Students call for revote on studies

Faculty and students discuss concerns at forum

by Jacquelyn Plittman
Staff Reporter

Students at N.C. A&T reacted positively last Wednesday to the news that Democratic nominee Bill Clinton had been elected President of the United States.

Clinton's stated intention "to unite the United States" and jumpstart the sluggish economy drew praise from some voters. "Democrats are for change, and we need change," said Serena Henderson, a freshmen nursing major.

"Hopefully, he will correct all the things that are messed up," Verdie Williams, a communication major, agreed. "I like Clinton's plan of action," she said.

"I hope the Democrats make our economy better," said Divens Harrison, a freshman from Winston-Salem.

Issues such as the economy, the federal deficit and health care brought students and other voters to the polls in record numbers.

"I decided to vote because I wanted change," said Marquis Harris, a junior marketing major.

Although Clinton narrowly lost to President George Bush in North Carolina, Democrats regained a majority on the Guilford County Board of Commissioners.

Some students said they felt that universities would benefit from a Democratic administration, because spending on state schools would increase. Better-educated students would have more potential in the tough job market, said Leela McMillan, an architectural engineering student. "I feel like this will bring more jobs to the students that are graduating soon," she said.

Continued on page 7

Aggies applauded Clinton's election

by Scottie Holloway
Staff Reporter

Frustrated A&T students demanded action on proposed mandatory black studies from administrators at a faculty-student meeting last Thursday in Harrison Auditorium.

The History Club, a coalition of student organizations, and other concerned students pushed for a res- turn by secret ballot on implementation of mandatory African-American studies in the university's core curriculum.

Dr. Pamela Hunter, Senate Chairperson, said students and faculty needed to be aware of action taken by the Faculty Forum on April 8, 1992. Students felt that a motion was passed stating that African-American and other multi-cultural courses should be accepted and strongly recommended as curriculum core options for the satisfaction of humanities, social sciences and free elective requirements.

"What was passed last spring at the Faculty Forum (strongly recommended African and multi-cultural studies) does not satisfy the students' number one demand, which is mandatory black studies," an angry student later responded.

Students claim the issues are much broader than the implementation of African-American studies. Some said they feel that student interests are not being served and faculty members have lost touch with black student needs.

"Emnity perspective, faculty is answerable to no one if they are not answerable to students first," said Eric Short, a senior public relations major.

"Students brought up this issue, support this issue, and demand that faculty push this issue through," Chancellor Edward Fort responded by saying he felt the issue would not be resolved through politics and demonstrations.

"My position has not changed," said Chancellor Fort, who supports mandatory black studies. "It's important that although we are a black campus, it should not be used as a basis for pulling for the institutionalization of racism against other students who come to this campus."

Since their quest began for mandatory black studies, students have received over 2,000 signatures on a petition urging adoption of the studies, unified several student organizations and marched to the administration building to discuss their concerns.

Continued on page 7

History club president says studies are a focus for change

by Greg Williams
News Editor

The student-led movement for mandatory African-American studies at A&T has become a catalyst for change on campus and in the surrounding area, said A&T History Club President Dwayne Patterson.

"The thing I'm most proud of is that we have the opportunity to bring out the fact that black studies is not the only thing" that needs to be addressed, he said.

Patterson said the larger issues have been outlined in a list of seven demands, including:

• A resolution to mandate that each incoming student be required to complete a minimum of six credit hours in African and African-American related courses;

• An open discussion between students and faculty through the mechanism of the Faculty Forum;

• A committee dedicated to the recruitment of black students, specifically black males;

• The reconstruction of the N.C. A&T mission statement so that it reflects the needs of this black university and the black community;

• Disciplinary action to be taken against the Dean of Business, Quinton Craig, for his intimidation of faculty and disrespect to students during the Spring 1992 Faculty Forum;

• A meeting between Craig and the student body;

• Approval for the Black National Anthem, "LEV and S," to be included in the university's曲曲

Continued on page 7

Alumni enrich A&T and Greensboro

by Lori Ingram
Staff Reporter

The North Carolina A&T State University Alumni Association raised $58,000 through the sale of tickets to the annual alumni concert Homecoming weekend, an alumni official said.

