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Michelle Allen Purdy Date

Southern and Independent:
Public Mandates, Private Schools, and Black Students, 1951–1970

By

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A.B., Washington University in St. Louis, 2001
M.A., Washington University in St. Louis, 2003

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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
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Abstract

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By Michelle Allen Purdy

Scholars of United States desegregation often portray private schools as avenues of escape for southern whites from public school desegregation. Few researchers have examined how *Brown v. Board of Education* and the 1964 Civil Rights Act influenced private school desegregation, in particular independent (and elite) schools, such as The Westminster Schools (plural in name only) in Atlanta, Georgia. Informed by multiple archival sources and oral history interviews, this research illuminates the political and social factors that influenced Westminster's founding and growth in the 1950s and 1960s, prompted Westminster's announcement of an open admission policy in 1965, and influenced the experiences of the first black students through 1970.

This dissertation reveals that as political and social changes occurred on local and national levels, Westminster's president and trustees deliberated about the school's position on race. Black and white Atlantans also challenged the school's exclusionary policies. Such deliberations and pressures coupled with a national independent school climate informed by civil rights legislation affected Westminster's identity as both a southern and independent school.

A contradictory and complex racial climate undergirded Westminster's desegregation. Prior to and through the initial years of desegregation, Westminster students participated in racialized traditions such as an annual slave auction fundraiser and programs with "Old South" themes. Yet, as evidenced by a variety of newspaper articles, students raised questions about racial issues of the era, including that of Westminster's desegregation, and showcased their varied conceptualizations about race, prejudice, and politics.

Following desegregation, racism permeated the experiences of black students both in overt and subtle ways. To navigate this terrain, the first black students relied on their previous experiences in black communities and schools and their abilities. Yet, Westminster continued to send all of its students mixed signals about race and racism. Moreover, the school did not change structurally as the administration and faculty remained all-white throughout the first three years of desegregation.

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Acknowledgments

As an African-American woman born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, the historical legacy that I have inherited is both obvious and obscure. In completing this dissertation, I attempted to answer both a personal and intellectual question, how did African-American students, such as myself, come to attend historically white independent southern schools, that were established before *Brown v. Board of Education* but not legally mandated to desegregate? As I have been on this journey to answer this question, I have carried with me my variety of experiences and a multitude of support for which I am grateful.

I am appreciative of Dean Lisa Tedesco, administrators, and staff members of the James T. Laney Graduate School and for the research funding from the Graduate School and the Spencer Foundation. I am indebted to the assistance of librarians and archivists with whom I have worked, in particular Cathy Kelly at the Westminster Archives, Marie Hansen and Sarah Ward of Emory University's Interlibrary Loan Office, the staff of the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library at Emory University, and Matthew Turi at the University of North Carolina-Southern Historical Collection. I am also indebted to all those willing to share their experiences through interviews for this dissertation.

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and members of the greater Atlanta community including Brittney Cooper, Worth Kamili Hayes, Lerone Martin, Guirdex Masse, Mika Pettigrew, Brenda Tindal, and Delores Williams.

Answering my question about how black students came to attend elite white southern private schools provided me numerous opportunities for personal reflection. As I was sustained by varied musical artists, I often remembered the following words from Margaret Walker Alexander's poem "For My People,"

For the cramped bewildered years we went to school to learn
to know the reasons why and the answers to and the
people who and the places where and the days when, in
memory of the bitter hours when we discovered we
were black and poor and small and different and nobody
cared and nobody wondered and nobody understood.

I considered both my personal and academic understandings of the multiple legacies that I have inherited as I attempted to capture a different story of how schools responded to desegregation and how African-American students navigated a new environment.

In reflecting upon and carrying out this task, I took with me the history of my family, rooted in both Mississippi and Arkansas, and the support of my relatives, in particular James Allen, Jr., Polly Brown, Carolyn Jean Crawford, Cecelia Dorsey, and Gloria Evans. Additionally, I carried with me the unwavering support, love, understanding, and patience of my parents Paul Wayne and Mitchell Pearl Purdy, my brother Paul Wayne Purdy, Jr., and my late maternal grandmother Pearl M. Allen. To each of them, I am thankful. I am especially appreciative of my grandmother's exemplar example and my mother's prayers, gentle pushing, various sources of support, and words of

encouragement. In return, it is my honor to dedicate this dissertation to my mother and in memory of my grandmother.

Table of Contents

Tables

Abbreviations

ABC: A Better Chance

AMA: American Missionary Association

APS: Atlanta Public Schools

AUC: Atlanta University Center

DAR: Daughters of the American Revolution

ESEA: Elementary and Secondary Education Act

ETS: Educational Testing Service

GACHR: Greater Atlanta Council on Human Relations

HOPE: Help Our Public Education, Inc.

IRS: Internal Revenue Service

ISTSP: Independent School Talent Search Program

LDF: Legal Defense and Education Fund of NAACP

MFPE: Minimum Foundation Program of Education

NAIS: National Association of Independent Schools

NAACP: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

NCIS: National Council of Independent Schools

NDEA: National Defense Education Act

NSSFNS: National Scholarship Service Fund for Negro Students

OASIS: Organizations Assisting Schools in September

SACS: Southern Association for Colleges and Schools

SCLC: Southern Christian Leadership Conference

SEB/ISEB: Secondary Education Board

SNCC: Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

Introduction

"*As far as recommending Westminster to other black students, the consensus was to recommend it to a group of blacks and not to send a black student here by himself.*"
~Malcolm Ryder, *Westminster Bi-Line,* May 1972

In 1972, the first black students graduated from The Westminster Schools (plural in name only) in Atlanta, Georgia.[1] Westminster, a historically white, southern independent school, desegregated in 1967, after being founded in 1951. The quotation from Malcolm, one of the first black graduates, is indicative of black students' experiences at independent schools, or elite white private schools, in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Though Westminster did not align itself with the segregationist academies (or havens for white students fleeing public school desegregation) that proliferated in response to public school desegregation between the 1950s and 1970s, Westminster did not significantly change on an institutional level during the initial years of desegregation. Westminster did provide an elite haven for white students during the varied stages of anticipated and actual school desegregation. This character created a school climate for the entering black students that forced them to rely on their academic abilities, co-curricular talents, and previous experiences in black communities and schools to navigate the climate successfully.

This historical analysis concerning race and private schools yields an in-depth look at a southern independent school, then with a boarding component, from the

[1] Though the Westminster Schools appears plural, the name of the school represents both the units of the school—elementary, junior high, and high school—and the separate boys' and girls' schools for grades 7–12 that existed until 1986. Currently all grades are coeducational. See The Westminster Schools, "About Us: History," http://www.westminster.net/about_us/history/index.aspx (accessed May 9, 2007/February 13, 2011).

school's establishment in 1951 through the first three years of desegregation in 1970.[2] This analysis primarily expands and reshapes the historiography of school desegregation in the South. The scholarly literature detailing the years following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision captures the political dimensions of public school desegregation, community responses, and school experiences of black students who desegregated formerly all-white public schools.[3] Also examined in these accounts is the role of segregationist academies and private schools as havens for the 500,000 southern white children whose parents fled public schools.[4] Few stories, however, examine the desegregation processes of historically white independent schools. Moreover, scholars have not fully captured the national position of independent school leaders on the issue of school desegregation and the inclusion of black students in private white schools.

In the remainder of this introduction, I define independent schools and consider the enrollment of black students, especially in the 1960s. Additionally, I highlight how

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[2] Throughout this dissertation the term "desegregation" will be used to describe Westminster's process for changing its admission policies to consider children from all backgrounds. At times, "integration" will be used within text rather than desegregation, as dictated by the material under discussion. Based on a review of legal and social science literature, desegregation is not synonymous with integration, though they are often used as such. Integration or racial integration refers to a transformed society, and desegregation is one step towards fulfilling that transformation. For definitions of desegregation and integration, see Alvis V. Adair, *Desegregation: The Illusion of Black Progress* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 181 and 183; and john a. powell and Marguerite L. Spencer, "Response: *Brown* is not *Brown* and Educational Reform is not Reform if Integration is Not a Goal," *New York University Review of Law and Change* 28 (2003): 344.

[3] Such accounts include Liva Baker, *The Second Battle of New Orleans: The Hundred-Year Struggle to Integrate the Schools* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996); R. Scott Baker, *Paradoxes of Desegregation: African American Struggles for Educational Equity in Charleston, South Carolina, 1926-1972* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Charles S. Bolton, *The Hardest Deal of All: The Battle Over School Integration in Mississippi, 1870-1980* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2005); Sherry L. Hoppe and Bruce W. Speck, *Maxine Smith's Unwilling Pupils: Lessons Learned in Memphis's Civil Rights Classroom* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007); Robert A. Pratt, *The Color of Their Skin: Education and Race in Richmond, Virginia, 1954-1989* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992); and Raymond Wolters, *The Burden of* Brown*: Thirty Years of School Desegregation* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1984).

[4] Anthony M. Champagne, "The Segregation Academy and the Law," *The Journal of Negro Education* 42, no. 1 (1973): 58.

studying Westminster provides a snapshot of the multiple influences on independent schools and school leaders' responses to desegregation in the mid-twentieth century. I conclude with an overview of the methodology employed in this study and of the organization of the dissertation chapters.

What are Independent Schools?

Independent schools (or unaffiliated or non-sectarian schools) are one type of nonpublic or private school, with the other being denominational schools (or parochial or church-related). While various kinds of independent schools exist, those of importance to this study are college preparatory schools, primarily historically white institutions, and members of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS).[5] In contemporary terms, these particular independent schools are considered "the most prestigious and privileged of private schools."[6] Such schools are defined as "distinct from other private schools in that they are individually governed by a board of trustees and they do not depend on church funds as parochial schools do, or on tax dollars as public schools do."[7] However, the distinction between denominational schools and independent schools is not

[5] According to Kraushaar, "The schools differ also as to their educational philosophy and goals. There are college preparatory schools, military schools, tutoring schools, laboratory and demonstration schools, conventional schools and progressive experimental schools, schools specializing in foreign languages, in world mindedness, in community involvement, in music or fine arts, in choir singing, in athletics, in character building, in work-study programs, in no-nonsense discipline or in an informal, permissive, first-name atmosphere." See Otto F. Kraushaar, *American Nonpublic Schools: Patterns of Diversity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 54.

[6] Diane M. Hall and Howard C. Stevenson, "Double Jeopardy: Being African American and 'Doing Diversity' in Independent Schools," *Teachers College Record* 109 (2007): 1–2.

[7] "What is the Difference between Independent Schools and Other Private Schools?," http://www.nais.org/resources/faq.cfm?ItemNumber=144101&sn.ItemNumber=146162 (accessed December 8 2005). Other types of private schools include parochial or religious, Montessori, and for-profit schools.

always clear.[8] According to Kraushaar, "certain denominational schools think of themselves primarily as independent and secondarily as denominational. This is true generally of the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Quaker, and the few Catholic schools that belong to the NAIS."[9] Further, one of the most salient features of independent schools, though largely nondenominational, is the freedom to provide religious life and training.[10]

In comparison to the public school population and other nonpublic school populations, the number of independent school students is relatively small. For example, for 2009-2010, the National Center for Education Statistics listed 49,293,000 children enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools, and the total private school enrollment was listed at 5,910,000 in 33,760 schools. Of those schools, 2,000 are considered independent with 1,400 belonging to NAIS and enrolling 590,386 students.[11] Approximately 36,013 students were African American.[12] Despite the enrollment numbers, the power and social capital to which independent school students become privy is substantial. In *Elite Schools,* a 1977 study based largely on surveys of students, teachers, and administrators, Leonard Baird acknowledged that while students enter into

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[8] Denominational schools are often categorized as Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish schools. Further, among Catholic schools, there are those considered parochial schools, diocesan schools, and "private" schools and academies. See Kraushaar, 27–8.

[9] Kraushaar, 54.

[10] Ernest Barrett Chamberlain, *Our Independent Schools: The Private School in American Education* (New York: American Book Co., 1944), 114–8.

[11] Student enrollment figures are based on 1,223 NAIS member schools' responses to an annual survey. See "NAIS Facts at Glance," http://www.nais.org/files/PDFs/NAISFactsAtAGlance200910.pdf (accessed January 12, 2011). For public and private school statistics see Center for Education Reform, "K-12 Facts," http://www.edreform.com/Fast_Facts/K12_Facts/ (accessed January 12, 2011) and National Center for Education Statistics, "Digest of Education Statistics," http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_058.asp (accessed January 12, 2011).

[12] For 2009-2010, African American students were listed as 6.1% of the total student enrollment. See "NAIS Facts at a Glance," http://www.nais.org/files/PDFs/NAISFactsAtAGlance200910.pdf (accessed January 12, 2011).

elite realms of society, that independent schools are most concerned and proud of the education they provide for their students.[13]

The limited number of black students who have attended these schools have been exposed to both an elite world and a rigorous educational environment informed by "the strong upper middle and upper class orientation of most independent schools."[14] Not until the 1960s, however, did black students in larger numbers become part of the school population that independent school leaders sought. Reflecting local communities' defiance of the *Brown* decision, in 1960 only one-third of formerly all-white independent schools had enrolled a black student.[15] Nationally, the percentage of independent schools that enrolled black students increased 84 percent in 1969, and the number of black students attending independent schools increased from 3,720 in 1967 to 7,617 in 1970.[16] Not isolated from the greater public, this increase was due to a host of factors, including effects of the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the Civil Rights Movement, civil rights legislation, and the 1970 decision in *Green v. Kennedy*.[17] With *Green v. Kennedy*, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) declared unconstitutional the practice of granting tax exemptions to educational institutions with racially discriminatory

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[13] Leonard L. Baird, *The Elite Schools: A Profile of Prestigious Independent Schools* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books/D. C. Heath and Co.), xiii.

[14] Kraushaar, 251.

[15] Mira B. Wilson, "Colored Students Are an Asset," *Independent School Bulletin* Series '48-'49, no. 3 (February 1949):12; and Arthur G. Powell, *Lessons from Privilege: The American Prep School Tradition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 86.

[16] Alfonso J. Orsini, "A Context for Understanding Faculty Diversity," in *The Colors of Excellence: Hiring and Keeping Teachers of Color in Independent Schools*, ed. Pearl Rock Kane and Alfonso J. Orsini (New York: Teachers College, 2003), 43; and Wanda A. Speede-Franklin, "Ethnic Diversity: Patterns and Implications of Minorities in Independent Schools," in *Visible Now: Blacks in Private Schools*, ed. Diana T. Slaughter and Deborah J. Johnson (New York: Greenwood, Press, 1988), 23.

[17] For the purposes of this dissertation, my reference to the Civil Rights Movement refers to the "classical" phase of the movement within the Long Civil Rights Movement. See Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* (March 2005): 1233–63.

practices.[18] In conjunction with these national changes was the activism of black parents and white community members in making independent schools, including those located in the South, viable educational options for black children.

Upon enrolling black students in greater numbers, the legacy of race and racism in independent schools became evident. In his 1972 study of nonpublic schools, Kraushaar concluded "about half of the minority students in integrated NAIS schools pay their own way. Since that half fits the social class pattern of white students in these schools, they pose no great problem. Indeed, many independent schools are well equipped to educate the upwardly mobile children of middle and upper class black families, especially those of professional men."[19] The perceived difficulty was educating black children from lower- or working-class families, because "such knowledge is not quickly or easily gained, as many independent school teachers are fully aware. Nor are the whites' stereotypes and ignorance about black Americans easily erased. There is, as a consequence, an understandable hesitation to meet the challenge of dealing effectively with boys and girls from impoverished rural and ghetto backgrounds."[20] The resulting conflation of cultures and expectations created tensions and challenges for independent schools that remain unresolved. Contemporary scholars, such as DeCuir and Dixson, have recognized the centrality of race for African American students attending predominantly white schools, especially elite white independent schools.[21]

Why Study Westminster?

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[18] Champagne, 58. Other documentation of the 1970 decision may be found in Kraushaar, 257 and Speede-Franklin, 23.

[19] Kraushaar, 251.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Jessica T. DeCuir and Adrienne D. Dixson, "So When It Comes Out, They Aren't That Surprised That It Is There": Using Critical Race Theory as a Tool of Analysis of Race and Racism in Education," *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 5 (June/July 2004): 26-31.

Established in 1951, Westminster, "a Christian, independent day school for boys and girls, which seeks to develop the whole person for college and for life through excellent education," grew out of the decline of the Napsonian School, a private school established in 1909 at the North Avenue Presbyterian School in the city of Atlanta.[22] In the summer of 1952, Washington Seminary, established in 1878 as an all-girls schools, merged with Westminster. After beginning in the facilities of the North Avenue Presbyterian School, Westminster moved in 1953 to its current 180 acre location in the affluent West Paces Ferry neighborhood in north Atlanta.[23] Currently a day school and one of the largest private schools in Atlanta and the Southeast, the campus boasts thirteen academic buildings and nine playing fields. Approximately, 1,854 students attend Westminster; out of this total population, 24.5 percent or 454 students are identified as minorities.[24] With an endowment of $239 million, Westminster was listed in 2008 as the fourteenth most wealthy independent school in the United States and the second most wealthy in the South. Currently, Westminster's endowment is $194.6 million. For the 2010-2011 school year, tuition for grades 6–12 was $20,690, making Westminster one of the most expensive schools in the greater Atlanta metropolitan area.[25] Westminster, one of the first schools in the South to offer advanced placement courses, currently offers twenty-seven advanced placement examinations, deeming it popularly as "Atlanta's

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[22] The Westminster Schools, "About Us: Mission & Philosophy," http://www.westminster.net/about_us/mission-philosophy/index.aspx (accessed May 9, 2007/February 13, 2011).

[23] The affluence of the West Paces Ferry neighborhood is partially characterized by the presence of four other leading independent schools: the Atlanta Speech School, the Lovett School, Pace Academy, and Trinity School.

[24] The Westminster Schools, "About Us: Facts and Figures," http://www.westminster.net/about_us/facts-figures/index.aspx (accessed February 13, 2011).

[25] Geraldine Fabrikant, "At Elite Prep Schools, College-Size Endowments," *New York Times*, January 26, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/26/business/26prep.html?ref=business (accessed January 26, 2008); The Westminster Schools, "About Us: Facts and Figures," http://www.westminster.net/about_us/facts-figures/index.aspx (accessed February 13, 2011).

premiere academic powerhouse."[26] Additionally, the range of SAT scores for the middle 50 percent of the 2010 senior class was between 1990 and 2190.[27]

Because of its prominence both nationally and locally, the desegregation of The Westminster Schools provides a lens by which to consider the reach and impact of the changing political and social trends in the mid-twentieth century on private school desegregation. Moreover, the urban setting of Atlanta in the mid-twentieth century provides a unique context for considering independent school desegregation, rather than the often rural setting of elite boarding schools. Home to such major companies as Coca-Cola, a growing international airport, and a relatively large black middle-to-upper-class community, Atlanta, under Mayor William B. Hartsfield, was becoming a thriving city during this era.[28] In 1961, Mayor Hartsfield stated, "We're a city too busy to hate. Atlanta does not cling to the past. People who swear on the old Southern traditions don't know what the hell they are. I think of boll weevils and hook worms."[29] With this rhetoric, Hartsfield and others sought to portray Atlanta as different from other southern cities such as Birmingham, Alabama; Jackson, Mississippi; and Little Rock, Arkansas, all of which were the epicenters of massive resistance to desegregation. Moreover,

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[26] Mary Jo Dilonardo, "One Size Doesn't Fit All," *Atlanta* 45, no. 9, (January 2006): 78.

[27] The Westminster Schools, "About Us: Facts and Figures," http://www.westminster.net/about_us/facts-figures/index.aspx (accessed February 13, 2011).

[28] Elected in 1936, Mayor William Berry Hartsfield was supported by Robert Woodruff of Coca-Cola and Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*. Despite his prejudice, he also recognized the power of the black community, which included such businessmen as Alonzo Herndon, founder of the Atlanta Life Insurance Company, political leaders such as John Wesley Dobbs and A. T. Walden, and educational centers such as the Atlanta University Center. As discussed in more detail in this study, following the abolishment of the white primary in the 1940s, the concentration of eligible black voters became a significant entity to the continued development of Atlanta. For more on Hartsfield and the development of Atlanta, see Harold H. Martin, *William Berry Hartsfield: Mayor of Atlanta* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1978); and Kevin Kruse, *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

[29] Susan M. McGrath, "From Tokenism to Community Control: Political Symbolism in the Desegregation of Atlanta's Public Schools, 1961-1973," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 79 (1995): 845.

Hartsfield and other leaders took measures to retain Atlanta's public persona as a city in which black and white leaders compromised on racial issues in order to ensure economic viability.

One of the ways in which Atlanta positioned itself as a "beacon" of racial harmony was through its primary and secondary educational institutions. These institutions, in part, symbolized Atlanta's response to political and social agendas on national and local levels following *Brown*. This response contrasted with Georgia state laws. Such laws called for the cessation of state funds to any public school that desegregated and included provisions for private schools. Atlanta, not withstanding its own racial challenges, differed primarily because of economic interests, and local leaders supported public school desegregation prior to the repeal of Georgia laws. In August of 1961, as part of an orchestrated plan, nine black students desegregated four former all-white Atlanta public high schools.

Concurrently, the leaders of Westminster, a school financially supported by leading white businessmen who had a vested interest in the public arena, considered expanding the school population to include African Americans. By November 1965, in part reflecting Atlanta's gradual shift in school desegregation, external and internal pressures, and the tenor of NAIS, William L. Pressley, president of Westminster and a founding trustee of NAIS, announced that the school would consider *all* applicants. This announcement afforded Westminster the status as the first non-sectarian private school in the South to announce a non-discriminatory admissions policy.[30] In the fall of 1967, the

[30] Wayne Kelley, "Westminster Board Sets Desegregation," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 14, 1965.

student population and the environment of Westminster changed as seven black American students enrolled.

As a part of the larger historical narrative concerning race, education, and social change, the story of the desegregation of this elite, independent private school provides a lens to examine black educational opportunity in schools when such access is not legally mandated but access is granted, in part, because of the influence of public laws, black agitation, white liberalism, and image maintenance. Exploring such opportunity in all of its complexities allows for a fuller understanding of the many factors—nationally, regionally, and locally—that inform an institution's process of desegregation and influence the experiences of black students therein. Therefore, this dissertation addresses the following questions: What was the desegregation process and the racial climate at The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, Georgia from 1951 through 1970? What were the experiences of black students who entered Westminster in the initial years of desegregation? What factors influenced their enrollment and experiences? What were the national organizational considerations, initiatives, and policies from the late 1940s through 1960s that informed the enrollment and experiences of black students in historically white independent schools?

***Southern and Independent*: A Different Study of Independent Schools and Black Students**

This study builds on and expands the limited research that has previously examined the desegregation of southern independent schools. In the historiography on Atlanta, Kevin Kruse in *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism* discussed the desegregation of Atlanta private schools in the 1960s and their importance

to the white upper class in being able to distinguish itself from the white working class. Zebulon Vance Wilson's *They Took Their Stand: The Integration of Southern Private Schools*, published in 1983 by the then Mid-South Association of Independent Schools and sponsored by the Lyndhurst Foundation, provided brief insight into the early years of independent school desegregation, with some attention to Westminster. Reflections from black students attending independent schools in the late 1970s and early 1980s were included as well as discussions of independent schools' efforts and challenges concerning black students, teachers, and trustees.

Three additional sources specifically relate to Westminster. First, William Pressly's 1991 memoir, *The Formative Years at Atlanta's Westminster Schools*, included his perspective on desegregation.[31] Secondly, Robbie Brown's "'Opening the Gates': The Integration of The Westminster Schools, 1951-1972," a paper produced for an undergraduate journalism class captured both the decision to desegregate and the experiences of the first black students through interviews.[32] Michael Gannon's thesis, "From White Flight to Open Admissions: The Founding and Integration of Private Schools in the City of Atlanta, 1951-1967," provided the most comprehensive understanding of Westminster's history and its local context.

Looking primarily on the founding and integration of private schools on the Northside of Atlanta, Gannon contended that histories focusing on *Brown*, on pressures to implement the decision, and on resistance to public school desegregation, "tend to ignore the emergence of private schools as a reaction to the *Brown* decision or treat them as

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[31] William L. Pressly, *The Formative Years at Atlanta's Westminster Schools* (Atlanta: McGuire Publishing Co., 1991).

[32] Robbie Brown, "'Opening the Gates': The Integration of The Westminster Schools, 1951-1972" (unpublished paper, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, n.d.).

derivatives of massive resistance."[33] He narrated how historians have weighed the *Brown* decision as either a) central and causal to the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent white resistance or b) purely symbolic and irrelevant because of international and national forces already at play. Other historians have rejected both these positions with more credit given to the actions of black protestors. Additionally as part of his framework, Gannon chronicled the rise of private schools in the South, defined the role of the "business conservative" in relationship to Atlanta politics, and outlined massive resistance to *Brown* in Georgia.

Gannon devoted his second and third chapters to the rise of private schools in Atlanta and the founding and integration stories of the five Northside schools, including Westminster. According to Gannon, Atlanta's leading independent schools, including Westminster, desegregated because of white Atlanta businessmen and black leaders' desire for educational opportunities for their children in contrast to the possibility of public school openings, the rapid expansion of northern suburbs, and the likelihood of private schools to integrate. Therefore, while race was a factor in the desegregation of these schools, it was not the sole factor. As argued by Gannon, "there is no clear causal relationship between public school integration and the establishment of the private school network. The market of students who were interested in attending private schools may have increased dramatically based on the school crisis, but other factors specific to the time period played equally important roles."[34]

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[33] Michael Gannon, "From White Flight to Open Admissions: The Founding and Integration of Private Schools in the City of Atlanta, 1951-1967" (master's thesis, Georgia State University, 2004), 2.

[34] Ibid., 66.

While relying on Gannon's work, *Southern and Independent* diverges in new ways. Because of Gannon's work, I too identify some of the historical actors involved with Westminster as "business conservatives." As he stated, the term referenced by Numan Bartley and others, "refers to those in the white, urban, upper classes. They are framed as pragmatists, though segregationists at heart, whose core commitment and central loyalty was to the creation of a favorable business climate."[35] Additionally, I pay attention to a distinct set of relationships formed among white business leaders and black political and civic leaders to ensure Atlanta's viability during the 1950s and 1960s.[36] These leaders, through professional and personal interests, held stakes in the public and private sectors, including public and private education.

I, however, argue that indeed race was a major factor in how Westminster was operating. With a headmaster of national stature, Westminster leaders were quite aware of the ways in which national independent schools were responding to political and social changes and the importance of independent schools' relationship to the greater public, in part dictated by race relations. Previous studies, often commissioned or supported by independent school organizations, show that independent school leaders were concerned about public image throughout the twentieth century and their schools' position within the larger educational landscape of the United States. In 1944, Chamberlain discussed what he deemed the most salient features of independent schools, posed ways in which independent schools could meet the needs of a society in the midst of World War II, and called for increased public relations by independent schools. Published nearly thirty years

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[35] Ibid., 19.

[36] David N. Plank and Marcia Turner, "Changing Patterns in Black School Politics: Atlanta, 1872-1973," *American Journal of Education* 95, no. 4 (1987): 589; Kruse, 35–41.

later, Kraushaar's study, which heavily relied on surveys, considered independent schools in relationship to other nonpublic schools from the perspective of school leadership, teachers, and students. Baird produced a similar study, except that he primarily focused on independent schools. Lastly, Powell deemed his work as one from which school leaders, including those in the public sector, could learn from independent schools. This dissertation extends the historical relationship between independent schools and the larger public by illuminating examples from national organizational materials to substantiate in greater detail how independent schools, such as Westminster, positioned themselves amidst larger political and social changes.

By focusing on one school, I provide an in-depth portrait pre- and post-desegregation. I include a discussion of marketing efforts of the school, the school's racial climate, and new details pertaining to the ways in which Westminster positioned itself with respect to public school desegregation and the pressures school leaders faced when deciding to adopt an open admission policy. Further, I attempt to complicate our understanding of black students' experiences during desegregation by including oral history interview selections from some of the first black alumni of Westminster; such voices, those of black students to desegregate formerly all-white private schools, are not readily heard or included in the desegregation literature. By drawing on archival materials and oral history accounts, I provide examples of how black students at Westminster were involved in the school life as students and their memories and reflections of the experience.

Additionally, I offer insight into the Stouffer Foundation, a southern organization, albeit short-lived, that sponsored the enrollment of black students in

southern independent schools, including Westminster. With the inclusion of the Stouffer Foundation, this project furthers our knowledge about which programs supported black students in independent schools. The program most often noted in the independent school literature is A Better Chance (ABC). Begun in 1963, primarily in coordination with northeastern independent schools, and still in existence in 2011, ABC is considered the centerpiece program for helping to substantially increase the enrollment of African-American students in independent schools.[37]

Methodology

Historical methods drawing on archival materials and oral histories were employed for this study. Consistent with Rury's discussion of historical writing, I construct an interweaving narrative that explains the context, cause, and chronology related to Westminster's desegregation, while advancing previous historical explanations of the educational options sought by black Americans in the two decades following *Brown*.[38] Additionally, relying on case study design, this project seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of an institution as it changed over time.[39]

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[37] For more discussion about ABC and black student experiences in independent schools see Lorene Cary, *Black Ice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Judith Berry Griffin, "Human Diversity and Academic Excellence: Learning from Experience," *The Journal of Negro Education* 68 (1999); 72-79; Luis A. Ottley, "Outsiders Within: The Lived Experience of African American Students in the Shipley School" (Ed.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2005); Diana T. Slaughter and Deborah J. Johnson, eds. *Visible Now: Blacks in Private Schools* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988); and Richard L. Zweigenheft and G. William Domhoff, *Blacks in the White Elite: Will the Progress Continue?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003).

[38] John Rury, "Historical Inquiry," in *Qualitative Research in Education: An Introduction to the Major Traditions*, ed. David F. Lancy (New York: Longman, 1993), 253. Also see Gaye Tuchman, "Historical Social Sciences: Methodologies, Methods, and Meanings" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 1994).

[39] Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 35.

