



## More than just “the gay marriage amendment”

Rebecca Weidler

On Tuesday, May 8th, North Carolinians (including Davidson students) will have the opportunity to vote on Amendment 1, a proposed amendment to our state constitution that reads, “Marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized by this State.”

A lot of people talk about Amendment 1 as “the gay marriage amendment.” In a lot of ways, though, Amendment 1 is “the civil unions, domestic partnerships, and straight unmarried couples amendment.” Amendment 1 does not simply take away any future possibility of two people of the same gender getting married; it takes away any future possibility of civil unions and domestic partnerships.

By our legal codes, North Carolina already does not offer same-sex marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships. However, writing this discrimination into our state constitution makes the situation worse in two key ways:

1) The Constitution is much more difficult to change than basic statutes, and so this amendment would significantly prolong the span of time without civil unions.

2) By prohibiting the state from recognizing any relationships other than straight marriage, unmarried couples could lose crucial benefits, such as health care for their partner and children.

Next Tuesday, I urge you to vote against Amendment 1. You might vote against it because you believe two people of the same gender should be allowed to marry each other. Alternatively, you might not be sure how you feel about same-sex marriage, but you do believe that same-sex couples should receive some kind of relationship recognition, such as civil unions or domestic partnerships; if this is the case, you should also be sure to vote against Amendment 1.

If you're not sure how you feel about same-sex relationships, and not sure how you feel about homosexuality, I urge you to consider how this amendment would harm many North Carolinians, including members of our Davidson community. Amendment 1 would jeopardize partner benefits for all unmarried couples, regardless of sexual orientation. Unmarried employees of the handful of local governments (including Mecklenburg County) that do provide domestic partner benefits would lose these benefits; the children they have with their partners could lose their health care. Depending on how courts interpret the language of the amendment, private businesses might also face challenges to the partner benefits they currently offer, especially if they administer their benefits through

state-operated health care providers. Across the state, and perhaps even in our own community, families will lose critical protections if Amendment 1 passes.

Beyond this loss of benefits to some families, Amendment 1 might have devastating effects for North Carolina's economy. According to the HRC's Corporate Equality Index (2011), 89% of Fortune 500 companies (including the “five largest North Carolina-based public companies”: Bank of America, Lowe's, Duke Energy, BB&T, and Reynolds America) ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, and so require that their employees in same-sex relationships be offered equal benefits (Equality NC). Considering the current economy (and the fact that many of us seniors are still looking for jobs... and all you underclassmen will have your turn soon... sorry), we need companies and small businesses to come to North Carolina, stay in North Carolina, and grow in North Carolina. We cannot afford to make our state inhospitable to businesses' nondiscrimination commitments.

Beyond these practical considerations, I ask you to take a few moments to think of our LGBTQ classmates, friends, faculty, and staff. Think of them waking up on May 9th to find that their state has rejected the validity of their relationships so vehemently that a constitutional amendment was needed, even at the cost of the state's economy and health care for families. Think of our friends who won't be able to get married (or commit to a civil union) in this state for decades. I ask that you reflect on

**“Families will lose critical protections if Amendment 1 passes.”**

Amendment 1 and its wide-sweeping consequences, and then hopefully take ten minutes out of your day on Tuesday and walk down to Town Hall (right next to Ben and Jerry's and Flatiron) and vote against Amendment 1. If you have not registered as a North Carolina voter (if you're an American citizen, you are qualified to register in North Carolina), you can register and vote early at the Cornelius Town Hall between now and Friday before 7:00 PM, and then on Saturday between 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM. I know we are busy, and I know it's almost finals, but there is so much at stake. On Tuesday, May 8th, please join me in voting against Amendment 1 and keeping our constitution a document of protection rather than discrimination.

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## A legacy of love: Mrs. Gloria Wilson Cole

Aria Halliday

As a community that strongly encourages its members to get to know each other and build relationships that transcend the day-to-day business of the institution, I was appalled when I found out that, the Superintendent of Building Services, Mrs. Gloria Wilson Cole passed away on Saturday, April 21st and there was no mention of her passing officially to students, staff, or faculty. There were some Davidson attendees at the celebration of her life on Wednesday, April 25th at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, but overall there was and still is a huge gap in knowledge, especially for the student population.