The high turnout and ticket sales for the show, which featured Phyllis Hyman, demonstrated the flood of energy pumped into school coffers and the local economy every Homecoming, said Sampson Buie, director of Alumni Affairs.

"Homecoming is a time when the A&T alumni come back home," Buie said. "At least $2.6 million was spent by alumni last weekend for purchasing hotel rooms, buying souvenirs, tickets for football games and other Homecoming activities."

A&T alumni consistently give donations to the university to help strengthen programs and help students achieve greater success academically, Buie said.

"Members of the Alumni Association give annually," he said. "In 1991, there was an all-time high of $334,000 in annual giving."
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**BE A TEACHER. BE A HERO.**
Call 1-800-45-TEACH.
by Corey Cartwright
Staff Reporter

A new community service program hopes to involve more than 20,000 college students in the Greensboro area and chairman of the student program is Ingram.

The program, called Campus Community Connection, has established satellite volunteer centers at A&T, Greensboro College, Bennett College and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. A&T's volunteer center is located in the lobby of the Municipal Student Union Building.

New doctoral program aims for spring start-up
by April Dillard
Staff Reporter

The School of Engineering's Doctorate Degree program has more hurdles to clear before it receives final approval, an A&T administration official said last week.

A&T hopes to be ready to offer the new doctoral program by April of 1993. Kelly said that the deadline for General Administration's decision was at the discretion of evaluators there, so no firm timetable for the proposed program was available.

Kelly said, "We are absolutely on schedule with a high percentage to assure all of the details are handled."

There were 95 students enrolled in the master's degree program for engineering in 1991. That number increased this fall to 100. The number of students in the master's program for mechanical engineering also rose from 35 students to 50.

Those enrollment figures were one of the determining factors in selecting the two majors for doctoral degree programs, Kelly said.

Kelly said that expected doctoral programs to be established in other engineering majors, depending on the number of students enrolled in each master's degree program. Industrial engineering is a strong candidate for an additional doctoral degree program with 55 master's students enrolled this year.

Additional funding for the doctoral program will be necessary to fund faculty positions in math and chemistry.

A&T Chancellor Edward Fort is well aware of the support system and additional funding needed for this program, said Kelly.

About 1,300 engineering students are enrolled at A&T and the baccalaureate and master's degree levels. Approval of the program would make A&T the historically black institution in North Carolina to offer a doctorate, and an educational milestone, Kelly said.

Alumni turn politician's tally another victory
by Corey Cartwright
Staff Reporter

"I really enjoy associating with my fellow Aggies and students. It keeps me from getting too self-centered," said N.C. State House Representative Herman Gin, Sr. (Guilford) who ran unopposed in the last week's election.

Gin, 65, a native of Spartanburg, S.C., attended Cofield College, played football and basketball at Hampton Institute, and attended Greensboro College.

Once he finished high school, he attended Cofield College in Greensboro, S.C. and in 1946 he transferred to North Carolina A&T.

Gin, who received a honorary doctorate of humane letters from N.C. A&T in 1991, recalled fond memories of his days at alma mater.

"Cofield College is the seed for graduation with a B.S. degree in biology except for about three credit hours, and completed those in 1964," he said.

Brandon Minnott
Staff Reporter

This year, A&T is creating a new position called the Volunteer Action Center.

"Through the Campus Community Connection center, students will find it easier to link up with the campus organizations they would like to help," said Sandy Leonard, program director for the Volunteer Action Center.

"This fall, there are over 20,000 students enrolled (at local universities), and during these times of budget cutbacks in community service, these students represent a tremendous untapped resource," she said.

The program was initiated when the Volunteer Action Center received a $4,000 grant last July from the Foundation of Greater Greensboro to begin a volunteer recruitment and training program on the five campuses.

Students who visit the volunteer center in the A&T lobby from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. will have access to information about community agencies and the issues they address.

The center also features a list of areas where volunteers are needed in the community, including any information on required training and the times the programs are needed.

For more information, call the volunteer center at 334-5500.
Hitting the high note: Singer Phyllis Hyman belts out a song at the annual alumni concert.