Primary Sources

This study is informed by collections at several repositories and published organizational sources (detailed in Appendix A). The Westminster archives include board minutes, school newspapers and yearbooks, promotional materials, financial records, and the papers of William L. Pressly (founding president of Westminster), such as correspondence, annual reports to the Westminster Board, minutes of school committees, and speeches. Additionally, the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia holds collections of individuals with both professional and personal ties to Westminster, such as the papers of Eliza Paschall, executive director of the Greater Atlanta Council for Human Relations. Related to the national context, various materials from NAIS (and its predecessor organization the National Council of Independent Schools), such as quarterly newsletters, annual reports, and publications including the *Independent School Bulletin*, provide insight into NAIS' organizational operation and focus, including issues related to race and the recruitment of black students. I also reviewed records and files from the Stouffer Foundation. Through scholarships, the foundation sponsored black students to desegregate southern preparatory schools. As I analyzed materials, I relied on external and internal historical criticism that calls for an historian to determine the ways in which a document's origins determine its usefulness, relevance, and revelation of truth.[40]

Oral Histories

In addition to primary sources, oral histories are important to this study. Oral histories, which became more prominent in the field of history in the 1960s and 1970s,

[40] Meredith D. Gall, Joyce P. Gall, and Walter R. Borg, eds., *Educational Research: An Introduction* (Boston, Pearson Education, 2003), 525–28.

"provide a means of conveying the uniqueness and integrity of individual lives, while at the same time broadening the research base upon which our understanding of general patterns is predicated."[41] With a particular focus on southern history, historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall asserted that oral history can illuminate the "affirmation that Southern culture is, most profoundly, a joint creation of black and white."[42] Oral histories also provide unique insight for considering civil rights history. In "Historians and the Civil Rights Movement," historian Adam Fairclough noted the growing popularity of oral history by pointing to their relevance and usefulness, "for rescuing local struggles from comparative obscurity and exploring the role of 'grass roots' activists who left little in the way of written documents."[43] Additionally, educational historian Jack Dougherty has discussed the growth of interdisciplinary insights in conducting oral histories for educational history fields such as segregated black schooling and the working lives of women teachers.[44] As documented by Valerie Yow, oral histories reveal: "daily life at home and work … the informal, unwritten rules of relating to others that characterize any group … ramifications of personal relationships that do not get told in official documents … and a psychological reality that is the basis for ideals that the individual holds and for the things he or she does."[45]

The study of school desegregation also utilizes and warrants the incorporation of oral histories. Oral history interviews conducted for this dissertation include those with

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[41] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "Documenting Diversity: The Southern Experience," *The Oral History Review* 4 (1976): 19.

[42] Hall, "Documenting Diversity," 22.

[43] Adam Fairclough, "Historians and the Civil Rights Movement," *Journal of American Studies* 24, no. 3 (December 1990): 394.

[44] Jack Dougherty, "From Anecdote to Analysis: Oral Interviews and New Scholarship in Educational History," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (September 1999): 712–23.

[45] Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2005), 12–14.

the first black students to attend and graduate from Westminster and their parents; individuals affiliated with NAIS, including the first director of minority affairs; and white individuals associated with Westminster, including alumni, parents, and a former board member. (See Appendix B for a listing of interviewees and detailed information on interviews.)

To account for the fallibility and trustworthiness of memory, the oral history interviews were structured interviews based on knowledge of the era.[46] Moreover, the analysis considered reliability and validity questions. Historian Alice Hoffman defined reliability with regard to oral history interviews as the following: "the consistency with which an individual will tell the same story about the same events on a number of different occasions." Further, validity was defined as "the degree of conformity between the reports of the event and the event itself as recorded by other primary resource material such as documents, photographs, diaries, and letters."[47] Thus, as interviews were conducted, responses were noted for consistency within and across participants and when possible, were correlated with archival materials.

For further discussion on methodological processes, see Appendix C.

Limitations and Assumptions

Several limitations and assumptions arose in conducting this study. By choosing to focus on institutional archival materials and because of the availability of interviewees, I elevate certain perspectives over others, which may or may not be indicative of all historical actors' perspectives. For example, while I have access to Westminster Board

[46] Ibid., 36.

[47] Alice M. Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History" *Today's Speech* 22 (Winter 1974): 25.

meeting minutes, no records in the Westminster archives exist detailing special meetings called to discuss school issues pertaining to race and desegregation. Furthermore, with additional attention to local and national materials, including newspapers, a more robust portrait of the era is possible along with additional particulars pertaining to black Atlantans. With respect to interviewees, President Pressly is deceased, thereby limiting my access to gaining additional insight and records. By interviewing more white alumni who attended the school prior to desegregation, one may gain additional perspective of Westminster's overall climate. I also only conducted interviews with those black students who graduated from Westminster; being able to discuss experiences with those who attended and left prior to graduating might have complicated the narrative concerning black students' experiences.

Both my educational and professional experiences in an independent school and my identity as an African American female have informed my conceptualization of this study. Through journaling and peer checking, however, I have attempted to appropriately distance myself as I engaged the research questions, the data collection process, and interpretations. Further, I cannot assume that what transpired at Westminster was indicative of the ways in which other independent schools confronted and reacted to desegregation.

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter 1 provides a framework for considering the desegregation of Westminster. In expanding the history of school desegregation, this project intersects with the history of black education in the South and independent schools. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the role of private schools in the history of black education for

considering the educational legacy inherited by the first black students to attend Westminster. I also consider the independent school world in which Westminster developed as a leading southern independent school.

Chapter 2 focuses on the years 1951 through 1957 during which time Westminster became a fixture in the Atlanta community under the leadership of William L. Pressly, who became a nationally recognized independent school leader. Though little evidence exists of events or considerations pertaining directly to the school's desegregation, this chapter chronicles the ways school traditions with racial connotations and references were beginning to take form.

Chapter 3 chronicles 1958 through 1961, the years immediately prior to the desegregation of Atlanta Public Schools. In response, the Westminster Board adopted committees focused on the "public school dilemma" and "race." Pressly continued his involvement on the national level as the number of segregationist academies increased in the wake of public school desegregation. As evident in Westminster's school newspapers, students discussed social issues of the era and raised questions about integration, prejudice, and discrimination, especially after the school banned performances by black bands.

Chapter 4 details the years 1962 and 1963, when black parents sought admission at Westminster and other local Atlanta private schools, and Westminster received inquiries from the Greater Atlanta Council on Human Relations (GACHR) about its policies. These years are framed by a national independent school climate focused more on race and recruitment of black students and local changes with respect to other Atlanta private schools. Adding to the complexity of Westminster's climate is evidence of the

continuation of racialized traditions and students, again, writing about the current political and social climate with regard to race.

Chapter 5 covers the years 1964 to 1966 during which time the Westminster Board changed its admission policy. In the fall of 1965, Westminster leaders, after receiving continued inquiries into its policies, announced an open admission policy. However, the presentation of the decision to the public did not fully indicate the tension and disagreement that occurred at the school. Students wrote in support of desegregation but also gave what they considered warnings of the current civil rights tensions. Moreover, as Westminster transitioned to desegregation, careful maneuvering occurred. In the backdrop was a national independent school climate that reflected the discourse of black pathology and the continuation of a developing agenda regarding black students in independent schools.

Chapter 6 describes the first three school years, 1967 to 1970, in which black students enrolled at Westminster. The chapter focuses on the ways in which black students experienced Westminster, the factors influencing their enrollment, and how Westminster did not necessarily make any significant institutional changes with respect to race and desegregation. Alongside Westminster's changes are national independent school policies concerning open enrollment.

The conclusion, to further elucidate the importance of *Southern and Independent,* highlights two significant events in 1970—Pressly's testimony before Congress about the inequality of segregationist academies and the beginning of William Dandridge's tenure as the first director of minority affairs for NAIS. Additionally considered is the meaning

of the project itself, future research considerations, and implications for contemporary schooling.

Chapter 1:

Intersecting Contexts and Histories—Framing the Desegregation of Westminster

By expanding and complicating the desegregation historiography, *Southern and Independent* offers a framework for examining the intersection of black educational history in the South and the history of white independent schools. For ex-slaves and their descendents, education consisted of both segregated public and private schools, which existed through the mid-twentieth century. Because African Americans had found a particular comfort in private settings, it is logical that while African Americans increasingly mounted challenges to segregation in public arenas, they also sought educational opportunity in historically white private institutions. Some of these institutions included southern white independent schools, such as Westminster, which developed alongside a changing national independent school agenda during the era of desegregation.

Two main points elucidate the historical context of this project. First, I highlight the predecessors of the black private schools sustained and developed following the Civil War. Next, drawing on both regional data and examples particular to Georgia, I discuss why private black education remained central to the black educational system. I also examine the similar characteristics inherent in black private and public schools in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I then consider the world into which Westminster entered in 1951. I focus on how white independent school leaders nationally in the early- to mid-twentieth century became more concerned with independent schools' public image, which included growing attention to race.

Centrality of Private Schools in Southern Black Education

Laying the Groundwork

Private schools central to the black educational system following Reconstruction grew out of white and black models that existed prior to and during the Civil War. [1] White academies, having supplanted the Latin Grammar Schools that had existed as feeder schools to colleges, proliferated between the American Revolution and the Civil War.[2] In 1855, Henry Barnard counted nationally 6,185 academies (incorporated and unincorporated) with more than 263,000 pupils.[3] Despite having boards of trustees and charging tuition, academies were not always completely privately controlled because they often had "close local and state ties in terms of both student body and financial support."[4] The academy curriculum included classes such as English, the modern languages, algebra, history, and the practical arts of navigation, agriculture, surveying, and

[1] While I specifically focus on black private institutions with characteristics similar to those of white private non-denominational schools, African Americans also have a tradition of being educated in parochial schools, in particular Catholic schools. See V. P. Franklin and Edward P. McDonald, "Blacks in Urban Catholic Schools in the United States: A Historical Perspective," in *Visible Now: Blacks in Private Schools*, ed. Diana T. Slaughter and Deborah J. Johnson (New York: Greenwood, Press, 1988); Mary Niall Mitchell, ""A Good and Delicious Country': Free Children of Color and How They Learned to Imagine the Atlantic World in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana," in *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States, 1727-1925*, ed. Nancy Beadie and Kim Tolley (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002); and Jacqueline Jordan Irvine and Michele Foster, eds., *Growing Up African American in Catholic Schools* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1996).

[2] These schools included college preparatory schools, female academies, college preparatory departments, military academies, and Roman Catholic academies. For historical accounts on the origins of independent schools and private education, see the following examples: Kraushaar, "Independent Schools and their Antecedents," chap. 3 in *American Nonpublic Schools*; William J. Reese, "Changing Conceptions of 'Public' and 'Private' in American Educational History," in *History, Education, and the Schools* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Theodore Sizer, "The Academies: An Interpretation" in *The Age of the Academies* (New York: Bureau of Publications/Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964); and Kim Tolley and Nancy Beadie, "A School for Every Purpose: An Introduction to the History of Academies in the United States," in *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States, 1727-1925*, ed. Nancy Beadie and Kim Tolley (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002).

[3] Henry Barnard, "Educational Statistics of the United States in 1850," *American Journal of Education* I (1855): 368.

[4] Sizer, 6.

pedagogy—courses deemed to prepare students for life and practicality.[5] Academies declined in number as the common school movement grew in the mid-nineteenth century and with the more frequent establishment of public high schools following the Civil War.[6]

The black models that influenced private schooling following the Civil War challenge this dominant narrative about independent academies. In a recent edited volume, Beadie and Tolley positioned the academy as the "prevailing institution of higher school in eighteenth-and nineteenth century America."[7] Tolley and Beadie drew this conclusion because they contended that some academies served "as an educational alternative to the forms of higher schooling provided by the dominant cultural groups."[8] As noted by educational historian Christopher Span in his study on Mississippi, "free and freed African Americans, as early as 1862, established churches and schoolhouses for individual and collective improvement. Literate and barely literate blacks would serve as these schools' first teachers and freedpeople—young, old, male, and female were their first pupils."[9] Additional examples included slaves and free persons being educated in Catholic institutions, "pit schools," and secret schools run by blacks as well as on

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[5] Sizer also noted that normal schools were a type of academy, yet, they do not fit the definition of academy as outlined by Sizer. He wrote, "While normal schools were of secondary grade, their curriculum was largely a review of the common branches and a smattering of pedagogy; the wide course of study generally seen in the academies was absent. Further many of the normal schools were founded under state auspices" (*Age of the Academies*, 34–5). Additionally, some academies such as Phillips Academy at Andover had normal departments. See Sizer, 35.

[6] In part, the academy, a rural institution, suffered because of increasing urbanization and industrialization. Moreover, public schools were viewed as embodying American ideals while private schools were their antithesis. See Sizer, 40–3.

[7] Tolley and Beadie, 4.

[8] Ibid., 5.

[9] Christopher M. Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 24. See also Christopher M. Span, "Alternative Pedagogy: The Rise of the Private Black Academy in Early Postbellum Mississippi, 1862-1870" in *Chartered Schools: Two Hundred Years of Independent Academies in the United States, 1727-1925*, ed. Nancy Beadie and Kim Tolley (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2002).

plantations by white children and/or the mistress.[10] By 1865, 500 "native schools" were also a part of this network of private endeavors.[11] As characterized by Span, "These independent or self-sustaining schools were managed and 'taught by colored people, rude, and imperfect, but still groups of peoples, old and young trying to learn.'"[12]

In part, because of the educational system in which they had already participated, former slaves initiated the development of universal education in the South. Nonetheless, the unequal system of education that developed fostered the continued need for private schools.[13] Within this oppressed black educational system, an expansive network of public and private schools developed. Private schools were distinct in their form but shared similar struggles and characteristics of their public counterparts related to curriculum, funding, control, and school environment.

Distinct Yet Similar

Black private schools met a variety of needs with respect to curricula and grade level. Between 1890 and 1920, private schools were instrumental in educating black students of high school age. Historian James Anderson reported the following:

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[10] See Mitchell, "'A Good and Delicious Country'" in *Chartered Schools*; and Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 16–21.

[11] In 1866, John W. Alvord, the national superintendent of schools for the Freedmen's Bureau, noted that 500 of these schools existed throughout the South. He also observed the desire by ex-slaves to learn and to teach themselves. See James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 5–6; Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse*, 29–30.

[12] Span, *From Cottonfield to Schoolhouse*, 29–30; emphasis in the original.

[13] The development of black education in the South is well documented. Two older accounts, Harry Ashmore, *The Negro and the Schools* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954) and Henry Allen Bullock, *A History of Negro Education in the South: From 1619 to the Present* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1967) provide statistics concerning the inequities in segregated schooling and detail the ways in which black Americans were not educated for full participation in the political economy of the South. James Anderson's landmark account *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* continues this chronicling. Anderson specifically traces the development of universal education initiated by ex-slaves, the ideological tensions concerning black educational opportunities, and the various forms of educational institutions supported in combination by freedpeople, missionary societies, philanthropic organizations, the Freedmen's Bureau, and public tax dollars.

> in 1890 only .39 percent or 3,106 of the 804,522 black children of high school age were enrolled in high school and more than two-thirds of them were attending private high schools …. The total number of blacks enrolled in public and private secondary schools in 1916 was 20, 872. Of these, 11,130 were enrolled in private high schools …. There were about 216 private black high schools in the South in 1916, and 106 of them offered four-year courses of study.[14]

While private schools were important throughout the entire South, they were of even greater importance in the deep South. According to Anderson,

> Although scarcely a fourth of the black pupils enrolled in secondary grades in the border states were in private schools, slightly more than three-fourths of the pupils in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina combined were in private institutions. In 1916, fully 95 percent of the southern black secondary school age population was not enrolled in public secondary schools and in the deep South the proportion not enrolled in public secondary schools was 97 percent.[15]

In addition to addressing the lack of public high schools, private education was integral to teacher training and preparing students for collegiate work. For example, the sixty private colleges and the more than 200 private institutions offering secondary and normal courses were sites for teacher training. In 1900, "over 70 percent of the black normal school students were enrolled in private institutions and 80 percent of those who graduated were from private schools. Seventy-five percent of the black students enrolled in secondary

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[14] Anderson, 188 and 197.
[15] Ibid., 197.

schools, and 55 percent of the high school graduates were in private institutions."[16] Further, black higher education institutions found it necessary to provide primary and secondary education. According to Anderson, "Of the 12,726 students attending these institutions in 1915, 79 percent were in the elementary and secondary grades. Many institutions were endeavoring to maintain college classes for less than 5 percent of their enrollment."[17]

In particular to Georgia, historian Dorothy Orr noted the following about private schools, while drawing heavily from Thomas Jesse Jones' 1917 "A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States."[18] She wrote,

> Of the 2,278 Negro pupils in secondary schools in Georgia in 1913, 2,119 were in the thirty-two private schools. Four-year courses were maintained in seventeen of these private schools with an enrollment of 1,847 pupils. The secondary work of the remaining fifteen ranged from a few subjects above the elementary grades to a full three-year course. The course of study usually followed the college preparatory or classical type.[19]

Further, out of the seventy-eight private schools in Georgia, only thirty-eight were significant. Orr listed these schools, which included curricula modeled after industrial training, college preparatory, and teacher training. A host of denominations operated the schools in Georgia such as the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Northern Congregational Church (American Missionary Association), Presbyterian Church North, Southern

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[16] Ibid., 110.

[17] Ibid., 249.

[18] Thomas Jesse Jones, "A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States," *Department of the Interior. Bureau of Education, Bulletin 1916, Negro Education* II, no. 39.

[19] Dorothy Orr, *A History of Education in Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1950), 295–96.

Presbyterian Church, Protestant Episcopal Church, Protestant Episcopal Church, American Baptist Home Mission Society, Colored Baptists in America, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, Catholics, and Seventh Day Adventists. Schools such as Allen Normal School, Boggs Academy, and Dorchester Academy offered boarding components. They were members of a larger network of black boarding schools including well-known schools such as Palmer Institute, Piney Woods, Avery Normal Institute, Snow Hill Institute, and Utica Normal and Training Institute. Orr also noted fifteen institutions that operated independent of church denominations.[20]

As throughout the South, the lack of public schooling catalyzed the need for private schools in Georgia. For example in Macon, according to historian Donald Grant, "the public schools for blacks in Macon began and ended with the elementary grades. Seventh grade was not initiated until 1917. The eighth, ninth, and tenth grades were added in 1918, but to go further, students had to attend the private Ballard Normal School or Central City College."[21] Ballard Normal School (an American Missionary Association school) was described as "a school of elementary and secondary grades. Four-year secondary courses provided either college preparatory or teaching training," and Central City (a Colored Baptist Convention School) was listed as an "elementary and secondary school of slight educational value. Owned by trustees of Baptist Church."[22]

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[20] Orr described the thirteen private schools as follows: "six were small undertakings dependent upon tuition, and seven relied upon donations for support. One was a philanthropic endeavor, and one was founded and owned by the 'Sublime Order of Archery.' As a rule, they were poorly managed." (Ibid., 305).

[21] Donald Grant, *The Way It Was in the South: The Black Experience in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 230.

[22] Orr, 297 and 302.

Athens in 1900 had "room for only half of the black children in Athens public schools," noted by Grant.[23] Thus, Jeruel Academy, established in 1881 and described in 1917 as "an elementary and secondary school with poor equipment ... aided by American Baptist Home Mission Society," filled a necessary void.[24] In Augusta, the Haines Normal and Industrial Institution founded in 1886 by Lucy Haines Craft, one of the first graduates from Atlanta University's normal department, did likewise. According to Grant, "In 1901 the Augusta public schools could only accommodate one-third of the black school population." In turn, Haines consisted of a "secondary school with large elementary enrollment. Eight elementary grades, kindergarten, secondary, and industrial department."[25]

With respect to higher education, Atlanta University, established in 1869, included a grammar school, a preparatory department or high school, and a normal school. In 1881, the grammar school provided a curriculum of "reading, spelling, grammar, geography with map drawing, United States history, elementary geometry, botany and physiology, writing, inventive and freehand drawing, vocal music, and gymnastics."[26] The preparatory department featured a classical curriculum, and the normal department served as the preparatory grounds for public school teachers.[27] Upon its discontinuation in 1894, "the grammar school students represented an average of 61

[23] Grant, 230.
[24] Orr, 301.
[25] Ibid., 299.
[26] Clarence A. Bacote, *The Story of Atlanta University: A Century of Service, 1865-1965* (Atlanta: Atlanta University, 1969), 29.
[27] Ibid., 34.

percent of the total enrollment."[28] Ten years later, the Oglethorpe Practice School was established as both a kindergarten and training site for teachers.[29]

In addition to the financial sacrifices black southerners made for public and private institutions, both types of schools relied upon individual and collective philanthropy and missionary organizations. In providing funding, these organizations were often at the center of struggles over control and ideology.[30] Between the end of Reconstruction and the early twentieth century, southern whites, northern white philanthropists, and southern blacks debated the purpose and ideological undercurrent of black education. Industrial or vocational education was believed to be the proper education for southern blacks by northern philanthropists and their southern white allies. Heralded by Booker T. Washington, industrial education, modeled after Hampton Institute and implemented at Tuskegee Institute under Washington's leadership, concentrated on preparing ex-slaves to be effective laborers. On the surface, industrial education, especially as black school leaders secured northern philanthropic funds and southern white supporters, became the prevailing model, yet classical liberal education, as advocated by W. E. B. DuBois, would also play a significant role at all levels of black educational opportunities

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[28] Ibid., 30.

[29] Ibid., 143. In 1930, Atlanta University, under the presidency of John Hope, "in connection with the Department of Education, would operate a laboratory school with a kindergarten, eight elementary grades, and a four-year high school" (*Story of Atlanta University*, 293). The high school portion was closed by the 1942-1943 school year. See Bacote, 335–7.

[30] Discussion of this ideological tension has been well documented. Some examples include Anderson, "Education and the Race Problem in the New South: The Struggle for Ideological Hegemony," in *The Education of Blacks in the South;* W. E. B. DuBois, "Of Booker T. Washington and Others" in *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin Books, 1903/1989); and Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York: Dover Publications, 1901/1995).

Several instances signal ideological tensions and shifts between industrial and liberal arts education. At normal schools, northern philanthropists tried to implement the Hampton-Tuskegee model of industrial education, but they met opposition, most greatly by schools associated with religious denominations and also by private schools independent of religious denominations.[31] Yet, some private schools were explicitly established as off-shoots of the Hampton-Tuskegee model. For example, William Edwards, founder of Snow Hill Institute in Alabama and a graduate of Tuskegee, sought to replicate his education. Edwards met opposition from local parents and his personal church affiliation with the African Methodist Episcopal Church, which wanted him to operate a denominational school. Despite offering teacher training, "the heart of Snow Hill Institute was its emphasis on agricultural and manual training."[32]

Other schools such as the Palmer Institute, begun in 1902 by Charlotte Hawkins Brown, initially included both liberal arts and industrial training; the latter was in part because of the continued appeal of industrial training to white benefactors. Yet, "by 1922 Palmer Institute became the only rural high school in Guilford County to earn accreditation. The nine-month high school year included courses in English, math, physics, chemistry, French, Latin, history, and civics. Domestic Science, agricultural, and industrial subjects rounded out the offerings."[33] In the 1930s, for funding purposes, Palmer came under the auspices of the American Missionary Association (AMA). However, "after her uncompromising rule led the AMA to disown Palmer in 1934,

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[31] For a partial listing of normal schools, see Anderson, 134–6.

[32] Arnold Cooper, *Between Struggle and Hope: Four Black Educators in the South, 1894-1915* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1989), 14.

[33] Katherine C. Reynolds, "Charlotte Hawkins Brown and the Palmer Institute," in *Founding Mothers and Others: Women Educational Leaders During the Progressive Era*, eds. Alan R. Sadovnik and Susan F. Semel (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Brown rejuvenated the school as an independent academic finishing school that increasingly drew middle and upper class students from across the United States."[34]

Public and private school environments were similar in that, although material inequalities in comparison to white counterparts prevailed, black school leaders worked with parents and communities to meet the educational needs of black southerners in the age of Jim Crow.[35] For example, the motto of Palmer Institute became "expressed in the geometric triangle of educational efficiency, spiritual sincerity, and cultural security."[36] Physical education and extracurricular activities were central to the experiences of students, with the Sedalia Singers being an important part of Brown's fundraising efforts for the school. In addition to becoming a national speaker on issues of race and equality, Brown also worked in the Palmer community by establishing the Sedalia Home Ownership Association. Laurence C. Jones, founder of Piney Woods School in Mississippi, believed that "the 'lessons for success' resided in such virtues as honesty,

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[34] Charles Weldon Wadeilngton and Richard F. Knapp, *Charlotte Hawkins* Brown & *Palmer Memorial Institute: What One Young African American Woman Could Do* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 11.

[35] Researchers have taken up the task of illuminating the ways in which black educators and parents worked together to develop quality public high school programs and environments so that students could achieve their highest potential. See Faustine Childress Jones, *A Traditional Model of Educational Excellence: Dunbar High School of Little Rock, Arkansas* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1981); and Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996). More recent publications concerning black schools and their communities, with a particular focus on the ways in which black individuals drew on collective cultural capital, include Peggy B. Gill, "Community, Commitment, and African American Education: The Jackson School of Smith County, Texas, 1925-1954," *The Journal of African American History* 87 (Spring 2002): 256-268 and Carter Julian Savage, "Cultural Capital and African American Agency: The Economic Struggle for Effective Education for African Americans in Franklin, Tennessee, 1890-1967," *The Journal of African American History* 87 (Spring 2002): 206–35. Additionally, scholars have illuminated the lives and work of black teachers including black teacher associations and the role of black principals. See Michael Fultz, "African American Teachers in the South, 1890-1940: Powerlessness and the Ironies of Expectations and Protest," *History of Education Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 401–22; and Vanessa Siddle Walker, *Hello Professor: A Black Principal and Professional Leadership in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

[36] Constance Hill Marteena, *The Lengthening Shadow of a Woman: A Biography of Charlotte Hawkins* Brown, (Hicksville, NY: Exposition Press, 1977), 71.

'carefulness,' attentiveness, and 'economy.' Students could change because 'their greatest asset [was] a heart yearning, craving, [and] longing for a better chance in life, for true manhood and womanhood.'"[37] Even when schools struggled, school leaders still pursued projects to assist the communities around their schools. Such would be the case of William Holtzclaw, founder of Utica Normal and Industrial Institute in 1903. For example, "In spite of less than adequate instructional program, an inability to pay teachers, and infrequent graduates, Holtzclaw initiated four ventures intended to 'help the people in general to rise': the Teachers' Extension Movement, the Utica Negro Farmers' Conferences, the Black Belt Improvement Society, and the Community Court of Justice."[38]

Over time, with the support of black southerners, tax dollars, and philanthropic funds, public schools were established both in urban and rural areas, and private schools in large part were displaced. For instance, by 1930 the enrollment in small private normal and county training schools declined. Often county training schools were subsumed under the public system and teacher candidates were more likely to attend four-year colleges because higher levels of education were required for teachers. By the 1929-1930 school year, only two private teacher-preparation institutions existed.[39] On the high school level, between 1916 and 1930, as significant shifts occurred in the population of blacks in the urban South, philanthropists and white southerners turned their attention to public secondary education for black southerners; such education often consisted of industrial education. As the number of black high schools increased, the presence of secondary

[37] Laurence C. Jones, *Up Through Difficulties* (1913), 79, quoted in Cooper, 58.
[38] Cooper, 30.
[39] Anderson, 146.

education in higher education also began to wane. For example, education institutions such as Hampton and Tuskegee "abandon[ed] their industrial training programs and soon [became] the two best-endowed black colleges for liberal arts education."[40] Still by 1940, "only 23 percent of the black high school age population was enrolled in public secondary schools. In Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina, states with large black populations, less than 18 percent of the black high school age population was enrolled in public secondary schools in 1940."[41]

Denominations also decreased their support of private schools. In Georgia, Orr, based on a 1943 interview with Robert Cousins, supervisor of the Division of Negro Education in Georgia, reported that the AMA was the first to end support of private schools. By 1943, all schools supported by the AMA were no longer operating as private schools. For example, Ballard Normal School, an AMA school, had come under control of the Board of Education of Bibb County.[42]

In total, by 1950, "from the seventy-eight [black] private schools operated in Georgia in 1914, the number has decreased to twenty-one."[43] The following six private or semi-private schools for blacks were operating in 1943: Beda-Etta Commercial in Macon, Boggs Academy in Keysville, Union Baptist in Athens, Gillespie-Selden Institute in Cordele, Holsey Institute in Cordele, and Union Normal in Bainbridge. All schools but Beda-Etta had relationships with local school boards. Other private schools included those that developed into eight colleges and universities, two Baptist seminaries, three Catholic schools, the Oglethorpe Practice School at Atlanta University, and Haines

[40] Ibid., 235.
[41] Ibid., 235–6.
[42] Orr, 305.
[43] Ibid., 306.

Institute in Augusta.[44] Haines Normal Institute, however, closed in 1949 from lack of financial support, and Boggs Academy, which became the first accredited black secondary boarding school in Georgia in 1943, closed in 1984.[45]

Out of the one hundred black private boarding schools that existed prior to the 1970s largely in the South, only four schools, including Laurinburg Institute in North Carolina and Piney Woods in Mississippi, are currently in operation, as noted in a 2003 article by Richard Roach.[46] According to alumni interviewed by Roach, "the tradition [of attending black private boarding schools] imbued them [former students] with a profound sense of community, religious devotion for those at the church-affiliated schools, and a commitment to academic excellence, qualities they believe are rarely replicated in the lives of contemporary black students."[47] Alumni of these schools are currently recovering their histories and sustaining alumni associations similar to alumni of black public schools that were closed during desegregation.

As black private schools diminished in numbers, the desegregation of black and white public schools became a reality following the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*

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[44] Ibid., 307.

[45] Grant, 231 and 526; Boggs Academy National Alumni Association, "Boggs Academy History," http://www.boggsacademy.com/home/history.html (accessed January 7, 2011).

[46] In addition to Laurinburg and Piney Woods, two other schools form the Association of Historically African American Boarding Schools. These schools are Pine Forge Academy in Berks County, Pennsylvania, established in 1946, and Redemption Christian Academy in Troy, New York, established in 1979. See Ronald Roach, "A Rich, but Disappearing Legacy," *Black Issues in Higher Education* 20, no. 13 (August 14, 2003), https://login.proxy.library.emory.edu/login?qurl=http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.emory.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=10606557&site=ehost-live (accessed December 11, 2010).