In the past three years I've spent at Davidson, the passing of a Davidson community member—students and faculty alike—has always been given adequate acknowledgement and attention. It is alarming now to think that Davidson shares knowledge differentially to its student body depending on the individual's status on campus. One would think that no matter the individual's social status on this campus that Davidson would make every effort to make information about that individual's passing available to the student body. Perhaps Mrs. Cole's passing was not given the same amount of care or attention because Davidson was too busy with Convocation or Spring Frolics and did not find the time to email the student body. Or perhaps Mrs. Cole's “staff” status, rather than faculty or student, did not afford her the social mobility necessary

for Davidson to care about her passing. Or perhaps, the mere fact that Mrs. Cole was a Black female, rather than a white male as has been the case with the other passings since I came to Davidson, did not require the same attention from College administration or students. Perhaps it is a combination of her race, sex, and socioeconomic status that has afforded Davidson the ability to “forget” that she was a part of this community before her passing.

Although I really dislike thinking of someone's passing as a time to inquire about the integrity or credibility of our institution, I think Mrs. Cole's passing is another instance in which Davidson has dropped the proverbial ball and shown its lack of dedication to actually creating a community with all of the individuals that make up this community. As a senior, I am still confused about the commitments that Davidson College subscribes to and those that are mentioned for the sake of national rankings and student recruitment. What is our legacy to be Davidson College? Will it be one of community, love, respect, and joy such as Mrs. Gloria Wilson Cole's? Or will we forever wallow in the frivolous happenings of Spring Frolics, Winterfest, and Fall Block Party? What skeletons will we let stay in the closet until someone opens the door?

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## WARN ME!!

Lincoln Davidson

By now, the extraordinary events of Saturday night at the Black Student Coalition house are known to the entire Davidson campus. In the immediate aftermath of Saturday night's events, however, the situation was not so clear. Some rumors I heard within the first hour of the fight at the BSC include:

- Two students got in a fight
- The students involved are from neighboring institutions
- They are in rival fraternities from these two schools
- One was step dancing and the other got in the way, which precipitated the fight
- Illegal drugs were involved
- One student had a knife/gun
- There were “at least a dozen” emergency vehicles around the BSC

I heard these rumors from various sources, some claiming to have witnessed them firsthand, some having heard them secondhand. Some of these sources were more credible than others, and some of the rumors are clearly more believable than others. What is clear is that for the many students in the vicinity when this event occurred, witnessing a dozen emergency vehicles from various jurisdictions created a lot of anxiety. It was unclear that the situation was under control, and many students were genuinely concerned for their safety.

It is now apparent that there was not a weapon present at the BSC and that the security and safety of Davidson students were not under threat to the extent that was widely alleged on Saturday evening immediately following the fight. Nevertheless, the strong presence on campus of police from a variety of jurisdictions created the impression for many students that something out of the ordinary was going on and caused

many students to worry that their personal safety was in jeopardy, which led to a lot of tension on campus at the time. One or two emergency response vehicles on Patterson Court on a Saturday night is relatively normal; a dozen implies a serious situation.

According to Davidson College's Emergency Response Plan, the second step that should be taken in the event of a “critical incident (e.g. gun, assault, rape)” is “campus-wide announcements are made via broadcast email and voicemail messages.” Davidson College has the infrastructure to carry out this step—indeed, the 1990 Clery Act requires institutions of higher education that participate in federal financial aid programs to provide timely warning of crimes that constitute a threat to students and staff. While it was clearly judged that the events of Saturday night were not a threat to students and staff, the channels of communication we have set up should have been used to assure the campus that the situation was under control.

Furthermore, the fact that it took so long for the administration to publicly respond to the events of Saturday night didn't do much to rectify the situation. The student body was not told a single thing until 11:00 PM Sunday night—almost twenty-four hours after the fact. The faculty and staff, on the other hand, were not made officially aware of the events until 8:00 AM Tuesday morning, a full two days later. Compare this to earlier in the semester when a body was discovered at the Lake Campus. In that instance, the body was found around noon on Sunday, and the student body was informed via email within two hours.

The events of Saturday night occurred on Patterson Court right at the very center of campus (particularly considering it was Frolics night), and many students were either present or in the immediate vicinity. In the wake of this event, many rumors sprang up—rumors that could have easily been quelled (or at least dampened) by a prompt response from the administration assuring the campus that the situation was under control. Dean Shandley and President Quillen have both stated that appropriate changes will be made next year to ensure that Spring Frolics remains a safe and enjoyable experience. The first of those changes should be a better system for sharing information regarding emergency situations (real or imagined) and responding more rapidly and fully to concerns on campus regarding such a situation. If we can't trust our college's administration to be honest with us regarding events on campus, how can we trust them to be upright guides for our formative years at Davidson?

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