

# Connor House renewed

Davidson is home to approximately 816 women, most of whom are members of Patterson Court. In other words, there should be enough women to support the four eating houses that we have on campus. Why, then, are there three booming houses and one that is barely surviving?

We all know that Connor House has suffered this year, but I don't think that what has happened in the past is important now. I'm not hesitant to admit that there is a stigma attached to the house. I think it's a false image, and I hate the fact that it's there. Still, I'm ready to move on. And so are all the women in Connor House.

Connor is home to strong, smart, energetic women. But the truth is that this number isn't large enough to ensure the future of the house. We currently have enough women to survive for now, we have plenty of money, and we have the enthusiasm. But what we need is the support of the women at Davidson. What we have discussed with Jim Barber and all of the eating house presidents is the need for Connor to become like a new house. A renewed house. The structure of the house is to remain the same—the name, the money, and the bylaws. Our goal is not to change the house superficially, not by chang-

ing our name or the mascot or the paint on the walls. This kind of change can be positive, but our energy needs to be focused on bringing renewal to the very basic foundation of the house. And we as women are at this foundation. Our involvement, support, and enthusiasm determine the viability of the eating houses.

Our aim is to bring about the renewal we need by offering a free switch into Connor, similar to the procedure used with the opening of Turner this past fall. (The current self-selection policy allows for one switch among the houses—a rule that will be waived for our situation.) Our idea is not to lure women away from Turner, Rusk, or Warner Hall, but it is to offer Davidson women the chance to support the unique system that we have here. By ensuring the future of Connor House, we are also ensuring the continued celebration of women that is at the foundation of the eating house system. Let's support each other and make this happen together. If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Davis at x6420, Darisse Bowden at x6521, or Katie Keith at x6288.)

Sarah Davis '00



Photo courtesy of Kim Ceci

◆ Connor House celebrates with its incoming members on Self-Selection Night.

## Diversity and desegregation

30 years ago, none of the Davidson College students were even born at the time desegregation was implemented into the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools. 30 days from now, most of us won't be here to see how the trial challenging this decision will conclude. However, this surely does not undermine the great significance and implications of the ongoing trial attempting to initiate Neighborhood Schools. Some of you may be asking yourselves "where is this 'Mecklenburg County'?" To the others of you, read on.

In 1969, after Vera and Darius Swann sued the segregated public school system, U.S. District Judge James McMillan ordered mandatory busing to integrate whites and black students in the greater Charlotte Area. The reason was clear: to provide equal public educational opportunities for all students, regardless of race. Opposition challenged what was called "dual systems" or those systems that operated separately based on race. Their intention was undisputed: by mixing black and white students, there could be no bias based on resources and teaching directed towards the public school system.

Now, parents are suing the public school system to end desegregation practices, claiming that bussing and racial quotas need to be eliminated because the goal of desegregation, equal opportunity for both black and white students, has been achieved.

The defense is unconvinced. I argue that there are two motives behind the case arguing to maintain desegregation:

- 1.) equal opportunity for all students
- 2.) racial diversity in the classroom

Both of these factors enhance public education. The former is imperative; the latter is not. 30 years ago these elements went hand in hand. That is to say that by making the classroom diverse, every student was dealt the same hand, they were given equal opportunity. However, today, there must be a distinction between the above motives. James Ferguson, who argued for desegregation in the trial 30 years ago is still arguing to continue such policies. He claims that he wants the same right he initially argued for: "an equal educational opportunity for the African American children of this community" because black students still receive "an inferior quality of education." One black parent is convinced that his child receives a worse education because she is black. "There are stigmas involved here," he believes, "stigmas that black children cannot learn."

They are arguing that largely black schools continue to receive inferior funding, resources, and even teachers, and therefore desegregation should not be eliminated. However, they are also arguing for diversity in the classroom. They

believe that learning from others of a different race or a different economic status is beneficial for students as it prepares them for the real world.

On Wednesday, a member of the school board was testifying as to his perception that bussing children could be detrimental to families. A lawyer, working for the parents to maintain desegregation, then asked him if the families benefited from "the opportunity to participate in a desegregated environment where their children interacted with other children..." Some high school students are protesting the neighborhood schools because, says one student, "it's given [us] a whole different perspective on life."

This type of classroom diversity was not an intention of desegregation that occurred 20 years ago. In order to get the sought equal opportunity, they diversified the classroom. In other words, diversity for the sake of diversity was not an issue. Yet today, it keeps emerging. It appears Cristina Capacchione was not admitted to a school because she is "nonblack."

