

Davidson Welcomes Back its First Black Graduates

By Alice Felmlee

Many Davidson graduates go on to become pioneers in their own fields; yet few enter the college as true pioneers. Wayne Crumwell and Marian Perkins did just that. As Davidson's first African American male and female freshmen, and eventual graduates, the two took major steps onto an all white Southern campus.

Returning to their alma mater as part of Black History Month, Crumwell and Perkins shared memories of the Davidson they had known and expressed some hopes for its future.

It took Crumwell only fifty minutes to relive his college experience on Tuesday night. The Reidsville, North Carolina lawyer spoke of the Davidson personali-

ties who had influenced him most and the truths he had been told. These truths did not arise from lectures of class discussions but rather from campus life—this was perhaps, the best education.

Throughout his four years at Davidson, Crumwell chose to believe the words of the then Admissions Director, H. Edmonds White. "He told us we were here for the benefit of white students. They needed to be exposed. It would be an awesome service that we could perform for them."

The contrast between black and white was to be a course in life, and Crumwell the improptu professor. Only later in his talk did the speaker suggest his own agreement to such a metaphor: "It was hard for me to understand how Davidson

students could be so intelligent yet so different from me as far as value systems."

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-Wayne Crumwell

Crumwell spoke of did not reflect the violence and outrage present on many college campuses at the time, the joy felt on campus on the eve of Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination linked Davidson to

the tensions beyond the life of a student.

"I remember going to a [white] friend's room the night Dr. King was killed," reminisced Crumwell. "We sat there sharing a bottle of Johnny Walker Red as we talked of the imminent race war, the reality that we would be on opposing sides and the fear that we might one day do each other bodily harm."

Crumwell feels that his time here instructed him in the real world, racism included.

Davidson's first black male graduate eventually gained a sense of his own abilities. It was Dr. McCormick who taught him to appreciate those abilities, and Davidson's own Lefty Drisell who instilled in him a hope for improved race relations.

Marian Perkins shared many themes with Crumwell. While outward racism was not so apparent, subtle hints of its presence did not go unnoticed by her. Professors who encouraged her to join their departments so that they might have a black student in their ranks, and a theater production which depicted African Americans in a displeasing light made their points.

Coming all the way from Atlanta to share her college experiences with a younger generation of Davidsonians, Perkins used the final moments of her talk to encourage students have deeply committed faith and to promote encouraged race relations. "I am deeply committed to my religion and don't feel the need to judge failure and success using the normal rules."

French Foreign Legion Captain Describes War in Croatia

By Jeff Oller

Few people are willing to stand up and literally fight for a cause. Anyone can talk big but consider a person who picks up a gun and fights in a war for the freedom of another country.

Colton Perry, a sophomore at Old Dominion University, is such a person. He recently fought for Croatia in their war against Serbia, and spoke to the Davidson community Thursday in the 900 Room.

A life abroad and full of military involvement has been in his plans for a long time. At the age of fifteen, he moved to France. Four years later, mesmerized by stories of the French Foreign Legion, he decided to join their ranks.

Joining a parachute regiment and finishing third out of a large training class, Perry soon found himself fighting in Chad. He ended up fighting on both sides of the war at different times.

In October of 1991, he joined

the Croatian Army Special Forces. After nearly eight months of fighting, Perry was shot in the leg while trying to evacuate civilians to safer territory. At this time he and two other Croatian fighters were captured by Yugoslavian forces.

It was not until four months later and countless hours of confinement and beatings that Perry was returned to Croatia. He was traded for three Serbian pilots at the U.S. Embassy and subsequently freed.

Through all of this Perry insists that he is a "pretty down to earth person," and insists that he did not fight in Croatia as a mercenary. His motivation was quite simple: a strong belief in the Croatian cause. He was not well paid and never expected any sort of compensation.

Although he does not want to point any fingers, Perry believes the main antagonist in this war is quite obvious. "After all, Serbia

itself coined the term 'ethnic cleansing' to describe what it was doing."

Citing the fact that the Serbians are not well-trained for war combat, this Croatian fighter believes that his forces will prevail. Looking to our nation's capital, Perry mentioned the growing concern which has been mounting because of America's lack of involvement in the area.

To this he offered a few suggestions. "By enforcing the no fly zone over Croatia, lifting the embargo, and actively supporting the Bosnian government, the United States could help the Croats recapture the land which is rightfully their own," said Perry.