[47] According to Roach, the following schools are the most well-known: "the Mather Schools in Beaufort and Camden, S.C., Palmer Memorial Institute and Laurinburg Institute in North Carolina, Snow Hill Institute in Alabama, Gilbert Academy in New Orleans, Piney Woods in Mississippi, and Boggs Academy in Georgia." Other southern schools that Roach included in a partial list of closed historically black boarding schools were Bettis Academy in South Carolina, Fargo Agricultural Schools in Arkansas, Haines Normal and Industrial Institute in Georgia, Okolona School in Mississippi, and Prentiss Institute in Mississippi. See Roach, "A Rich but Disappearing Legacy."

decision.[48] Some black schools that existed in segregation became vastly different during desegregation due to closings, mergers, the firing and demotion of black teachers and principals, and white flight.[49] Because of the blurred lines between public and private educational opportunities in the South, it is not surprising that black Americans would consider elite private schools during desegregation. To gain a sense of the world into which African Americans entered, one must consider independent schools' relationship to the larger public and how the admission of black students became a part of that agenda.

Independent Schools and Public Image

Westminster joined a group of elite southern private schools sustained or established amidst the rise of public high schools. Out of the approximately 6,155 academies nationally in the late eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century, at least 583 academies existed in Georgia during this same era.[50] During and immediately after the Civil War, the state of Georgia continued to support academies, which were very

[48] It should be noted that the Black Power Movement spurred the development of independent black institutions for elementary and secondary levels, especially outside the South. As more independent black schools developed during the 1960s and 1970s in response to the failures of public school desegregation, the Council of Independent Black Institutions formed in 1972. For examples, see Maisha Fisher, *Black Literate Lives: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (New York, Routledge, 2009); Mary Eleanor Rhodes Hoover, "The Nairobi Day School: An African American Independent School, 1966-1984," *The Journal of Negro Education* 61, no. 2 (1992): 201–10; and Russell Rickford, "'A Struggle in the Arena of Ideas': Black Independent Schools and the Quest for Nationhood, 1966-1986," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2009).

[49] For discussions of desegregation's effects on black schooling see David S. Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); Adam Fairclough, "The Costs of *Brown:* Black Teachers and School Integration" *The Journal of American History* (June 2004): 43–55; Michael Fultz, "The Displacement of Black Educators Post-*Brown:* An Overview and Analysis," *History of Education Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 11–45; and Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Landing on the Wrong Note: The Price We Paid for *Brown*," *Educational Researcher* 33, no. 7 (October 2004): 3–13.

[50] Orr, 35.

similar to the emerging public schools.[51] As public high schools replaced most academies by the turn of the century, college preparatory schools, often supported by endowments, survived. [52] Termed "old-line" schools, examples of college preparatory schools include Asheville School in Asheville, North Carolina, established in 1900; St. Andrew's School in St. Andrew's, Tennessee, established in 1905; and Woodberry Forest School in Woodberry Forest, Virginia, established in 1889.[53] Though most southern private schools prepared students for college, some schools adhered to differing models such as the country day model and military school, as noted by Bezanson, Boothby, and Kester. Additionally, others offered manual training alongside a college preparatory curriculum.[54]

In the 1920s, the term "independent school" emerged, as independent school leaders considered the public's perception of private schools. The term became

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[51] Oscar H. Joiner, ed., James C. Bonner, H. S. Shearouse, and T. E. Smith, *A History of Public Education in Georgia, 1734-1976* (Columbia, SC: R. L. Bryan Co., 1979), 89.

[52] Orr, 49.

[53] Zebulon Vance Wilson, *They Took Their Stand: The Integration of Southern Private Schools* (Atlanta: Mid-South Association of Independent Schools, 1983), viii. Wilson referred to private schools established prior to the rise of segregationist academies in the 1960s and 1970s as old-line private schools. Wilson noted, "Nevin and Bills' *The Schools That Fear Built* dealt with segregationist academies in the South. Their characterization of the schools they studied in the mid 1970's was thorough and fair. However, they excluded the old-line private schools and the several new schools that aligned themselves with the old-line institutions through their professional organization, the Mid-South Association of Independent Schools. The conclusion left the reader is that these old-line schools might be somehow insulated from the segregationist academies. They are and they are not." Also see Kraushaar, 66 for a discussion of the establishment of independent day and boarding schools.

It should be noted that St. Andrew's School existed through 1981, when it merged with other private schools in the area to form St. Andrew's-Sewanee. Those schools listed were a part of a select group that admitted African American students who received Stouffer Foundation scholarships in the 1960s and 1970s. See "Minutes of Stouffer Foundation," 23 August 1970, in Box 8 in Anne C. Stouffer Foundation Records, 1960s–1990s #04556, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hereafter referred to as "Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC."

[54] Warren B. Bezanson, Ralph E. Boothby, and Howard Kester, "Private Secondary Education in the South," in *Secondary Education in the South*, ed. W. Carson Ryan, J. Minor Gwyn, and Arnold K. King (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1946). While historians and others have documented the age of the academies, there is limited information on "old-line" southern private schools and other southern private schools from the beginning of the twentieth-century through the mid-twentieth century.

commonplace during the 1930s and 1940s, because private schools or "prep" schools wanted to be "free of the unfortunate connotations often associated with the word 'private.'"[55] These connotations included "elitist," "undemocratic," and "un-American."[56] Moreover, school leaders wanted to "distinguish fiscally and educationally responsible nonpublic schools from fly-by-night or profit-making con games."[57]

As this term was adopted, the homogenous independent school student population was no longer considered an asset. According to Arthur Powell, the Great Depression "raised painful political, moral, and educational questions about homogeneity."[58] One answer to these questions was an increase in the availability of financial aid beginning in the 1940s. Schools wanted financially needy students yet academically able students, because independent schools sought to maintain their high academic standards. With increased economic prosperity, independent schools were able to offer some financial aid. For example, 12 percent of students in 1950 received aid. Providing funds, however, became difficult for schools as they depended on general revenues and annual gifts from parents.

In addition to the schools' push for economic diversity were concerns for expanding religious, ethnic, and gender diversification in the independent schools' student populations. For example, Jewish students sought admission to independent schools. Although Jewish families could sometimes pay tuition fees, independent schools maintained low Jewish student populations. For example, "nearly 5 percent of Andover students were Jews in the 1940s. The head wanted the number reduced, lest it frighten

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[55] Chamberlain, 7; Arthur G. Powell, 62.
[56] Kraushaar, 54.
[57] Arthur G. Powell, 62.
[58] Ibid., 84.

away his mainly Protestant constituency."[59] Prior to and during the 1950s, the separation of boys and girls was thought to be justified by the differences in life destinations. As noted by Powell, "Since most of the colleges the schools prepared students for were single sex, a compelling model was already in place. And since many girls did not attend four-year colleges or any college, boys and girls were usually offered quite distinct curricula."[60]

Alongside the push for religious and gender diversification, racial diversification was questioned. One on hand, black students were not sought, and the few attending northern schools reported negative experiences. Of note is Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, one of the first independent boarding schools to accept black students. In 1944, however, upon an alumnus' request to recruit more black students, "the headmaster responded that there were currently two black students at the school, and that accepting more might 'cause trouble.'"[61] Additionally, Julian Bond, former chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), recalled his school, the George School, in Pennsylvania as a "hotbed of racism" in the 1950s.[62] Bond "remembers that his fellow students were not very concerned about hiding their prejudices." Moreover, an administrator, displaying his prejudice, asked Bond not to

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[59] Arthur G. Powell, 85; Richard L. Zweigenhaft and G. William Domhoff, *Blacks in the White Elite: Will the Progress Continue?* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 27.

[60] Arthur G. Powell, 103. Yet in the climate of the 1960s, which found "students and teachers [seeking] less institutional rigidity, more sensitivity to student desires and alleged needs, and more rapid acceptance of the growing national tendency toward reduced adult direction over the lives of the young," coeducation became an acceptable desire," (*Lessons from Privilege*, 103). For the first time, during the 1968-1969 school year, nationally, most independent schools were coeducational. See Powell 104.

[61] Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 27.

[62] Ibid, 28.

"wear his much-loved George School jacket when he was walking into town with his girlfriend," who was white.[63]

By the late 1940s, some independent school leaders, however, were calling for the increased admission of black students to independent schools. In January of 1949, Mira B. Wilson, a white female principal of the Northfield School for Girls in East Northfield, Massachusetts, wrote a short article titled, "Colored Students are an Asset," in the *Independent School Bulletin* (hereafter referred to as *Bulletin*), the official organ of historically white independent schools.[64] Wilson noted that twenty-two independent schools had "committed themselves to a non-discriminatory policy," and although three schools were prepared to enroll "colored" pupils, they had not done so.[65] In challenging the low enrollment numbers of black Americans in independent schools, Wilson concluded by arguing "the policy of inclusion is in line with the best interests of both religious and national life."[66]

Wilson issued her charge during the post-World War II era when public discourse, especially in the South, was not focused on how primary and secondary white schools could be welcoming to black students. Moreover, legal challenges by black Americans to segregation were becoming more heightened and intense. Yet, independent schools began to publicize changes in their admissions. In the January 1950 *Bulletin* an announcement read "two Negro students have been enrolled in the Junior I class at

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[63] Ibid.

[64] The *Bulletin* was "the only magazine published expressly for independent schools. It belongs to ALL independent schools, whether they are members of the Secondary Education Board or not." See "The Independent School Bulletin" Advertisement, *Independent School Bulletin* Series '48-'49, no. 3 (February 1949): 38.

[65] Wilson, "Colored Students Are an Asset," 12.

[66] Ibid., 13.

Calhoun School, New York City." The students and their admission were described as follows:

> One of the girls is a graduate of the Modern School, a private elementary school for Negro children in New York City; the other was, for five years, a student at the Lincoln School. The girls have already taken an active part in the extra-curricular activities in dramatics, music, and writing for school publications. The school feels that they have a valuable contribution to make to the life and breadth of understanding of the student group.[67]

A year later in 1951, the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students (NSSFNS) in coordination with northern independent schools began a program for recruiting black students to independent schools. No such announcement or program would emanate from the South until the middle of the next decade.

Developing National Independent School Organizations

The adoption of the term "independent" and changes in private school demographics were emblematic of the ways in which independent school leaders positioned themselves in the mid-twentieth century, as individuals focused on their schools' public image and relationship to the public sphere. Through the development of national independent school organizations—the Secondary Education Board (SEB) and the National Council of Independent Schools (NCIS), independent school leaders came to monitor a variety of matters pertinent to independent schools. Both NCIS and SEB existed to address the needs of independent schools, with NCIS growing out of SEB.

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[67] "What the Schools Are Doing," *Independent School Bulletin* Series '49-'50, no. 2 (January 1949): 43.

The SEB, first titled the Secondary Entrance Examination Board, originated in 1923 "when a handful of private school people … had begun a series of information meetings at The Fessenden School in West Newton, Massachusetts," as noted by Cary Potter, former NAIS President, in the article "NAIS: 25 or 62?"[68] These school leaders were concerned about standardizing admission requirements for the lower grades of the secondary schools. In its initial development, the board "published 'Definition of Requirements' and examinations," adopted by nineteen schools, and became an official organization on the occasion of its first conference on October 31, 1925 at the Harvard Club in Boston. Over time, the number of member schools grew from 100 in 1930 to 500 in 1962, and "an elaborate substructure of committees dealing with every aspect of the curriculum and not a few extracurricular questions was gradually built."[69] The SEB (later named in 1958 Independent Schools Education Board) developed entrance exams and requirements, researched school practices, and provided varied activities for school personnel.

The NCIS had less tangible goals and was more informed by the growing negative reputation of independent schools and desires to monitor possible federal regulations.[70] According to Potter, NCIS "grew out of a need for private schools to try to deal collectively with a problem, but it was far more amorphous with which to attempt to cope than the straightforward matter of entrance examinations …. Furthermore, it was potentially a more threatening one, for it involved the very existence of the institution of

[68] Cary Potter, "NAIS 25 or 62?" http://www.nais.org/ismagazinearticlePrint.cfm?print=Y&ItemNumber=150593 (accessed August 12, 2010).

[69] Ibid.

[70] Arthur G. Powell, 62

the private schools."[71] As noted, independent schools had been grappling with their identity in the first four decades of the twentieth century as public schools became more prevalent. Increasingly individuals were "questioning whether private schools were any longer necessary, or even desirable," especially in areas of the United States that did not have a long tradition of independent schools.[72] The 1925 case *Pierce v. The Society of Sisters and the Hill Military Academy* had tested the viability of independent schools; the state of Oregon had recently required that all children attend public schools. The court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs and upheld parents' ability to choose private schools.

This sentiment gave rise to the National Council of Independent Schools. Initially proposed by Morton Snyder, head of Rye Country Day School in New York, during an SEB meeting in 1929, the board was hesitant to take on the task of developing "a national federation of Private School Associations." Snyder wanted a federation that would defend the private school amidst "'hostile climate,' prejudice and lack of public understanding. He envisaged a federation that would explore what could be done to promote the interest of private schools in different areas of the country."[73] NCIS came to fruition in the early 1940s through the joining of the SEB Committee on Public Service, established in 1941, and a special committee of the Country Day School Headmasters' Association, seeking to explore Snyder's plan. NCIS initially formed in August 1942 as a "loose knit confederation of constituent members; some regional associations (such as the California Association), some 'type' organizations (such as the Headmistresses' Association of the

[71] Potter.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Ibid.

East or the Secondary Education Board)."[74] The organization primarily served "purposes very similar to those of the SEB Committee on Public Service (which subsequently disbanded)—furthering the concept of public service, speaking on behalf of all independent schools, enhancing unity among them, and providing contact with other branches of education."[75]

In 1943, SEB formed its own Committee on Public Relations. The formation of NCIS and this committee caused confusion in direction of efforts. To eliminate confusion, a special meeting was held in February 1947 in Cleveland. During this meeting representatives of NCIS' executive committee and SEB's Committee on Public Relations decided that a national organization was needed to address the multiple issues independent schools were facing, without respect to their internal academic requirements and directions. Out of this meeting, the purpose of NCIS developed,

> To facilitate in every possible way the services of independent schools to public education and community service; to provide the membership with information and advice in all phases of school activity necessary to their welfare; to promote the common good of all independent schools in one national force; to interpret to the public the aims, ideals, and services of independent schools.[76]

Francis Parkman, formerly head of Saint Mark's School in Massachusetts, was made executive secretary in January 1948; he would serve in this capacity through 1962, when he became the first president of NAIS. NCIS leaders, primarily school heads from various types of independent schools throughout the country, took up the challenge of

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[74] National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council Report*, no. 2 (December 1946): 4.
[75] Potter.
[76] Ibid.

combating negative stereotypes about independent schools by focusing on a variety of matters including those pertaining to teachers (i.e., training, recruitment, and retention), reports from local and regional associations, accreditation, annual statistics, and the function of NCIS as an organization. Most important to Westminster's context were the monitoring of legislation and public relations.

Monitoring Legislation

A goal of NCIS was "collecting and reporting information helpful to schools and associations in stemming the tide of restrictive state regulations." In the May 1947 *National Council Report* (hereafter referred to as *Report*), the official reporting outlet of NCIS, a subcommittee on the Legal Status of Independent Schools noted "that legal redress of legislative wrongs is difficult, laborious and expensive; that the best legal protection is awareness before the event, and the building up of a general friendly awareness as to the contributions and problems of independent schools in the minds of legislators and the public."[77] In the March 1948 *Report*, notes about the executive committee meeting on February 11 indicated the desire for NCIS to become a "clearing house" of legislation, "both on the books and proposed, affecting independent schools." The first piece of information requested for every state was the "constitutional situation on freedom from taxation."[78]

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[77] National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council Report*, no. 3 (May 1947): 1. As the official reporting outlet of NCIS, the *Report* was "to be mailed to member organizations and two copies to individual schools and to each delegate attending the most recent meeting." The functions of the *Report* were two fold, "a) to keep the seven hundred or so member schools informed specifically as to the interests and work of the National Council and b) to serve as a clearing house for matters of general interest to independent schools." See "National Council Report" in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council Report*, no. 1 (August 1946): np; and National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council Report*, no. 2 (December 1946): 1.

[78] See "Plans" in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 6 (March 1948): 3.

Legislative reports were provided in the forthcoming *Reports* about sales and use tax law, accreditation, tax-exemption status, and regulations on private educational institutions. Of note were discussions of the passing of "Fair Educational Practices" in several states and a Pennsylvania proposal that "would make tax exemption illegal for all private schools in the state (except religious schools who 'make any written or oral inquiry concerning or designed to elicit information as to race, religious, color, national origin, or ancestry of a person seeking admission to such institution).'"[79]

The relationship between independent schools and the law was also present in the *Bulletin.* In 1949, Frances V. Lloyd, Jr., director of studies at St. Paul's School in Concord, New Hampshire authored "The Law and the Private Schools." Lloyd first recounted the 1925 *Pierce v. Society of the Sisters* case. He then included briefs pertaining to state legislation on school charters, taxation of schools, material grants under the law, and academic standards and concluded with identifying six problems with which private schools must contend. They included the following: "The Independent Schools, in the eyes of the law, must measure up to the full responsibility they share with the public schools for the education of American youth" and "Independent Schools face

[79] See "Pennsylvania" in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report* , no. 9 (January 1949): 2. See also "Legislation" in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 7 (June 1948): 3; and "Fair Educational Practices" in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 11 (June 1949): 2. According to the June 1948 *Report*, the Fair Educational Practices act "amends the state education law to provide against discrimination in admission practices on the basis of race, color, religion, creed or national origin, by educational institutions of post-secondary grade." See "Legislation" in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 7 (June 1948): 3.

the constant danger of thinking too narrowly on their 'form' of education and not broadly enough on the national educational problem."[80]

Although race during these years was not frequently and explicitly discussed in issues of the *Report*, the legislation most closely followed indicates the ways in which NCIS leaders, including Westminster president William Pressly, understood and responded to national and state political and social changes with respect to education. Subsequently these actions informed these NCIS leaders' engagement with race and school desegregation when warranted by changing political and social tides.

Public Relations

In addition to understanding legislation and reporting on it, independent school leaders spent considerable attention on independent schools' relationship to the public. In the December 1946 issue of the *Report*, NCIS leaders emphasized the evolving relationship between public schools and independent schools. Seemingly as the United States emerged from World War II, they believed that new cooperative relations between public and independent school teachers could develop. In their words, "there is ground for believing that the old days of separateness and rivalry are giving way to a new era of co-operation and awareness of common problems, and of all teachers being not rivals, but colleagues in a great cause."[81]

Though independent school populations began to grow in the post-war years, NCIS leaders urged others to reiterate the following about independent schools' relationships with the greater public: "the contributions of and need for independent

[80] Francis V. Floyd, Jr. "The Law and the Private Schools" *Independent School Bulletin* Series '48-'49, no. 3 (February 1949): 9.

[81] National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council Report*, no. 1 (December 1946): np.

schools, of constant and genuine co-operation with public agencies of various sorts … lest we drive wedges of discord between different types of schools in our own group. At a great price we possess our freedom; the old price of liberty which is responsibility."[82] Similar tones also emanated from the *Bulletin.* In the November 1950 *Bulletin*, Arnold E. Look, president of the Ellis Country School, warned independent schools of predicaments that hurt independent schools. Look suggested, "The public relations of independent schools can be improved only to a minor degree by the employment of improved techniques of propaganda." The specific problems outlined included independent schools' shortened school years; "fraudulent advertising" pertaining to schools' advertisement of the availability of remedial programs and accreditation status; and misuse of scholarship funds "to buy outstanding athletes for the school teams."[83] Additionally, in February 1951, F. Gardiner F. Bridge, an English teacher at Hebron Academy in Hebron, Maine, challenged independent schools to develop good relationships with their local communities and the public school systems in those communities. In his opinion it was of utmost importance "that the independent school should adapt itself to its community; the community cannot be expected to adapt itself to the school."[84]

Independent schools also interacted with the community through community service, especially with respect to the underprivileged. In April 1949, the following was reported in the *Bulletin:*

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[82] National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council Report*, no. 3 (May 1947): 7.

[83] Arnold Look, "The Public Relations of Independent Schools," *Independent School Bulletin* Series '50-'51, no. 1 (November 1950): 15–16.

[84] F. Gardiner F. Bridge, "Independent Schools and the Community," *Independent School Bulletin* Series '50-'51, no. 2 (February 1951): 15.

> The student Social Service Committee at the Hackley School, Tarrytown, N.Y., has formulated plans to finance and run a two-week June camp for 25 children in Tarrytown who otherwise would not have a chance to experience camp life. All facilities of the school and the regular Hackley summer camp will be made available to the campers. Selection will be based on need, plus qualities of leadership.[85]

In this announcement and others, writers seldom defined "underprivileged" (and later "disadvantaged"), thus one does not know specific demographics of the group "served."

Also not always articulated was what independent school students were expected to learn from their community service experiences. In May 1949, Kenneth C. Parker of the Taft Schools in Watertown, Connecticut reported on service in Philadelphia. While, he pointed toward what students were to learn, he did not indicate student responses or the actual lessons learned. A collective of students from the Germantown area were devoting "their time and efforts on Saturdays to the work of improving substandard dwellings occupied by underprivileged families." The participating students included those from independent school Germantown Friends and also other private and public high schools. According to the director of the program, a teacher at Germantown, "For us, it's an educational project in addition to being a community service. We want our young people to realize that such areas as these exist in Germantown—in fact, not far

[85] Joseph R.W. Dodge and Kendall S. Pennypacker, "What the Schools Are Doing," *Independent School Bulletin* Series '48-'49, no. 4 (April 1949): 18.

from their own homes." Subsequently, the director expressed her hope for the same reaction by those being helped.[86]

Elite private schools took steps to enhance their public image, including adopting the term "independent" and developing national organizations. Through these organizations, a concerted effort was put forth to monitor legislation and public relations. As it became advantageous, independent school leaders expanded beyond their homogenous populations. By the mid-twentieth century, black students, in much greater numbers, became part of these demographic shifts.

As black southerners wrestled with public school desegregation in the 1950s and 1960s, white southern independent schools were not exempt as sites for educational opportunities, for private schools had long been a part of the African American educational tradition. Conversely, white independent schools maneuvered and changed with the times. As Vance Wilson, current headmaster of St. Albans School in Washington, D.C., noted in *They Took Their Stand,* "As slow as [public school integration] was taking place, the alarm caused in the white communities precipitated events resulting in the eruption of blatantly segregated private schools and the decisions to expand enrollments in old-line schools which, at the same time, espoused the ambiguous qualification that they were unlike the newly formed segregationist academies."[87] Westminster was one such school that had to distinguish itself from the growing numbers of segregationist academies. Through this largely institutional history, that centralizes the racial climate of a school prior to and following desegregation

[86] Kenneth C. Parker, "Our Schools and the Public," *Independent School Bulletin* Series '48-'49, no. 5 (May 1949): 19. Parker began this article by discussing ways in which schools can be more hospitable to new students and the importance of personal touch as a way to increase better public relations.

[87] Wilson, *They Took Their Stand,* xv.

alongside local, regional, and national developments, one gleans the multiple forces that influenced one independent school's change over time. Moreover, Westminster serves as a site for examining the experiences of black students who navigated once segregated private and hostile terrains.

Chapter 2:

An Elite Southern Independent School Emerges, 1951–1957

In the mid-twentieth century independent schools faced criticism of their place in the U.S. educational system, and some efforts were initiated to increase the number of black students attending these schools. Westminster, a non-sectarian school with a close affiliation to the Presbyterian Church, did not have an explicit statement that denied admission to black students, but black students were not sought after either. Influencing Westminster's development were the ways in which Atlanta positioned itself differently from the state of Georgia, which enacted policies of massive resistance to circumvent the desegregation of public schools. Between 1951 and 1957, Westminster became a fixture in Atlanta's elite white community. Underscoring Westminster's development was a racial school climate that adhered to traditions of the Old South. As Westminster grew, its founding president Dr. William Pressly became a leader in the national white independent school world, which continued to grapple with its relationship to the greater public.

Westminster's Origins

Westminster grew out of the Napsonian School's decline. Napsonian was a private school established in 1909 at the North Avenue Presbyterian School located in the center of Atlanta. As stated in an article by Stuart R. Oglesby, "The school was founded by a small group of men for North Avenue Presbyterian Church, under the leadership of Dr. Richard Orme Flinn, pastor." In 1942, the leadership of the school "passed to an incorporated board of trustees, affiliated with both the Presbytery and the Synod." Additionally, a new name for the school was selected—Napsonian. Although boys had

been accepted in the lower grades since the school's establishment, the "Junior High and Senior High [were] open to girls only."[1]

Napsonian, with a well-rounded curriculum, was accredited in 1921 by the Southern Association of Colleges and High Schools (SACS), and graduates were being "admitted without examination to standard colleges such as Agnes Scott [College, located immediately outside of Atlanta] and Randolph-Macon [College, located in Virginia]." The curriculum included an emphasis on the Bible "as God's message to man" and provided physical education for all students.[2] Yet with the school facing declining enrollment, Dr. James Ross McCain, president of Agnes Scott and board member of Napsonian, wrote in 1951 to Pressly, a family friend, regarding white Atlantans' desire for a strong independent school. McCain asked for Pressly, then co-headmaster of the McCallie School in Tennessee, an all-boys' boarding school begun in 1905, to recommend a leader for a new school. The letter also stated the availability of land in the West Paces Ferry neighborhood and the desire for the new school to carry on Napsonian's emphasis on Christianity. Rather than nominate someone else, Pressly nominated himself.[3]

Westminster's admission policy and racial climate cannot be understood without considering Georgia and Atlanta politics. Even prior to the *Brown* decision, the Georgia legislature orchestrated policies to resist the possibility of school desegregation. In 1947, under Governor Herman Talmadge, a statewide system of common school finance, the

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[1] Stuart R. Oglesby, "Presbyterian News Notes," ca. 1951, Folder: Clippings, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, The Westminster Schools Archives, Carlyle Fraser Library, The Westminster Schools, Atlanta, Georgia. (hereafter referred to as "WA").

[2] Ibid.

[3] Pressly, 8–9.

Minimum Foundation Program of Education (MFPE), was devised. Supported by the Georgia Educators Association, Superintendent Mauney Douglass Collins, and Roy V. Harris, a leading Georgia politician, MFPE served as Georgia's last-minute attempt to create actual separate but equal black and white public schools. In 1950, the General Assembly approved a record-breaking $207,505,708 state appropriations bill; half of this appropriation was to fund the MFPE's attempt to equalize black and white schools. Similar to other southern states, the Georgia legislature wanted to make separate but equal schools a reality in order to avoid the possibility of desegregation on the grounds that white and black schools were unequal. Another part of the bill included a state law that "required the state to cut off funds to all public schools in Georgia in the event of the admission of one black to one public school."[4]

The MFPE also factored in ongoing accreditation conversations for independent schools. In 1950, qualification in the Southern Association of Independent Schools (a member body of NCIS) was by accreditation from SACS.[5] Yet at SACS' November 1950 meeting in Richmond, Virginia, discussion ensued "over the proposals for the establishment of new standards by the association," including the requirement that a school be accredited by its local state before being approved by the association. Private school leaders objected because, "rigid application of state accreditation requirements, designed for public high schools, would make difficulties for the independent schools in the matter of curriculum, length of school year, teacher certification, etc."[6] By March

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[4] Thomas Victor O'Brien, "Georgia's Response to *Brown v. Board of Education*: The Rise and Fall of Massive Resistance, 1949-1961." (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1992): 93.

[5] National Council of Independent Schools, "Independent School Associations—Membership Standards," *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 15 (June 1950): 7.

[6] National Council of Independent Schools, "Southern Association of Colleges and Schools," *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 17 (December 1950): 5.

1951, discussion of new standards had been tabled, because "we are told that there is increasing understanding of and sympathy for the position of independent schools, so there is some ground for a little restrained optimism. On the other hand, it appears that state departments of education for various reasons, are reluctant to modify the rule requiring state approval as a prerequisite for accreditation by the Association."[7]

Georgia independent schools' state accreditation depended on compliance with MFPE. Without compliance, schools risked losing accreditation by SACS.[8] Additionally, along with providing money to "equalize" white and black schools, MFPE included funds to increase public school teachers' salaries. This raise in salaries caused concern among independent school leaders because they did not know if they could match the new salaries when hiring teachers for their schools. By September, when Westminster opened its doors, the salary policy had been eased for private schools, and they were allowed to follow the state salary schedule for the 1950-1951 school year.[9] Further, in March 1952 a compromise was reached regarding private schools' accreditation. A school could be eligible for accreditation upon applying to SACS' State Commission. Additionally, the SACS Executive Committee made provisions so that independent school leaders, including the president of the Southern Association of Independent Schools, could be represented.[10]

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[7] National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 18 (March 1951): 3.

[8] National Council of Independent Schools, "Georgia: Minimum Salaries" *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 19 (June 1951): 2.

[9] National Council of Independent Schools , "Georgia: Minimum Salaries" *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 20 (September 1951): 5.

[10] National Council of Independent Schools, "Legislation, Accreditation, Etc.: Southern Association of Independent Schools," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 22 (March 1952): 9.

As the Georgia legislature initiated MFPE, black Atlantans leveraged what power they could. With the abolition of the Georgia white primary following *Smith v. Allwright* in 1944 and the recognized power of the black vote, a loose alliance was established between the white business community in North Atlanta and the black middle class, "a large and well-organized black middle class with its roots in the black churches, black business, and the Atlanta University complex."[11] At the center of this alliance were leading white men including Mayor Hartsfield; Ralph McGill, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*; and Robert Woodruff, president of Coca-Cola; and leading black men including John Wesley Dobbs and A. T. Walden, founders of the Atlanta Negro Voters League.[12]

Despite the activism and strategizing of black Atlantans, segregation and racism hampered their power. However, Hartsfield, a segregationist, knew that he had to appeal to black Atlantans. During the 1949 mayoral election, he appeared before the Atlanta Negro Voters League. The league only endorsed Mayor Hartsfield after he agreed to support the following: "hiring more black police; opening a fire station with black firemen in Westside Atlanta's black areas; getting more parks, playgrounds, public housing, and land for private homes; and upgrading black city workers," according to historian Ronald Bayor.[13] With the endorsement of the Atlanta Negro Voters League and 50.1 percent of the vote, including 82.5 percent of the vote from two predominantly black precincts, Hartsfield was re-elected mayor. However, "whatever Hartsfield's rhetoric,

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[11] Plank and Turner, 589; Following the 1944 decision in *Smith v. Allwright* which "declared Texas' Democratic white primary unconstitutional.…a decision abolishing the white primary in Georgia was handed down shortly thereafter" ("Changing Patterns in Black School Politics," 596).

[12] Kruse, 36.

[13] Ronald Bayor, *Race and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century Atlanta* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 26.

Atlanta's blacks were still treated as second-class citizens. No white leader sought to end segregation. As one stated in the early 1950s, 'I'm a true friend of the Negro and will be as long as he keeps his place.'"[14] The alliance between whites and blacks limited the number of openly racist whites who won public office, but little changed in the lives of Atlanta's black citizens.

