

# THE NU MESSAGEBIAN



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[October 25 - November 1, 2001]



## The History of the African-American Cultural Center: From the Perspective of a Student, Professional Staff and Alumni

By Tracey E. Ray, Ph.D and the (late) Tony K. Williamson (in loving memory)



Tracey E. Ray, Ph.D and the late Tony K. Williamson, first Editor-In-Chief of The Nubian Message

On a number of occasions, I have heard Dr. Lawrence Clark compare the African American experience and struggle to that of a relay race. One of the critical aspects of the race being the passing of the baton from one runner to the next. Understanding that if the baton drops to the ground the race can be considered over. The responsibility of passing the baton is twofold. The person passing the baton must be careful to ensure that the person receiving the baton has the full grip and composure to accept it. Secondly, the person receiving the baton must have a willingness and understanding of what they need to do with the baton as they run their leg of the race. In my effort to share with students, faculty and staff some of the history of the African American Cultural Center and how it came to be, from one perspective I may be running my leg of the race, while from another I am passing you the baton.

One can't talk about the history of the AACC without talking about student activism. In 1956, five African American students enrolled at NCSU as undergraduates. More, but still a small number of African American students began attending NCSU in the late 60s and early 70s. Any African American student of that era will tell you how small the numbers were. Give them a name and they can tell you if that person was a student here, because they all clearly knew each other. They were very connected to one another. There was a small number of African American faculty at the university. However, small numbers did not stop the strong level of advocacy that had begun to add programs to support African American students.

With so few African American students on campus in the 70s, many black students felt alienated and needed a place to gather together. Many students sought comfort in the home of Dr. Augustus Witherspoon or met in a room in the basement of the YMCA building, which was located where our School of Design now stands. This room was called the "Ghetto." In 1974, the "Ghetto" their place of comfort, was torn down by the University in order to make room for the School of Design building.

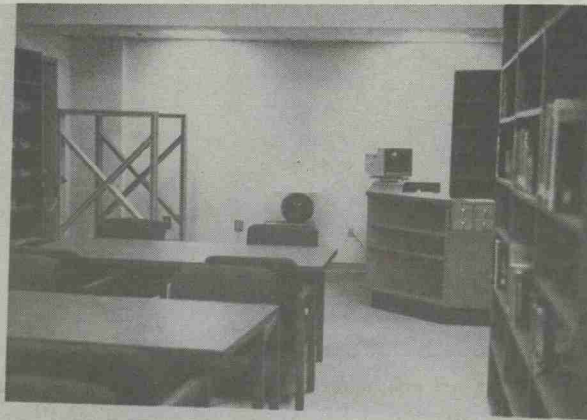
In January 1974, students asserted themselves to let administrators know about their needs and concerns. The concerns at the time were: a need for a black cultural arts center and a coordinator to go with it, improved recruitment and admission of blacks, an administrative Dean for black students and more black staff for dorms. In regards to the "Ghetto" being torn down, students became "upset" and appealed to Dean Talley, the administrator of Student Affairs. Dean Talley felt as though there was no need for two student centers. Dean Talley spoke with Augustus Witherspoon, leader of the movement and proposed having a Black Union. Dr. Witherspoon replied that there was no need for one. Having a Black Union was not the same as having a cultural center. Bitter feelings began to engulf the minds and hearts of Black students and faculty. Dr. Augustus Witherspoon and a representative from St. Augustine's College organized a retreat.

On the evening of the retreat, 14-15 Black students and 20-25 white students along with Black faculty, gathered with Dean Talley and Assistant Dean Poole. Dean Poole gave an explanation for tearing down the "Ghetto." During his explanation, a young black female student shared her feelings concerning the need for an

African-American Cultural Center. She strongly argued the Black race's daily struggle for self-pride and dignity on a predominantly white campus.

After she expressed her frustrations, Dean Talley left in absolute rage while students hands came together to applaud the students views. Students then began to convey their feelings to one another. As Black students shared their daily struggles on campus, the Black and White students united in efforts to create an enjoyable learning environment at NCSU. In efforts to appease the African-American students they were given a temporary place for two to three months. However students desired a more permanent home for the African-American Cultural Center.

In 1975, after much protesting, African-Americans and White students united. The university gave the African-American students the old Print Shop on the corner of Dan Allen Drive and West Dunn Avenue. This building, which was also known as the "CC" or "Sweatbox," was poorly equipped. The ventilation system was poor and the center had no air conditioning and no budget. I recall questioning why the building had no air conditioning and inquired about the possibility of adding air conditioning to the building. I was told the university's administration had been approached by students many times about renovating the building and students were told that nothing could be done with the poor ventilation system. We were led to believe that if we did not occupy



The Cultural Center Library stands empty once construction was completed

the space, the building was in such poor condition that it would be demolished.

The building contained one large room that was used by African-American organizations for meetings, social gatherings and programs. The lower level of the building was used by a number of student organizations as office space. African-American students declared that this cultural center was not sufficient for the needs and goals of the African American student body. Once again African American students' desire for a place to share the great knowledge of their people was unfulfilled. African Americans longed for a library where people of all cultures could read and study about African and African American contributions to the world. Also, the students needed a place for the growing number of African-American organizations. This was extremely important because space was needed as these organizations were and still are instrumental in molding African-American leaders for our future.