Passing the crown: 1991 Homecoming Queen Pam Askew (right) and new Queen Machelle Cato share the spotlight.

Letting it fly: Aggie quarterback Adrian Starks unleashes a pass during Saturday's game.

Stepping out: Organizational queens and their escorts strut their stuff in the court of the newly crowned Homecoming queen Thursday night.

Her royal highness: New Homecoming Queen Machelle Cato is bedecked in her cape (above left) and approached by her Aggie subjects (below left).

Below, Aggie defenders converge on Bethune-Cookman's ball carrier at the Homecoming game.

Sideline strategy: A&T Head Football Coach Bill Hayes confers with a player during the Homecoming game.

Sharing the stage: A&T alumnus Rev. Jesse Jackson chats with university officials and SGA President Erica Smith before speaking to students and alumni.

Photo essay
By
Doug McCullough
U.S. Representative urges cap on Congress salaries

GREENSBORO, N.C.—U.S. Rep. Howard Coble (R-N.C.) said that he has agreed to be a plaintiff in a federal lawsuit aimed at repealing an upcoming congressional pay raise. Coble has agreed to join forces with a Denver-based legal foundation which is trying to prevent a 3.2 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for members of Congress from taking effect on January 1, 1993.

If the COLA goes into effect, the annual salaries of Senators and Representatives would be $133,644, up from the current $129,500. Annual COLAs as become law by the passage of the 1989 Ethics Reform Act, which Coble voted against.

“The Denver-based American Constitutional Law Foundation, Inc., has announced plans to file the lawsuit in order to overturn the COLA from taking effect. Coble and U.S. Rep. Jim Cooper (R-Ohio) have said they will become plaintiffs in that lawsuit. Other Members of Congress and candidates for Congress are being asked to join the lawsuit,” Coble said. Congresswoman Coble said she agreed to join the lawsuit because lawmakers should not have to foot the bill for another Congressional pay raise at this time.

This is another example of Congress feathering its own nest while Congressmen do not get a raise,” Coble said. “My joining this suit as a party plaintiff is consistent with my earlier vote to defeat the congressional pay raise and co-sponsorship of the legislation to repeal the congressional—and other federal—raise in the Ethics Reform Act.”

A number of taxpayer watchdog groups have argued that the COLA is unconstitutional because of the manner in which it was adopted, last year, it fulfills the automatic COLAs approved in 1989.

The groups state that because of the Madison Amendment, Congress must pass a bill into law specifying dollar amount of any congressional salary increase. Among the groups are the National Taxpayers Union, Americans for Tax Reform, Citizens Against Government Waste and U.S. Term Limits.

The automatic COLAs.

Most students receive aid

WASHINGTON (CPS) — Nearly 60 percent of freshman undergraduates receives some student financial aid from federal, state or other sources, the U.S. Department of Education reports.

More students in private institutions received financial aid in share public, and in private, for-profit institutions, nearly nine out of 10 students received some form of aid, said the 1992 report.

The report contains 60 responses for schools—elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education.

Among the findings relate to college students:

- Federal support for education rose 29 percent between 1983 and 1991 to an estimated $54.6 billion.
- The number and percent of bachelor's degrees earned in the natural sciences, computer sciences and engineering dropped during the last half of the 1980s.
- Between 1980 and 1990, costs for tuition, room, and board rose more rapidly as private colleges than as public institutions—49 percent vs. 26 percent. Although the rate of increase for college costs continues to outpace inflation, in 1991, tuition, room and board at public institutions as a proportion of family incomes was lower than in the mid-1960s.

ROTC hosts trick-or-treaters

On 28 October 1992, ARMY and ROCT joined together as part of the 605 to hold their Third Annual Halloween Party.

The Halloween Party provided a safe alternative for Trick-or-Treaters from the local schools in Greensboro, North Carolina from trick or treat to the eighth party.

Caders from ARMY and ROCT are eager to their creativity to turn 605 into a haunted house filled with witches, goblins, ghosts, and zombies.

The Air Force ROTC Leadership Lab was used as a refreshment area, and the Army ROTC Leadership Lab was used in a prize area.