Westminster's origins, therefore, are contextualized by a state committed to upholding segregation prior to *Brown* and a city challenged by its black citizens to enact equality. Conversely, Pressly recognized the importance of Atlanta's white power structure, the "business conservatives." Business conservatives, as educated, wealthy individuals and moderates on race relations, were "less inclined than the lower classes or rural communities to view strict segregation by any means necessary as the only option."[15] Prior to accepting the offer from McCain, Pressly sought the advice of leading Atlantan white business leaders, such as Woodruff; Harrsion Jones, also of Coca-Cola; and John Sibley, chairman of the Trust Company of Georgia who would be appointed chair of the 1960 statewide education commission. Though Pressly received the support of all three men, Woodruff made it clear that he would not support the school financially because of his financial commitments to Emory University's medical school. Briefly disappointed by Woodruff's decision, Pressly still accepted the position as president of the newly formed school.[16]

Pressly made his presence known to the board members and the community. In May 1951, Pressly called for the board's cooperation in raising funds: "Board of Trustees

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[14] Ibid., 27.
[15] Gannon, 19.
[16] Pressly, 11–14.

must accept its share of responsibility for raising these funds … I want the Board of Trustees to realize that no school head coming into town can be expected to raise funds without the wholehearted cooperation of each member of the Board of Trustees."[17] Additionally, Pressly appealed for the development of boarding school components (in addition to day schools) for boys and girls, a tuition increase from $300 to $400, a salary of $9,000 with a $1,500 house allowance, and a new name for the school. The board members charged with fulfilling these duties included Dr. Vernon S. Broyles, Jr., pastor of Atlanta's North Avenue Presbyterian Church and former chair of the board for the Napsonian School. Broyles would serve as chair of the Westminster board for more than 20 years. Other members of Westminster's Board included McCain, who served until his death in 1965, and Welborn Cody, the school's attorney and a member of North Avenue Presbyterian Church. Comprised of three schools—a junior school (consisting of kindergarten through seventh grade), a girls school (eighth through twelfth grades), and a boys school (eighth through twelfth grades), the new school was named The Westminster Schools.

In 1951, Westminster began at the facilities of the Napsonian School with 240 students, a faculty and staff comprised of 18 members, 2,500 volumes in the library, and an operating budget of $75,000.[18] As Westminster developed, Pressly relied on the following criteria for developing "a successful college preparatory school":

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[17] William L. Pressly to Dr. Vernon Broyles and Westminster Board, May 17, 1951, Folder 2: Correspondence, Dr. V. Broyles from Dr. Pressly, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[18] "The Physical Development of the School," Folder: Administrative Records 1956–1961, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

1) a board of trustees composed of experienced, capable men and women who would dedicate themselves to the school's purposes;
2) a well-trained faculty, determined to help each pupil develop academically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually;
3) a student body of bright and talented youngsters; and
4) community support from citizens who would be willing to devote enormous amounts of time, energy, talent, and money so that the school could succeed.

By collectively addressing these criteria, in particular criterion four, Pressly became more familiar with the white business leaders of Atlanta, thus situating himself marginally in the political and social climate of Atlanta during the mid-twentieth century.

In the coming years, Pressly would also become a leader in the national independent school world, whose tenor in 1951 was best reflected in NCIS' *Secondary Education and Independent Secondary Education in the United States: Two Statements by the National Council of Independent Schools.* The latter addressed the criticism of independent schools being fraudulent (i.e., individuals' not receiving "sound education"), developing "adults who are selfish and weak" and "snobs," fostering community members indifferent to public education, and promoting un-American and undemocratic ideals by participating in a private system of education. In response, "fly-by-nights" were deemed as not having standards, and it was reported that regional associations were creating lists of "honest and competent" schools. The statement also included a description of some independent school students … whose chief spiritual staff is a silver

spoon and whose main intellectual reliance is a successful ancestor."[19] In response, the academic goals of independent schools were stated: "It is furthermore expected of most independent schools that they will get their students into college, and for the most part into colleges to which admission is competitive. Whether the independent school deals with able, mediocre, or limited students, it undertakes to train all in high standards of academic work and performance."[20]

Socio-economic status was also addressed by noting rising costs of independent schools. These rising costs, however, were being countered by financial assistance, sometimes leading schools to have budgets in the red. NCIS described the crisis of socio-economic status as follows:

> The danger of social exclusiveness remains, and indifferent students are sometimes offered opportunities they waste while other boys and girls who have every qualification except cash are denied the opportunity they deserve. To reconcile economic survival with a democratic cross-section is another serious challenge facing independent secondary education.[21]

Private education was also defended as not harming public education, "the most widespread criticism of independent schools," by arguing that the cost would be too great to educate all students in public schools.[22] The writers equated independent schools with other private agencies including colleges. The concluding sections highlighted what were considered the distinctive features of independent schools: flexibility; research

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[19] National Council of Independent Schools, *Secondary Education and Independent Secondary Education in the United States*, (Boston, MA: National Council of Independent Schools, 1951): 11.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 12

[22] Ibid., 13.

contributions; attention to individual students; diversity of schooling options; training of independent school teachers, which emphasizes content (rather than pedagogy); religious freedom; and promotion of "conservatism" or those heritages that "constitute" established civilization. Additionally, NCIS described independent schools, especially boarding schools, in contrast to public schools, as countering localism.

In its initial years of development, Pressly would oversee Westminster's growth undergirded by independent school leaders' concerns over public image, a regional debate about accreditation standards, and a local context seeking to evade imminent desegregation. Pressly and other school leaders would make Westminster distinct in its marketing, fundraising, and academic offerings; yet, the school's racial climate made it a product of time and place. In some respects, the school provided a haven for white students, similar to that of the segregationist academies that would emerge in opposition to desegregation.

Marketing Westminster

As Westminster developed, marketing of the school was directed towards white Atlanta, in particular those living on the Northside. In 1952, the Westminster promotional materials were titled, "The School Atlanta Needs," presumably because, "Atlanta is not able to point with pride to the campus and buildings of a single nationally known independent preparatory school," specifically a Protestant school "where both boys and girls in elementary and secondary grades can obtain an education of recognized academic worth and Christ-centered in purpose." Additionally, Westminster was situated as a viable alternative to private education offered in the Northeast, an association that would often be made. The introductory material of the promotional booklet read: "Richmond,

Chattanooga, Nashville, and Memphis have some excellent independent schools, but by and large, the South provides few educational opportunities on a par with those offered by the leading preparatory schools of the Northeast states. Therefore, hundreds of our young people are sent away to school year after year."[23]

With a call for more community support of the school and an emphasis on Christian education and the preparation of leaders, The Westminster Schools increased in stature during 1952. An April 1952 article by Celestine Sibley, noted columnist for the *Atlanta Constitution,* reported on a three-day convocation "on the growth of educational opportunity in this area," of which Pressly served as host. Pressly, reflecting the national independent school conversation, asserted, "Even as the public school is a symbol of democracy so is the independent school a symbol of freedom."[24]

As Westminster grew, however, it would come to reflect a contradictory school climate, in part because of the influence of southern white mores. As noted in the school newspaper, the theme for 1952 was "Song of the South" featuring "Uncle Remus and his various friends." Characters represented in the May Day Pageant included Br'er Bear, Br'er Fox, and Br'er Rabbit."[25] This production was presumably based on the 1946 Disney release "Song of the South," its first live action dramatic film. The stories featured in the production were first told by Joel Chandler Harris, a native white of Eatonton, Georgia and former editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* in the late nineteenth century. With the 1880 publication of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings,* Harris' African American storyteller Uncle Remus came to life. Harris' work contributed to the

[23] "The School Atlanta Needs," 1952 Campaign, Development Office Records, WA.
[24] Celestine Sibley, "City Visioned as Top Hub in Education," *The Atlanta Constitution,* April 24, 1952, Folder: Clippings, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.
[25] "May Day Pageant Held Friday, May 30," *The Westminster Tattler,* June 3, 1952, p. 1, WA.

nostalgia of the Old South that depicted "perfect race, class, and gender harmony," according to historian Grace Elizabeth Hale."[26] Harris' work along with others began a drama "that culminated with David O. Selznick's 1939 film of Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With the Wind.*"[27] In reproducing Uncle Remus stories, the Westminster students invoked images of the Old South and that of the loyal ex-slave. What one cannot determine is whether or not the Westminster students analyzed such stories as trickster tales and their meaning for black Americans.

With these southern celebrations as part of the school culture, Westminster grew in its initial years. In a September 1952 board meeting, Pressly reported that 432 students were enrolled and 51 applicants had been turned away.[28] Additionally, the school began receiving significant financial contributions in November. Pressly announced what would be the first of many gifts from the Woodruff Foundation—a donation of $50,000 towards the campaign to raise $840,000 for the school. Evidently Robert Woodruff had changed his mind about supporting Westminster.[29]

The summer of 1952 brought another change: the merging of Westminster and Washington Seminary, an-all girls' school begun in 1878. Again, Pressly garnered attention from the press. In "A Quiet Man with Ideas," Sibley reflected on Pressly's demeanor and his accomplishments, conveying a sense of the loyalty that Pressly quickly acquired in Atlanta. Sibley remarked, "At least [the Westminster Schools] has the support of a remarkable number of citizens who were loyal to the two old schools and who

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[26] Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890–1940* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 52-3 .

[27] Ibid.

[28] Minutes, 12 September 1952, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[29] Minutes, 24 November 1952, The Board of Trustees Records, WA; Pressly, 33, 35.

believe in the vision of the new schools." Additionally, Sibley praised Pressly for the ways in which he navigated a community shedding its ties to former schools:

> Dr. Pressly has had to be tireless in the big campaign to build the Westminster Schools. He has also had to have a tremendous amount of tact and patience. People, particularly Southern people, are fond of their old institutions and their old ways. It's never easy to see something you have loved as people loved both Washington Seminary and the old North Avenue Presbyterian School give way to a new order. Your mind may tell you that the new thing is good but your heart rebels.[30]

Though Sibley wrote about individuals letting go of these two independent schools, she also captured sentiments that would resonate in future years of the changing South, especially changes that states like Georgia would resist in efforts to hold onto during desegregation.

By 1953, Westminster had a total enrollment of 750 students, and the separate schools for girls and boys began their first year on the current West Paces Ferry campus, while the junior school operated in buildings used by Washington Seminary on Peachtree Road.[31] Tuition ranged from $200 for kindergarten to $450 for the Boys' and Girls' schools, and those who boarded paid an additional $900.[32] In December, the school received $7,000 as part of a grant for "initiating the experiment in enrichment and

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[30] Celestine Sibley, "A Quiet Man with Ideas," *The Atlanta Constitution,* July 2, 1953, Folder: Clippings, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[31] "The Westminster Schools," advertisement, *Rush,* November 5, 1953, Folder: Clippings, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[32] "Expenses," Folder: Administrative Records, 1953–1954, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

acceleration of the educational program"—a program that would later become the Advanced Placement Program.[33]

As Westminster became a fixture in the Atlanta community, segregation was soon to be found unconstitutional. In anticipation of the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, Georgia Governor Herman Talmadge championed and wrote into law a statewide conversion plan to create a private school system; he also established the Georgia Commission on Education, a committee that sought legal means to maintain segregation.[34] As O'Brien observed, "both sought to maintain segregation and to circumvent *Brown* before it was even decided."[35]

Sustaining Westminster during *Brown*

Brown v. Board of Education had become the landmark case of the legal strategy begun in the 1930s by the Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF) of the NAACP. The LDF had won two significant Supreme Court cases—*Sweatt v. Painter* and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma* in 1950.[36] Though *Sweatt* and *McLaurin* concerned black access to higher education, both cases contributed to establishing legal precedent for *Brown.* In May 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education,* the NAACP's landmark case, overturned *Plessy v.*

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[33] Fund for the Advancement of Education, letter to Pressly, December 16, 1953, Folder: Fund for the Advancement of Education, 1953–1956, Board of Trustees Papers, WA.

[34] Jeff Roche, *Restructured Resistance: The Sibley Commission and the Politics of Desegregation in Georgia.* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 19.

[35] O'Brien, 109.

[36] For information on the NAACP Legal and Educational Defense Fund, Inc., see Waldo E. Martin, Jr., Brown v. Board of Education: *A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998); Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of* Brown v. Board of Education *and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004)*;* Genna Rae McNeil, *Groundwork: Charles Hamilton Houston and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); and Mark Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

Ferguson, thereby outlawing "separate but equal."[37] Although black Americans were initially hopeful following *Brown*, the court's subsequent decision in *Brown v. Board of Education II* stalled the dismantling of separate educational facilities, and schools like Westminster continued to grow.

Between 1954 and 1955, Westminster's student enrollment increased from 890 to 985.[38] In 1954, Westminster's promotional materials were entitled, "A Great City, A Great School," in which Atlanta was characterized as follows: "For her greatness is not something she was born with, nor something 'thrust upon her'; it is something she has achieved. It is the product of opportunity, vision, and creative effort." Likewise, Westminster capitalized on this same combination. Pressly discussed the freedom of independent schools: selecting students "who have the ability and desire to do the hard work it requires, and to meet the high standards it sets," the inclusion of Bible instruction, and the ability "to concentrate on the special task of college preparation."[39] Additionally, Pressly noted the following:

> Atlanta's great institutions of higher education have welcomed the Westminster Schools as an important addition to the city's educational resources. Leaders in the public schools have been equally cordial, for part of Westminster's purpose is

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[37] The five cases known as *Brown v. Board of Education* include the following: a) *Briggs v. Elliott,* begun in 1949 in Clarendon, South Carolina; the grievances included lack of busing and unequal, segregated schools. b) *Boiling v. Sharpe,* begun in 1950 in Washington, DC; the grievances included black students attending overcrowded, segregated schools and being denied admission to new, well-equipped schools for white students. c) *Belton (Bulah) v. Gebhart,* filed in 1951 in Wilmington County, Delaware; two mothers filed this case because of the distance their children had to travel to attend segregated schools. d) *Davis v. School Board of Prince Edward County,* filed in 1951 in Prince Edward County, Virginia; again, the grievance was based on overcrowded, under-funded segregated schools. e) *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,* begun in 1951; Oliver Brown and thirteen other parents filed the suit because of the distance their children had to walk to attend a segregated school when a white school was closer.

[38] Minutes, 25 June 1954, The Board of Trustees Records, WA; Minutes, 12 August 1955 and 9 September 1955, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[39] "A Great City, A Great School," 1954 Campaign, Development Office Records, WA.

> to carry out an educational experiment which, when results prove advantageous, can be widely applied.[40]

In fact, Ida Jarrell, Superintendent of Atlanta Public Schools (APS), supported Westminster. According to Gannon, "Certainly Atlanta's notoriously conservative Superintendent of Public Schools, Ida Jarrell, knew what direction the courts were heading when she endorsed the Westminster plan in 1952."[41]

The promotional materials, perhaps not surprisingly, included little discussion of Atlanta's racial politics. While Atlanta University was listed among the city's educational institutions, the election of Dr. Rufus Clement, president of Atlanta University, to the Atlanta School Board in 1953, was not mentioned. Clement, along with Dr. Miles Amos and Austin Walden, who were newly elected as representatives of Atlanta's Third Ward, had become Atlanta's first black officials since Reconstruction.[42]

Moreover, Westminster's climate reflected racial overtones and southern traditions. For example, advertisements in the school newspaper for The Pickaninny, a coffee shop, featured three black figures gleefully running. The Pickaninny was operated by Mammy's Shanty, a restaurant on Peachtree Road, Atlanta's central corridor that connects the downtown to the Northside.[43] These images illuminated a powerful and dominant caricature of black children in the twentieth century. According to sociologist David Pilgrim, pickaninnies or picaninnies were "child coons." They "had bulging eyes, unkempt hair, red lips, and wide lips … They were routinely shown on postcards, posters, and other ephemera being chased or eaten. Picaninnies were portrayed as nameless,

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Gannon, 55.
[42] Kruse, 39–40.
[43] "The Pickaninny," advertisement, *Westminster Tattler,* April 1954, p. 3, WA.

shiftless natural buffoons running from alligators and toward fried chicken."[44] Similar to the inclusion of Uncle Remus stories in the May Day celebrations, advertisements for The Pickaninny highlighted the ways in which Westminster positioned itself in the community and the old white southern heritage it promoted.

On the state level, legislators attempted to thwart the *Brown* decision. Talmadge and the General Assembly continued to improve black schools while simultaneously advancing the private school plan initiated in 1953 through a new amendment—Amendment #4. The proposed amendment gave the General Assembly the ability to "discharge" themselves "of all obligation" of providing "adequate education for the state's citizens." Additionally the amendment provided citizens with "grants from state, county, and municipal funds. . . for educational purposes."[45] Critics of the amendment, which included members of the Georgia Education Association, the Georgia Teachers and Education Association, and the state Parent-Teachers Association, questioned the legality of the plan and the fate of teachers' retirement monies.[46] Talmadge and the State Democratic Party, however, championed the amendment "as the only way to maintain a system of common schools and segregation."[47] With a vote of 210,458 to 181,148, Amendment #4 passed.[48]

Throughout the South, the rise of states' massive resistance continued most prominently between 1955 and 1957, the same years in which Westminster's student

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[44] David Pilgrim, "The Picaninny Caricature," http://www.ferris.edu/news/jimcrow/picaninny/ (accessed November 16, 2008).

[45] O'Brien, 131.

[46] Prior to 1971, the Georgia Education Association served white teachers, whereas black teachers belonged to the Georgia Teachers and Education Association. In 1971, the two organizations merged and became the Georgia Association of Educators.

[47] O'Brien, 137.

[48] Susan Margaret McGrath, "Great Expectations: The History of School Desegregation in Atlanta and Boston, 1954-1990" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1992), 62.

body quadrupled from its initial size. For example, outside of Georgia in Clinton, Tennessee, the relatively peaceful desegregation of Clinton High School by nine black students on August 27, 1956, was followed by protests. By the end of the week, only about half of the student body, including the nine black students, was attending Clinton High. That Friday night segregationists violently protested, and by Sunday afternoon, 600 National Guardsmen had arrived in Clinton, helping to end the protests. [49]

The fall semester progressed with nine black students being escorted to school each day by three white escorts. Yet, Clinton High was temporarily closed in December following the beating of one escort. [50] When the school reopened in the spring of 1957, the black students felt ostracized and isolated, reflecting the experiences of the first black students to desegregate formerly all-white schools elsewhere.[51] However, despite the racism encountered, Bobby Cain became the first black student to graduate from a formerly all-white public high school in the South in the spring of 1957. One year later, without as much publicity, Gail Ann Epps became the first black female student to graduate from Clinton.

The experiences at Clinton High School signified early massive resistance that occurred throughout the South. Only a few months after Clinton High's first integrated

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[49] June N. Adamson, "Few Black Voices Heard: The Black Community and the 1956 Desegregation Crisis in Clinton," in *Trial and Triumph: Essays in Tennessee's African American History*, ed. Carroll Van West (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 340-1.

[50] Ibid., 342.

[51] Regina Turner, a black student who remained at Clinton for two more years after the fall of 1956, but graduated from an all black high school in Tallahassee, Florida, and Jo Ann Allen, another student who also moved from Clinton with her family, aptly describe their experiences. See Adamson, 344, 347. For examples, especially during this stage of desegregation, see Daisy Bates, "The Long Shadow of Little Rock," in *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954-1990*, eds. Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine (New York: Penguin Books, 1991); and Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, eds., *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1980s through 1990s* (New York: Banton Books, 1990).

graduation did Little Rock's resistance become national news. Similar to Clinton High School, nine students desegregated Central High School in 1957, but they were met with such immense opposition, including that of Governor Orval Faubus, that the federal government intervened. President Eisenhower federalized the Arkansas National Guard and sent the 101st Airborne Division, thereby making Little Rock an example of federal intervention.[52] As Herbert Brownell, then U.S. Attorney General, stated, "We felt that this was the test case that had to be made in order to dramatize to everyone that when it came to a showdown, the federal government was supreme in this area."[53] Following the national publicity surrounding Little Rock, leaders of other southern communities, including those of Atlanta, became much more deliberate in how school desegregation occurred in their cities and states; in essence, moving with "all deliberate speed" became the option of choice.

As desegregation occurred in places like Clinton and Little Rock, the Georgia General Assembly continued to pass laws that would thwart the possibility of public school desegregation. Six new laws were passed including the Private School Plan of 1956, which authorized the state to lease public school buildings for private educational purposes and to extend retirement benefits to nonpublic school teachers. In 1957, the General Assembly gave Governor Talmadge the power to abolish compulsory school attendance laws. The Georgia Commission on Education was also provided funds to create and promote pro-segregationist propaganda.[54] Furthermore, to oversee its

[52] The students now known as the Little Rock Nine were Carlotta Walls, Jefferson Thomas, Elizabeth Eckford, Thelma Mothershed, Melba Pattillo, Ernest Green, Terrance Roberts, Gloria Ray, and Minnijean Brown. Prior to their desegregation of Central High, Faubus had declared that "'blood will run in the streets' if Negro pupils should attempt to enter Central High School." See Bates, 98.

[53] Hampton and Fayer, 47.

[54] O' Brien, 149–67.

resistance, the state equipped the commission with surveillance equipment to spy on those thought to be threats to compliance with state law. Consequently, by 1957, "the total effect [of the actions of the Georgia Assembly] was a climate where any diversity was unacceptable."[55]

As massive resistance continued on a state level, some changes were occurring in Atlanta. For example, earlier in December of 1955, Atlanta golf courses were ordered desegregated. Additionally in 1957, actions commenced to desegregate Atlanta city buses, and 80 white Protestant ministers signed a "Ministers Manifesto" in response to the opposition to desegregate Little Rock's Central High School. Yet, as noted by Kruse, the desegregation of these spaces created two complications that benefitted such schools as Westminster: "In the end, court-ordered desegregation of public spaces brought about not actual racial integration, but instead a new division in which the public was increasingly abandoned to blacks and a new private one was created for whites." This private world was created because working-class whites were in essence the most affected by the desegregation of public spaces. According to Kruse, "Upper-class whites had no similar attachment because, unlike the poor, they had plenty of private alternatives. They belonged to private country clubs, had access to private pools, and drove private cars …. To the shock of working-class whites, who had long assumed that all white southerners stood united in support of segregation, these upper-class whites not only went along with court-ordered desegregation but then had the gall to brag about it."[56]

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[55] Ibid, 171.
[56] Kruse, 106–07.

Additionally, upper-class whites had access to such schools as Westminster, which they continued to fund. Along with Robert Woodruff, Ivan Allen, Jr., then president of the Chamber of Commerce and future mayor of Atlanta from 1962 to 1970, was one of Westminster's earliest parents and fundraisers. During Westminster's second major fundraiser in 1954, Allen and Pressly together met with "60 key prospective donors" and the campaign "surpassed its goal" of $430,000.[57] Pressly, by adhering to his criteria for a successful college preparatory school, carefully positioned Westminster to be on the minds of leading white Atlantans who would support the school. For example, the 1957 campaign was led by Edward D. Smith, president of First National Bank in Atlanta, and the school received a generous gift of property valued at more than $125,000 from Arthur L. Harris, president of the Mead-Atlanta Paper Company.[58] With a board comprised of such individuals as Mrs. Ivan Allen, Jr., a growing academic reputation, and increased financial support, Westminster solidified its position within the Atlanta community.

As Westminster grew in the initial years following *Brown,* racial undertones continued to be present. At the beginning of the 1955 school year, the *Westminster Chimes* became the paper designated for the Girls School and *The Mark Sheet* was started as the paper for the Boys School. Both papers, while continuing to focus on school activities and student accomplishments, contain examples of the school's racial climate. Even in the absence of black students, white students and faculty held racial attitudes and beliefs evident in their traditions. For example, the 1956 Mardi Gras Celebration was

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[57] Pressly, 52.

[58] "Arthur Harris Gift Expands Westminster," *Northside News,* November 7, 1957, n.p., Folder: Clippings, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

based on the theme, "Favorite Old Song." In the school newspaper, a picture of the freshman float "Dixie" was included. The picture shows a leading lady on the float with a basket of cotton in front of her and two float pullers, seemingly in black face. Based on the caption, all students appeared to be Westminster students.[59]

In January 1956, "Slave Market Provides Rat's Revenge on Seniors," depicted a type of induction process that occurred between the upperclassmen and underclassmen. The writer stated, "In October, the Seniors had their fun during 'Rat' Week. The 'Rats' had been caught in the trap! But the trap was opened and the mice set free. On Wednesday and Thursday, the rodents themselves were tending the trap … with the Seniors inside!" Additionally, through the article one can see how students discussed the slave auction, an annual fundraiser for the Atlanta Child's Home. One particular description of the auction involved the sons of Mayor and Mrs. Ivan Allen, Jr. The reporter wrote, "Ivan Allen became the unworthy slave of Inman [Allen] who had as his assistant John Mullin, Jimmy Fluker, and Tommy Rains. Ivan started off Wednesday by crawling around the gymnasium floor and then serving Inman and Tommy a Coke just before Mr. Austin's English Class." Pressly also seems to have participated by purchasing a student who appeared the next day at "the Girls' School with tied hands and feet and a lipstick covered face. After finding a "Help" note pinned to [him], one of the girls finally rescued him."[60]

These racially charged pictures, depictions, and events at Westminster signal the embracing of racist forms that only increased in the years before desegregation. Though

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[59] "The Parade of the Floats," *The Westminster Chimes*¸ March 1956, p. 3, WA.

[60] "Slave Market Provides Rat's Revenge on Seniors," *The Mark Sheet*, January 13, 1962, p. 2, WA.

few in number, these examples highlight questions about Westminster's origins as a southern institution that was attempting to provide a nationally recognized education. Based on how they conceptualized slave auctions, young men were auctioning one another, and the event seemed popular among students, faculty, and staff. The highest bids were taken, and the descriptions that accompanied the documentation of the auctions indicated that students were sold to do jobs. Such adherence to racialized traditions raises considerations about the ways in which students were taught about slavery and if any students ever opposed such depictions at the May Day festivities or the slave auction.

A Developing National Agenda

In addition to developing a school of local prominence, Pressly gained national notoriety. In 1957, he was selected chairman of the National Council of Independent Schools' (NCIS) Executive Committee, the first southerner to hold the position, and found himself in the midst of national conversations about race. Pressly had assumed leadership in other ways which presumably helped him garner attention for this national position. He served as a charter trustee for the College Entrance Examination Board, vice president of the Southern Association of Independent Schools, and chairman of the Georgia State Committee of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. He also held membership on the Georgia Accrediting Commission.

Though Pressly's actions cannot be traced directly to the national agenda, he positioned himself to be aware of independent schools' relationship with the community, public image concerns, and even the admission of black students to non-southern independent schools. For example, between October 1954 and March 1955, NCIS sponsored advertisements in six issues of *Harper's Magazine* and the *Atlantic*. The

advertisements addressed the following questions and themes: Why is a Private School Called Independent? What's Being Taught by Our Independent Schools? Why Do Parents Choose an Independent School? Why Do Teachers Choose Independent Schools? Are Independent Schools All Alike? What Lies Ahead for Independent Schools?[61] During these same few months, NCIS received 1,200 inquiries according to Francis Parker, NCIS executive secretary.

Additionally, the increased enrollment that Westminster had experienced in its initial six years was not in isolation nor relegated to the South. In January 1956, James V. Moffatt, director of admissions for the Hill School in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, wrote, "Most independent schools, if not all, are enjoying an enrollment boom." He continued, "No longer can admissions be considered in the light of 'getting students,' because today the main responsibility of the admissions officer is in the role of public relations representative not only of his own school, but of all independent education."[62] Such increased numbers called for attention to how independent school leaders communicated with their communities.

An announcement about Sidwell Friends School's newly adopted open admission policy was also included in the May 1956 *Bulletin,* but particular language was used, presumably in an effort to appeal to the greater public and the goals of independent schools nationally. Similar to public school desegregation, the process was to be gradual, because "for the first year students will be admitted to the kindergarten. Each year thereafter the admissions will be extended grade by grade." The advantages of a Sidwell

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[61] Advertisements reprinted in National Council of Independent Schools, *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 41 (December 1956): inserted document.

[62] James V. Moffat, "The Admissions Officer in Public Relations," *Independent School Bulletin* Series of '55-'56, no. 2 (January, 1956): 17.

education were also outlined: "to provide college preparatory training at a high level of academic excellence, with an awareness of an obligation to train for subsequent leadership and good citizenship." Yet, this education was to be provided to qualified black children, according to Sidwell's standards, so "that they, too, may be better prepared for ultimate professional and civic leadership."[63] The Sidwell announcement foreshadowed a constant theme about black and poor children attending independent schools—the unwavering of academic standards.

The concern over academic standards reflected a larger societal focus on education. In response to Sputnik and the Cold War, math and science education were at the forefront of educational concerns. One manifestation was the passing of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). As 1957 came to a close, NCIS, under Pressly's leadership, reported that it had received numerous inquiries about the role of academies in the U.S. educational crisis. In addition to releasing a statement to member schools concerning quality of curriculum and teaching, the NCIS Executive Committee encouraged schools "to continue and to expand their activities in certain specific areas such as the Advanced Placement Program, summer activities, opportunities for teacher refresher and advanced courses and the like."[64] Additionally, in early 1957, the *Bulletin* continued to include articles such as "Can We Sell American Independent Education to American Business?" and "Why Give to Private Schools?" In the latter, a question and

[63] "What the Schools Are Doing," *Independent School Bulletin,* Series '55-'56, no. 4 (May 1956): 25.

[64] National Council of Independent Schools, "Independent Schools and the 'Crisis': Policy Statement" *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 46 (December 1957): 11.

answer format is used. One question posed was "Are not private schools undemocratic?" The answer began: "They are highly democratic. No race or creed is barred."[65]

Moreover, with the publication of Arthur Miller's 1957 legal analysis, *Racial Discrimination and Private Education,* it was clear that private schools were not exempt from the conversation concerning the implementation and reach of public school desegregation.[66] In this account, Miller, an Emory University law professor, discussed the legal status of nonpublic education with respect to state control of education; cases involving curriculum, instruction, and administration; and religious training being offered in private schools and not in public schools. Miller specifically addressed the lack of definitive measures or limits of state governments regulating private schools. While some states have considered "so-called" Fair Educational Practices, "designed to require that certain private schools ignore race or religion as a criterion for matriculation … a number of Southern states have statutes that appear to require segregation in nonpublic schools."[67] For example the Georgia Constitution and statutes "operate together in such a fashion that any private school accepting both white and colored students loses its tax exemption."[68] Tax exemption of private school property had been a benefit that many private schools had enjoyed without ever being challenged.

