February One: Marking the Legacy of the A&T Four

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The university will have its annual breakfast to honor the A&T Four on Thursday, Feb. 1. This year’s theme is “Reclaiming Our Heritage; Redefining Our Legacy.”

For almost 20 years, A&T has held this event to celebrate the legacy of Frank McCain, Jibreel Khazan, Joseph McNeil and the late David Richmond.

Along with the A&T Four at Thursday morning’s breakfast will be special guest Naomi Tutu.

Tutu is the daughter of Archbishop Desmond and Nomalizo Leah Tutu and will be the designated speaker and an activist for human rights.

At the breakfast, Tutu will share her personal stories about living in the apartheid era in South Africa.

The decision of the A&T Four to begin a sit-in at Woolworth’s restaurant over 40 years ago impacted the civil rights movement.

At the time, African Americans were not allowed to sit and eat inside of restaurants.

Dr. Judy Rashid, dean of students, said students can not begin to fathom not being able to sit down in a restaurant.

She described the time period of the sit-in as one with a lot of social injustice.

“A lot of privileges the black man did not have because of the color of his skin,” Rashid said.

Different faculty and staff members, who are here now, were students during the sit-in movement.

Lewis Brandon, a former biology teacher at A&T, reflects on Greensboro during the time of the civil rights movement.

“A&T was in Greensboro, but it was not apart of Greensboro,” Brandon said.

The sit-ins were an act to bring about change, equality and justice. Rashid stated that these acts are extremely important to the history of our school.

“The significance of the A&T Four’s contributions to civil rights is that they accomplished it while they were students,” she said.

Rashid wants every student to know that while in school we can make a difference.

The one word that many students and staff are saying to describe the A&T Four is courageous.

“It was remarkable that four men could think about the same thing and move on such convention at such a young age,” Rashid said.

Randall Ellington, a junior communication studies major, commends the A&T Four for taking the initiative as freshmen to change the world.

“As a student, I feel I have some big shoes to fill because of the university’s representation given by the A&T Four,” Ellington said.

On Thursday, breakfast with the A&T Four will begin at 6 a.m. in Williams Cafeteria.

After the breakfast, everyone can attend the ceremonial laying of the wreath in front of the Dudley Building.

At 3 p.m., students and the community will meet in Stallings Ballroom located in the union for a round-table discussion.