

Moore is uninformed on fraternity issue, says the Black Student Coalition

Michelle Serrano

In last week's issue of *The Davidsonian*, an article titled "Here's how a black fraternity could be a bad idea" gave reasons as to why Davidson should not have a black fraternity on campus. The article has been read and evaluated. As responsible young men and women, the Black Student Coalition feels that it is our duty to correct some of the false information which was presented to readers. Let us examine the article point by point.

The first point made was that "a black fraternity would segregate the campus." Now, let us look at the term "black fraternity." This is an incorrect term to describe such fraternities as Kappa Alpha Psi and Alpha Phi Alpha. Though these fraternities have been historically black they are not exclusive to Black men, because there are non-black members. The campus is already divided into various interest and social groups. This is because people are going to socialize with others with whom they feel comfortable and with whom they share certain ideas and backgrounds.

The second point was that, "One of the best ways to make black students feel more comfort-

able is to get them involved in campus social activities." If you want black students to become involved in campus social activities you do so by letting them choose to do so. You cannot expect to make black students more comfortable because it is not up to any one person to decide whether or not another person is comfortable. If you look at the memberships of the organizations on campus, it is evident that black students do become involved in activities that they are interested in because of personal preference and not because of skin color.

FOCUS

The pro side of black frats

The third point is that "...black fraternities...[are] the antithesis of what the Rev. Martin Luther King worked toward." Let us not be confused about the goals of the civil rights movement. Dr. King's first priority was the extension of constitutionally guaranteed rights to Black Americans. Secondary to that was the desire to be fully integrated, not assimilated, into the society. Assimilation assumes the loss of cultural identity. For Dr. King, it was equally, if not more important, to know from whence you have come and to where you are going; to know who you are and who's you are. Historically black fraternities and sororities have been and will continue to be an important source of this knowledge for past, present and future generations of young men and women. We feel that Dr. King would agree and support this statement as he was a proud brother of ALPHA PHI ALPHA Fraternity.

The fourth point is in reference to the statement, "you will probably not work for a company owned by a black person,...a black person will probably not be your boss....Your professors in graduate school will probably not be black....your closest friends are probably not black...." Our first ques-

See FRATERNITY, page 10

A black fraternity is not an insidious plot

Darry Strickland

Upon reading Thomas Moore's article last week in *The Davidsonian*, I was not only shocked, but angered by many of the ignorant and flawed assumptions he contended: Black fraternities were not as Moore stated, started on Black college campuses but at predominantly White institutions. Their purpose was to give a sense of brotherhood, comradeship and fellowship to Black males on these campuses who otherwise felt isolated and disenfranchised. A black fraternity at Davidson seeks the same goal.

I resent his assertion that a Black fraternity would be a separatist entity on Davidson's campus. Implicit in that statement is a racist assumption: that there is something threatening, negative and insidious in Blacks organizing and coalescing for anything which isn't initiated by Whites. I dare say that if the "shoe were on the other foot," and you were at a predominantly Black institution in which you made up 4.9 percent of the student body, and wanted to bring a historically White fraternity on campus, you would not deem it to be a separatist entity at all. You would think it natural for people with similar experiences, cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds to group

together.

I also resented your arrogant admonition to the members of the Kappa Alpha Psi interest group, stating that we are compromising the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King in our attempt to bring a historically Black fraternity to Davidson. This attitude shared by many Whites—that if Blacks don't wish to integrate, we are separatists—is erroneous. This is not the question at hand; the pertinent issue is assimilation, not integration, which requires the compromising of cultural identity. If we want to create a fraternity with the stamp of African-American cultural, political and social identity used to unite interested males at Davidson, we should be allowed. We should not be punished or discriminated against because we do not wish to join the established fraternities at Davidson but want to start our own, especially if color is the determining factor.

In his call for integration, Moore must discard his ethnocentric attitude and realize that Blacks are culturally different from Whites and this difference should be respected by Whites, as Blacks are forced to respect the cultural differences of Whites. Daily, we deal with living the dual roles of integration, and we don't hide as he stated. We are Black—we can't hide! The onus for integration, hereto, has been the "Black

Man's Burden." We have been forced to join, although not explicitly stated, White fraternities at Davidson, if we wished to participate in the fraternal experience. With a Black fraternity on campus, Whites will bear some of the responsibility for integration. If you want to integrate the campus, join us. His contention that this will foster an "us vs. them" dichotomy is ignorant of the present "us vs. them" dichotomy, at Davidson, which Blacks are asked to alleviate by assimilation into White fraternities where, on the whole, we are not comfortable.

However, out of the many ignorant and unenlightened assumptions Moore made, what was most disturbing about his comments was his patronizing attitude toward Blacks. He had the panacea for the racial tensions, integration and education, but then asked, in effect, "what else do you niggers want?, you do realize that you can achieve only so much, since you are a minority?" It is pitiful for one person to think in such anachronistic terms in 1989, but if more Whites feel the same as Tom Moore, they are not only failing Davidson's supposed liberal arts education, but Davidson is failing them.

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A frat is not separate but equal—just different

Melissa Givens

"An unlearned carpenter of my acquaintance once said in my hearing: 'There is very little difference between one man and another; but what little there is, is very important. This distinction seems to me to go to the root of the matter.'"

-William James

And so it seems to me. I read Tom Moore's editorial in last week's *Davidsonian* and was disturbed by what he had written. I was not disturbed by the subject of the article, nor was I disturbed by the adversarial position he took. Such discussion is important to the life of any college/town/country. I was however, disturbed by the obvious lack of information with which it was written.

There are many points with which I would like to take issue and all of them stem from Moore's apparent misunderstanding of some basic issues of human dynamics in general, diversity in particular, and even more specifically, historically black Greek-letter organizations.

"Simply put, a black fraternity would segregate the campus." Davidson's campus is already a victim of de facto segregation. I am not saying this to condone the segregation, only to recognize it. There is very little black participation in many of the campus activities/organizations and often there is a good reason for it.

You cannot "make black students feel more comfortable" by "getting them" involved in campus social activities. We have to want to be involved. The fact that more of us aren't should signal to people that for one reason or another, the activities are not those that many of us care to participate in. I can assure you that there is not pressure being put on any black student at

Davidson by any other black student at Davidson not to get involved in any other social activity at Davidson. It is always a choice made by an individual black student at Davidson who has sampled the social offerings of Davidson and found them wanting.

Why are they wanting? Sometimes there is no concrete answer. Many times the atmosphere is just not very welcoming to anyone who doesn't fit in. The reality is that Davidson is a very homogeneous environment. Differences are recognized but not celebrated. If you are different, you have a problem unless you can find others who are different and find some kind of affirmation of that difference among them. This is not separatism. It is adaptation—making the best of a less than desirable situation.

Unfortunately for Davidson however, such adap-

See NOT SEPARATE, page 10