Miller contended that southern whites were committed to continuing racial segregation. Any solutions to segregation were believed to fail because of southern life under segregation. Further, anyone in support of desegregation or civil rights was

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[65] Mrs. Waldo C. M. Johnston, "Can We Sell American Independent Education to American Business?" *Independent School Bulletin* Series of '56-'57, no. 2 (January 1957): 18–20; and "Why Give to Private Schools?" *Independent School Bulletin* Series of '56-'57, no. 2 (January 1957): 21.

[66] Arthur S. Miller, *Racial Discrimination and Private Education: A Legal Analysis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 19.

[67] Ibid., 22.

[68] Ibid., 29.

subjected to physical, economic, and psychological sanctions. Such sanctions, as noted by Miller, "make up a good part of the context in which a private school administrator operates."[69]

Miller further explored the ways in which private education is intimately connected to the public. He raised the following question: "Does the finding of a national interest in education, when added to the further finding that enforced racial segregation generates feelings of inferiority in the objects of discrimination, suggest that it is a logical step to require integration whenever education is carried on?"[70] Miller next considered the 14th Amendment by writing, "thus those who would break down the barriers in private education must present a factual situation from which it will be possible for the justices of the Supreme Court to draw the conclusion that the state is somehow intimately involved in privately-controlled education."[71] Though Miller provided a possible legal argument that black individuals could employ in a case calling for the integration of private schools, he did not foresee black individuals being successful.

In its initial six years, Westminster leaders had secured substantial financial support, built a new campus, and significantly increased the number of students enrolled at the school. In the coming years, however, these men and women would be forced to consider desegregation. Members of the Westminster Board would assert their own concerns regarding the school's position in the wake of public school desegregation, and students would challenge one another on racial issues and their willingness to accept integration. Westminster, similar to much of the South, would move with cautious

[69] Ibid., 65.
[70] Ibid., 73.
[71] Ibid., 74.

deliberation in deciding to desegregate. Additionally, Pressly would continue to operate and navigate not only in Atlanta but also in the national independent school community

Chapter 3:

Positioning and Posturing in the Midst of Change and Challenge, 1958–1961

As chair of the National Council of Independent Schools (NCIS) and president of a growing southern independent school, Pressly was quite aware of the era in which he lived. In an interview with nonfiction author and journalist Gary Pomerantz, Pressly stated "So far as I know the only situation according to us, as far as integration was concerned was in '58, I think …, the public schools were supposed to be closing in Atlanta. We had such a flood of applications. I remember we tested everybody that applied. I remember that year we turned away 1800 students."[1] Indeed public school segregation was being challenged in Atlanta.

In January 1958, twenty-eight black parents, led by Vivian Calhoun, sued the Atlanta School Board for black student admission to white schools and an end to segregation in Atlanta city schools. Subsequently, white flight from APS rose. In *The Formative Years*, Pressly's recollection of Westminster's development, he said, "The school agreed to test every student who applied, letting parents know that classes were absolutely filled but that their children would be tested anyway to see if they were eligible. It wasn't easy to turn them away without igniting hard feelings." Pressly also noted the increase in segregationist academies in Georgia. "Some were built on sound educational principles. Others were purely and simply segregationist academies. Small towns that built these so-called 'seg academies' eventually would run out of money and have to shut them down."[2]

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[1] William L. Pressly, interview by Gary M. Pomerantz, 18 November 1993, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Books Library, Emory University (hereafter referred to as MARBL).

[2] Pressly, 121.

Beginning in the fall of 1958, the Westminster Board formally adopted strategies and policies pertaining to race, and a committee on race was established in 1961 as APS were being desegregated. Moreover, Westminster's school climate reflected both its racialized traditions and students engaging in racial issues. Nationally, independent school leaders continued to monitor legislation and began to observe segregationist academies.

A Leading School Takes Shape during a Public School Dilemma

By 1958, Westminster's enrollment of 1,050 students was four times its initial enrollment of 240. Additionally, the school employed 115 faculty and staff members as compared to the original 18. The operating budget had grown from $75,000 to $652,000, and rather than being housed on four acres in four small buildings, the Westminster campus had moved to its current location in North Atlanta and occupied 170 acres. The campus consisted of three large classroom buildings, the president's home, a small music building, two field houses, three basketball floors, one gymnastics room, one dance studio, a twenty-seven-acre playing field, eleven regulation fields, tennis courts, and a track.[3]

Alongside Westminster's growth, school newspaper articles depicting student life showcased the continued tradition of the slave auction. In the December 1958 edition of *The Mark Sheet*, a short editorial entitled, "School Supports Child's Home," reported that the slave auction fundraiser had been a three-year tradition occurring each December. Additional fundraisers included a faculty-varsity basketball game and a duds-day (paying a quarter "to come to school dressed like bums"). In the second to last sentence, a

[3] "The Physical Development of the School," 1958, Folder: Administrative Records 1956–1961, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

challenge was issued—"it is hoped that the generosity of this year's eighth-graders has forced the other classes higher than before to avoid being slaves for two days."[4]

Westminster tended to appreciate and host black entertainers. For example in October 1958, Dwike Mitchell and Willie Ruff, a black jazz duo, were featured on the front page of *The Mark Sheet;* they had performed for an assembly. The student writer showcased his familiarity with musical compositions and performance, by noting,

> "Fugue for Lulu," an original by the duo, followed. This bit of musical abracadabra illustrated graphically the influence of Bach and his contemporaries of the 17th and 18th century on modern jazz …. Mitchell's use of the twelve-tone scale in "Old Man River," coupled with Ruff's dissonant bowings on the bass, made this number outstanding.[5]

When Mitchell and Ruff returned to the stage for an encore presentation, "Bits of Brahms, Chopin, and Lizst were deftly blended with a really known-down-drag-out jazz beat that sent the Westminster jazz aficionados back to their 4th period classes in a cool, but happy mood." The author noted that Mitchell and Ruff were classically trained at Julliard and Yale, but "the basic feeling for genuine jazz was completely apparent." Further, the Mitchell and Ruff performance was lauded as "the most successful musical program ever presented."

In less than a year, the Midnighters' performances during Westminster's Jazz Weekend in January of 1959 received even more coverage than the Mitchell and Ruff performance. Again, front page news, three pictures accompanied an article entitled,

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[4] "School Supports Child's Home," *The Mark Sheet*, December 2, 1958, p. 2, WA.

[5] "Dwike Mitchell and Willie Ruff Perform at Dual Assembly; Students Cheer Disc Stars," *The Mark Sheet*, October 24, 1958, p. 1, WA.

"Midnighters Entertain at Two Dances and Jam Session during Big Jazz Weekend." As reported, the Midnighters, a black music group, performed for two dances and a jam session during the Jazz Weekend, and the reporter wrote the following description of the semi-annual dance:

> Suddenly the "stars of our show, the fabulous Midnighters," emerged from the dressing room and began their song and dance revel which gradually built up to a massive assault on the piano and the nerves of the audience. The Midnighters proved to be as good as their reputation. A certain amount of repetition was necessary, however, because of the expurgation of several suggestive pieces; but songs like "The Twist," "Work With Me Annie," and "Daddy's Little Baby," gave the enraptured boppers many moments of joy.[6]

Again, the tone of the article suggested appreciation for the performance of the "Midnighters," despite the "expurgation of several suggestive pieces." Interestingly, two years later this would be the very reason that black bands were banned from performing at Westminster.[7]

With a growing school underscored by southern traditions, Westminster board members decided to appoint a committee on Westminster's relationship to the public school dilemma in 1958. During a November board meeting, Dr. Vernon Broyles, Chairman of the Westminster Board, suggested that "the Trustees should be formulating an adopted policy of the school in the event the public schools in Atlanta are closed under the Supreme Court ruling." Upon the board's agreement, "Dr. Broyles appointed Dr.

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[6] "Midnighters Entertain at Two Dances and Jam Session during Big Jazz Weekend," *The Mark Sheet*, February 13, 1959, p. 1, WA.

[7] Parents' Council Meeting Minutes, 7 November 1961, Folder: Parents Council Meetings 1961–1970, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

Roland Frye to serve as Chairman of a Committee to study this problem and to formulate a statement of policy for consideration by the Board."[8] Dr. Frye, an Emory professor of English and active member of Help Our Public Education, Inc. (HOPE), had been recently elected to the Westminster Board of Trustees in the spring of 1958.[9]

In December 1958, Frye gave one of two recorded reports to the board. Comprising the committee were Mr. Welborn Cody, the school attorney; Dr. P. D. Miller; Mrs. Ivan Allen; and Mr. James Porter. In his report, Frye stated "that he felt no formal statement of policy was necessary but that the Board is in general agreement that the school should not change in size or character due to pressures resulting from the public school dilemma." Additionally the board agreed to help "organize and advise with other private school groups."[10] The adoption of this committee signaled that Westminster leaders were aware what could occur in Atlanta, such as state laws that threatened to close any public school that desegregated. Thus, the changing legal policies concerning the education of white and black students informed the ways in which the school was positioned. As one solution to the admission problems facing the school, the board decided to raise the testing fee from $8.50 to $10.00.[11]

Frye's second report came just a month later at the January 1959 board meeting, during which "Dr. Frye gave a report of the committee on meeting the present school emergency. Dr. Frye reviewed the various problems which Westminster would face in the event that the public schools should be closed. He urged all members of the Board to give

[8] Minutes, 12 November 1958, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.
[9] Clipping, ca. March 1958, Roland M. Frye Biographical Files, MARBL.
[10] Minutes, 10 December 1958, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.
[11] Ibid.

thought and consideration to these problems."[12] Unfortunately, no details were provided on the various problems identified by Frye's committee, yet an article published on April 3, 1959 offers insight into Frye's position on public schools. In a meeting before the Atlanta Jaycees, Frye "maintained that private schools 'simply cannot do the job of educating all children,'" citing the costs of private schools as one justification. While another speaker before the group advocated resistance to desegregation, Frye stated "that it is 'a poor and perverted expression of love for the South to deny children free education.'"[13]

Admission policies remained on the board's agenda in January of 1959. According to the board minutes, "Dr. Pressly stated that due to the extremely large number of applications for the coming year, the school's enrollment would be closed as of January 27, when testing of applicants for admission begins." Additionally, the board came to another agreement—not to admit "new students to the senior class, except under unusual circumstances."[14] Within a very short period, Westminster had prepared itself for the possibility of APS closing, prior to the decision in *Calhoun v. Latimer.*

Judge Frank A. Hooper, in June of 1959, decided in favor of the black Atlantan plaintiffs; he ruled that the "Atlanta Board of Education had indeed operated a racially segregated school system and such a practice violated the Fourteenth Amendment."[15] Hooper ordered the Atlanta School Board to craft and submit a desegregation plan for implementation in January 1960. Despite the plan's gradual desegregation process, the

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[12] Minutes, 14 January 1959, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[13] "Both Sides Given to School Crisis," *The Atlanta Journal,* April 3, 1959, p. 28, Roland M. Frye Biographical Materials, MARBL.

[14] Minutes, 14 January 1959, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[15] Wei-ling Gong, "Race, Class, and Atlanta Public School Integration, 1954-1991" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1991), 54.

plaintiffs tolerated it "in order to force the Georgia General Assembly to accept responsibility for closing the public schools."[16] In addition to black advocacy for desegregation, white leaders including Ralph McGill, a then Westminster parent, and groups including HOPE, begun by leading white women, advocated for desegregation.[17] Yet the desegregation plan still openly and outwardly defied state law.

As Westminster leaders considered the school's position within the years that segregation was legally challenged in the public education sector, Westminster students raised questions about desegregation and race relations. In the October 1958 edition of the *Westminster Chimes*, the newspaper produced by the Westminster School for Girls, a student wrote an editorial entitled, "Any Disturbance Affects Students Throughout US." The writer initially asked, "Little Rock, Clinton, Norfolk: names in the news, places we may never see. How can their affairs affect us?" The writer continued by stating that parents from these locations had been calling Westminster regarding admission for their daughters.

Though the student did not reveal her source for knowing this information, her article corresponded with Westminster turning away 1,800 applicants for the 1958 school year. Further, she addressed public school closings from a white student's perspective by noting, "Their daughters are filing applications for college, without even knowing whether they will be able to finish their senior year of high school." The writer also retold the story of a former Westminster student attending a school in a different state. Though

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[16] McGrath, "Great Expectations," 157.

[17] HOPE, Inc. was an organization formed by three white women of Atlanta in the fall of 1958. According to Kevin Kruse, "By December 1958 those small meetings had evolved into mass rallies, and eventually, official incorporations as a nonprofit group. Although chapters sprang up across the state, HOPE never had a formal structure of organization, not even a membership list . . . On the whole, however, HOPE members were typically upper-middle-class, college-educated, white mothers, many with children then in public schools" (*White Flight,* 138).

the former student was not attending the "best" school in her new city, the school operated on double shifts. With this, the writer concluded by challenging Westminster students not to take their education for granted in light of the educational disturbances around the country.[18]

A month later, a second editorial regarding public schools was published in *The Mark Sheet.* The author first noted the desegregation suit against APS. To him the result of the case was obvious: "the Atlanta Public School System will be forced to admit Negroes." He also pointed out, however, that because the state legislation called for the closing of public schools if desegregated "that most of Atlanta's students might not be able to enter school next September." The student further urged that a city-vote on desegregation be considered, and he called for individuals to pressure the state legislature. Additionally, the writer highlighted the effects of public school closings in other locations and called for Westminster students to recognize the privileged position that they occupied. He suggested that Westminster students would only be indirectly affected by public school closings: "We can voice our opinions with more force than can those who are actually going to be deprived of the chance to learn. While their pleas may be interpreted as only personal anger, we can speak out for the maintenance of the public school system for the sake for the principle alone. This cannot help but have great influence on the minds of thinking Atlantans."[19]

This editorial touched on a variety of topics including the need for Atlantans to speak out against the state legislation plan that stipulated the closing of public schools if

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[18] "Any Disturbance Affects Students Throughout US," *The Westminster Chimes*, October 1958, p. 2, WA.

[19] "Keep Public Schools Open," *The Mark Sheet*, October 19, 1958, p. 2, WA.

desegregation was ordered. The desegregation of public facilities, begun in the 1950s, and the development of the Northside-black alliance had been fueled by the fear of losing Atlanta's economic position and the agency of black Americans. This anonymous student may have been concerned about the impact of economic changes on his family and the workforce he would soon be entering. Yet, he genuinely suggested that others speak out "on principle alone." He did not elaborate on this principle, yet one possibility could have been upholding the *Brown* decision despite the opposition of the Georgia state legislature. A year later in December of 1959, an editorial in *The Mark Sheet*, "The Problem of Tolerance," provided additional insight into the ways in which Westminster students conceptualized changes in society, for the author attempted to make a distinction between tolerance of ideas and tolerance of men.[20]

As Westminster grew and responded to the public school dilemma, Pressly remained chairman of the executive committee for NCIS, thereby continuing to be a central figure as independent schools leaders nationally considered federal legislation and the effects of desegregation on the growth of independent schools. NCIS' monitor of federal legislation took into account the NDEA. In the June 1959 issue of the *Report*, schools were made aware of NDEA's "loans-to-schools provisions." If schools chose to apply for the loans, the amount could be applied to "acquisition of equipment and materials and for minor remodeling of space in connection with facilities for teaching of modern languages, science and mathematics."[21] Later that year in the November *Report,* the front page featured a "Special Memorandum on Legislation" with briefs detailing

[20] "The Problem of Tolerance," *The Mark Sheet*, December 17, 1959, p. 2, WA.

[21] National Council of Independent Schools, "Legislation—National Defense Education Act," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 3 (June 1959): 6.

parts of NDEA most applicable to independent schools, including Title III, V, and VI. Title III referred to the loans described above. It was noted that at the end of the fiscal year that $1,000,000 in loans (only one-sixth of the appropriation) had been granted to eighty-eight schools, "many of them parochial schools." Title V concerned testing of students in nonpublic schools; these tests were identical to those used in public school systems that had no program of standardized testing. Lastly, Title VI allowed for teachers and counselors, including those of nonpublic schools, to participate in counseling and guidance institutes and language institutes free of charge.

While national attention focused on improving U.S. schools, public school desegregation became a reality in the South. New private schools, referred to historically as segregationist academies, were being established, and NCIS would have to take a position in the coming years as inquiries came its way. As of March 1959, "the NCIS office had four inquiries from various parts of Virginia from groups planning to start new schools."[22] Regarding segregationist academies, the Southern Association of Independent Schools had issued a statement following its December 1958 meeting:

> The Southern Association of Independent Schools expressed its hope that no measure would be taken in any state to terminate or interrupt the operation of our public schools.
>
> The public schools of our southern states are the chief educational agencies of our society. Their uninterrupted continuance at full efficiency is vital to the welfare of our citizenry. Closing the public schools would not be a remedy for the troubles that beset southern communities. Wide--spread or long-term

[22] National Council of Independent Schools, "New Schools in the South," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 52 (March 1959): 2.

> closing of the public schools would be disastrous; consequently, abandonment of public education, for whatever reasons, is unthinkable.
>
> While the Southern Association of Independent Schools always welcomes good new schools, it condemns the attempts of any individuals or groups to make financial profit out of the present emergency by the opening of substandard private schools.

In response, however, NCIS shied away from completely condemning any new private schools:

> Of course it is unsafe to assume (nor was it intended by the Southern Association) that all new schools started in the South are established to avoid integration, or that schools started for this purpose will necessarily be started for profit or be "substandard." Nevertheless, the avoidance of integration, if that is the sole reason for starting a new non-public school, looks like rather an uncertain foundation for stability and growth, and associations of established independent schools will have to be watchful with regard to the qualifications of schools with such a background, when applications for membership are involved.[23]

Although this public statement was issued, what was not indicated was how well the Southern Association publicized this statement or the measures it would take to determine which schools were started for profit or to avoid integration. Nor did this statement include a position on existing schools that had not admitted black students. Ironically, the next *Report*, in June 1959, included an announcement about the development of a "How to Do It" manual for organizing a new school, and the following

[23] Ibid., 2–3.

statement was included: "It should probably be emphasized that the manual will be presented not from the point of view of urging or encouraging groups to start a new independent school but from that of giving assistance to groups which have determined that they wish to do so, and need guidance and information to help them decide whether it is practical, and if so how to proceed."[24] Rather than take a stance against those schools intended to maintain segregation practices, NCIS would provide guidance in support of new private schools across the country.

The Race Question

By May of 1960, 749 out of 7,016 school districts in the seventeen southern and border states that had been strictly segregated were desegregated with limited numbers of black students. By that fall, other southern cities such as New Orleans and Richmond joined this trend.[25] With Judge Hooper's decision in *Calhoun v. Latimer*, Georgia politicians were forced to consider school desegregation.

In an attempt to afford more time in delaying the repeal of Georgia laws, Governor Ernest Vandiver in 1960 established the Sibley Commission led by John Sibley, the same businessman that Pressly had consulted in the spring of 1951 before accepting McCain's offer to lead Westminster.[26] Vandiver charged the commission with developing a state desegregation plan while still maintaining some form of resistance. During March 1960, the same month that blacks—in particular college students from the Atlanta University Center (AUC)—began sit-ins at Atlanta lunch counters, the

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[24] National Council of Independent Schools, "Help for New Schools: A Manual," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 53 (June 1959): 3.

[25] See Liva Baker, *Second Battle of New Orleans;* and Pratt, *The Color of their Skin.*

[26] Roche, xi. As indicated by Roche, Sibley had served as general counsel for Coca-Cola and president of the Atlanta-based Trust Company Bank and was a partner in one of the South's premier law firms, King and Spalding.

commission held hearings in each of Georgia's ten congressional districts. Despite the preference for absolute segregation by 60 percent of the 1,600 witnesses, the majority of the commission members recommended "that the state abandon massive resistance and adopt a more practical position" that still ensured a high level of legal segregation. Conversely, "a sizable minority of the commission disagreed and submitted its own report, calling for the continuation of massive resistance."[27] Following the release of the Sibley report in April 1960, the state remained divided on the issue of desegregation. Moreover, Westminster leaders continued to make decisions regarding the number of students to admit. For example, in the December 1960 board meeting, board members decided the following for the 1961 school year:

> Dr. Pressly explained … tests will be given for new applications for the Kindergarten, Sixth, and Eighth grades only. As there are at present no openings in the other grades, any replacements in these grades which may arise due to future vacancies, will be made from those children who have been previously tested by the school. These children only will be allowed to retest for possible openings in the grades other than the Kindergarten, Sixth, and Eighth.

Having agreed not to grow the school, this policy seemed to have been put in place to limit which people who could apply.

In January of 1961, though not fully explored by such historians as Roche, the catalyst for change in Atlanta and throughout Georgia was the admission of African Americans Charlayne Hunter Gault and Hamilton Holmes to the University of Georgia. On January 6, 1961, when Judge William T. Bootle ordered the University of Georgia to

[27] Roche, 164, 166; O'Brien, 253.

admit Hunter Gault and Holmes, the General Assembly attempted to avoid Bootle's decision. Following a campus riot on January 11, Bootle ordered the readmission of Hunter Gault and Holmes and "enjoined Vandiver from cutting off state funds to the University of Georgia" on January 12.[28] On January 18, Vandiver asked the legislature to repeal laws that would close public schools if desegregated for two reasons. First, the General Assembly was prohibited from denying funds to the University. Secondly, because of their professional and personal interests, Assembly members opted not to close the University. By the end of the month, the legislature passed three bills: "the first to suspend massive resistance laws and guarantee a grants-in-aid and pupil placement plan, the second to allow for local option, and the third to turn control of schools over to their local school boards."[29]

The decision to desegregate the University of Georgia affected both the public and private sector, and the question of tax exemption, which would become pivotal in discussions about race and K–12 private schooling in the latter part of the decade, was already surfacing in higher education. For example, at Emory University in Atlanta, board chairman Henry Bowden formed a committee "to study the policy of Emory University relative to the admission of negroes as students, and to recommend to the executive committee at its February 1961 meeting such changes, if any, it feels would be proper," according to historian Melissa Kean.[30] Similar to the leaders of the city of Atlanta who compromised on issues of race in order to sustain Atlanta's prosperity, Emory leaders followed the same agenda. Deciding to admit black students could be

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[28] O'Brien, 275.
[29] Roche, 183
[30] Melissa Kean, *Desegregating Private Higher Education in the South: Duke, Emory, Rice, Tulane, and Vanderbilt* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 182.

costly because of the "Georgia legislature's grant of a tax exemption to Emory and other private schools, which applied as long as the school was maintained for whites only."[31] However, on the horizon were the possibility of this law changing and the restriction of federal monies for research to segregated schools. The Emory Board chose not to act during the spring of 1961 as it weighed the issue of the inevitability of desegregation and the Georgia tax-exemption law. When the board did not issue a statement, "faculty and students reacted with dismay," and the board promised a decision by November.[32]

As admission policies were changed and contemplated in higher education, the city of Atlanta prepared for the desegregation of public schools, and Westminster leaders continued to mull over the school's position with regard to desegregation. Westminster also began receiving some pressure to desegregate, in part, by the Greater Atlanta Council on Human Relations (GACHR), a branch of the Georgia Council on Human Relations. GACHR's expressed purpose read as follows:

> Its purpose is to carry on in the greater Atlanta area an educational program for the improvement of economic, civic, cultural, and religious conditions in the area; to attain through research and action programs the ideals and practices which will result in the greatest good for all people in the area; to reduce intergroup tensions and their causes; to promote intergroup understanding; to cooperate with the state, regional, and national agencies in the attainment of these desired objectives.

Most of GACHR's efforts were in the public arena, including the desegregation of public services (i.e., transportation and healthcare), facilities (i.e., lunch counters), and the arts (i.e., The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra); higher education desegregation; and black and

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[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, 184.

white churches working together. Additionally, private primary and secondary schools were included in GACHR's agenda. For example, in January of 1961, GACHR formed a committee focused on private school desegregation.[33]

As the year progressed, the Westminster Board adopted positions relevant to federal aid being offered for the establishment of private schools. In April of 1961, the Westminster Board decided against accepting any federal loans being supplied to independent elementary and secondary schools for building purposes. Further, "it was seconded and passed that Dr. Pressly should inform the National Council of Independent Schools that Westminster is not interested in federal loans and that the Westminster Board of Trustees hopes the Council will not pursue passage of such legislation."[34]

The board's position on federal aid was indicative of NCIS' close watch of NDEA monies available to private schools and the role of the federal government in education. In 1960 and 1961 *Reports,* NCIS continued to inform readers on NDEA amendments. NCIS went on record in support of amendments to Title II, V, and VI to ensure that private school teachers would also receive loan forgiveness and be able to attend guidance and counseling institutes and foreign language institutes free of charge like public school teachers.[35] NCIS polled school leaders for their opinions on such amendments; "replies were received from about 100 schools, and these we summarized in a report which was sent to the Legislative Reference Service early in December."[36]

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[33] Minutes, GACHR Executive Committee, 5 January 1961, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

[34] Minutes, 12 April 1961, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[35] National Council of Independent Schools, "National Defense Education Act Amendments," *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 57 (March 1960): 6.

[36] National Council of Independent Schools, "Legislation and Taxation—National Defense Education Act," *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 60 (December 1960): 4.

Further in the April 1961 *Report,* larger concerns were indicated about federal involvement in education and the flurry of activity under the Kennedy administration:

> It is clear that there is strong support for the administration's proposals [federal aid to public schools on all levels], but it is also clear that there are those who are opposed in principle, those who believe that aid to the public school should be limited to construction and should not include aid for teachers' salaries, those who believe that grants to states for public schools aid should be matched to some form of loan program for non-public schools, and those who are concerned about aid going to states and schools which have resisted integration …. About all that can be said now is that the administration's proposals will not be enacted without a struggle, and that every effort will be made by the administration to have the subject of federal aid to public schools considered on its merits, and aid to other schools considered separately.[37]

NCIS leaders agreed that response to the administration's proposals were too diverse among school leaders for NCIS to issue a collective position.

Conversation continued to swell around the growth of private schools both in the South and North. In defense of a school administrators' conference held at Teachers College, Columbia University in the summer of 1959, William W. Brickman, editor of *School and Society*, wrote an editorial indicating that the growth of private schools was attributed to racial desegregation as well as the "improved economic situation of families and some dissatisfaction with the public schools." Brickman specifically noted the rise of private, religious schools in northern states; he also defended parents' right to school

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[37] National Council of Independent Schools, "Legislation and Taxation—Federal Legislation," *National Council of Independent Schools Report,* no. 62 (April 1961): 1.

choice and suggested that public schools might be enhanced because of the growing number of private schools. In Brickman's estimation, "Fair competition can contribute toward the raising of the standards of public education. The democratic way in education is neither monolithic nor monopolistic. Fortunately, the national motto still remains *e pluribus unum.*"[38]

The Westminster Board made its decision regarding federal aid concurrent to the desegregation of APS. OASIS—Organizations Assisting Schools in September—and city leaders, including Mayor Hartsfield, were determined that what happened elsewhere (i.e., the resistance in Little Rock and the University of Georgia) would not occur in Atlanta. According to McGrath,

> OASIS did not criticize the concept of pupil placement, rather the organization stressed the importance of peaceful implementation. Unlike HOPE, which made a conscious decision to exclude blacks, OASIS consisted of fifty-three civic, professional, and religious organizations representing black and white constituencies.[39]

OASIS and school officials met with white parents and students prior to the opening of school, and GACHR held meetings for the black students transferring, during which they met some of their white classmates. GACHR also organized the only meeting among school officials, black students, and their parents. Perhaps indicative of Westminster's complex position in the greater Atlanta community, Westminster students participated in

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[38] National Council of Independent Schools, "The Growth of Private Schools," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 86 (March 1960): 8.

[39] McGrath, 'Great Expectations," 172.

some of these preparation meetings.[40]

On August 30, 1961 all of the preparations culminated as nine black students—out of a total student population of 110,000—were escorted to their respective Atlanta public schools in undercover cars.[41] With the police poised to react to any disturbances, Grady, Murphy, Northside, and Brown High Schools were desegregated without major protests. Attendance was normal at each school with only five arrests made.[42] But the experiences of the black students were anything but positive. Martha Ann Holmes and Rosalyn Walton, students at Murphy, ate lunch by themselves and like the other seven students were subjected to verbal and physical attacks.[43] Moreover, white students' actions were stimulated by their teachers, who made black students sit in corners of the classrooms, and by their principals, who designated places for black students to sit. As aptly noted by Kruse, "Token integration was often just a new form of segregation."[44] Yet, the desegregation of APS did cause Westminster leaders to consider race more directly.

Though GACHR had formed a committee on private school desegregation in January 1961, no available records indicate that the Westminster Board and administration was informed about the committee. Yet, during a September 1961 board meeting, "Dr. Broyles expressed the belief that the Board should have a policy on integration in order that Dr. Pressly will have a stated policy to be used, if that occasion should arise. Such a policy need not to be announced to the public." The Committee on

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[40] Minutes, GACHR Executive Committee, 5 January 1961, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.
[41] Though ten were granted transfers in the Spring of 1961, only nine actually transferred.
[42] Kruse, 151.
[43] Ibid., 156–57.
[44] Ibid, 159–60.

Race was assembled "to study this subject"; the committee consisted of Dr. McCain, who served as Chair, Mr. Hal Smith, and Mrs. Thomas Hines."[45] Ironically, the day before Dr. Broyles made this proposal, GACHR had decided to "inquire of all private schools and county schools" their future plans regarding desegregation.[46]

Again in October, the Westminster Board was "opposed to any sort of federal aid to non-public schools," this time in response to a NCIS survey of schools regarding this issue and others.[47] Yet, the majority of the members voted in support of an "income tax deduction allowable to parents paying tuition to private schools."[48] Measures concerning tax deduction or credit, according to the April 1961 *Report,* had "been introduced in every legislative session for the past several years and several of them have already appeared in this session … the history of the proposals has been that despite considerable and varied backing, they have run up against flat opposition from those responsible for government finance both in the administrative and legislative branches."[49] One can assume that Westminster's support of tax credits and refusal of federal aid paralleled overall board political sentiment toward political and social changes.