In 1987, some 13 years later after the notion of an African American Cultural Center at N.C. State was first introduced, Kevin Howell, the first African-American Student Body President at NCSU, began the fight again for an African-American Cultural Center. Throughout that academic year students protested not only on the issue of needing a sufficient African American Cultural Center, but also on low graduation rates among black students, the need for more black faculty, the classroom environment, awareness of the African American studies minor, and the lack of black staff for programs centered around African American student's experience and cul-

ture. Things were moving forward, but NCSU was still not an optimal environment for fostering African American student success. Still pressing on, in the Spring of 1989, the first student-faculty-staff trip to Ghana, West Africa took place.

After much planning, protesting and debating the African American Cultural Center was scheduled to begin construction in 1990 as part of the Student Center Annex (later named Witherspoon Student Center in 1995). In its original plan, it was to be a free standing cultural center attached to the Student Center Annex by a walkway, which would flow between the two buildings. Due to increased construction costs, the two buildings were merged as one to reduce expenses. But an African American Cultural Center can not remedy all the challenges faced by African Americans at NC State. In Fall of 1989, Brian Nixon, NC State's second African-American student body president was harassed and even attacked on campus. His attackers used racial epithets. Brian resigned from his position before the academic year ended.

Having been a freshman attending the African American symposium one becomes energized and eager to further explore African American culture and the questions of, "Who Am I? What is the essence of my being? What is it that I will contribute? As an undergraduate student, the new African American Cultural Center would be a haven to gain knowledge and explore the possibilities.

In the Spring of 1991, the doors of what is now the African-American Cultural Center opened. Organizations cleared out of the old CC and now had more adequate office space and meeting space. Initially, we were overwhelmed at the possibilities that would lie ahead with having a three-story African-American Cultural center, including an art gallery and library. Surprisingly by the summer of 1992, renovations had begun on the old CC to turn it into the West Dunn Building, a place to process student ID and handle other university accounts. We had been in the new African American Cultural Center a year and a half. The Fall of 1992 would be our third awakening.

Dramatic events seem to consistently move our communities to action or dialogue. The first experience that set in motion this wake up call was walking

into the West Dunn building. Shock does not begin to explain the feelings of many African American students. I remember literally walking back out the building, and looking around to make sure that I was in the right place. African American students could not believe the renovations that had been done to a building that in the past we had been told could not be renovated. The simple fact that the building had air conditioning, not to mention its new amenities was simply too much to bear.

The second experience that set in motion the wake up call was a student body rally held on Monday, September 21, 1992 at UNC-Chapel Hill. Spike Lee spoke at UNC at the student rally of 7000 in the Dean's Smith Center. The rally was for a free standing Black Cultural Center (BCC) on the campus of UNC. Many African-American students from NC State went to show their support. The Chancellor of UNC, Chancellor Paul Hardin, was opposed to a freestanding BCC, opting instead for a building with joint uses such as our Student Center Annex (later named Witherspoon Student Center) at NCSU or a multi-cultural center. Hardin said a free-standing BCC would promote separatism. Spike Lee was cousin to the BCC's namesake, Sonja Stone, who had taught African American studies at UNC for 17 years and had died in 1991.

The rally organizers were a group of student athletes from Chapel Hill, called the Black Awareness Council. The student athletes understood their level of influence due to the amount of revenue the university generated through athletic events.

See History Continued on Page 7



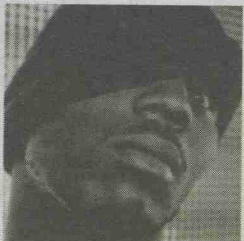
## Hip-Hop Lounge

The Nycest source of Hip-Hop reviews, news, culture, and whatever else I feel like...

Album Review: DMX- "The Great Depression"  
DMX comes with his fourth album entitled "The Great Depression." DMX comes hard as usual with his flow and subject matter. He also spits on some realness speaking of his lost grandmother and other adversities in his life. This album lays down 17 tracks plus 3 hidden joints, which give a total of 20 that attempt to place him once again among Hip-Hop's elite emcees. Here is a review of some spotlight tracks.

Track 1: "Sometimes"  
X starts off his album with a deep acappella poem in which he tries to justify to himself "what life's about." He questions his everyday thoughts and actions, while trying to figure out what it's all worth. His album is appropriately named "The Great Depression." This introductory track shows how X is saddened and angry about situations where his so-called friends have betrayed him. His last line ends with a sign of optimism spitting out that "sometimes the sun shines around the clock," but quickly brings it back to his depressed state saying "but sometimes it's dark and hell is hot."

Track 2: "School Street"  
On this track DMX gets real raw, taking back to the streets. This track is a proclamation of his street roots. DMX, like other rappers, is not ashamed of where he comes from. X shouts out all his Yonkers peeps, to let them know he ain't forget about them. This song has a hot beat with some a fierce lyrical delivery. This track is mad gutter.



## Track 3: "Who We Be"

This is X's newest single, in which he spits some venom at all those emcees who don't know who X is. DMX also speaks on the harsh reality of living the street life. This song is one that gets you hyped up and ready to set something off. A definite smash song, with typical DMX attitude and lyrics.

