claiming much more, leaving her mark on Mississippi's Gulf Coast.

As a summer intern at the Winter Institute, I visited the Gulf Coast this past July for the first time since the storm. I was struck with deep feelings of guilt when I realized I had watched so much of the storm's aftermath that affected my loved ones from the comfort of my school in distant Tennessee. It was immediately clear to me that the tragedy that began August 29, 2005, continues still today. I was shocked at the devastation still visible after two years and disheartened in the face of such a daunting need to rebuild. Yet mostly I was disappointed in my lack of involvement with the recovery effort that is still very much in need of support.

After the initial shock subsided, I was able to find a sense of comfort in the recovery that was taking place and in the resilience of the communities that felt the brunt of the storm. Groups have come together in response to the tragedy with a common goal of rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

I was able to sit in on a meeting organized by one such group, which the Winter Institute helped organize and continues to support. They call themselves the Steps Coalition, composed of energetic community leaders and social justice advocates, whose mission is to "promote an equitable recovery and healthy, just and sustainable communities in South Mississippi." Steps continues to look into the face of this tragedy, helping to restore the dreams of Mississippians who are still rebuilding their lives.

When faced with the reality of the Gulf Coast's condition, it is easy to forget the chance we have to rewrite this tragedy. Groups like the Steps Coalition send the message that is so important for all of us to hear: that even in tragedy there is opportunity for greater change. We have a chance to build a new Mississippi. The Gulf Coast crisis underscores many issues apparent in the U.S., such as immigration, the war in Iraq, global warming,

poverty, human rights, and so forth. Because the Katrina crisis is relevant to all these issues, it should be used as a catalyst for national policy reform.

As time passes, the Gulf Coast community continues to search for closure and healing. We must shift focus from devastation to survival. Members of the Steps Coalition helped organize an interfaith sunrise service held on August 29, 2007, the two-year anniversary of the storm, at the Gulfside Assembly in Waveland, Mississippi—a town nearly wiped out by the hurricane.

I have come to understand a new sense of place here in Mississippi through my internship experience, just as the Coast communities are working to create a new sense of place. This process is one that takes time. It is not something that comes to us, but one that we must seek. I suppose this "sense of place" is a well-worn and common theme for Southerners. Eudora Welty recorded photographic images of the Mississippi Delta during the devastating depression as "one time, one place," and called it a "family album." The indelible images of the post-Katrina Gulf Coast add pages to



A meeting on the Mississippi Gulf Coast of the post-Katrina alliance the Steps Coalition.

the family album. My summer experience has brought these Mississippi communities into focus for me. I've come to a deeper appreciation of our individual and collective roles in rebuilding our Mississippi family. Those of us untouched physically by this tragedy have a special responsibility to support the restoration, because that's what families do.

A Different Kind of Reconciliation

by *Jeremy Hawkins*

Reconciliation comes in many forms, and when I arrived in Mississippi as a summer intern, I admit I knew of just one. I expected to be at the forefront of racial reconciliation and racial reconciliation alone.

However, I was wrong to assume that was the only kind of reconciliation I would take part in. It was my fate to learn and experience a different kind of reconciliation, one of personal reflection and acceptance of myself. Understand that I did get to see racial reconciliation happening, from Tallahatchie



Jeremy Hawkins (right) with interns Patrick Weems and Jordan Butler and Winter Institute executive director Susan Glisson

County to the steps of the State Capitol Building, but throughout my internship, I was emboldened to reconcile myself with my own demons. So, while my co-workers held my shaking hands, I dropped my façade, let down my barriers, and reconciled my past with my present. It was a struggle not unlike racial reconcilia-

tion, and now, for the first time, I can truly accept myself for who I am.

My experience, like the work being done by this Institute at the University of Mississippi, was painful yet needed. Healing is occurring in the Magnolia State. Do not be dismayed. Mississippi is truly a Wellspring of life with a beautiful future, and the Winter Institute is working tirelessly to aid that process by helping Mississippians reconcile the past, even down to its own staff. Thank you, Susan, Jordan, Dave, and Patrick. I will never forget your love, acceptance, and understanding.