The issues of desegregation and questions of prejudice and discrimination were apparent at Westminster. Between 1958 and 1961, the board had adopted two committees dedicated to looking at Westminster's position in relationship to public schools and to desegregation. Yet conversations that transpired in these committee meetings are not revealed in official board minutes nor are board members' varying positions on

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[45] Minutes, 13 September 1961, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.
[46] Minutes, GACHR Board of Directors, 12 September 1961, Eliza Paschall Papers, WA.
[47] National Council of Independent Schools, "Legislation—Survey of School Opinion," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 64 (September 1961): 1.
[48] Minutes, 11 October 1961, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.
[49] National Council of Independent Schools, "Legislation—Federal Legislation," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 62 (April 1961): 2–3.

desegregation. Additionally, board members had decided on more than one occasion not to accept the assistance of the federal government. As the desegregation of APS occurred and Westminster leaders once again considered how to position the school, students continued to write about desegregation and race and even raised questions about the possibility of Westminster's desegregation. On the other hand, the climate of Westminster also continued to be shaped by racialized traditions as well as student interest in the performance of black bands and their subsequent ban by the school administration. [50]

Continued Contemplation

As the Westminster Board weighed decisions about how to respond to school desegregation, Westminster students continued to contemplate the social and political climate of their era. In February of 1960, John Pendergrast, a Westminster student and son of Mrs. Nan Pendergrast, an active member of GACHR, wrote an editorial titled, "Separate but Equal?" John and his six siblings all attended Westminster for the seventh through twelfth grades, after completing elementary public schools, according to Nan Pendergrast. Because of her stance on segregation, Nan stated in an interview that sending her children to Westminster was "tough." She continued, "I thought about it. For one thing, as you can see, we live right next door. This is actually my 100th year of connection to Westminster. … I went to Washington Seminary and my mother went to Washington Seminary, class of 1909. The thing was I did not feel happy about Westminster, but the public schools were no better; it was not a question of making a choice." Additionally, preparation for college was important to Nan and her husband,

[50] The slave auction was mentioned again in the article, "Boys' School Prepares for Child's Home Drive," *The Mark Sheet*, November 18, 1960, p. 1, WA.

Britt Pendergrast. According to Nan Pendergrast, "At the time it seemed to me terribly important to me to send them to the best colleges, and they were not in the South." Having taken advanced placement courses offered at Westminster, some Pendergrast children were able to graduate college in three years, thereby eliminating the cost of one year's tuition. When asked how Pressly felt about desegregation, Nan Pendergrast stated that he often remarked, "'We'd let them in but they couldn't possibly do the work.'"[51]

Nan Pendergrast's activism influenced her children. In "Separate but Equal?" John Pendergrast stated that the integrationist needs to counter the "supremacist" who believes that "there is an unbreachable gap between the races and that each race should be allowed its natural place, the Whites above and the Negroes below." He said that this countering needed to occur with "a bewildering array of statistics providing conclusively that Negroes given the same opportunities have done as well as Whites." Pendergrast questioned the defense of "tradition" as a rationale for continuing separate but equal. In stating that integration needs to be accepted, Pendergrast wrote, "The truth is that more Negroes are born each minute than can be deported in a week. We are going to have to live with the Negroes like it or not. Though the supremacist will still not be convinced, integrating schools and facilities will provide equality under the law for blacks."[52]

John Pendergrast addressed the inferior status placed on black Americans. Furthermore, he acknowledged that "no amount of statistics is going to convince the White supremacist that he is no better than the average Negro," and that change will not come overnight, "but it will take the Negroes' supposed inferiority off the books." Yet underlying this editorial's tone was the notion that regardless of what people may think or

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[51] Nan Pendergrast, interview with author, Atlanta, Georgia, July 29, 2009.
[52] "Separate but Equal?," *The Mark Sheet*, February 12, 1960, p. 2, WA.

want (i.e., deporting Negroes), whites will have to live with blacks. Pendergrast concluded by stating that with integration, blacks will have "a chance to fight for equal opportunities. They will no longer be stifled, and the White supremacist can rest his brain from the exertions of trying to twist logic away from the truth."[53]

While male students wrote very directly about issues of race and desegregation, three articles in the *Westminster Chimes* in the October 1960 and February 1961 editions highlighted female students' opinions on national issues; however, the authors did not discuss race explicitly. The articles covered students' thoughts on the 1960 presidential election between Kennedy and Nixon, a call for students to think nationally, and advocacy for more student opportunities to voice their opinions on local, national, and international situations.[54] With the desegregation of APS, however, additional articles appeared in *The Mark Sheet* that addressed more directly the Westminster environment.

In October of 1961, the editor of *The Mark Sheet* wrote a short piece on the desegregation of APS in which he discussed the South's ability to do what is "right." With the election of Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., which "demonstrated Atlanta is ruled by law and wisdom," and with the seemingly peaceful desegregation of APS, the author wrote, "… No matter what our personal feelings are we must realize that disobedience to the law can only bring anarchy and complete disorder." After acknowledging his gratefulness that Atlanta was not another Little Rock, the editor concluded with the following: "Let us hope that our administration will never deny an applicant admission to Westminster

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[53] Ibid.

[54] "Informed Students to Decide Between Nixon and Kennedy," *The Westminster Chimes,* October 1960, p. 1; "Editor's Desk: Students Must Think on National Scenes," *The Westminster Chimes,* October 1960, p. 2; and "Letter to the Editor: Awareness of Events Advocated by Students," *The Westminster Chimes,* February 1961, p. 2, WA.

because of race, creed, or color."[55] This quote sparked the first discussion in the school newspapers regarding Westminster's desegregation. Though determining students' knowledge of the formation of the Board Committee on Race is difficult, this article and others appeared concomitant with actions concerning desegregation at Westminster.

As considerations of desegregation were evident in the school newspaper, students also wrote about the banning of black bands. Black bands had continued to perform at Westminster through the 1960-1961 school year. In the April 1960 edition of *The Mark Sheet*, "The Drifters," an all-black group performing at Westminster's Jazz Weekend, were pictured.[56] Additionally on the front page of the February 1961 edition appeared the article, "Noted R&B Expert Comments on Bo Diddley."[57] With the previous newspaper coverage of performances from 1958 to 1960 of Mitchell and Ruff, the Midnighters, the Drifters, and Bo Diddley, one can logically conclude that students appreciated their performances. These examples point to the importance of music to the Westminster School for Boys as well as to their conceptions of race.

In November of 1961, Pressly announced at the Parents' Council meeting the school's decision to ban black bands from performing at school dances.[58] This ban may be indicative of a generational shift occurring in the South during the mid-twentieth century. As Pete Daniel has noted, "Many adults saw rock 'n' roll's fast beat, obscure lyrics, frantic performances, unorthodox wardrobe, and hectic dancing as lewd, lowdown,

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[55] "Editorial," *The Mark Sheet*, October 13, 1961, p. 1, WA.
[56] *The Mark Sheet*, April 22, 1960, p. 3, WA.
[57] "Noted R&B Expert Comments on Bo Diddley," *The Mark Sheet*, February 17, 1961, p. 1, WA.
[58] Parents' Council Meeting Minutes, 7 November 1961, Folder: Parents Council Meetings 1961–1970, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

transgressive."[59] Moreover, some whites "contemptuously referred to rhythm and blues and rock 'n' roll as 'nigger music.'" Additionally, the ways in which white youth, in particular white females, were drawn to such music raised long-standing fears. As indicated by Daniel's examples, white female college students flocked to dance parties where black bands performed. The "fear of interracial dating and sexual relations dominated many white conversations at the time, symbolic integration through music aroused strong sentiments."[60] The combination of political changes, music, and other societal entities created a transformative power that presumably Westminster administrators and parents dreaded.

Student responses to the school's banning of black bands, though only from male students, provided a forum for discussion about prejudice and discrimination. In "Prejudice?," an October 1961 editorial, Ralph McGill, Jr., son of *Atlanta Constitution* editor Ralph McGill, wrote, "As everyone knows, Westminster is a Christian school, founded on Christian ideas. Prejudice is not one of them. Nevertheless, there appears to be evidence of prejudice in a ruling handed down by the school." While the young McGill cited that the reason for the ban on Negro bands resulted from "a number of unfortunate incidents," he declared that banning all Negro bands "for the misconduct of a few" was wrong. Further, he charged that the ban was related to race: "The character of a performer determines his actions, not the color of his skin. Musicians should be chosen solely for quality."[61]

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[59] Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 148.

[60] Ibid., 167.

[61] "Prejudice?," *The Mark Sheet,* October 13, 1961, p. 2, WA.

In direct response to McGill's editorial, a second editorial with the same title was printed in the November 1961 edition. The author argued that the decision was not based on prejudice but rather on "a standard of comparison." Further, "If many of the Negro bands have been found to be lacking in dignity, and if the nature of their music has been judged inferior to that of most white bands, then they should not be invited back. The ruling is one of taste, not of prejudice." In making this argument, this student challenged McGill to look at the setting. In this student's opinion "it is of questionable tolerance for one to sit in the confines of a school such as Westminster and expound the principles of racial equality, since ours is strictly a selective school."[62]

In another editorial printed in the same edition, a student discussed the meaning of discrimination. He defined discrimination as "the act of making a distinction or observing a difference." He argued that individuals discriminate everyday when choosing which clothes to wear and Westminster administrators discriminate against students based on IQ scores. The author agreed that the administration did discriminate in banning bands, but the decision was "not based on blind prejudice but analyzed fact." Such facts cited included the conditions in which black bands arrived at dances and the need for the school administrators to correct the behavior and song selection of black performers. Yet, as the writer contended, "with white bands this has never been necessary."[63] Finally, "Criticism," a third editorial published in the November edition, primarily challenged students to consider the type of criticism that they level upon the faculty and administration; yet, editorial was sparked by the "Negro band" and "twist" controversies.

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[62] "Prejudice?," *The Mark Sheet,* November 22, 1961, p. 2, WA.
[63] "Discrimination," *The Mark Sheet,* November 22, 1961, p. 2, WA.

Based on these editorials, the banning of Negro bands ignited conversations at Westminster about the definitions of prejudice and discrimination.[64] At the heart of these issues was race, thus signaling a school climate in which students, at least in the Boys' division, examined decisions important to the student body and with some sophistication. The editorials written about the ban on black bands illuminate the maneuvering related to language that some of the students employed to defend the school's decision—what appeared to be a decision driven by expectations undergirded by race. The students had recognized the changing policies at the school level, and additional articles published during these years illustrate an awareness of policies on the local and regional levels. Moreover, beyond the policy level, these articles are evidence of students reflecting on their own concepts of discrimination and racism, and offering these concepts as rationales for decisions.

As Westminster's leadership navigated the years 1958 to 1961 through its positioning of the school in relationship to societal struggles over race, the school newspapers shed light on a school environment that continued to promote traditions such as the slave auction fundraiser while lauding black performers. This analysis of Westminster's school newspapers raises questions about the thoughts of white students, in particular, male students coming of age during a vastly changing political and social era. The ways in which these students considered race helped to create a particular school environment that would be sustained in the years prior to black student enrollment.

Moreover, because of Pressly's national prominence, one can logically conclude that he was conscious of the national climate regarding desegregation, both in general and

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[64] "Freshman Charges Student Council with Partiality," *The Mark Sheet*, December 19, 1961, p. 2, WA.

within independent schools. In 1961, Pressly, while serving as chair of the Commission on Secondary Schools for SACS, wrote a chapter titled, "How to Get Your School Under Way," for *A Handbook for Independent School Operation*; this is the school guide that had been profiled in the June 1959 *Report.* As indicated in the book's preface, "Whereas about one in eight pupils enrolled in non-public schools in 1950, the proportion jumped to more than one in six in 1960. To meet this enrollment gain, some non-public schools added new classrooms. But most of the demand has been (and will be) met by new schools."[65] As southern whites evaded public school desegregation, southern private schools capitalized on white flight from public schools.

[65] William Johnson, ed. *A Handbook for Independent School Operation* (Princeton: D. Van. Nostrand Co., 1961), iii.

Chapter 4:

Attempts to Push the Doors Open, 1962–1963

In 1962, the organizational structure of the independent schools nationally changed when NCIS and the Independent Schools Education Board (formerly SEB) merged to form the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). The directors of the newly formed NAIS sought to continue the work of both organizations with ISEB's focus on academics and curriculum and NCIS' focus on administration. The expressed purposes of NAIS that year were "to assist, strengthen, and promote the interests of independent schools of the United States and similar schools elsewhere and to aid them to serve effectively the free society from which they derive their independence."[1] Pressly continued serving in a national capacity as a founding NAIS board member, and per by-law requirement, he was also a member of the School Administration Committee.

In tandem with NAIS' development, black parents officially began to inquire into Westminster's admission policy in 1962. By 1963, at least one set of black parents sought admission for their daughter, and the GACHR asked more questions of Westminster and other area Atlanta independent schools. Further, similar to the first ten years of the school's existence, racialized traditions continued to be part of the school culture, but increasingly student writers also addressed political and social changes that indicated changing racial attitudes. Because of Pressly's national position, the ways in which Westminster leaders positioned the school was not without knowledge of developing

[1] National Council of Independent Schools, "Introduction: NCIS-ISEB," *National Council of Independent Schools Report*, no. 67 (April 1962): 1.

national policies and practices concerning the recruitment of black students to independent schools.

Black Atlantans Seek Admission at Westminster and Other Private Schools

In Atlanta, as black parents sought admission to Westminster and other private schools, they did so in a climate of gradual public school desegregation and heightened racial tensions. APS were desegregated in the fall of 1961; yet, the number of black students attending schools with whites was limited. The figures tell the story, as related by historian Alton Hornsby:

> As the desegregation began there were slightly more than 100,000 children attending the Atlanta Public Schools, fifty-six percent of whom were white and forty percent black. Nine black students and 5,034 white ones were enrolled in the four desegregated high schools. During the next school year, 1962-1963, there were six additional desegregated high schools; the number of black students in all of the schools had risen to only forty-four, while 10,945 whites attended multiracial classes.[2]

NAACP lawyers returned to federal court arguing that APS remained segregated and called for a more accelerated desegregation plan. The motions were denied by Judge Hooper and at the Fifth Circuit level, and gradual desegregation was upheld. Yet, the court decision stipulated that test scores and personality interviews were not to be used to discriminate against black students in placing them in white schools.[3]

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[2] Alton Hornsby, Jr., "Black Public Education in Atlanta, Georgia, 1954-1973: From Segregation to Segregation," *The Journal of Negro History* 76, no. 1 (1991): 30.

[3] Ibid.

In higher education in Atlanta, the issue of tax exemption continued to be critical for decision-making about admission policies. Following the desegregation of Atlanta's public schools, Emory University's board of trustees announced an open admission policy in the fall of 1961, but it would only be enacted when tax-exemption status was not threatened. The following spring, according to historian Melissa Kean, "after receiving the application at the Dental School from a qualified black applicant, Emory filed suit on March 12, 1962, carefully arguing that the tax exemption was valid but the racial restriction within it was not." Though the district court did not decide in favor of Emory, the Georgia Supreme Court did in October 1962. Later that fall, a part-time black graduate student enrolled at Emory, despite its leaders' apprehension at being forced to do so. As documented by Kean,

> Bowden wrote that he would be happier if Emory could remain segregated, and that he did not want to change the custom because of "pressure from either the government or private donors who threaten to cut us off if we do not integrate"….Whether we like it or not … the Federal Government is deeply embedded in private as well as public education ….We are of the opinion that in the not too distant future we will find Congress acting to cut off Federal funds from institutions which by charter or rules prohibit negroes from attending ….[4]

The implications for such involvement by the federal government threatened the research enterprise of Emory and, in turn, its ability to grow as a major research institution. Additionally, Bowden received inquiries from foundations and accrediting agencies regarding the university's position on desegregation. Though not documented in

[4] Kean, 185–86.

Westminster's archives, such a move by Emory provides additional context for the consideration of private institutions during this era and the question of tax-exemption status.

Outside of school desegregation, the well-known events that unfolded in Atlanta and in the South in 1962 and 1963 were integral to the Civil Rights Movement. In the summer of 1962 when the NAACP held its annual convention in Atlanta, despite school and lunch counter desegregation, hotels remained segregated. The NAACP tried several tactics to change these policies, including picketing and filing a law suit, *Reed v. Sarno.* The ruling in the case was "that policies of a private business could not be construed as 'state action.' If a businessman wanted to discriminate in his choice of customers, he had that right."[5] That spring the NAACP launched a campaign for a municipal public accommodations law, but even moderate businessmen would not budge. For example, "John Sibley, who had guided Georgia through its school desegregation crisis, shuddered at the thought of businessmen compelled to serve black customers against their will."[6]

Shortly thereafter, however, Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., whose wife continued to serve on the Westminster Board, would testify on behalf of what would become the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Already the nation had been witness to the riots that occurred following the entrance of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi in October 1962. In May 1963, Atlantans, along with the entire nation, watched violence unfold during civil rights demonstrations in Birmingham, Alabama. A large number of demonstrators were arrested, including Martin Luther King, Jr., but marchers continued

[5] Kruse, 209.
[6] Ibid., 210.

to advocate for civil rights. In turn, Birmingham police violently used dogs and high-pressure water hoses against the demonstrators.[7]

Because of these events, President John Kennedy knew that the federal government would have to intervene; he had been very reluctant to do so for fear of distancing southern Democrats. On June 11, 1963, President Kennedy made his plea to the nation for civil rights legislation, including first and foremost legislation for equal accommodations in all public facilities. That same day the first black students had registered at the University of Alabama. Yet that night, violence struck again when NAACP field secretary Medgar Evers was murdered in the driveway of his home in Jackson, Mississippi shortly after midnight.

Atlanta's segregationists refused to support civil rights legislation. President Kennedy, however, needed southern support, and he called upon Mayor Allen to testify in Washington. Allen feared that supporting civil rights legislation would hamper his political career, but a phone call from President Kennedy and the support of white and black business and civic leaders convinced Allen to testify. During his testimony, Allen "warned that, without any clear direction on desegregation, cities like Atlanta, 'might slip backward' and resegregate.'"[8] Indeed Atlanta slipped backward, with restaurants that had temporarily desegregated once again segregating. In response, in October of 1963, the Atlanta Summit Leadership Conference formed and was comprised of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights and local chapters of the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

[7] John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000), 533.

[8] Kruse, 212.

(SNCC). This coalition of groups announced its plan for Atlanta desegregation under the title "Action for Democracy." In response, Lestor Maddox and a group of fellow segregationists formed the People's Association for Selective Shopping.[9]

Though not on the forefront of the public accommodations agenda, exclusive admission policies were also tested by civil rights activists. In March of 1962, the following was reported in GACHR's "School News": "In a response to a telephone inquiry, a spokesman in the admissions office at the Westminster Schools said that applications from negro students will be processed like any other applications, which in many cases of course means getting a place on a waiting list."[10] GACHR's monitoring of Westminster's policies continued that May. Eliza Paschall, executive director of GACHR, wrote to Pressly regarding black citizens being forced to sit in the Westminster balcony during the baccalaureate service at the end of the school year. The letter read as follows:

> We realize that the policies of the Westminster Schools are the business of the school but they are a matter of interest and of some concern to the community at large. Some of our members were concerned over reports that at the baccalaureate service on Sunday, May 27, Negroes attending were required to sit in the balcony. We look to Westminster for leadership in many things, including a rational approach to human relations. We hope that the reports are not correct, and would appreciate you so informing us.[11]

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[9] Ibid., 214.
[10] GACHR Newsletter, "School News," March 1962, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.
[11] Eliza Paschall to William Pressly, May 30, 1962, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

Though Pressly did not appear to have addressed this inquiry in writing, discrimination charges by Paschall seem plausible considering Pressly's announcement during an April 1962 Parents' Council meeting. During this meeting Pressly "announced that an unfounded rumor had been circulated to the effect that the Trustees had agreed to accept Negro applications. It was asked that the Council help dispel this erroneous notion, where it was found to exist."[12]

Pressly's request to end rumors regarding the admission of black students signaled an avoidance of desegregation, despite black Atlantans having tested Westminster's policies that year. In his 1962 Annual Report to the Board, Pressly wrote the following: "During the year, at least four controversial issues have arisen in independent school education." The fourth issue listed by Pressly was the question of desegregation:

> At your direction, the school has tested every candidate who has applied for admission. During the last school year, four negroes were tested. The first two were high school girls. Neither had an I.Q. over 110 and not one of their percentile scores was over the tenth percentile. The students were undeniably ineligible for admission to Westminster. The last negro who applied was a boy. When he arrived for the test, his mother had with him his older brother, who had not applied. She asked that we also test him. We told her that we would gladly do so, but with the clear understanding that the grade for which he was applying was full, with a long waiting list, and we could not test him with the idea of admitting him. This was agreeable with the mother and we tested both boys. The boy who

[12] Minutes of Parents' Council Meeting, 22 April 1962, Folder: Parents Council Meetings, 1961–1970, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

had applied tested very poorly. The older brother, who was tested for diagnostic purposes, tested well.[13]

Evaluations of admissions' tests were not included in Pressly's report. Yet, ironically the one black student who successfully tested could not have attended Westminster because the grade to which he applied was full. Previous research indicated that black Atlantans had pushed for admission as early as 1963, but this report shows that black individuals sought admission even earlier; the identity of these individuals remains unknown as well as whether or not they were the first black students to test for admission.

The pressure to desegregate continued to be directed towards Westminster in 1963 by whites and blacks. According to Michael Gannon's 2004 master's thesis about the founding and integration of private schools in Atlanta, Ralph McGill, whose son graduated in 1962, recommended Lindsey Poteat Valcourt, "nephew and godson of Dr. Frank Cunningham, president of Morris Brown College" and "the son of a World Health Organization physician." He also came recommended by "close family friend, Reverend Warren Scott, chaplain at Spelman College."[14] GAHCR also inquired about Westminster's policy on desegregation and encouraged the desegregation of other local private schools.[15] Supported by Paschall to seek admission to Atlanta's private schools, a coalition of black parents formed under the leadership of Dr. Staughton Lynd, a professor at Spelman College. According to Gannon, "Lynd approached Juanita Abernathy, Coretta Scott King, and Jean Young …. All were wives of prominent SCLC leaders … Lynd also

[13] President's Report to the Board, November 1962, Folder: 1962, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[14] Gannon, 106–07.

[15] "Prospectus in Human Relations in Greater Atlanta," 1963, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

recruited Edith Ross, the wife of a Spelman colleague."[16] Out of the group, the Ross family would challenge Westminster.

Pressly dissuaded Edith Ross and her husband, a professor of anthropology at Atlanta University, from having their daughter vie for eighth grade admission to Westminster, as recounted in a letter from Paschall. At the time, their daughter was attending the Oglethorpe School, and her father did not want to send her to a "Negro high school" nor "send her away from home." One day prior to the scheduled admission test on February 9, the Rosses met with Pressly, and he told them the following: "The policy of the school up until either June, 1962 or Dec. 1962 was to accept <u>for testing</u> any student, but there had never been any clear policy by the trustees as to what they would do about a qualified Negro student who applied for Westminster." Yet, Pressly did not appear optimistic about the board's decision if the Ross child qualified academically for admission to Westminster. Pressly then suggested that the Rosses consider schools outside of Georgia such as Miss Porter's and Deerfield Academy. Additionally, Pressly offered to "help them in trying to get her in one of these places." As noted in the letter, the Rosses had learned that Pressly had offered the same help to other black families seeking admission at Westminster. Realizing the end result, the Rosses opted for their daughter not to sit for the admission test. Paschall wrote, "He [Dr. Ross] said he and his wife are not interested in doing anything to lessen Westminster's 'position'—he thinks it is good for the community to have such a school—but he is perfectly willing for his experience to be used in any way that might be helpful." Paschall pondered what

[16] Gannon, 73.

GACHR should do about the situation—"a letter to Broyles asking for the policy? A tip to the papers? Nothing???"[17]

According to Gannon's research, the media gave very limited coverage to this Westminster situation, as noted in the following quote:

> McGill's reference to Westminster's "shameful" behavior in the October 1963 *Diocese* interview is the only public coverage of integration at Westminster. Perhaps this was due to the power of the Westminster Board of Trustees in Atlanta, the lack of a media worthy name like King associated with the story, or to the fact that a private school defending its version of private rights was not deemed newsworthy.[18]

All three reasons postulated by Gannon are valid, yet Pressly's 1962 Report to the Board also indicated another reason—Westminster had already maneuvered to evade applications by black students.

Historian Kevin Kruse contended that although segregationist academies did play a major role in white resistance, "other private schools, established by major religious denominations, long before rulings against segregated education, did, in truth, provide shelter for segregation."[19] Yet by the 1960s, these schools were forced to contend with the shelter they provided. By 1962, local Roman Catholic schools—eighteen elementary and high schools—were desegregated. Accordingly, private schools on the Northside of Atlanta, three of which had religious affiliations, were challenged.

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[17] Eliza Paschall to Kay Hocking, Nancy Perkins, and Anne Nelson, February 20, 1963, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

[18] Gannon, 108.

[19] Kruse, 172.

Two of the schools—the Atlanta Speech School and Pace Academy (considered historically as a "white flight school"), also both located on the Northside of Atlanta, were integrated without much controversy in 1963 and 1966, respectively. The desegregation of Trinity and Lovett, however, proved to be more controversial in 1963. When Ralph David and Juanita Abernathy made an application for their daughter to Trinity, the chairman of the board asked for the application to be withdrawn. The chairman stated that if black children were tested and admitted, Trinity would lose much parental and congregational support and face an economic crisis. The Abernathys continued the application process, but their young daughter was tested for admission only. According to Gannon, Juanita Abernathy "knew immediately her child could not pass the test that was being administered to her."[20] Following the test, the Abernathys contacted Reverend Allison Williams, minister of Trinity Church and a member of GACHR. Through Williams' investigation of the matter and because of the support he received by the Trinity church and school communities, desegregation became a possibility.

Later, during the spring of 1963, under the urging of the Abernathys, Jean and Andrew Young had their children tested for admission at Trinity, and they were readily accepted for the fall of 1963. Subsequently 61 out of 247 white students were withdrawn from Trinity, and 250 out of 2,000 members left Trinity Church. However, Trinity also benefited from desegregation. With the aid of Ralph McGill, Trinity received a $15,000 grant to help improve the academics of newly admitted students.[21] Within two years, Jean

[20] Gannon, 80. Also because of age, Martin Luther King, III was not tested for admission to Trinity; children had to be six years old to enroll at Trinity. See Gannon, 78.

[21] Ibid., 81–82.

Young was appointed to Trinity's Board. Trinity had exemplified the shift taking place among moderate whites, yet differed from the reaction at Lovett to the possibility of desegregation. During the 1950s, the Lovett School grew exponentially as a result of public school desegregation. As noted by Kruse, "Headmaster Vernon Kellet, an elderly Englishman, readily admitted the impact of public school integration on the academy's growth. 'In all candor, the segregation-desegregation struggle gives impetus to the development of private schools,' Kellett confided to a reporter." Though the Lovett School had no formal policy on segregation, the Episcopal Diocese and Bishop Randolph Claiborne had taken a stand against all forms of discrimination.[22]

In the spring of 1963, however, the Episcopal Church was forced to confront Lovett's position on race. With the encouragement of the Reverend John Morris, an Episcopal priest whose children attended Lovett, and with the belief that Lovett was open to all children, Martin Luther King, Jr. and Coretta Scott King made application for Martin, III in January of 1963.[23] Upon receipt of King's application, Cecil Alexander was called to a meeting by Billy Sterne, successor to John Sibley at Trust Company of Georgia and chairman of the Lovett admissions committee. Serving as a Lovett Board member, Alexander was an Atlanta architect who was a committee member on the city's only interracial committee and sat on the Atlanta Citizens Advisory Committee on Urban Renewal. During this meeting and in subsequent meetings, the Lovett Board, upon advice of the admissions committee, decided not to accept Martin Luther King, III.

After having received notification from headmaster, Reverend James McDowell, about the Lovett Board's decision, the Kings issued a statement: "Our sole purpose in

[22] Kruse, 174.
[23] Ibid, 175.

making application to the Lovett School for our son, Martin III, was a sincere attempt to secure for him the best possible secondary education. This was not meant to be any sort of a test case, though we do desire for our son the experience of integrated schooling."[24] Because of the decision not to admit King, Alexander, a prominent white businessman with unique connections to the black community, resigned from the Lovett Board. Furthermore, the board severed the school's relationship with the Episcopal Church and became the Lovett School.

Though not addressed in any of Westminster's board minutes, the Lovett School situation could have impacted Westminster's policies as well as Pressly and the board's decisions regarding desegregation. In the October 1963 board meeting, the following was recorded: "Dr. Broyles also announced that the time for testing for admissions is approaching. He stated that a special meeting of the board might be necessary to discuss the school's policy on testing."[25] Additionally in December, Paschall wrote Pressly again about Westminster's policies:

> I noticed in the Sunday paper an announcement that Westminster is now accepting applications for admission to certain grades. This brings up my perennial question about applications from Negroes. Do you accept them and if so, do you consider them on the same basis as applications from white students?[26]

Between 1962 and 1963, Westminster's considerations were informed by Atlanta's racial climate. While trying to be different from other southern cities, Atlanta could not escape the agency of black Americans vying for equality and recognition. As

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[24] *Atlanta Journal*, 16 March 1963, p. 3, quoted in Gannon, 95.
[25] Minutes, 9 October 1963, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.
[26] Eliza Paschall to William Pressly, December 9, 1963, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

written by Kruse, Pressly contended in the 1960s that "the school had never capitalized on racial controversies by taking in 'refugees' from the public schools."[27] Yet, enrollment had clearly increased during an era in which white flight increased.

Change and Challenge: Westminster's Developing Racial Climate

Perhaps more so than Westminster's "official" record, the school's newspapers reveal Westminster's position during these years of change as students wrote about the political and social climate, with particular attention to race. In October 1962, in a short editorial, "Mississippi in Perspective," the author referred to Governor Ross Barnett's resistance to the entrance of James Meredith to the University of Mississippi. Because of this "stir," the author contended that race, "the most important issue in the South today," had been spotlighted again. Rather than addressing "legal interpretation," the author, using the lens "of the responsibility of the individual to act and to think 'in favor with God,'" asked the following: "How, for example, would the student at Westminster regard a Negro as a classmate? It is unlikely that we would chant *en masse* "nigger, go home," as the students at the University of Mississippi did. But would not there be some inward resentment." Furthermore, he stated that the issue must be addressed with considerations of Christian principle. He concluded by asserting that each student was "bound as a moral being to eliminate prejudice and that he is further bound as a Christian to replace it with goodwill."[28]

This is the first article to draw upon Christianity, one of Westminster's pillars. Westminster, while not officially affiliated with a particular church or denomination, was marketed as a Christian school and influenced by the Presbyterian Church. Board

[27] Kruse, 173.
[28] "Mississippi in Perspective," *The Mark Sheet*, October 19, 1962, p. 2, WA.

members were required to be members of an evangelical church, with two-thirds needing to be "members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States." The school charter also stipulated "for every seven members of the Board," that at least one minister of the Presbyterian Church serve on the board.[29] Thus, one must question the ways in which Christianity influenced Westminster's culture and position regarding desegregation.