## Track 5: "We Right Here"

This is X's first single, which sets off the mood of the album. X has had much success in the past with his albums both commercially and underground. In this song he proclaims his spot in this rap game is still #1. This track is hype and a typical X banga.

## Track 8: "Damien III"

X takes it back with this track. X didn't have a Damien track on his last CD, which lead to a lot of talk about him being commercialized. X once again talks with the devil and tries to avoid the temptation of doing wrong. Damien temps X with taking away everything that he has accomplished with also adding that he has softened up. This track is nyce for the fact that it shows that success does not come without temptation. X hits it on the head with this one.

## Track 9: "When I'm Nothing"

This track has an R&B melody to it but with a club essence. He uses a sample to make this beat but the song address what could happen if his career hits rock bottom. X realized that success comes with a lot of fake friends. X remains focused on weeding out the fake from the real. This track's beat works well with the lyrical delivery and is a blazin joint.

## Track 10: "I Miss You"

This is X's most personal track. X speaks on his grandmother's death and all his memories from her. Through his lyrics it seems as if his grandmother was a very influential person in his life. This song is basically a letter to update his grandmother on all the recent family events and to express his sincere love for her. Everyone can relate to a lost family member and that is why this track is a favorite among many.

## Track 15: "You Could Be Blind"

This is one of my favorite tracks on the album. The beat is hot and works real well with the flow. I also am feeling the meaning, "You could be blind but you gonna see it when you need to see it...first free your mind and then you'll free your spirit." No matter what, you can't block out the light forever and once you see it you can't avoid it. This life lesson can be related to any situation that is why this song has a nyce approval.

## Track 17: "A Minute For Your Son"

This is the hottest track on the album. The beat is blazin, the lyrics are nyce, and the message is real. In this track X praises the Lord. X explains how he never "felt a love like this before." X also claims that with his Lord's love, "It doesn't rain anymore," saying that the bad times in his life no longer overwhelm him. X also says that he knows that one day he will be preaching the word of God. This track is appropriate for the last track of his "Great Depression" album, symbolizing that in order to get past all his depression he had to have found the Lord's love.

## Other Nyce Tracks:

"Y'all &^%\$ed Up"  
"Shorty was the Bomb"  
"The Prayer IV"

OVERALL RATING: 8/10

## Upcoming Local Hip-Hop Events:

1. DMX- Free Outdoor Tour  
10/29- Raleigh, NC
2. FREEstyle Fanatics, Part 2  
Where: Berry Lounge (The QUADjects)  
When: This Thursday 10/25 @8pm  
--\$3 to rap/ FREE to watch--

T-Nyce...the one and only

## THE BROTHERS OF KAPPA XI Chapter of KAPPA ALPHA PSI Fraternity, INCORPORATED

dedicate the following poem to all of the lovely women at N.C. State University.  
Thank you sincerely for being the magnificent creatures that you are...

### Admiration for the Soul of a Woman

Welcoming the Rains of your Spirit to Cleanse thy Soul  
An Oasis of Love, Strength, and Perseverance  
Inviting Love into the home of a heart, Curtailing Strength to be that of our own, Praying for perseverance to endure life's journey  
Natural reasons for one to anticipate Sunrise  
For without you, we continue to knock on the doors of Sorrow

A temple of Sanity and Stability within the Midst of Chaos  
Carrying the burdens of society on your Shoulders  
Morals resting on you like sleep in a weaken Eye  
Often these handicaps form a symbol for sustained responsibility, Often perception and reputation play dominance, Often truth and sympathy are lost in the busy flow of pessimism  
Fitting that the Great Creator positioned you in this manner

Creatures held to a bar of perfection  
Only wishing to possess a pinch of the recipe that makes life rich  
Understanding the true meaning of internal happiness and self-worth  
Inspiring discoveries in oneself as time becomes old  
Basking in your glow as a sign of devotion

Bearer of Life, Spirit of Sacrifice, Foundation of History  
Producing generations to add to Earth's richest fruit  
Yielding dreams to that of men and children  
Reminiscing on Ancestral Backgrounds that sculpted the Future  
Astonishing attributes that at times become entrapped in a Heap of Cloudiness

Traits only evident and embedded in the Bosom of a Woman  
Appreciating all that is in your Make-Up  
Open lids make room for visions of you, An open mind makes room to converse with you, An open heart makes room to share life with you  
Quietly but firmly taking time out to say Thank You

Since the awakenings of Life  
Women, special indeed  
Requiring, Celebrating, and Cherishing your presence  
Conditional Attention growing up to become Unconditional Appreciation

In remembrance of Ladies' Appreciation Day  
May Love, Serenity, and Blessings filled with peace and hope find you

By Rodney L. Wideman  
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.



*got something to say?*

*Express yourself with poetry, essays or whatever else at  
nubianinbox@hotmail.com*

## Le Héros Patrice Émery Lumumba

The hero eventually breaks. For everything is against him.

The movies, the books, the stories...

They dramatize him, make him seem real

But the hero is dead, of

course he is dead

The hero has been murdered,

they killed him

Of course they killed him

Everything is against him

His own mother is against him

The women, they too are against him

His own brothers, they too

eventually are against him.