Because he remains a captain in the Croatian Army on reserve status, Perry plans to return to Croatia this summer. He intends to aid in the training of recruits and to eventually obtain Croatian citizenship.

Campus Questions Statement of Purpose

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gauge that could fairly be considered exclusive."

Dr. McKelway serves on the sub-committee with Dr. Ben Klein, Professor of Mathematics, Larry Dagenhart, Charlotte attorney and Trustee, and Rev. William Wood, Senior Minister of Charlotte First Presbyterian Church and Trustee. The committee will present suggestions for change to the Trustees in the spring or summer; the Trustees will then vote to determine whether or not to adopt the alterations.

According to Dr. McKelway, the Statement of Purpose "is lodged in the ByLaws of the Trustees. It is not a faculty document though we will be able to help draft and craft the statement." McKelway states also that student and faculty concerns will be considered but the final vote belongs solely to the Trustees.

The issue is being addressed by the Council on Minority Affairs chaired by Junior DeVane Tidwell. Tidwell says, "Davidson wants to be considered a school with high academic standards and professes to espouse cultural diversity. If

this is the case, then it must be embodied within such official school documents as the Statement of Purpose." The Council plans to propose particular changes for approval by the Student Government which will in turn propose the changes to the Trustee's sub-committee.

Tidwell "urges all students to at least take time to actually ingest the Statement which can be found in the opening pages of the college catalog." The current Statement has not been changed since 1962 before minorities or women were admitted. Pertinent suggestions can be made to any Council of Minority Affairs or SGA representative.

Anni Kirkland, sophomore representative to the council, comments that, "the committee feels that the Statement of Purpose is not true in the way Davidson is now and it contrasts what Davidson is hoping to be." She suggests that the primary concern involves removing the more overt references to Christianity to incorporate more religious and cultural diversity.

Not all students agree on the necessity to change the Statement of Purpose. "I would like to fulfill

the Statement of Purpose as it is now, but it is hypocritical because student life doesn't revolve around Christian ethics," says freshman SGA Senator Bo Bartholomew. "We have two choices: One, change the Statement of Purpose to meet what we are now, or two, change the lives of Davidson student to meet the Statement of Purpose."

Dr. McKelway does not foresee any tremendous change of meaning for the statement. He emphasizes the possible change of language to better portray the goals of the college. "The desire is not to reinvent or erase the Statement of Purpose. The issue is one of improvement and change."

SGA President Alden Smith who also serves on the Council on Minority Affairs, states, "the aim is not to de-Christianize the document but to make it more representative of the students and faculty."

"The statement that Davidson's primary purpose is to develop persons of Christian character is simply not true. I think any religious professor will back me up on that."

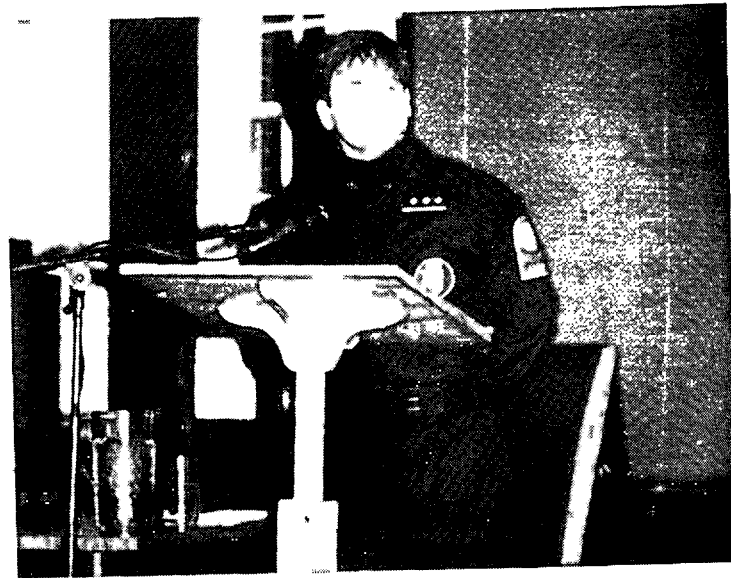


Photo by Kristina Nevius

Sponsored by the Dean Rusk Program, Croatian freedom fighter Colton Perry spoke in the 900 Room Thursday night.



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