Some of the games consisted of musical chairs and put the one on the pinata was made, also. Prices for the winning participants in the games consist of candy gift certificates, and cup cakes. A Halloween cake went to the person who broke the pinata.

Ama businesses and N&T's radio station made this event possible. Area businesses donated some refreshments and prizes which helped to defray expenses.

Flyers posted throughout communities and WNAU, the radio university station, provided publicity for the event.

Detachment 605 plans to continue the Halloween Party next year in high expectations for the upcoming years.

This event has given ARMY and ARMY ROTC another opportunity to give back to the community by providing a fun, and most importantly, a safely Halloween for the children for our future.

Peace Corps seeks to tap spirit of volunteerism

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Volunteering is on the rise in the United States, according to figures released by the Peace Corps.

The gross-root international development agency, which was founded during the presidency of John F. Kennedy in 1961, has seen a 25 percent increase in the number of applications in 1992 compared to last year.

The Peace Corps offers ideal Americans of various backgrounds a chance to share their skills by living and working with 90,000 developing nations worldwide.

One of the reasons for the surge in applications to the Peace Corps can be traced to the results of a 1990 study by the Gallup Organization, a research and consulting firm.

The study showed that 58 percent of American teens were active volunteers, and 52 percent of Americans between the ages of 25 and 44 volunteered on a regular basis.

The Gallup Study also indicates that volunteers in the United States was at its highest level ever, with approximately 98 million Americans sharing their time and personal resources.

And in a n 18 volunteered an average of four hours per week in 1989, compared to an average of 90 hours in 1979.

Those figures represent a 23 percent overall increase in the level of volunteerism since 1987.

Peace Corps officials said they were especially interested in individuals skilled in areas such as education, agriculture, health, forestry, business and engineering.

Peace Corps volunteers receive hands-on work experience, education, and opportunities and financial aid, free travel, paid living expenses, free medical and dental care and a $5,400 end-of-service bonus.

Peace Corps recruiters will conduct on-campus interviews at A&T on Nov. 17 and 18.

Interested students can also register with the Office of Career Services.

Award to honor slain civil rights activists

A slain civil rights activist will be honored through an award given to college students who are catalysts for social change in their communities, and a Los Angeles-based activists' foundation has announced.

The Michael Schwerner Activist Award will be presented every spring to five college students who have challenged some of the social injustices, promoted positive solutions for change and inspired others to make a difference, said Alan Gittisman, founder of the Gleitsman Foundation.

Schwerner was a Cornell University graduate and civil rights activist who was kidnapped and murdered along with two co-workers in Mississippi in 1964.

Recipients of the award will receive a $1,000 stipend. Nominations for potential Michael Schwerner Activist Award honorees may be submitted by a nominee's students, campus faculty, staff members, alumni and others.

People "often have important solutions to critical needs, but feel they are not powerful enough to continue the system," Gittisman said.

By recognizing students who have successfully made an effective change, I hope that others will realize their own potential and will initiate positive actions on behalf of causes important to them. "This will be a better world for us all," he added.

Nomination forms, which must be returned to the before Jan. 11, 1993, may be obtained by writing to the Gleitsman Foundation, 6100 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 400, Los Angeles, California, 90048-5111.

In addition to the Schwerner Activist Award, the Gleitsman Foundation also presents a helmet Gleitsman Award and People Who Make a Difference, which honors social activists working within the United States.

The Air Force ROTC Leadership Lab was used as a refreshment area, and the Army ROTC Leadership Lab was used in prize area.

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A&T declaws Wildcats in Homecoming victory

Set sights on MEAC championship

by Keith Bullard

A&T Sports Editor

The thought of repeating as Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Champions has the Aggie football players in two-gun, must-win situations if they want to be in the NCAA Division I-AA national championship. After the Aggies 24-10 win over Delaware State last Saturday, the Aggies are tied for first in the MEAC Conference with Florida A&M and South Carolina State, second in the Sheridan Black College Poll and tied for 17th with William and Mary in the National College Athletic Association (NCAA). The Aggies credit Saturday's win to quarterback Adrian Stark.