Of course they are against him...

Everything is against him

The coward, now he is alive and well

The coward stands in his cowardice...

Celebrating the hero, who is dead

The women, they love the coward

The coward, he has accreditation, he has esteem

The coward, his life is easy...

Of course it is

Everything is for him

By Adedayo A. Banwo



## A Lily in my Womb

I am sinking in quicksand, here I go

Suffocating in thought of dark tomorrows

I cried myself to sleep

I tried and still I couldn't eat

Internally, I could hear myself weep

Screaming out my emotions inside almost shattered my teeth

Now my throat burns and I can hardly speak

Flowing in my veins, like my own blood

It was rooted deep

A secret that was too much for my soul to keep

My path was so easily walked, but now it has become too steep

Gravity was slowly giving up on my feet

I am floating now

Where? I don't know

This battling river is controlling my flow

I am feeling numb like a frostbite in the coldest winter snow

I am sinking in quicksand, here I go

Suffocating in thoughts of no tomorrow

Then suddenly, there was a bright light of hope behind the shadow

Sweet lilies planted in my womb to sympathize my sorrows

God stood by me that day, forgave me

And gave me another tomorrow

By Chasda Clendinen



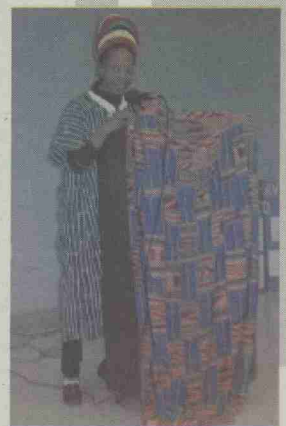
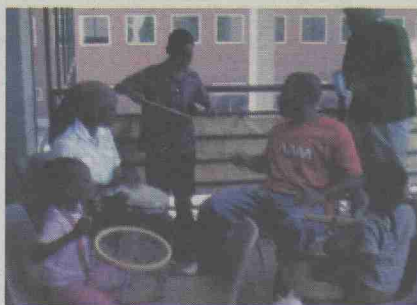
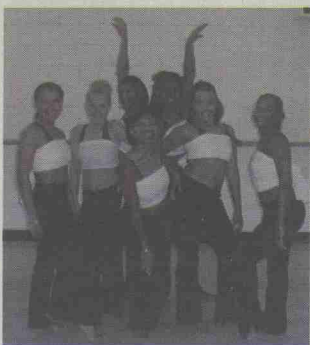
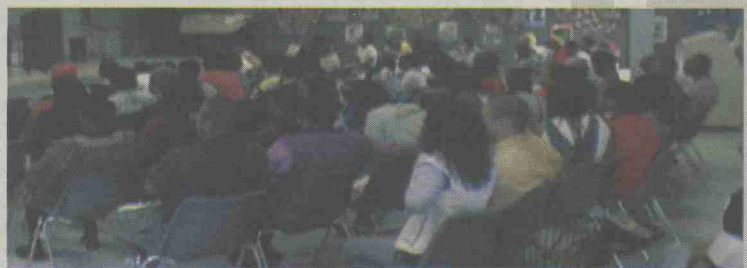
# Culture & Arts 5

## Scenes from Heritage Day 2001



Clockwise from Left: Ben Chavis Mohammad delivers his message to the audience, Singer, storyteller Ayaba, One of the many vendors sets up shop, A packed house as the festivities get underway, Dr. Moses pauses after its all done, Children beating drums during one of the many scheduled activities for them, and Dancevisions strike a pose before their performance.

All Photos by Keon Pettiway,  
Culture and Arts Editor except  
Dancevisions by Sydney  
Williams, Chief Photographer



Want to submit photos from your campus  
event? Hit us up at  
**[nubianinbox@hotmail.com](mailto:nubianinbox@hotmail.com)**  
You might find yourself in the paper!



# Culture & Arts 6

## Representing Blackness: Filmic Images of Reaction and Revolt

Dr. Floyd W. Hayes, III

In my Black Popular Culture course, we recently finished reading Black feminist and cultural critic bell hooks' book, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*. In this powerful text, she calls for critical thinking in the examination of American popular culture: films, live performances, music, photography, and books. Critical consciousness is necessary so that we can resist the impact of reactionary, dispiriting, and disfiguring images produced by what hooks calls America's white supremacist capitalist patriarchy<sup>1</sup> or her term for the interlocking systems of race, class, and gender oppression. Having studied with Brazilian revolutionary educator Paulo Freire, radical intellectual-activist hooks, Distinguished Professor of English at City College in New York, asserts that education is the practice of freedom; she is widely known for challenging educators to teach students to transgress against racial, sexual, and class boundaries.

As an educator, I am constantly reminded of hooks' demand that I assist students in freeing their minds through the process of critical consciousness. Transformed into the practice of freedom, education for critical consciousness can shift from drudgery to liberation. Significantly, in order to accomplish this goal, I need to decolonize my own mind by struggling against internalized racism and other forms of mentacide, which are legacies of America's historic culture of domination. Decolonizing the mind is an everyday challenge when one is surrounded by, indeed inundated with, powerful mass-mediated images in the evolving age of knowledge, science, and social management. For America's oppressed native daughters and sons, who are among this nation's angry and resentful outsiders, it is important to recognize that a major location of the battlefield is changing from the street to the mind.