Regional Alliance Gains Momentum *continued from Page 8*

UM's Oxford campus to plan for that event. ATRR Member Okolo Rashid, co-founder and executive director of the International Museum of Muslim Cultures, says, "ATRR represents a new broad-based movement for real sustainable social change in the American South toward truth-seeking, justice, and reconciliation, that can ignite the whole country. The November conference provides an opportunity for exposure to scholarly resources for framing our work strategy, and solidifying our relationship and efforts."

Rich Rusk, who helps coordinate work in Moore's Ford, Georgia, said, "For me, this conference at Ole Miss next November represents yet another chance to showcase the vital work being done across the South and nation by grassroots, community-based groups working for justice and racial healing from these vicious racial killings of long ago. At age 61, I have never met a more fascinating, passionate, skilled group of organizers. What a thrill it is to be working together in

"This conference... represents yet another chance to showcase the vital work being done across the South and nation by grassroots, community-based groups working for justice and racial healing..."

—RICH RUSK

common cause in this large, multiracial effort. In concert with other progressive people and organizations, what we can help resurrect and inspire a new movement, similar in scope to the Sixties with its passion and intensity, with millions of our fellow citizens working for positive social change in a variety of fields."

Respect Mississippi Student Group Plans an Active Year

by Bennett Mize

“Perhaps we can remember, if only for a time, that those who live with us are our brothers. That they share with us the same short moment of life. That they seek, as we do, nothing but the chance to live out there lives in purpose and happiness in winning what satisfaction and fulfillment they can. Surely we can work a little harder to bind up the wounds among us and to become, in our own hearts, brothers and countrymen once again.”

—SENATOR ROBERT F. KENNEDY

A year has passed since Respect Mississippi held its first student-led open dialogue on the lack of diversity at the University of Mississippi. After seeing the struggles and problems that still occur daily among different races at Ole Miss, and the furthering polarization among students due to color and dissimilarity, a small group of students took it upon themselves to change. The idea a year ago was to challenge ourselves to promote education and diversity, and then learn to challenge each other. Then, we could promote it as being an important element of our community. Essentially, we strive for love between and justice for our fellow human beings.

Open dialogue has been Respect Mississippi’s primary tool to achieve that element. We have established small groups in the homes of our friends in order to talk out our differences. The importance of this is immeasurable. We have heard the stories of men and women from all over Mississippi, the nation, and the world who inspire us to bring positive change here at Ole Miss. The Black Student Union, the International Student Organization, the Ole Miss NAACP, many Greek chapters, the William Winter Institute, and a growing number of other groups have been our close advocates and true companions in the dialogue. It is a long road, but due to the integrity of our friends, we can look forward to our upcoming year ahead.

Our president, Patrick Weems, said in addressing Respect Mississippi’s views during the last year that “The group does not want to stop with dialogue; instead, we feel

the best way to bring people together is by working in cooperation to accomplish goals.” With this in mind, Respect Mississippi has taken a closer initiative to plan a very active fall semester for 2007.

One of our goals is to propose a campus pledge towards diversity in the form of a statement that students and organizations will sign saying that they are for diversity on our campus and that they will work to earn and secure that goal. It is necessary for each student, in his or her unique position, to situate himself or herself in common principle to more efficiently tackle the tasks that are presented to us.

This pledge will signify our desire to break out of our tradition of racial segregation in social events and hopefully will motivate us through the years.

In direct response to the challenge that our campus can do better, the alumni center and Respect Mississippi have organized a campus event targeted at providing a safe—and social—space for addressing racial segregation. “The OMazing Race” will be a scavenger hunt on campus that will encourage students to step outside their normal social boundaries and strive toward common goals. Twenty groups of students will go through campus to find and solve clues that highlight the University of Mississippi’s difficult history.

In addition, starting this fall, we hope to spread our ideas to colleges and universities all over Mississippi. We want to encourage other students across the state to set in motion their own groups targeted at racial reconciliation and social justice.



If you are interested in the work of the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, please let us know how you would like to participate:

- I would like to participate in the Welcome Table: A Year of Dialogue on Race.
- I would like more information on the Alliance for Truth and Racial Reconciliation.
- I would like to be on the mailing list for a future Winter Institute e-newsletter.
My email address is _____
- I would like to receive email notices about future Civil Rights Education Summits.
My email address is _____
- I would like information on making a donation.

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

I prefer to be contacted by Phone E-mail US Mail

Comments: _____

Please fax your information request to 662-915-6728
or mail it to The William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, P.O. Box 1848, University, MS 38677

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