In the current trial, a sign outside the courthouse on Wednesday read "Equity and Integration - They Go Together." In order to fight for the best interests of the students, however, I believe that the motives for equity and integration must be distinguished. Racial quotas should not precede equal opportunity. Bussing kids 90 minutes merely for the sake of classroom diversity, should not be a fundamental agenda for the defendants. While it would be nice to have such diversity to learn from peers, it cannot be sought at the expense of equal opportunity. I do not know if there are still schools with inferior resources, there may be. However, I would hope that we are past the stage where there are people with serious intentions of depriving largely black schools of better resources and teachers. But if unbalanced education is still occurring in the public school system, then we must, for the sake of education, do all we can to change that. I believe that equal opportunity should be first prerogative for this trial, while classroom diversity pales in comparison to such a goal.

"This case is not about racial quotas or...social engineering, ...[but to be sure that there is] not an inferior education for some...with less resources," insisted a defense lawyer (arguing for continued desegregation). I hope that he is right, that his motives do not include classroom diversity. If he is, then he not only gives his side the best chance at maintaining desegregation, but most importantly, he puts the educational opportunities of children before less significant agendas.

Phil Reed '02

## Big dreams grow on Davidson campus

### Abu-Dayyeh has plan to save the world

Several years ago, the World Bank dropped off hoes in the backyard of an underdeveloped country of an undernourished people who dream of a Davidson SAT score for a calorie intake. They dropped them off and left.

Six months later when the bank's overseers came back to check on the progress, the hoes laid in the same spot they had left them, untouched. The investors did not understand that all the men were fishermen and the women were left to do the gardening worked all day with their babies on their backs. The women couldn't stand upright to hoe the ground. They needed to work on their knees so that their babies wouldn't fall off of their backs. To work, the women needed smaller, hand held instruments so that they could be on their knees when they work.

That's how Davidson student Dalia Abu-Dayyeh tells the story.

It's the stuff she aspires to change and what inspires her towards service.

"I want to redefine aide. Instead of actual physical donations such as money or supplies, I want to give an education. . . The aim is to get the insiders to tell the other people in the village what to do, instead of the unknown Westerner from an unknown corporation." She has a plan to save the world and she's not afraid to tell it to anyone.

A few may laugh at any thought to save the world. Large worlds come hard to save these days and most "save the world" dreams died way back in elementary school. But to Abu-Dayyeh, it's not the case. "You tell your teacher your dreams and they'll tell you they can't be achieved," she says, "I don't want to stop thinking that I can achieve my dreams."

She'll swoon you with stories on end of third world apathy and Western ignorance, then subtly insert a language allusion from one of the seven she speaks - whether it be in be in English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Italian, or Hebrew. She's a mouthful for most to swallow and at first hard to digest without noticing her confident demeanor. But both she, it, and her languages are remarkably interesting.

Her official residence places her in the Palestinian Authority of the Middle East but unofficially she lives among three different religious cultures of her home's Christianity, her surrounding community's Muslim religion, and the neighboring Jewish traditions. She started school at an Arabian institution until the Intifada Revolution in 1987 forced her to the more stable environment of French schooling. Being a part of so many different cultures not only gave her a sense of how much variety exists in the world, but also fed to a passion

for language and culture.

Abu-Dayyeh hungers for a better grasp of language; for she understands what an integral part of a culture it is. Only through a complete understanding of the culture does she truly believe she can help it. "There are things that can't be translated into English, that can be only appreciated in the context of the culture and its language," she says. "If you don't understand the language and the culture, you can't understand the emotion that that phrase emits." Her biggest thrill comes in finding an emotion inexpressible in one of her native languages that is expressible in another.

Without that understanding of the culture, she disputes, an outside country can't help one foreign to them. Quick to criticize Western thinkers about their preaching of assimilation, she argues. "You can't impose a way of thinking on a culture. A culture is not going to change. A culture is a culture."

"Westerners want to see immediate results. They will go to countries and plant already grown trees, but the problem is that these trees never take roots. Instead, plant an acorn. We know we have planted it, but we may never see it grow in our lifetime."

With her "plan," insiders would advise outsiders on how the rest of the world can help them, rather than have strangers impose their decisions upon a culture of which they have no part. Respectable members of the village would be schooled in a usable skill, such as agricultural research, which they would in turn, teach to their community. She hopes the plan has a snowball effect with students of the system returning what they have been given by teaching in the program in an almost ROTC like fashion - giving back for an education.

Abu-Dayyeh has already spoken with bank leaders about her educational plan of third world aid. They appear positive and hope to work with her down the road to raise the hopes and standards for third world constituents. With her service, dreams, and education, Abu-Dayyeh surely hopes to make a difference.

David Rosenberg '01

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