Nowhere is this change more prominent than at the movies. Two recent films, "Training Day" and "Lumumba," provide

striking contrasts in the cultural politics of Black representation. "Training Day" is the continued high-powered assault on the mass-mediated images of Blacks and Latinos that white cultural and intellectual elites increasingly have engaged in since the retrograde Reagan era and America's ultra-rightward turn in the 1980s. In a time when white cops are increasingly murdering Black people in urban communities throughout America, and when major scandals of corruption within the Los Angeles Police Department have become public, it is disingenuous for Hollywood to construct a political spectacle that portrays a Black rogue cop - actor Denzel Washington plays this leading role - attempting to instruct a white male rookie in the ways of police corruption and social

exploitation in America.

By comparison with "Training Day," the

international film "Lumumba" treats the militant Congolese struggle to overthrow Belgian colonialism in 1959-1960. In 1884-1885, Western European imperialists held the Berlin conference (a

Ebouaney). We witness Lumumba as a radical leader of the popular and militant Congolese National Movement; as the first prime minister of independent Congo in 1960; and as the assassination victim of Congolese, Belgian, United

sination in 1961, Mobutu would become the Congo/Zaire's military dictator from 1962 to 1993. And there are various Belgian, United Nations, and American CIA officials, all of whom collude in the overthrow and death of Patrice Lumumba.



Training Day starring Denzel Washington

decadence in Los Angeles.

Here is a cynical and reactionary representation of all Los Angeles Blacks and Latinos not as people struggling to survive in a world indifferent to unwarranted suffering and undeserved misery but solely as nihilistic male drug users and gang members who "dog out" their women. Indeed, Washington's one-dimensional character beds a Latina, with whom he also has a son, who lives in a rough section of West LA known as the "Jungle." Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre make appearances as a wheel-chaired drug dealer and a member of Washington's gang in blue, respectively. Tellingly, the movie constructs the white rookie cop as a socially naive and morally innocent male, who apparently possesses Herculean physical strength because he quickly recovers after Washington's character viciously beats him to the point of unconsciousness. It has been reported that Denzel Washington's wife did not want him to play the role. He should have listened to her! Although Washington's appearance in "Training Day" demonstrates his great acting ability, it punctuates his cynical collusion with the hegemonic forces of race, class, and gender

After the meeting, Belgium's King Leopold II, who was to become infamous for his savage and dehumanizing treatment of Africans, later took personal possession of the central African colony that became known as the Congo Free State (today Democratic Republic of Congo). The Belgium government annexed the colony in 1906 following Leopold's forced abdication. Following the end of WWII, the Pan African struggle to overthrow colonialism began in earnest, as revolutionary voices in Africa and the African Diaspora demanded the independence and self-determination of African states. Between the late 1950s and early 1960s, African nation-states won political freedom from European rule. Yet, in the aftermath of political independence, there remains in many African states European economic exploitation and cultural domination. Therefore, the histories of European imperialism and colonialism are interwoven with the contemporary crisis of underdevelopment in Africa.

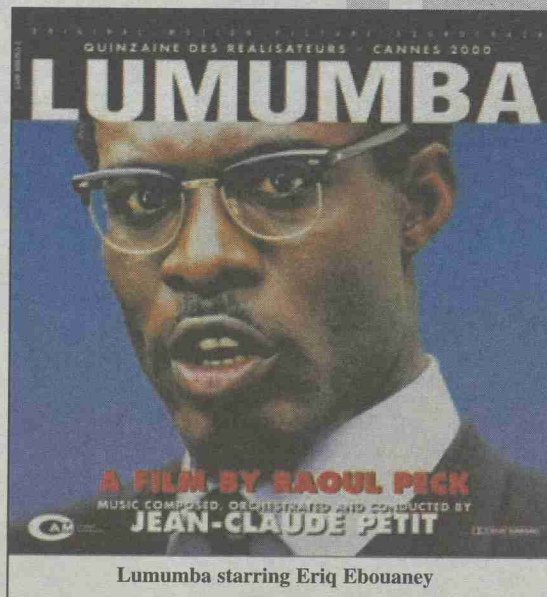
"Lumumba" is a political thriller of epic proportions that chronicles the short life of the charismatic figure Patrice Lumumba (played by Cameroon actor Eriq

Nations, and United States CIA collusion. To be sure, through Ebouaney's superb acting, Lumumba comes alive as a courageous, serious, determined, and intense leader. In an era of Cold War politics of the 1940s to the 1960s, the Congo is caught between the neo-imperialist designs of the leftward Soviet Union and the rightward American government. Lumumba (along with his comrades-in-arms) must walk this tightrope, grappling with Belgian antiblack racism, the reigns of postcolonial/neocolonial state power, political coalition building, the Africanization of military leadership, political rivalry, military mutiny, political betrayal, and his own brutal and savage assassination (January 17, 1961). In the midst of revolutionary struggle, we see uplifting and tender images of Lumumba with his daughter and pregnant wife. We witness his sorrow upon hearing that his newborn child dies. Along the way, the film provides images of African culture and music in celebration of independence, as traditional culture and modern political and social dynamics intersect.