In December 1962, the same year that black students tested for admission at Westminster, a male student wrote an editorial entitled, "Integration Accepted?" The writer asked poignantly how a black student would be accepted at Westminster, by arguing that a black student, who "would obviously be an intelligent, mature student of outstanding character," "could become a valuable member of [the] student body" only if "we gave him the opportunity to demonstrate his abilities by allowing him to participate in student activities." The student then raised the following questions: "Could we overcome prejudice and vote for him in the Key Club? Or could we nominate or even elect him for a class office if he is suited?" In this author's opinion, little has changed since the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation. In conclusion, he argued, "We cannot minimize the difficulty of overcoming a heritage as strong as ours. If we at Westminster are faced with an integration situation, we will face that difficulty. Only an open mind and rational actions can guide us."[30]

The author raised important and necessary questions; yet, he did not discuss his motivation or that of other Westminster students to write about these issues. Are the

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[29] "Copy of Petition for Amendment to Corporate Charter," ca. 1951, Folder: Minutes July 1951–July 1952, Board of Trustees Minutes, WA; it was also stipulated that "Six (6) of said Trustees shall be elected by the Board subject to approval as follows: Two (2) by the Session of the North Avenue Presbyterian Church; Two (2) by the Presbytery of Atlanta; and Two (2) by the Synod of Georgia."

[30] "Integration Accepted?" *The Mark Sheet*, December 20, 1962, p. 2, WA.

students welcoming the opportunity to integrate? Or do they see integration as something that would eventually occur, and thus they were trying to learn to accept it, despite possibly not desiring it? In the final edition of *The Mark Sheet* in June of 1963, the editor concluded with the following:

> The problem of race will become increasingly significant in the years ahead. The administration is moving toward the inevitable change to integration at Westminster. The students should ready themselves, also**.** We should be careful not to regard the speck of "forwardness" in the Negro's eye only to disregard the beam of prejudice in our own. In the spirit of understanding we can best increase in "favor with God and man."[31]

Based on this concluding paragraph, students appeared to recognize that desegregation was a real possibility at Westminster. Though not documented in their newspapers, one would presume, because of the very public coverage, that at least some students were aware of the Lovett controversy. Perhaps others were also aware that Trinity had accepted the Young children for the 1963-1964 school year.

In considering the motivation of Westminster students for writing about race and desegregation in late 1963, two possibilities emerge. One possibility is the students' recognition of the continued violence that erupted throughout the South as blacks fought for their rights. In the November 1963 edition of the new *The Westminster Bi-Line*, a joint paper between the Boys' and Girls' schools, a student urged that others adopt a Christian attitude in responding to the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church of

[31] "From the Editor," *The Mark Sheet*, June 1, 1963, p. 2, WA.

Birmingham, Alabama.[32] The student wrote, "We did not prevent the bombing of this church, but we should and could have. We can at least help to rebuild it through funds and words of love. In this way we might also endeavor to realize these people's belief to man's kindness and his desire for brotherhood."[33] Secondly, in addition to the Civil Rights Movement, the assassination of President Kennedy may have motivated Westminster students to raise questions. In the December 1963 edition of the *Bi-Line*, a student challenged his fellow students to have "the courage and convictions to defend the right and denounce the wrong." Furthermore, he wrote, "we should all feel the necessity of uniting our efforts to crush the forces of evil and injustice in our country. We can do this by improving educational opportunities and living conditions for those less fortunate than we."[34]

Advancing a New National Agenda

As the nation changed and resistance to such change manifested through white flight and the increased establishment of segregationist academies, NAIS positioned itself as open to change. For example, on June 19, 1963, independent school leaders, including NAIS President Cary Potter, attended a meeting of over 200 educational representatives at the White House. According to the October 1963 *Report*, the President "called on [the educators] for suggestions and advice as well as for their cooperation in furthering equality of opportunity in education for Negroes and other minority groups, emphasizing particularly the need for local activity of a variety of sorts, and the role which he hoped

[32] In the fall of 1963, *Westminster Chimes* and *The Mark Sheet* merged to become *The Westminster Bi-Line.*

[33] "Christian Attitude is Strongly Urged," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* November 1963, p. 4, WA.

[34] "The Drag Line," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* December 20, 1963, p. 2, WA.

educational leaders would take in their respective communities."[35] One of the ways in which NAIS heeded this call was through its 1963 publication, *Negro Students in Independent Schools* by David Mallery, a publication that elucidated many themes that would be relevant as independent schools such as Westminster were pushed to consider desegregation.

Intended for heads of independent schools and board members, *Negro Students in Independent Schools* was to serve as a handbook for considering the educational experiences of black students. In the first half of the publication, Mallery drew on anecdotes and lessons learned from independent school leaders whose schools were desegregated. For example, John D. Verdery, headmaster of the Wooster School in Danbury, Connecticut made two notable points: 1) "It took us some years to face the simple fact that Negro parents, like other parents, are not eager to place their children in an environment in which they have reason to believe they are not really wanted," and 2) "From a practical standpoint the institution that wants Negroes must at first *ask them to come*."[36] Verdery's points frame the ways in which independent schools were pushed to consider the experiences of black students in their schools.

Mallery addressed a variety of other topics pertaining to black students. Such topics included recruitment strategies, the involvement of NSSFNS, communication with black families about independent schools, black families most desired by independent schools, the difficulty in finding black families because of housing patterns, and black students' qualifications. For example in Chapter III, "We Will Accept Qualified

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[35] National Association of Independent Schools, "Civil Rights," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 6 (October 1963): 7–8.

[36] David Mallery, *Negro Students in Independent Schools* (Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, 1963), 7.

Applicants," Mallery discussed children without particular educational opportunities and families without knowledge of the value of a good education. Though he framed his argument from a deficit point of view, Mallery challenged independent schools to consider how they judged black students, especially for admission, in light of societal inequities. Further, he believed that the presence of black students would cause white students to confront their own stereotypes about black individuals.[37] Mallery also noted changes that occur in a school beginning to desegregate such as the preparation of the headmaster, faculty, parents, staff, and students; the school's role in educating and informing concerned parents; curriculum concerns; and examples of independent schools with black students prior to this publication.

Mallery shared excerpts from a meeting among school heads in 1963 as they reflected on one school's actions after the 1954 *Brown* decision, including the role of religion. Mallery wrote, "The problem is that that school we're talking about has a religious ideal—a commitment that is very clear and which rules out segregation of races and creeds. Yet this particular ideal is in conflict with other ideals of this sect—and also stands up against the threat of the school's going under financially if they desegregated."[38] In the meeting, the school leaders questioned how a school could move forward with desegregation if the issue had not been resolved from a religious perspective and felt that the head of this particular school would need the support of his church. Additionally, the issue of financial support was on the table; leaders felt that if an institution had financial support then it should move forward with desegregation.

[37] Ibid., 15 and 17.
[38] Ibid., 28.

Further, the school leaders questioned what constituted desegregation. According to Mallery, the head of one school asked, "Is it starting one Negro child in the first grade and working him up?" One response was "You have to begin somewhere. You're not going to get a whole lot of applications at the beginning—we know that. I think it's important just to start, and not to worry whether it's token or not. Then when you're started, you can think about a program of going out and getting qualified Negro students in some kind of organized way."[39] Additionally, school leaders knew that their students were watching their actions and that they were all a part of a sociological revolution.

Mallery also addressed the need for independent schools to be explicit in what they offered applicants, including black applicants. As he stated, black parents who sent their children to independent schools "have faced the fact that there will be various problems and adjustments for their children and for themselves."[40] Additionally, social relationships were discussed. According to Mallery, "The question of a child's social relationships is certainly at the heart of much hesitancy and wariness in the process of desegregating an independent school."[41] One headmaster stated that his school did very little to prepare the community for the presence of black students. On the other hand, this headmaster stated, "With Negro candidates themselves, we discuss some of the pressures that we feel they are liable to face, simply because they will consider themselves to be representatives of their race, as well as of themselves and their family."[42]

Mallery also included the perspective of psychiatrist Dr. Robert Coles. Coles noted the issue in the South of the white upper middle class "find[ing] themselves in the

[39] Ibid., 29.
[40] Ibid., 36.
[41] Ibid., 38.
[42] Ibid., 46.

midst of a 'new' development in the private schools" while defending the "normal life of their city" including "attracting new industry, the solidity of a community,…and protect[ing] the public schools."[43] Coles, in referring to the business conservatives, who constituted the parent population of a school such as Westminster, stated that private schools had to contend with these individuals' duality. On one hand, they feared the changing society, including the desegregation of public schools, but on the other they supported private schools, which were now calling for desegregation.[44] Coles also commented on the psychological and emotional impact on black children attending majority white schools. He stated that "Negroes will often come with special academic or psychological problems that the school needs to perceive and help meet. The school can't ignore these problems and pretend they don't exist, while talking about everyone being treated alike."[45] Dr. Coles' statement along with the aforementioned concerns provide some evidence that independent schools were aware of the potential ways in which black students could be affected by attending these schools.

In the second half of the report, Mallery provided position papers from heads of schools, NSSFNS, and Robert C. Weaver, administrator for the U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency.[46] In addition to addressing the recruitment of applicants and economic concerns (i.e., providing scholarships to black students), some of the most salient points raised were concerned with human and social relationships. Attention was given to whether or not integrated independent school settings were best for white and black

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[43] Ibid., 52.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Mallery, 54.
[46] The position papers from heads of schools, "Integration of North Country School" and "The Independent School and Desegregation," also appeared in the April and November 1963 *Independent School Bulletin,* respectively.

children, the psychological and emotional impact on black children attending majority white schools, and consideration over students' interactions in and out of the classrooms (i.e., dating and dances and a parent's role in educating children about race). This combination of topics and questions raised significant points that would have to be addressed by schools as black students became more sought after in the coming years.

One vehicle for attracting more black students to independent schools was the development of the Independent Schools Talent Search Program (ISTSP). In February 1963, twenty-one representatives from independent boarding schools met.[47] The group "banded together to expand a program which had formerly been in operation as part of the overall activity of the National Scholarship Service and Fund for Negro Students."[48] The program now operated independently of NSSFNS under the ISTSP title. Through a "substantial grant," the Merrill Trust funded programmatic operations including a field representative. Additionally each participating school contributed "one dollar per boarding student" enrolled.[49] ISTSP expanded in the coming years as the NAIS began to focus on black student recruitment.

By 1963, a number of factors were converging to create a climate for desegregation in independent schools. Civil rights activism had captured the nation's attention including that of independent school leaders. Accounts such as *Negro Students* illuminated the varied considerations that historically white independent schools needed

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[47] "Two Year Report on Independent Schools Talent Search Program," Box 13 in Anne C. Stouffer Foundation Records, 1960s–1990s #04556, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Hereafter referred to as "Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC."

[48] National Association of Independent Schools, "Broadening Educational Opportunities—Independent Schools Talent Search Program," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 9 (May 1964): 7–8.

[49] Ibid.; "Two Year Report on Independent Schools Talent Search Program," Box 13, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

to confront as they sought more black students through such efforts as ISTSP. Conversely black upper-class parents, such as those in Atlanta, had begun advocating for the inclusion of their children into white private schools, and they had received support from local activists. As shifts in federal policy were on the horizon, so would be changes on local levels and in schools like Westminster, which would be pushed in the next two years to adopt an open admission policy. Further, the era, intensely heighted by vast evidence of racism and discrimination, fueled the development of Westminster's complex and contradictory climate, even when no black students were present.

Chapter 5:

Doors Pushed Open while Maintaining Public Image, 1964–1966

"I am arguing that the problems of teaching the culturally deprived are possibly too complex for most independent schools to handle. The massive assault on this problem must be made by specially-trained professionals under public authority and made quickly. The independent schools' role here, alas, must be a limited one. But limited though it may, the schools must take in deadly earnest, must find scholarship funds, must recruit vigorously, and must teach to the limit of the skills of their faculties."

~Ted Sizer, "The Independent Schools' Concern for National Problems in Education"

Dr. Ted Sizer, then the director of the Master of Arts in Teaching Program at Harvard University, spoke at the 1964 Annual Meeting of the National Association of Independent Schools. Sizer began by asking why independent schools should be concerned with national problems facing education, and he noted that the academies of the nineteenth century experienced a sharp decline in their numbers by 1880 because schools were too concerned with short-term problems as opposed to long-term issues. Subsequently, current independent schools "must be concerned for national problems in education, for if they are not, they will be justly relegated to an inconsequential corner of the American educational scene."[1] As indicated by the quote above, the most obvious challenge for independent schools would be meeting the needs of "culturally deprived" or in actuality black students.

As independent schools moved forward with addressing the national issue of race, these tensions were addressed both internally and externally as schools such as Westminster were pushed to consider desegregation. In 1964, Westminster received additional inquiries into its policies from the community including from one of its

[1] National Association of Independent Schools, *Report of the Annual Conference: March 5, 6, 7, 1964* (Boston: National Association of Independent Schools, May 1964), 111–12.

parents. Moreover, tax regulations concerning tax-exemption status were looming. By the end of 1965, the Westminster Board had voted to change the school's admission policy to consider all applicants, regardless of race. Although no major incidents were reported following this decision, the ways in which Pressly discussed Westminster's desegregation were intertwined with maintaining a particular image of the school. As Westminster transitioned to desegregation, a contradictory and complex racial climate continued to be fostered through racialized traditions and student reporting on local, regional, and national events. Underscoring Westminster's changes was a national independent school agenda that now included more focused attention on race and the recruitment of black students than in previous years.

Opening the Doors

The years immediately preceding Westminster's decision to desegregate were marked by continued segregation in APS and intense Civil Rights activism. According to Gannon, during the 1963-1964 school year, "there were only 144 African American students in ten integrated schools, out of over 110,000 students in the City attending over 150 schools."[2] In April 1965, the U.S. District Court in Atlanta ruled on the NAACP appeal that had been made following the 1963 court decision that maintained gradualism as the process for desegregating APS. The Court "ordered the complete desegregation in the Atlanta public school by the 1967-1968 school year, under a continuation of the "freedom of choice" program."[3] By the fall of 1965, all grades had been desegregated in Atlanta, and the number of black students in APS (61,344) had begun to outnumber white students (52,894). Additionally, "enrollments at all of the black high schools exceeded

[2] Gannon, 109.
[3] Hornsby, 30–31

capacity by as much as 240 percent, while six of the all-white or majority white high schools had vacant classroom seats."[4] Further "only 6% of African American students attended schools with whites statewide."[5] Though Atlanta's city leaders had maintained an image of racial harmony, segregation and inequality persisted in the education of black students.

In January 1964, student led sit-ins were occurring throughout the city, including at local Krystal and Morrison food chains and at Atlanta-based Leb's Restaurant. The sit-in at Leb's on January 25, 1964 caused one of the most public displays of retaliation by young black activists. After the police refused to intervene, owner Charles Lebedin locked the doors to the restaurant and barred the restrooms, leaving inside forty students, led by John Lewis of SNCC. In response, "students abandoned their nonviolent ways. They smashed drinking glasses to the floor, overturned coffee urns, and flipped a few brown-and-yellow leather booths upside down. With the restroom doors still locked, some demonstrators relieved themselves on the floor."[6] Following this incident, white city leaders, such as former Mayor Hartsfield, became more "suspicious of black activists." Subsequently, black activists "realized that local actions—whether protests in the streets, lawsuits in the courts, or negotiations in city hall—would never secure the victory they sought."[7]

With these tensions swirling in the background, GACHR and others asked more questions about Westminster's admissions policy. In the January 1964 newsletter of GACHR, the following was printed regarding Westminster:

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[4] Ibid., 32.
[5] Gannon, 109.
[6] Kruse, 216.
[7] Ibid., 219.

> Recent announcements of admission tests for Westminster in the daily press prompted inquiries about racial policies. Dr. William Pressly, President, said that there is a committee of the trustees working on the matter, but the school does not now accept applications from Negro students. It does administer tests for admission to other schools and colleges to Negro as well as white students at its testing center.[8]

Westminster's policy of not accepting black students was becoming more public. However, the announcement regarding Westminster's testing of black students was a first. This acknowledgment may have been Pressly's way of indicating that some black students had taken admission tests at Westminster; it also highlighted his affiliation as a board member of the Educational Testing Service.

In March, Eliza Paschall continued to question Westminster. She wrote the following letter to Max Taylor, the new director of the Westminster Summer Camp:

> We have noted the announcement of the Westminster Summer Camp in the ATLANTA JOURNAL AND CONSTITUTION for March 15. We try, in this office, to keep an accurate, up-to-date list of facilities in the community which are available to all regardless of race. We would appreciate your informing us if you will accept applications from Negroes at the Westminster Summer Camp.[9]

Yet, a response to Paschall's letter is not evident. Moreover, this letter was the last direct communication from Paschall and GACHR to Westminster regarding admission policies. One indication of GACHR's decline in inquires is gleaned from a confidential memo

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[8] "Council on Human Relations of Greater Atlanta, Newsletter, January 1964," Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

[9] Eliza Paschall to Max Taylor, March 26 1964, Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

from Paschall to GACHR board members following the passage of the Civil Rights Bill. In the section concerning how the council should proceed with education, the last question written involved Westminster—"Is it important to us that Westminster still does not take applications from Negroes?"[10] This question appeared not to have been answered in writing but in a lack of continued action by GACHR, which would have different leadership for the 1964-1965 school year when Paschall took a leave of absence.

Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild, however, inquired about Westminster's exclusionary practices. Rothschild, a long-time member of GACHR and a Westminster parent, served as rabbi of The Temple, Atlanta's oldest synagogue, which had been bombed in the fall of 1958.[11] Despite having paid tuition for his children to attend Westminster, Rothschild declined in 1964 to make a pledge to the school's annual fund. He credited the school for his children's education, even as Jewish individuals, and he noted, "The social ethic of Judaism and Christianity is certainly not disparate and their knowledge of a faith other than their own will only serve to make them better Americans and better Jews." Yet Rothschild concluded his letter with the following explanation as to why he could not support the school's annual fund:

> However, as a rabbi and even more important as a religious person I find it impossible to accept—precisely because Westminster is a school which prides itself upon being Christian—its unwillingness to educate qualified children of any race. To allow private schools which are under religious sponsorship to become

[10] Eliza Paschall to members of the GACHR Board, confidential memorandum, n.d., Eliza Paschall Papers, MARBL.

[11] Kruse, 137.

> the last bastion of segregated education seems to me to be contradictory, untenable, and indefensible.[12]

Rothschild's letter raises significant implications. It clearly challenged Westminster's policies. What is not known is if there were additional letters sent by other parents or the effect of Rothschild's letter on the board's deliberations. Rothschild's letter may have had little influence since he and others advocating for racial justice continued to enroll their children at Westminster. Yet, this letter combined with the previous inquiries, the passage of the Civil Rights Act during the summer, the national independent school agenda, and the looming federal tax policies may have helped move Westminster toward desegregation.

In August of 1964, Pressly raised the tax-exemption status issue by reiterating "Federal Judge Elbert Tuttle's statement that the courts would ultimately remove [the school's] tax exemption" if Westminster did not soon desegregate. With this inevitable fate, Pressly and Broyles gathered the board for an informal meeting in October 1964. As Pressly recalled, the positions of the members ranged from "Let's integrate right now" to "I haven't decided yet" to "Let's never integrate—I couldn't live with it."[13] No formal vote was taken, but three members of the board were clearly in favor of integration: McCain, Reverend Allison Williams, and Billy Beers (who had served on the Lovett School board the previous year when Lovett denied Martin Luther King, III admission).[14] In the coming year, their push, along with that of Pressly and Broyles, would come to fruition.

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[12] Rabbi Jacob M. Rothschild to William Pressly, April 20, 1964, Folder: Correspondence 1961–1966, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[13] Pressly, 148.

[14] Gannon, 110.

Interestingly, the start of 1965 found Pressly acknowledging black student achievement in a letter to the faculty. In January, Pressly wrote a lengthy letter to the faculty regarding various curriculum matters, standards for students, and reminders to teachers (i.e., teaching load, writing for NAIS' *Independent School Bulletin*, having professional teaching certificates, etc.). Additionally, Pressly mentioned the reading requirements at St. Augustine, an African American Catholic School in New Orleans. He questioned, "Do our eighth graders match the negro boys at St. Augustine in reading twenty-five books a year?"[15] In making this comparison, Pressly showed his familiarity with St. Augustine's curriculum and possibly the achievement of black students in segregated schools. In February, Pressly spoke to the members of the Headmasters' Association regarding how Westminster was going to "accomplish integration." Though no further details are provided, Pressly's discussion of integration resonated with the impending fall decision at Westminster.[16] With the desegregation of public facilities and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Martin Luther King, Jr., by the spring of 1965, Pressly stated, "Many of the middle of the road folks were reading about it [integration] all the time and it had become more widely accepted."[17] The Westminster Board's vote, however, was put on hold during the spring of 1965.

As Westminster leaders moved closer to announcing an open admission policy in the fall of 1965, the school climate reflected one in which students addressed issues of the day while continuing their same traditions. The *Westminster Bi-Line* continued to provide an ongoing space for students to address racial issues. In a March 1964 article, "Poll of

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[15] Memorandum to the Faculty, January 5, 1965, Folder: Administrative Records 1963–1965, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[16] Pressly, 143.

[17] Ibid., 148.

Boys Student Body Reveals Election Sentiments," the results of a 100-student poll were shared. If eligible to vote, sixty-three students would favor then President Lyndon Johnson, whereas the remaining votes were divided among other candidates. Additionally, when asked about important issues, the two most given were "the race issue and the state of the island of Cuba."[18] Westminster students' thoughts on the race issue were recorded as follows:

> Johnson's political stand on race will follow that of the late President. Whether or not he merely inherited this particular doctrine and thus lost some of the great sincerity of our past President, will probably determine the success of the present bill before Congress. But by the students voting for Johnson, they indicated that they want some answer to the racial issues from Johnson instead of the dubious stand taken by Senator Goldwater.

"Jacksonville, '64: Site of Extremism" offers another example of the ways in which Westminster students documented racial controversies. This writer recounted a race riot that took place in Jacksonville, Florida in 1964. Retold as a narrative as opposed to news reporting, according to the article, prior to the riot all was quiet in Jacksonville; in fact "an uneasy peace pervaded the atmosphere." Then, "Suddenly, chaos erupted. Gangs of Negro high school students swarmed down the streets and sidewalks. They were followed by helpless police on foot and in squad cars." The story crescendos as the black students turned into "mob hysteria" when they began to vandalize white and black property, "attack[ed] pedestrians as the police watched," burned the car of a photographer from the *Florida Times Union,* and beat the three men inside of the car.

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[18] "Poll of Boys Student Body Reveals Election Sentiments," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* March 1964, p. 8, WA.

The student offered one rationale for the riot as well as how a similar situation could be prevented in Atlanta. The author stated that such "an explosion" was "caused by the actions of extremists, both racists and segregationists," and that city leaders were responsible for preventing such an occurrence. Yet in Jacksonville, "absurd statements made in a gubernatorial campaign speech by the mayor were in great measure responsible for setting off the riots which ensued." The author then thanked the mayor of Atlanta, Ivan Allen, Jr., for "avoiding such a situation."[19]

While students wrote about these issues, they also continued to support enthusiastically the slave auction. In the February 1964 edition of *The Westminster Bi-Line,* an article highlighted a record "sale" of $200. This article, "Fuller Draws Record $200 to Lead All Star Sale," vividly captured the auction:

> After mobbing and sacking the field house, the students were told that individual all-star picks were to be sold to the greedy crowd. Following the normal brisk trading on the block, everyone reached deep into his future allowance for the final prize. Jim Fuller, a three-year slave veteran, displayed his muscled body, to the gleeful cheers of the anticipated buyers.

Fuller sold for $200, and the auction raised $417 for the Atlanta Child's Home.[20]

Based on the 1965 yearbook, the slave auction was a beloved tradition as evidenced by a full page dedicated to chronicling the auction. Six pictures are included of faculty, staff, and students participating, including two of Pressly. According to the description, this auction "was pushed way above the expected goal. A group of all-stars

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[19] "Jacksonville, '64: Site of Extremism," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* May 1964, p. 2, WA.

[20] "Fuller Draws Record $200 to Lead All Star Sale," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* February 1964, p. 4, WA.

from grades nine through twelve, totaling about fifty victims, were sold."[21] In the 1966 yearbook, the same school year in which Westminster would announce its desegregation policy, coverage of the auction was combined with two pictures of the senior–faculty game. By this time, the monies raised during the annual week of fundraisers prior to Christmas were used "for the purpose of bringing an American Field Service student to Westminster" in addition to the donation to the Atlanta Child's Home. In total, the 1965 proceeds exceeded $1,600.[22]

In contrast with the tradition of the slave auction, the tradition of having black performers was declining. Except for the visits of Graham Jackson, "recording and television star, and entertainer of many United States presidents," no other indication of black performers being welcomed at Westminster is evident in the years immediately prior to 1965.[23] As with the previous articles about black performers, a November 1964 article offered a positive review of Graham's performance on the organ, piano, and accordion and as a comedian. An intriguing inclusion in the article was discussion of the handshake between Jackson and Pressly. The reporter wrote, "The show was highlighted by the symbol of mankind's friendship for one another with a handshake between Dr. Pressly and Mr. Jackson. This signified the gratefulness of the school to Mr. Jackson." Similar to the comments about the performance of the Mitchell and Ruff Duo in 1958, this student reported, "Mr. Jackson's assembly was the best in the last couple of years and possibly the best in the history of the school … It differed from regular assemblies in that it was not an assembly with a man who just talked, but it was a display of great and

[21] *Westminster Lynx 1965*, p. 40, WA.
[22] *Westminster Lynx 1966*, p. 143, WA.
[23] "Jackson Displays Talent; Cheered Enthusiastically," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, November 1964, p. 4, WA.

unusual talent." Jackson's performance was also documented in the 1965 yearbook with a picture measuring one-fourth of the page and the caption reading, "Graham Jackson delighted students with his humor and varied musical ability."[24]

With the banning of black musical groups, the number of black performers at Westminster decreased, and no editorials were written calling for the lifting of the ban. This lack of action may be due in part to the matriculation of various students during these years, and the attention given to other issues. For example, students wrote more articles about the Vietnam War, in addition to continuing to cover student travels and visitors to the school, including then gubernatorial candidate Bo Callaway.

When the 1965 fall semester began at Westminster, continued internal and external pressures were coalescing around Westminster's decision to desegregate. A letter to the editor in *The Westminster Bi-Line*, published three days before the October 1965 board meeting, illustrated the internal conversation. The student contended that with integration, "the school would perform definite service for the community and the students." He further wrote, "The Negro students would benefit greatly from the first-rate education the school gives. The [current Westminster] student would then be better prepared to accept responsibility of leadership." Yet, in the second part of the letter, the student discussed how both white and black students would benefit from integration by "studying with each other; learn[ing] the other's problems, worries and dreams." Moreover, "The mutual understanding derived in this would be of incalculable benefit in a world full of hate."[25] The first part of this article is representative of the term *noblesse oblige*, which Wanda Speede-Franklin, former director of minority affairs for NAIS,

[24] *Westminster Lynx 1965*, p. 25, WA.
[25] Bob Bradbury, "Letter to the Editor," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, October 11, 1965, p. 2, WA.

posits as another imperative that influenced the recruitment of black students to independent schools in the 1960s. According to Speede-Franklin, this term "suggests that the privileged class is morally obligated to alleviate conditions of poverty through charitable gestures toward the poor and so-called disadvantaged."[26]

Additionally, the question of tax-exemption status continued. In October of 1965, "the Internal Revenue Service suspended action on all applications from private segregated schools for tax-exempt status."[27] This decision came after the 1964 decision in *Griffin v. County School Board of Prince Edward County*, a case initiated following the closing of public schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia from 1959 to 1964, during which time a set of private schools were established for white children. In *Griffin,* "the Court held that the closing of public schools by the county school board and the board's support of private segregated schools constituted a violation of the fourteenth amendment."[28]

On October 14, while a formal Westminster Board meeting was held, no significant minutes were taken; those taken were as follows: "The meeting consisted of open discussion of matters of current importance to the schools. The discussion was informal and no action was taken. It was decided that the Board should meet again in the evening next month."[29] On November 11, the board met and a motion was made to "make no distinctions on admitting applicants."[30] While Westminster's admissions policy had never included a direct statement about not admitting black students, this exclusion

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[26] Speede-Franklin, 23.

[27] "Civil Rights: Segregation: Federal Income Tax: Exemptions and Deductions: The Validity of Tax Benefits to Private Segregated Schools," *Michigan Law Review* 68, no. 7 (1970): 1412.

[28] Ibid., 1432.

[29] Minutes, 14 October 1965, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[30] Pressly, 149.

gave the Board leeway to make a distinction between being "desegregated" and "integrated," and Westminster opted for the term "desegregated."[31] From this meeting, Pressly issued the following letter to parents indicating the change in school policy:

November 12, 1965

Dear Parents of Westminster Students:

I want you to know that the Board of Trustees, after careful consideration, has decided that, beginning with the academic year, 1966-1967, the Westminster Schools will test for admission and consider the applications of any and all candidates.

I am sure the school will have the continued cooperation and understanding of its patrons.

Sincerely,

William L. Pressly

Though Pressly signed the letter, Mrs. James N. Frazier, Mr. Arthur Howell, and Mr. William Parker, members of the Committee on Race, had composed the statement.[32]

From Pressly's perspective, the board's decision to desegregate Westminster was received well by the Westminster community and was a step toward progress because Westminster was the first non-sectarian institute in the South to announce such a policy.[33] Later, Pressly wrote, "At last, Westminster stood on the verge of no longer being regarded by many as a 'social club.'"[34] Pressly noted that out of approximately 150

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[31] Ibid, 150.

[32] Minutes, 11 November 1965, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

[33] "Westminster Sets Desegregation," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, December 16, 1965, p. 1, WA; Wayne Kelley, "Westminster Board Sets Desegregation," *Atlanta Constitution*, November 14, 1965, p. 55, WA.