"Adrian has been playing well the last couple of weeks," said A&T Head Football Coach Bill Hayes. "Adrian is a little bit older, (age) 22. He gives us good leadership." Stark completed seven of 15 passes for 114 yards, rushed for 43 yards and threw a 42-yard touchdown pass to Rudy Ariz with 2:22 left to decide the game.

"I'm trying to make the best of it because this is my last go-round," said Stark. Stark credits the defense for the victory. The Aggie defense held Delaware to 103 yards passing and 111 yards rushing. The biggest play of the game was the 42-yard pass to Ariz.

Hayes said the team was tight at the start but got into a rhythm as the game went on.

North Carolina A&T Aggies defeated the Bethune-Cookman Wildcats 30-22, October 31, during Homecoming. The Aggies were able to come back into the game against an 0-2 opponent. They controlled the game and apparently had it wrapped up in the third quarter but Bethune bocked the Aggies when they exploded in the fourth quarter with 15 points.

By Keith Bullard

Sports Editor

North Carolina A&T Aggies defeated the Bethune-Cookman Wildcats 30-22, October 31, during Homecoming. The Aggies were able to hold the Wildcats off and escape with a win. The Aggies sealed 563 yards of offense while Bethune sealed 383 yards.

Quarterback Adrian Stark completed five of 15 passes for 108 yards. This winmaked the Aggies one step closer to the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference title.

Sports Calendar

INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD
DECEMBER 4: Clemson, Greenville, S.C.
AGGIE BASKETBALL (MEN)
DECEMBER 1: UNC Charlotte, Greensboro, 8:00 pm
AGGIE BASKETBALL (WOMEN)
DECEMBER 1: UNC Charlotte, Greensboro, 6:00 pm
FOOTBALL
NOVEMBER 14, 21

1992 MEAC FOOTBALL STANDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Florida A&amp;M</td>
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<td>tie: A&amp;T</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4. Morgan St.</td>
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<td>5. Bethune-Cookman</td>
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A & T Sports Editor

North Carolina A&T State University will induct four of its former athletes into the A & T Sports Hall of Fame on November 21.

A wrestling great of the early 70's, Melvin Jerome Fair, Hunter, Ed Carr, who graduated in 1952, Roland Floyd Eller, an Aggie basketball championship player on the 1954-55 team, and former A&T basketball standout, Al Atkins, will be speakers during the banquet. For more information, contact 334-7583.

by Keith Bullard

Sports Editor

North Carolina A&T

Aggies crush Delaware St.

Aggie greats to be inducted
Chancellor
from page 1
approximately 3 and one-half hours on Monday night. At
that time, the students expressed their group desire to
discuss with the faculty the issue of their preference for
mandatory black study.

The students' concerns were
based on the fact that the
issue had been considered by the
Faculty Forum on April 8, 1992. As that was the Faculty
Forum, while not mandating black studies, adopted a
resolution requesting
students to take up to 12 hours of
African-American studies to
satisfy the core curriculum
requirements; six hours in humanities, six hours in social
sciences and free electives.
The concerns of the students
regarding black studies were based upon their belief that they needed an
additional opportunity to

accomplish, students on this
campus and a whole lot of
issues," he said. "The media
can isolate and separate, and
when you're forced to deal with
the whole thing, it's hard to get
your hands around it.'

Paterson said, "Eric'
acquaintances with
Northwestern, N.Y.,
said the move was the full support
of the SGA and President Eric Smith.
"She has the lead,"
Patterson said "She's taking
the heat as SGA President." "Eric
Smith, President of Hoechst
Corporation, who attended the
presentation, was out of the
room for this for years.

We're trying to get
Eric's name out there more to
show the public that this is not just the
history club, but the whole student
government," Short added.
"The history club was
organized to 'serve the black
community,' to look for black
A&T students; to be involved
in historically black organizations and
clubs.