The movie also chronicles the events and people who betray the revolution. There is weak and indecisive Joseph Kasabubu, who becomes the Congo's first president. There is Moise Tschome, Lumumba's arch-enemy, who leads the secession of the southern Katanga province in July 1960. There is the military leader Joseph Mobutu, who later leads a military coup d'etat. (After Lumumba's vicious assas-

Films and filmmakers do more than entertain us. They can construct political and cultural spectacles of decadence and reaction that assault our minds, as does "Training Day." This cynical film represents managerial elites' will to perpetuate race, class, and gender exploitation and oppression. Conversely, films also can create images of courage and revolt that inspire the victims of white western cultural domination to continue their struggle for liberation; this is the message of "Lumumba." Indeed, this epic film portrays a history and personalities with which Africans and their American descendants can identify. African students tell me that the educational practice in most African nations still excludes sufficient focus on African history and politics. If shown throughout Africa, "Lumumba" can help to revive the study of an important anti-colonial leader and his times. It also can instruct a generation of young Black people in America and throughout the Pan African world that education is the practice of liberation.

\*Dr. Floyd W. Hayes, III, is Associate Professor in the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies and the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at NC State University





## History continued from page 2

Football player Tim Smith was the group's leader. Lee spoke free of charge. He talked about the courage and strength of the student athletes to fight and urged them to shame professional athletes who had graduated from UNC but would not return to make a stand on this issue. Shouts and cheers of "Ungawa, Black Power," filled Dean's Smith Center and students raised their arms to form the letter X to symbolize Malcolm X. Delores Jordan, mother of Michael Jordan, had pledged to pay for the construction of the building with funds from the Michael Jordan Foundation. She was also present at the rally. The Technician, as well as every other local newspaper reported on the story. UNC's Black Awareness Council (student athletes) was described in the Technician as racist and terrorist.

This was an obvious failure to understand the purpose of the cultural center. The purpose was not as one writer put it, "to gain black superiority over whites". An African-American cultural center is a place where blacks can showcase the achievements of their ancestors. It is a place where both blacks and non-blacks can learn things about African heritage other than the negative images constantly portrayed by the media. It was a shame that racial pride and an attempt to project a positive image of oneself had to be confused with racism. A member of the Technician staff said that our claim that Blacks are not given sufficient credit for their contributions to history is "blatant vomiting of revisionist history". The Technician compared the Black Awareness Council to Ku Klux Klan and calling them "Ku Klux Blacks."

African American students at N.C. State were outraged. At no point had the Black Awareness Council, NAACP, SNCC, or even the Black Panther Party practiced unjust terrorist acts that could in anyway be synonymous with the Ku Klux Klan. Did the Technician feel that it was just speaking of African-American students from UNC? Did that make a difference? African-American students at N.C. State took offense to the statements. We once again began to focus on our Cultural Center and recognizing the needs of African American students at NC State.

Within the week student alliance and activism began at N.C. State. By Wednesday (following Monday's rally at UNC), students had formed a gathering on the brickyard to burn the Technician. This act symbolized African American student's unity with the brother and sisters at Chapel Hill as well as resentment about the way in which the events had been reported. By Friday, a town meeting had been called in Fountain Dining Hall. Concerns were noted about the lack of books in the African American Cultural Center's library. We had been in the African American Cultural Center for a year and a half. Had the university noticed that there were only 10 books in the library? All of which had been donated. There was no artwork for the gallery and no staff for the Cultural Center's library or gallery other than Dr. Moses, not even a receptionist. Other issues would erupt as well.

On October 6, a panel of university administrators met with students in a public forum to answer questions and address the concerns that had been raised. A list of 23 concerns along with possible solutions and target dates were handed. By giving target dates, the university felt that students were issuing ultimatums. When students asked Chancellor Monteith the question of why there

were so few books in the African American Cultural Center his response was, "You give us the book titles and program descriptions and we'll try to get all of them funded if possible."

Ten days later, in a closed meeting with the African

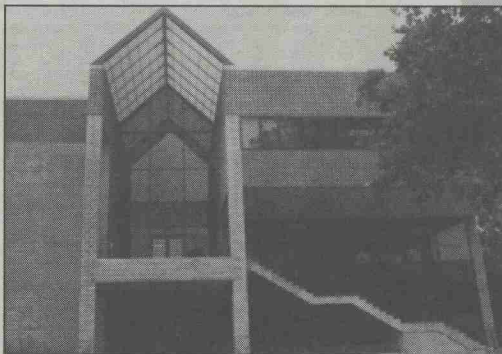
American Student Advisory Council (AASAC), Chancellor Monteith, Provost Hart, and other university officials the concerns and issues were further discussed. At that meeting Chancellor Monteith offered \$10,000 from a private source towards the African American Cultural Center's budget. Student's concern was that it came from a private source, which meant that it was not continuation money or funds that could be counted on annually in future years. A promise was made that another \$15,000 would go towards planning and programming for library. Although students had made progress, Monteith's response was somewhat disappointing.

