



Professor Fitzgerald is director of ethnic studies at University of Nevada-Las Vegas

those guys who sat behind the desks. Everybody I knew wanted to get a "desk job" and so did I. There was only one problem -- they were not hiring us to those jobs. The closest we could expect to get to a desk job would have been with a rag in one hand and a can of Pledge in the other.

What to do. As the school year drew to a close, there were rumblings on the horizon. It seemed that a few schools in my neck of the woods would be required to integrate the following fall. It would be just a matter of time before Natchez would be required to follow suit but it would be another ten years before such would occur in Las Vegas. Already we had discovered that "with all deliberate speed" could mean a whole lifetime or just a matter of years. It might move swiftly or it might move at a snail's pace. In the instance of the Supreme Court ruling of 1954 it would indeed be the latter.

Las Vegas was different from Natchez, Mississippi. The greater portion of Las Vegas' black population resided on the 'westside.' Black children, through the elementary grades, attended Black neighborhoods schools within that community. Upon their matriculation into the secondary schools they attended schools in the white communities. Las Vegas, you see, had half a school district which was segregated and the other half was integrated. Las Vegas has always prided itself in being different.

At the time when the greatest amount of good

could have been achieved in terms of children learning to get along with children of other races, Las Vegas' children were segregated. Suddenly, in junior high school, the students were called upon to experience a kind of culture shock by attending school with people who were not only strangers but who also looked differently and of whom they had heard all kinds of strange stories. It worked both ways.

By the time integration in the schools could be experienced, Las Vegas' students were well into adolescence. Certain attitudes had already been formulated and different camps existed within the schools.

Black children who had had positive personal experiences in their elementary schools were now having "bridges made over their heads." They had been class presidents, secretaries, treasurers, on the team, cheerleaders, in the choirs, and all of the other extra-curricular activities which are designed to give a child the opportunity of becoming a well-rounded individual. Their concepts of themselves were strong in spite of the fact that theirs were the very worse of buildings, materials and other creature comforts. The buildings were fine when they were erected but because dissimilar amounts were spent in maintaining the schools on the westside, they soon found themselves in disrepair. Their condition continued to deteriorate until integration arrived and

suddenly white children would be attending classes in those buildings. You remember the first rate job of refurbishing, landscaping and other improvements which the school district finally found the funds for following Judge Thompson's decision of 1969, don't you?

Black students of Las Vegas were not welcomed to the secondary schools with open arms. Right off the bat they were relegated to a kind of second class status. There are no records of black girls being cheerleaders or participating in other activities. The occasion of black boys doing differently would be found almost exclusively on the athletic teams. Even in those instances those black boys who did indeed participate had to be at least twice as good as anyone else on the team in order to get an opportunity to perform.

Certainly, in Las Vegas, Black students attended integrated secondary schools but they were almost on the outside looking in as far as extra-curricular activities were concerned. In Natchez, we were on the outside looking in all the way. By the time we graduated from high school, even though we had been shown in a million different ways that we were scum, we had a pretty good idea of what our true value was.

According to reports, as far back as the early 1940s, Black students of Las Vegas were being directed away from the college preparatory courses. The question generally raised was "what would you do with a college degree anyway?" No hotels were hiring Black executives with accounting degrees, no stores were hiring Black managers with business degrees, no law firms were hiring Black attorneys, only on rare occasions were Blacks with degrees in education being hired outside of the westside and on the westside there were

Nominated for eleven Academy Awards.....

'COLOR PURPLE' bombs out

The highly acclaimed and commercially successful movie, 'Color Purple', which went into the Academy Awards night presentation with 11 nominations, including the Best Picture, Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress categories, turned out to be the all-time loser, as it failed to win even one award. The film, with a predominately Black cast, a Black Producer and Black Musical composers, is about a rural

Black woman's struggle for self worth.

The Hollywood-Beverly Hills Branch of the NAACP promptly filed a protest against the Motion Picture Academy and called the voting outcome "a slap in the Faces" of Producer-Composer Quincy Jones and Director Stephen Spielberg.

The statement was issued by civil rights organization's publicist, Connie Watson, who called the outcome a

"blackout," a term the chapter uses to describe the motion picture industry's actions to suppress black film projects. The shutout added to controversy that already surrounds the academy's snub of Stephen Spielberg, who was denied even a nomination for directing the movie.

The film starred Whoopi Goldberg, who was nominated for Best Actress and has been acclaimed for her first film role.

KAPPA

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from California, who interrogated the honoree. Prior to the interrogation Mrs. Palmer received a crown, corsage and other floral tributes from the membership. Willa Bywaters and North Las Vegas Mayor Pro-Tem Theron Goynes brought greetings.

The purpose of the tribute was to formally introduce Winnie Palmer to the Las Vegas Community. Palmer, a brilliant educator, is an early retiree from the Los Angeles School System, where she is well-known in the educational, civic and religious areas and who now resides with her husband John Palmer here in Las Vegas.

Palmer has won many, many awards and although retired, she still works part-time as a teacher consultant to new teachers in Los Angeles Schools and is the National Chairperson for AOIP (Assault on Illiteracy Program). Through her instrumentality, a branch has been established here in Las

Vegas.

During the interview Palmer emphasized the fact that Phi Delta Kappa Sorority is an organization of teachers and administrators and that one of its main goals is to focus upon youth and develop their potentialities to the fullest. She said that we want to help our young men as well as our young women, and we need to tell them that babies having babies is not the proper thing to do.

Phi Delta Kappans help to promote our youth to (1) develop an integrated personality, (2) to assume a successful place in a group and (3) to adjust to the ever changing problems in their culture.

Lorayne Douglass, Far Western Regional Director, presided over the entire conference.

Gamma Sigma chapter wishes to thank the community for its support and offer a special thanks to all participants and purchasers of tickets and ads for their souvenir journal.

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