As a result of these
discussions, it was jointly
agreed that a forum would
be held on Thursday, Oct. 29. 5:
30 p.m. in Harrison Auditorium to provide
the requested dialogue between
the student and the faculty.
The compensation format for
the Thursday forum was
mutually agreed upon by
students and administration
and faculty. As a result of that,
I asked the vice chancellor for
Academic Affairs to strongly
urge faculty and students to attend
the Thursday forum. It was agreed that:

1) any students with class conflicts would be accommodated;
2) a majority of the presentations would be

not, including students of the SGA and Student Government
Association and History Club.
The student administration
requested representatives. As a result of
these discussions, it was jointly
agreed that a forum would
be held on Thursday, Oct. 29.
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ON THE SUBJECT OF THIS
issue is important to note that
the students' desire for faculty-student
dialogues has been responded to
as expediently as possible. It
is imperative that I take this
opportunity to assure the A&T
family (our students and faculty)
that the university's approach to
this issue has and must remain open
and not only the students' right to
speak about these issues, but also
the university's obligation to
honor the established curriculum
approval processes, including the
established prerogatives of the
faculty.

Lastly, it is important
to note that the students' desire for faculty-student
dialogues has been responded to
as expediently as possible. It
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that the university's approach to
this issue has and must remain open
and not only the students' right to
speak about these issues, but also
the university's obligation to
honor the established curriculum
approval processes, including the
established prerogatives of the
faculty.

I also stress to the
students that the chancellor and other members of
the administrative team would do
all that we could to increase faculty
participation, but that faculty
participation could not be
mandated.

In conclusion,
this summary is provided to members of the A&T family
so that we all may be up-to
date on the events surrounding
this important issue and
that we continually respect
the rights of the students to engage
in meaningful dialogue with
the faculty, based on the
assumption that the dialogue
must operate within, and be
consistent with, the existing
rules of the university.

Election
from page 1
from the university," she said. "It
is going to be the best
four years of political history.
Cheryl McCoy, a
junior nursing major, was
drawn to political
activities addressed by the
candidates. "They speak
for something larger and
longer, and medical services to increase the
black population.

Congress
from page 5
participate—butes retirement
benefits in part on a member's average annual salary for the
highest-paid three consecutive
years of covered service. As a consequence, any increase in
congressional salaries brings
together more urgently for
short-term pensions for
eligible members upon
retirement. According to a
nationally syndicated
columnist, Ose is the only
member who has refused to
participate in the
congressional pension
program.

Imagine R&D at 200
Miles Per Hour.
Imagine Yourself at
Hoechst Celanese.

At Hoechst Celanese, we used our imagination to
find the toughest testing ground for our high-speed
passenger car of the future. We choose
innovators, not only because we
look for that thrill but because we
need to know what the technology can
industry. And now you can become a part of it.
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more graduates to match our
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informal, atmosphere where you will
receive the highest degree of
satisfaction consistent with your talents.
If you're ready to take on a challenge, plus seek stability,
rewards and advancement, that fit your
make reasonable efforts to help
your students; they are

Illustrated Board:
December 31, 1992 Entries
must be
This is
expected to
increase in science or engineering in the
U.S. No more than three (3) entries from the same college, university
or company will be accepted for each category. An entry must be
submitted by a college or university of at least bachelor's degree
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A&T Register November 13, 1992 7

Forum
from page 1
grievances with Chancellor
Fort. Students are now
pressing administrators to
discuss other issues: the
enrollment of more black
majors; the increasing number
of white female faculty members
at the university; a possible
merger with the University of
North Carolina at Greensboro
(UNCG); and the singing of the
National Black Anthem at
convocations and university
functions.

Alumni
from page 1
"We have 20 full-time
scholarships," he noted.
But said that alumni were
looking for new areas where
their involvement would benefit
A&T students. "The alumni have
A&T," he said. "It's one of the
most important segments of
the university." The history club has
charged $100/paying members
from all areas of campus,
Patterson said, adding that the
diversity kept the organization
interesting.
"They're from all
different majors, fraternities
and sororities," he said. "That's
what's important about the
history club. Members of the
alumni (and the administration)
don't know what's going on
from this.

The amount of money contributed to A&T through the
Alumni Association is tremendous," he said. "If we
would decide to reserve their
funds in support of our
programs and demands, it
would be a great asset for us.