The Chancellor talked of encouraging his administration rather than taking actions. That Monday, October 19, the Student Mentor Association sponsored a speak-out on the Brickyard, which featured student speakers from NC Central and UNC. That evening students marched to the Chancellors home to further let him hear the concerns expressed. The issues included the following: the African American Cultural Center, Technician, WKNC, Public Safety, recruitment of African American graduate students, the number of tenure-track African American faculty, and the retention and graduation rates of African American undergraduate students. The following day students staged a sit-in at the Public Safety office to protest their "practiced" policy of only posting composites of African American suspects. Many other protests, town meetings and sit-ins followed, including one at WKNC. Students efforts proved worthy. By November 1992, after months of intense lobbying and protesting by students and faculty members, university officials granted the African American Cultural Center an operating budget. Something else would come out of their effort. Students had the promise of a budget for the African American Cultural Center, but they now also have a vehicle of voice.

On November 30, 1992, the Nubian Message issued its first publication. The late Tony Williamson served as its first editor and funded the first years' publications independently. The first Nubian Message was printed at and with the assistance of N.C. Central University. A good

portion of the African American Cultural Center's history was documented in that first edition and is noted here through my co-author.

It was the student's hope in 1993 that the changes would insure that the African-American Cultural Center could be a center for learning. It would serve as a foundation for developing self-pride and dignity in our African-American students at NCSU. It would be a place where people of various ethnic and religious backgrounds could gather and learn of African-American culture past and present. In 1995, the university suffered a great loss with the passing of Dr. Augustus Witherspoon. I am blessed to have known and interacted with a man of such character, determination, untiring commitment and leadership. Without the work,



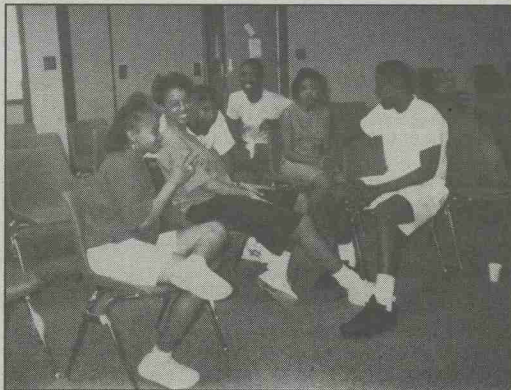
**The newly completed CC in its original state before more renovations were done**

leadership and mentoring of Dr. Augustus Witherspoon and Dr. Lawrence Clark, N.C. State would not have had Coordinators in the colleges (most of which are now Directors and Assistant Deans), African American Student Affairs, a Peer Mentor Program, an Association for the Concerns of African American Graduate Students or an African American Cultural Center. Through their leadership and direction, those of us in these units also know how strategically the units work to support the academic success of students and one other. It is through that foundation laid by their great effort that in the Spring of 2001 the African American Cultural Center was still standing to celebrate its 10-year anniversary.

For most African American alumni, if there were no African American Cultural Center at N.C. State, there would be no connection to the University. The Cultural Center (old and new) tells the story of what we can do at N.C. State. Sometimes because of and sometimes in spite of. If the African American Cultural Center is to be altered let it be done by its constituents. It was built by our struggle, has endured on our shoulders and its future is in our hands. If it loses its identity or dramatically changes its mission, the baton will have been dropped and we will have lost an important race.

The African American Cultural Center, like the African American experience is full of struggle. But it is also full of hope, determination, persistence and fight. For those who have come before us and those who will come after us, we owe it to them to continue to work to make N.C. State a better place that fosters student success for all including African American students. Current graduation rates demonstrate great disparities for African American students.

This article serves to inform those who don't know but want to know, to energize those who know but need to remember and to wake those who have not been running their leg of the race. All students, especially African American students must understand the nature of the Cultural Center and embrace the opportunities it provides. I hope the attention turned to the African American Cultural Center sparks equal attention to other issues outside the Cultural Center such as the need to improve retention and graduation rates of African American students, the fact that there has been no significant change in the number of African American faculty on this campus in the last 20 years, and other issues which affect student success. There is a great deal of work to be done. Ask questions. Become informed. If we all don't participate in doing it, who will? Students, faculty and staff have you picked up the baton? Are you running your leg of the race?



**Students sit and talk in the brand new 3rd Floor of the Cultural Center**



## Just My Opinion: O.J. is Free!

Adedayo A. Banwo  
Editor

(Note: They = The Majority)

O.J. Simpson is free right this very minute. Who knows, he could be riding around in a luxury automobile, sipping on some syrup on a plush Miami beach? No matter what other charges he may face, he cannot be retried for the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. His Heisman trophy can be taken away, his house, his car and most of his money, but his freedom cannot.

This makes Them mad, sometimes even furious. But there needs to be more understanding on their part. First, they need not be angry with O.J. nor whether or not he was truly guilty because there are millions of other O.J.s languishing in prison right now. These O.J.s too went to court. They faced charges and prosecution cases that did not go beyond a reasonable doubt in proving their guilt. They faced conviction based on evidence collected by detectives who routinely utter the "N" word. These O.J.s are locked up, and they

threw away the key.

