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N.Y. Pastor Speaks At Breakfast

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N.Y. pastor speaks at breakfast

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The A&T Four was remembered once again in what has become a staple tradition for the A&T family. Feb. 1 marked the 46th anniversary of the courageous acts that the four A&T students made in 1960 for the advancement of civil rights.

This year's celebration theme was "Reconnecting the Past, Establishing the Present and Shaping the Future." The annual program takes place on or around the first of February in Williams Cafeteria. The event was sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs and attracts a large audience every year.

During the breakfast portion of the ceremony, which began at 6:30 a.m., members of local media, alumni and student body gathered in the cafeteria. The atmosphere was similar to a mini-homecoming.

"I am very happy to be here because there is a lot of history here with this celebration of the sit-in movement," said Rev. Calvin Butts III, the keynote speaker, as he entered the building.

On Feb. 1, 1960, A&T freshmen Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, Jibreel Khazan and the late David Richmond staged the first successful sit-in protest at the F.W. Woolworth lunch counter in downtown Greensboro. This was one of the many key events that trailblazed the civil rights movement across America.

Members of the A&T Four had fond memories of that historic day.

"We did not appreciate it at the time, but we were being a part of something much bigger and it has lasted for years," McNeil said.

When McCain was asked about the legacy that he felt his actions made, he humbly responded, "I expect the students to take away an awareness that they should always seek change. I would also be lying if I told you that I felt that what we did would still have an affect on the world some 46 years later!"

Some of the highlights of the program included a powerful poetic expression by Judy Rashid, the vice chancellor for student affairs, and a special tribute to the late Coretta Scott King, given by SGA President Justin Ramey.

A stirring rendition of "Lift Every Voice" was performed by the A&T Gospel Choir. Perhaps the most surprising moment occurred when Khazan delivered his own musical tribute to the late Rosa Parks.

After some presentations by the A&T Four and members of both A&T and Bennett College's Student Government Associations, the keynote speaker, Rev. Calvin Butts III, took the stage.

Butts is a pastor of the renowned Abyssinian Baptist Church in New York.