The history club has
charged $100/paying members
from all areas of campus,
Patterson said, adding that the
diversity kept the organization
interesting.
"They're from all
different majors, fraternities
and sororities," he said. "That's
what's important about the
history club. Members of the
alumni (and the administration)
don't know what's going on
from this.
Racial "redlining" a subtle form of housing discrimination

by John A. Powell
National Legal Director
American Civil Liberties Union

On Oct. 20, African-American homeowners won a major victory against housing discrimination when a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled unanimously that the federal Fair Housing Act prohibits "redlining," the company practice of refusing to provide, or charging higher prices for, homeowners' insurance based on the racial composition of a neighborhood.

Therewith, announced by Judge Frank Easterbrook in Chicago, came in a lawsuit brought two years ago in U.S. District Court in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by eight black homeowners against the American Family Mutual Insurance Company.
The homeowners, represented by the ACLU, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Wisconsin NAACP, say that American Family Mutual refused to issue insurance policies to the eight homeowners on the basis of their race.

The American Family decision has given blacks powerful tools with which to challenge redlining around the country. Previously, insurance companies and weak state laws were all that the victims of this type of racial discrimination had to rely on.

Now the ACLU and other advocates can invoke more stringent federal laws in their efforts to prove that insurance companies are engaging in practices that contribute to the housing segregation in the United States.

Prior to the American Family decision, it was unclear whether the Fair Housing Act could be used against redlining. The provisions of the 1968 Act, which was hastily written and passed after the Assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are broad and do not list the specific illegal practices that infringe housing discrimination. Accordingly, in 1984 in the North Carolina case of Mackey, Nationwide Insurance Co., the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that home insurance redlining was not covered by the Fair Housing Act.

In 1988, Congress tightened the language of the Act by directing the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to specify the types of racial discrimination that the Act outlawed. HUD then interpreted the law to ban in the chains of housing discrimination and included redlining as one link.

A lower court in Wisconsin, however, ignored the new HUD regulations and, citing the Mackey decision, refused to apply the Fair Housing Act to American Family's redlining practices. Judge Easterbrook would have none of that. Writing on behalf of the appeals court, he said "clearly the HUD has bypassed Mackey... Let's not squander the borrowed time of these borrowers' hard-earned dollars in a lawsuit that probably won't be decided in our lifetime or in the lifetime of these borrowers... Let's not squander the borrowed time of these borrowers' hard-earned dollars in a lawsuit that probably won't be decided in our lifetime or in the lifetime of these borrowers..." The Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit ruled that home insurance redlining was not covered by the Fair Housing Act.

The importance of the right against housing discrimination was underscored by this past spring's civil explosion in Los Angeles. Insurance redlining and other practices that make life difficult in the inner city neighborhoods helped perpetuate the racial segregation and community destruction that sent millions whites and many minority-income African-American families fleeing to the suburbs over the past 20 years.

Insurance redlining helps trigger exodus and community deterioration in two ways. First, insurance agents avoid neighborhoods that blacks are integrating in significant numbers, which contributes to destabilizing those neighborhoods: for homeowners, abject fear of living uninsured, and for those who want to sell their homes in the present system.

Second, insurance agents either refuse to write policies in inner city neighborhoods or charge policies, which makes home ownership either an impossible or unaffordable in many neighborhoods. Other communities, where property values and the habitation becomes at risk, are burdened with the cost of maintaining that racial segregation during recession; less money for schools, few businesses, few jobs, hardly any services.

The ACLU is working in the courts to define racial discrimination in every way so that our communities can be strengthened instead of destroyed. The violence and mayhem that erupted in L.A. was not sparked solely by the exacerbation of police officers who perpetrated a racist act. It was a product of the deeply entrenched, institutional racism in housing and employment that concentrates poverty in places like South Central L.A. and Milwaukee.

In Wisconsin, one of the tenets of institutional racism that has so long poisoned our inner cities is to become more visible. When insurance companies are required to operate according to principles of fairness and equity, the human and physical landscape of urban America will be less blighted than it is today. As of October 20, the Fair Housing Act has finally become a formidable resource among the many required to wage our struggle for equal treatment.

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