Recently a highway patrolman who seemed to believe, no, who was convinced that I had drugs in my car, stopped me. In fact, this patrolman went so far as to explain to me the sentencing laws for drug

car. Now I don't know what convinced this patrolman that I was in the possession of drugs (maybe he watched too much BET), but he was convinced. I didn't let him search my car, but let's say I wasn't completely educated about the rights guaranteed

man didn't care about those rights and searched my car or even thought he had the right to search my car. This patrolman, frustrated that he couldn't find any drugs, yet still convinced that I had some, could have decided to go ahead and plant

is the jury, composed of Them, going to believe?

See, in that situation, my innocence would be completely irrelevant within our criminal justice system and believe it or not, there are many people in prison under the same

circumstances. So they should understand that when we cheer for O.J., we are in no way cheering for murder or murderers. God will eventually deal with them. We are, in fact, cheering against a system built by Them, for Them, which unfairly puts so many of us behind bars.

So the next time they see a picture of O.J. chilling on a south Florida beach and it starts to burn them up inside, tell them they should be comforted by the fact that there are millions of other O.J.s in prison this very minute sitting in his place.

Cover of Time.com following O.J. verdict, courtesy AOLTimeWarner

convictions and how long I would be in jail before he had even looked at the inside of my

to me through the U.S. Constitution and had let him search. Or perhaps, the patrol-

some paraphernalia under my seat. I mean, he knew I had some anyway right! Now who

for the 13th time last Saturday and many students simply stayed home. There is of course no monolithic black student requirement to attend AACC events on campus, nor would anyone want there to be. However, a larger percentage of the black student body in attendance would have been encouraging.

Heritage Day featured many cultural, educational, and political events. There were activities for children,

vendors, and even poster board displays prepared by the Resident Organizations of the AACC. There were even many students in attendance at the beginning. Once the dancing and music stopped though, nearly half of the students in attendance left. Witherspoon, missing the message given by Ben Chavis Muhammad. The debate about the organization and structure of the Cultural Center begins and

ends with this issue. What are students using the Cultural Center for?

The AACC is more than a place to hold dances and parties, simply examining the events calendar provide enough evidence of that. However, when educational events are held, students often stay home. Ironically, when the Scholars program or the Center for Student Leadership holds educational lectures, the auditori-

um is filled with black students who would have never thought about attending such a lecture had it been sponsored by the AACC.

Its not that the AACC is not fulfilling its mission, it is that the students are not fulfilling ours. Many students had projects, work, and other commitments, which is completely understandable. However, many of us did not, and we are the issue at hand.

## Where were the students during the 2001 Heritage Day Festival?

The Nubian Message Weekly  
Editorial

The African American Cultural Center is just that, a center. Not only a center for faculty and staff, but also a center for students to study, work, and learn together. The Heritage Day Festival, one of the AACC's largest programs, was held

## "Nappy Luv"

Decker Ngongang  
Guest Columnist

On September 27, the organization KWU (Knowledge, Wisdom and Understanding) put on the event Nappy Luv in conjunction with the Peer Mentor Association Cookout. As a member of KWU, I can say that the event's reach was far beyond anyone's expectations. The theme for KWU this year is Give a Voice to the Voiceless, and this event aided in seeing our dreams come to fruition.

The format for this event was similar to the previous KWU Banga, with several acts

presenting hip-hop, poetry, rock, R&B, gospel, as well as the occasional spoken word. Each act had its own flavor and, unlike many other shows, each act had a message and a passion for what they were doing. Such passion that has never before been expressed onstage. This is where KWU's Giving a Voice to the Voiceless theme coincided very well with the event. The audience's emotions fed off of the rhythm and, more importantly, they saw the overwhelming talent and passion held by many NC State students who would otherwise stay silent.

For KWU, one of the big missions this year is taking the message across racial, cultur-

al and religious lines. A diverse group in our makeup, we use artistic expression to bring together many people of different backgrounds. The Nappy Luv event did just that, but on a scale we had not imagined. At the outset the climate was very positive with a local rock band opening up the show with a riveting performance. As I looked out into the crowd, I saw so many different faces, some wondering about the rock music and some bobbing their heads at the new type of sound. The tide turned when the hip-hop performance began and many people in the audience cheered while others sat and bobbed their heads at this art form they were not accustomed

to. At the end of the day, the Multipurpose Room was filled to capacity and everyone was slapping hands and bobbing their heads to the beat. Whether the music was a guitar, the scratch of a turntable, or the emotions of a poem being read, we each heard different voices, ones that we might not have paid attention too prior to the event.

The KWU Banga was a success. Not just for the turnout, not even just for the great acts, but also for the overwhelming display of love. In an event that was not publicized on a grand scale, we raised \$145 for the Red Cross to care for the victims from the terrorist attacks. Student Body President Darryl Willie

manned the donation table for nearly two hours while the different acts moved the crowds. It meant a lot to KWU to provide such an event, but it meant even more for me to see such positive expression from our campus.

In times where the use of the Cultural Center is being debated, KWU made a statement that this building is more than concrete, it is a center for expression, education and fellowship. That Thursday, the greater NC State community saw what KWU was all about. KWU is just beginning and welcomes people to come to our meetings Sunday nights at 8 p.m. in the Merrymonk room in North Hall. God bless and good day.

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