[34] Pressly, 149.

letters and telephone calls, "only 10 expressed dismay," and although Pressly was questioned by an Atlanta businessman and a mother of a Westminster student at church, he stated that no children were withdrawn from Westminster because of the decision to consider all applicants.[35]

Yet, the decision to desegregate Westminster was not unanimous, and disagreement among the trustees was not revealed in public. Similar to the ways in which Atlanta leaders sought to preserve the city's image during the desegregation of public spaces, Pressly sought the same for Westminster. He noted in *The Formative Years,*

> We sent the letter to parents on a Friday and handed copies to each faculty member that afternoon. No one leaked it to the press until I sent it to Gene Patterson, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution,* late Saturday morning, thus informing the public on Sunday. I declined to say how many had opposed the decision, so a reporter wouldn't portray a "fight" among the Trustees.[36]

In "Westminster Board Sets Desegregation," the article published in the *Atlanta Constitution* on Sunday, November 14, 1965, disagreement was not discussed. Reporter Wayne Kelley included the following statement from Pressly: "'The board has had the matter of desegregation under consideration for more than a year,' Dr. Pressly said Saturday. 'The trustees were under no pressure and there was complete agreement,' he added." Additionally, when asked to comment on any opposition to the decision, Pressly stated, "I don't think that is important." [37]

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[35] Ibid., 150.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Kelley reported that "Private Catholic schools were desegregated here and throughout North Georgia in 1962," ("Westminster Board Sets Desegregation," 55).

Furthermore, Kelley reported that Pressly indicated that "more than 20 of the 24 members of the board of trustees attended the session Thursday," though the archived copy of the minutes list fourteen trustees present and nine absentees. In Pressly's memoirs, he stated that one absent member, Pollard Thurman, "telephoned to say he'd be absent on the 11th but would mail in his vote in favor of admitting black students."[38] Neither the minutes nor Pressly's memoirs account for others' positions, except the resignation of one absent member. In the minutes of the December board meeting, the following letter was included:

> Dear Dr. Broyles,
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> In view of the Board of Trustees decision at the November 11, 1965 meeting, I tender my resignation as a trustee; a position it was my pleasure and honor to hold for 14 years. I do not approve of the mixing of races and my conscience will not permit me to remain on the Board.
>
> I request that this letter be made a part of the minutes.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Verdey R. Boyd[39]

Thus, disagreement did exist within the Westminster community; yet, a mass exodus of students did not occur. Several reasons may suggest why this may have been the case. First, the decision to desegregate was supported by the six principals of the school. In the December minutes of the board's meeting, the following statement was included: "Your recent decision effecting a change in admissions policy is welcomed by

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[38] Pressly, 149.
[39] Minutes, 8 December 1965, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

those of us in administrative positions within the school."[40] Secondly, Pressly seemingly avoided the same publicity that the Lovett School had garnered in the spring of 1963. Not wanting a similar response, Pressly appeared to have acted in ways that would guarantee an image of solidarity regarding desegregation. Third, Pressly was in communication with business conservatives such as Robert Woodruff of Coca-Cola, who had been a close advisor to Mayor Hartsfield during the 1950s and 1960s as Atlanta positioned itself in the larger Civil Rights Movement. A very short letter that Pressly wrote to Woodruff following Westminster's decision to desegregate highlights their connection. In the letter Pressly noted that the decision was "a step that our students and faculty were most anxious to take."[41]

Indeed in December of 1965, two articles appeared in the *Bi-Line*. In one article, the letter that Pressly had sent to parents was reprinted. The article also quoted Pressly as directly stating (unlike the letter) that Westminster would continue "to apply its high standards for admission, though now race will not be one of the factors considered." Again, it was reiterated that "the trustees were under no pressure and there was complete agreement."[42] The editors of the *Bi-Line* also expressed their approval, by stating that the decision had been necessary if Westminster was "to grow further as an outstanding preparatory school," for such policies had been in place at outstanding preparatory schools in the Northeast. Additionally and similar to the student letter in the October paper, the students shared what desegregation would mean for their educational experiences. They wrote, "we are free to discard the sheltered, artificial atmosphere of

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[40] Ibid.

[41] William Pressly to Robert Woodruff, November 12, 1965, Robert Winship Woodruff Papers, MARBL.

[42] "Westminster Sets Desegregation," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, December 16, 1965, p. 1, WA.

studying only with members of our race. New freshness in viewpoint from Negro students will help us to see a better concept of social conditions and problems, free from the distortion of small prejudice."[43] In conclusion, the editors urged that the decision be adopted in the Middle and Lower Schools, though there was no indication otherwise that the decision did not apply to all grades; they also thanked those who had supported desegregation when the idea was resisted.

Although these two articles suggest that black students would be welcome, in contrast, two published editorials in the November and December editions were mired in skepticism and warnings related to the racial climate of the era. In "Senior Students Examine Birch, Bigotry, and Tolerance," two students argued that Americans must realize the power of communists who the students believed to have infiltrated the Civil Rights Movement. The authors wrote, "The Negro and white supporters of the civil rights movement have been duped and stirred to revolt by a few hard-core communists." Thus, they challenged those who had not been duped "to realize the evil forces and evil purposes behind this pretense of humanitarianism." By doing so, "the whole horrible fraud would fall to pieces in three months." Again, the students compared the "good patriotic, and idealistic Americans," with the extremists, who are referred to as "a bunch of nuts." The students further claimed that Westminster students "are generally tolerant," but that they need to "constantly guard against a rigidity in our 'tolerance.'" Although the students shared their opinions about the threat of communism, they called for an

[43] "Letter from the Editors," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, December 16, 1965, p. 2, WA.

engagement of the other side for "it would be very easy to fall back upon the security of our 'authority.'"[44]

The December editorial, "Minority Scapegoat Idea Needs to be Cast Aside," likewise posited a warning to students regarding black Americans.[45] The writer stated that minorities have been scapegoats for the majority. He wrote, "We who have been imbued with a simple delineation, based on color, between good and bad, friend and foe, are finding difficulty in purging this simple method of separation from our minds." The writer then told two stories about experiences in Monroe, Georgia on a golf course with the first occurring a few years prior and the second only a few weeks before the writing of the editorial. During the first story, the writer shared the following about what a white man said after seeing a "blood-spattered" black boy:

> a bunch of animals, that's all they are. Those niggers stay in fights ninety percent of the time. Hell, I know my son's got to go to school with them soon; that really isn't so bad—they play hookey most of the time anyway. I just don't want any outsiders coming in and stirring 'em up. Why jeez, you look at those animals, they always carry a stick … They'll start swinging the sticks and somebody will get killed.

In the second story, the student described an exchange with a caddy wearing SCLC Project SCOPE buttons. At first the caddy asked the student what he thought of the Civil Rights Movement, but the student responded by asking the caddy the same question. The caddy stated, "Well, if we didn't pay taxes it'd be different. But we deserve

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[44] "Senior Students Examine Birch, Bigotry, and Tolerance," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* November 8, 1965, p. 2, WA.

[45] "Minority Scapegoat Idea Needs to be Cast Aside," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* December 16, 1965, p. 2, WA.

all the rights everybody else has. But the main thing is an education. That's the main thing right now. I got to get an education first off." The author's final words on the matter were that outside agitators had come and "riled up all the niggers about nothing." He further wrote, "Yes, and even that small caddy was swinging a stick at me. It wasn't wooden, however. It was constructed of an idea, and that is the most dangerous kind." In essence, the student seemed to tell his fellow white students, let us beware of black people and their ideas.

As a southern independent school, Westminster had the latitude to progress gradually with desegregation, and it was able to have an exemplary academic program while continuing to be undergirded by images of the Old South and racism. Moreover, school leaders set the academic admission standards that black students would have to meet, and black parents would need to be in a position to afford the tuition. Yet, because of the changing national tenor, having black students would be in Westminster's best interest. Pressly, as a national figure in NAIS, presumably knew that Westminster needed to distinguish itself from segregationist academies as independent schools nationally heightened their recruitment of black students.

NAIS' Agenda on Race Takes Shape

As the Civil Rights Movement, the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and Johnson's War on Poverty undergirded some of NAIS' focus and efforts during these years, the organization's efforts would reflect both a perceived pathology of black Americans and the need for change because of racism. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action,"

outlined his perspective on "a new crisis in race relations."[46] Moynihan contended that the urgent problem in the United States was the instability of the Negro American family, in particular those families of lower-class status. Furthermore, he argued that this tangle of pathology that encapsulated black families was perpetuated on its own accord without white assistance. Although a black middle class was growing, Moynihan asserted that those individuals remained susceptible to the tangle of pathology "that affects their world," because of housing segregation that causes middle-class blacks to live in close proximity to lower-class blacks. Moynihan wrote that the middle class "are therefore constantly exposed to the pathology of the disturbed group and constantly in danger of being drawn into it."[47] Seemingly diverging from Moynihan's sentiments were President Johnson's remarks, now considered the rationale for affirmative action policies. In June of 1965 during a speech at Howard University, President Johnson stated, "You do not take a person who, for years, has been hobbled by chains and liberate him, bring him up to the starting line in a race and then say, 'you are free to compete with all the others' and still justly believe that you have been completely fair."[48]

In the mid-1960s, the leaders of NAIS continued to pay close attention to legislation such as NDEA, tax reform that could limit charitable donations to independent schools, and tax credits for parents paying tuition to independent schools.[49] According to

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[46] Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," in *The Essential Neoconservative Reader*, ed. Mark Gerson (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1996), 23.

[47] Moynihan, 33.

[48] William G. Bowen and Derek Bok. *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 6.

[49] National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 3 (Dec 1962): 6; National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 4 (April 1963): 6–7; National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 5 (June 1963): 4–5; National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation," *National Association*

the February 1965 *Report*, long-awaited amendments to NDEA with respect to private school teachers had finally passed.[50] Beginning in May 1965, NAIS' legislative concerns included the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). According to the *Report*, the purpose of ESEA was "to provide aid for school systems with substantial numbers of children from low-income families, and the bulk of the financial aid will go for that purpose."[51] Independent school leaders were made aware, however, of potential provisions available for independent schools and their students, including books through Title II and provisions for supplementary educational centers via Title III. Independent school leaders were also encouraged to communicate with the chief educational officer of their individual states to familiarize themselves with ESEA.[52]

Though NAIS monitored such legislation, NAIS President Cary Potter acknowledged a particular leeriness of increased federal government presence in education but also a resolve for independent schools to be a part of the conversation. After attending the White House Conference on Education in 1965, Potter noted,

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of Independent Schools Report, no. 6 (October 1963): 5–6; National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 9 (May 1964): 8–9; National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislations," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 10 (September 1964): 5. See also Frank B. Keith, "Federal Aid and Non-Public Schools," *Independent School Bulletin* Series of '61-'62, no. 2 (January 1962): 69–70.

[50] The loan-forgiveness portion of the act had been extended to private school teachers; independent school teachers became eligible for stipends while they attended NDEA institutes for advanced study; and the institutes (originally only for foreign languages and counseling) were broadened to include "history, geography, modern foreign languages, reading, and English, as well as for teachers of disadvantaged youth, librarians, and educational media specialists." See National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation—National Defense Education Act," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 12 (February 1965): 6–7.

[51] National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation—Federal Aid," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 13 (May 1965): 5.

[52] National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation—Federal Aid," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 13 (May 1965):5-6; and National Association of Independent Schools, "Legislation—Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 14 (September 1965): 6.

> There are, no doubt, mixed feelings about the wisdom of heavy federal involvement in education, but the relationship of education to the social and technological changes of the age has given, and will surely continue to give, a national focus on education which is unprecedented and not likely to be ignored by any administration or congress … as Commissioner Keppel stated at the Conference, is that education today is everybody's business, and that means the nation's business.[53]

In the increasingly changing political climate, Potter challenged independent school leaders, despite only being a fraction of the country's educational system, to be aware of their schools' unique offerings. Potter contended,

> The independent school in its own community has much to offer and much to gain from increased community emphasis on education. The present ferment presents problems, to be sure; but equally surely, it presents exciting opportunities for all students for all kinds. The qualities of independence, diversity, imagination, and commitment which have characterized the best independent schools of the past should serve equally well in the rapidly changing times in which we find ourselves.[54]

During these years, black Americans continued to agitate for change, while school desegregation moved at a slow pace and private schools became escape routes for whites. For example in Louisiana, New Orleans Public Schools had been desegregated in November of 1960, but as noted by historian Liva Baker, "Louisiana's private schools

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[53] National Association of Independent Schools, "The White House Conference—Three Observations," *National Association of Independent Schools Report,* no. 14 (September 1965) : 2.

[54] Ibid.

thrived on state money allotted to students who attended them. In 1964-65, the number reached a high of 10,777 white recipients in New Orleans alone."[55] Further, "ten years after the U.S. Supreme Court declared racial segregation in America's public schools unconstitutional, 873 black students out of a citywide black enrollment of 64,893 were attending schools with white students in New Orleans."[56] As the nation became more intensely aware of and divided about racial injustice, and the federal government became more involved in legislating policy, NAIS' agenda on race began to take shape.

The black students that eventually entered Westminster were part of a growing population of black students in independent schools recruited by the Independent School Talent Search Program (ISTSP). Related to the ISTSP was Dartmouth's A Better Chance (ABC) Program, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. During the summer of 1964, Dartmouth would offer, "in its ABC program, an opportunity for intensive study to 50 boys from disadvantaged groups, primarily in the New England area."[57] Most of the boys were identified through the ISTSP program and admitted to New England boarding schools. According to the Two Year Report on ISTSP, the program served as "a summer transitional program to help disadvantaged students make the academic and social adjustment to the independent schools."[58]

The following year, forty-nine boys enrolled in twenty-six participating schools of the ISTSP Program after completing the ABC Program; twenty additional students enrolled directly in participating schools. By the fall of 1965, sixty schools were

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[55] Baker, *Second Battle of New Orleans,* 472.

[56] Ibid.

[57] National Association of Independent Schools, "Broadening Educational Opportunities, Independent Schools Talent Search Program, Dartmouth ABC Program," *National Association of Independent Schools Report,* no. 9 (May 1964): 8.

[58] "Two Year Report on Independent Schools Talent Search Program," Box 13, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

participating in the program, and close cooperation continued with the Dartmouth ABC Program, which "served as the principal recruiting agent."[59] The Danforth Foundation, General Electric Foundation, and the Charles F. Kettering Foundation also supported ISTSP. Additionally, in May of 1965, the Office of Economic Opportunity agreed to support an additional 100 students, bringing the total number of students to be placed to 200, including 50 boys and 50 girls, respectively, from ABC Programs. A new ABC Program began at Mount Holyoke, also supported by the Rockefeller Foundation, for girls during the summer of 1965.

The funding made available to ISTSP indicated the role of foundations in financing the educational opportunities of black Americans in independent schools. For NAIS this was quite positive. As noted in the February 1965 *Report*, "Despite strong efforts by schools themselves, and wide commitment on the part of school heads to the objective of 'broadening the base,' results are slow in coming, especially in the face of a continued general increase in costs of normal operation."[60] In addition to ISTSP, the Negro Student Fund was established in Washington, D.C. by a group of independent schools to support financially admitted students in an effort "to help make announced integration policies more effective by reducing economic barriers to their achievement."[61]

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[59] National Association of Independent Schools, "Broadening Educational Opportunities—Independent Schools Talent Search Program, *National Association of Independent Schools Report,* no. 12 (February 1965): 8.

[60] Ibid.

[61] National Association of Independent Schools, "Assistance for Negro Students—The Negro Student Fund," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 10 (September 1964): 6. A description of the National Achievement Scholarship Program was also included in this edition of the *Report.* The program, intended for "Negro high school students," provided winners with "four-year Achievement Scholarships to the colleges of their choice." For the 1964-1965 school year, the program planned to administer 200 scholarships.

Alongside the growth of programs such as ISTSP was the increased emphasis on black students and educational enrichment programs in the *Bulletin*, with a particular focus on the disadvantaged. *Noblesse oblige* was a running theme in the articles. For example, in a short article on an educational conference at Williston Academy in April of 1965, one of the conference themes was "encouraging and finding a place for the Negro student." In offering suggestions about closing "the cultural and educational gap" between black and white students, one headmaster discussed a program in which white students tutored black students. In this headmaster's summation of the program, he stated that the program provided a "ray of light that shows them things are going to get better."[62] The implications for how black students were perceived resonated with their supposed positionality as individuals who needed help. Little was mentioned regarding the positive attributes black students brought to these schools, despite their perceived academic deficits.

Two articles from a six-part feature entitled, "The Responsibility of the Independent School," published in December of 1965 further illuminates these notions. Thomas M. Mikula, a mathematics instructor at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, argued that independent schools should play a role in the "Education of the Disadvantaged." In Mikula words, "At the heart of any discussion about the underprivileged of the United States is the Negro population, who for so long have lived under what must be considered less than a second-class citizenship."[63] In turn, one of the solutions to the problems of the underprivileged is education.

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[62] "Education Conference," *Independent School Bulletin* 24, no. 3 (April, 1965): 57.

[63] Thomas M. Mikula, "Education of the Disadvantaged," *Independent School Bulletin* 25, no. 2 (December 1965): 17.

Based on unidentified testimony from those who teach in segregated schools, Mikula characterized black students and their parents as hopeless and unmotivated. Additionally, the teachers "themselves had to struggle through similar situations in their childhood and were ill-prepared for college," Mikula wrote. Therefore, Mikula contended that help from the outside must be extended and asserted that "the independent school must identify themselves with the problem in every way open to them. They must actively seek the Negro and other culturally deprived but capable students."[64] While increasing the number of black students in independent schools, an independent school was to have the following effect:

1. It will provide a better formal education for the capable student who comes from a culturally deprived community.
2. It will provide an incentive to the parents, teachers, and students who remain behind in the home community.
3. It will provide a more complete education for those students already in independent schools by supplying them with an environment similar to the one in which they will work after they have completed their formal education.

In addition to these effects, Mikula also called for the hiring of "teachers from segregated schools and from underprivileged communities." Based on his belief about their perceived lack of qualifications, Mikula warned schools that such teachers would possibly lead to the deterioration of schools, but such a risk is necessary. Mikula hardly acknowledged the achievement of black students in segregated schools and black students' potential contributions to independent schools. He did, however, insist upon

[64] Ibid., 18.

independent schools' duty to assist in "a national emergency. The independent school must share the guilt, together with all the institutions of this country, of having derived benefits through the years from the second-class citizenship of the Negro."[65]

In a second article, "Community Service," Edward Blair discussed a tutoring program in Baltimore; most of the faculty from the program taught at the Park School, an independent school, in Brooklandville, Maryland. Courses were offered in a variety of subjects including English, remedial reading, ancient history, remedial arithmetic, algebra I and II, and foreign languages. The students also participated in a discussion group and enjoyed talking about "teen-age standards of ethics and morality, politics and the Negro's opportunities in politics, education, and integration." From Blair's perspective, this was one of the most enjoyable parts of the program. Undergirding the effort were the believed perceptions about segregated education for black students. Blair wrote, "A segregated school provides little incentive for the Negro child, and it does not give him a tangible basis for cultural comparison. We were, therefore, dealing with culturally, economically, and academically 'disadvantaged' children, a problem which manifested itself in different ways." [66] He discussed the students' lateness, attributed to both other duties and lack of concern for timeliness, and lack of patience. Blair did conclude by making suggestions, including the need for additional teachers so that students would receive more individual attention and the need for more community organizations to be involved. He stated:

> At best, we are only plugging up the dam of deprivation with the flimsiest of materials. When the special education of disadvantaged children begins at the

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[65] Ibid., 19

[66] Edward Blair, "Community Service," *Independent School Bulletin* 25, no. 2 (December 1965): 21.

> nursery school level and continues through to the high school years, we shall have overcome many of the major problems which exist in our society and which are tarnishing both our self respect and international image.[67]

One could read Blair's perspective as one with good intentions, but it is one heavily influenced by stereotypes about black education and students. Like Mikula, Blair did not consider the assets of black schools in spite of segregation. Moreover, he lacked a nuanced approach to understanding educational possibilities of black students and the larger socio-cultural context sustained by inequality.

In the mid-1960s, national leaders of independent schools monitored legislation, supported recruitment efforts of black students, and articulated beliefs about how independent schools were to serve the "disadvantaged." Pressly, in the year prior to desegregation, continued to maintain Westminster's image while students engaged in community service and discussions about the political changes of the era. While Westminster attempted to become a welcoming environment for black students, the school climate would reflect the larger societal norms around race.

A Welcoming Environment?

Desegregation did not occur immediately at Westminster. The summer of 1966 brought an opportunity for the desegregation of Westminster's boarding component of the summer program when Jeannie Hawkins, a black student, was admitted. Yet, in handwritten faculty meeting notes, Pressly expressed how he had promised to notify parents if desegregation were to occur at the school.[68] Because Jeannie's identity was

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[67] Ibid, 22.

[68] Handwritten notes from Pressly for faculty meeting [ca 1966], Folder: Faculty Meeting [1966] Integration, William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

unknown until she arrived that summer, Pressly opted not to notify parents at the last minute, and Jeannie was not allowed to live in the dorms. According to Pressly's memoir, *The Formative Years*, Jeannie remained at the camp and lived in the home of Westminster's elementary school principal, Chris Stevenson, and his wife, Chessie.[69]

For the 1966-1967 school year, no black students enrolled. Three students had applied but scored low on the admission test. Some faculty argued for their admission despite the low test scores, but Pressly did not feel that this was in the best interest of the students. In *The Formative Years,* Pressly noted, "Also unfortunately integration had become a burning issue. When the administrators decided not to accept the first three black applicants, rejecting them rather than crucifying them academically, some members of the boys' faculty felt we were against integration and 'standing in the schoolhouse door like Governor Wallace.'"[70] Pressly responded with having faculty retreats and the formation of sixteen committees for every phase of school life.

While students were supposedly prepared for desegregation during this year school, Westminster's climate included both annual traditions and more heightened racial discussions. Pressly recalled, "Westminster primed its students for the day when blacks would study, socialize, and play on athletic teams with them. In 1966-67, Westminster's last school year with an all-white student body, we insisted that blacks shouldn't be singled out and that everyone should stress similarities, not differences. Everyone should make sure, we said, that no black student eats lunch alone or attends social functions without company."[71] Yet, Hill Martin, a 1972 white alumnus, does not "remember

[69] Pressly, 152–53.
[70] Ibid., 164.
[71] Ibid., 153.

hearing any social responsible voice from the faculty, administrator or parents stand up and outline the wisdom of the decision," as students contemplated the decision.[72] Moreover, the school continued to reflect its southern mores. In 1967, the "Old South" was celebrated at the Junior-Senior Ball. Prior to the dance, students were told the following: "To set the mood for this gala occasion, the foyer and front lawn will be decorated as a southern plantation. Dress will be formal; gentlemen may wear either old Confederate uniforms or tuxedos."[73]

School newspaper articles concerning issues of race, politics, and social change also signaled the environment that black students would enter at Westminster. In February 1966, Bill Rothschild wrote an article entitled, "Julian Bond Issue: Beyond the Joke," a reference to the attempt of the Georgia state representatives not to seat Julian Bond because of his endorsement of SNCC in opposition to the Vietnam War. Rothschild reported on Bond's tactics in front of the Georgia House of Representatives, a group of "politicians who for 100 years have preached open defiance of federal laws and sections of the Constitution of the United States witch-hunt a man who exercises the same prerogative for a cause **unpopular** with their constituents." Further, SNCC, "a band of overly disgruntled, self-acclaimed second class citizens, foresees an opportunity to embarrass the hallowed congressional halls of Georgia as racist, and exploits the war in Viet Nam to do so." He then contended that the House committee that ousted Bond did not deal with "constitutional issues," but argued "one man, one vote—as the cause of such radicals getting elected in the first place." Yet, that was the exact freedom for which

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[72] Hill Martin, e-mail message to author, March 28, 2010.

[73] "Student Council Conducts Fund Raising Day for AFS," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* December 16, 1966, p. 1, WA; "Juniors Plan Dance with Malibus, Rebs," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* April 25, 1966, p. 1, WA.

the United States was supposedly fighting; so while Rothschild seemed to disagree with Bond because of how "unpopular and illogical those dissentions may be," he seemed also to be saying that it was Bond's right to dissent.[74]

Similar to national independent school trends, urban issues and community service received more attention, often with underlying stereotypes of black pathology. In "Unless Conditions Are Improved Violence in Ghettos Will Continue," the writer discussed the need for long-range solutions as well as immediate encouragement.[75] Additionally, he assessed that the uprisings were natural occurrences, for "where a minority group is continually oppressed it will rise up. No one is saying that this violence is good, only that it is a natural result of adverse economic and social conditions." He characterized the hopeless by providing an example of Atlanta: "One needs to only visit the Merritts Avenue Section near North Avenue and Peachtree Street to see the magnitude of the problem. There, households are comprised of women and children; fathers exist only in the biological sense. Children are everywhere, ill-clothed, ill-fed, and ill-housed. Most have never seen the inside of a schoolroom; many have never even seen Peachtree Street, a few blocks away." One might ask is there no one in this neighborhood doing well?

His editorial continued by stating that the "black community" could not take care of its own, for those who have left are not looking to return. He called for the enforcement of truancy laws and the funding of food, clothing, and education by the local, state, and federal governments. He then stated that "responsible civil rights and

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[74] Bill Rothschild, "Julian Bond Issue: Beyond the Joke," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, February 4, 1966, p. 2, WA.

[75] "Unless Conditions Are Improved Violence in Ghettos Will Continue," *Westminster Bi-Line*, October 5, 1966, p. 2, WA.

anti-poverty programs" were necessary to counter violence. The threat of violence was apparent, and this editorial characterized minorities as unthinking for he wrote, "Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and other minority groups will be the pawns for anyone offering the 'easy' solution of violence only as long as equal political and economic opportunities are denied." Yet the author did conclude by warning whites about their own racist attitudes and actions and the need for "accelerated efforts … in the direction of political and social equality and economic opportunity."[76]

When a Westminster student reported on Head Start in the school newspaper in "Project Head Start Gives Challenge to Student," student consciousness of service was apparent. The purpose of Head Start was explained as helping "underprivileged children develop fully enough so that when they enter first grade at six they will meet with success." Yet, there was no explanation as to why children were underprivileged, nor did the author seek to answer whether or not a child saw himself as "growing up fighting for his life in a slum of downtown Atlanta." The student also solicited volunteers, and it was explained that "no salary is paid for service of this kind, and few volunteers feel the need for any. They know what they are doing is important, and they receive full payment for their efforts from those they help."[77] That fall, three students reported on their experiences with Head Start. The article recounted what was believed that the children learned and experienced: "They learned how to brush their teeth and keep clean" and were "taught the pleasure of learning and the necessity for listening and following

[76] Ibid.

[77] "Project Head Start Gives Challenge to Students," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, March 9, 1966, p. 4, WA.

directions in a class." The student, however, did not discuss what the girls found "enlightening and rewarding" about the experience.[78]

As students wrote such articles and editorials, they also seemed to engage one another in the issues of the day. For example, in November 1966, a student poll was reported on twenty-five questions pertaining to political candidates, policies related to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, foreign aid, public school policies, prayer in school, and Johnson's poverty program. The majority of students polled said they disagreed with Julian Bond being seated in the General Assembly, agreed with the U.S. policies in Vietnam, agreed that the federal guidelines for public schools were unconstitutional, and felt that "Johnson's poverty program is a give something for nothing program."[79] Students also gave attention to the fall 1966 campaigns, including the gubernatorial race between Bo Callaway, the Republican Party nominee, and Lester Maddox, the Democratic Party nominee and avid segregationist. In fact, after the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Bill, Maddox had organized a rally that turned violent and featured "a slate of segregationist all-stars" including former Governor Ross Barnett of Mississippi and Governor George Wallace of Alabama.

While the majority of Westminster students polled favored Callaway, the continued stronghold of Dixiecrats or southern Democrats proved to be quite powerful.[80] The close race between Callaway and Maddox had to be decided by the Georgia General Assembly. With a democratic majority legislature, Maddox was elected governor. Many

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[78] "Three Senior Girls Tell of Head Start Summer," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* October 5, 1966, p. 3, WA.

[79] "All Precincts Reports that Bo Leads the Pack," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* November 7, 1966, p. 5, WA.

[80] "Callaway Speaks for Assembly," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* November 7, 1966, p. 8, WA; "Callaway Talks of Cities, Education in Interview," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* November 7, 1966, WA.

leading figures, including former Mayor Hartsfield, Ralph McGill, and even Barry Goldwater, opposed Maddox's election and dismissed it as "an aberration and an embarrassment." Yet, "the central themes of his political appeal, particularly his hostility to federal 'interference' in local affairs, had firmly taken root in Georgia, and indeed, the rest of the South."[81]

Moreover, the Civil Rights Movement gave way to the Black Power Movement, bringing more urban grassroots organizing by SNCC, including to Vine City, "a rigidly segregated poor and working-class Black neighborhood," where Westminster students would perform community service in the coming years.[82] Moreover, as social unrest occurred, especially among poor and working-class African Americans feeling neglected and subjected to racism, neighborhood protests took place in Summerhill and Dixie Hills during the summers of 1966 and 1967. The protests, according to historian Winston Grady-Willis, "challenged the hegemony of the biracial Atlanta regime in ways that no previous occurrence had."[83]

As Westminster students discussed political and social change, Pressly began to speak more about race and desegregation. In February 1967, Pressly gave a speech at the headmasters' meeting entitled "Valedictory" in which he spoke of Georgia's political regression with the election of Maddox. Pressly contended, "In Georgia, we don't live among the ruins of antiquity, we live in present ruin … engendered by ancient wrong." Pressly, however, did state what made him proud. "We are proud of our liberal Governors, Ernest Vandiver and Carl Sanders; proud of our young Congressman, Charles

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[81] Kruse, 233.

[82] Winston A. Grady-Willis, *Challenging U.S. Apartheid: Atlanta and Black Struggles for Human Rights*, 1960–1977 (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 85.

[83] Ibid., 133.

Weltner; proud of our integrated restaurants, hotels, hospitals, schools; proudest of our educated, sane Negro leadership." Subsequently, Pressly, similar to the student newspaper article from 1965, questioned and denigrated the role of outside agitators. He wrote, "Then came Stokely Carmichael and SNCC, inciting a riot, defying our humanitarian Mayor, Ivan Allen—the friend of the Negro, who had strained old friendships to go to Washington to plead for the passage of the Civil Rights Act. Stokely Carmichael screaming Black Power, loud enough to raise the dead—the dead issues." As the speech continued, Pressly, in contrast to how he attempted to maintain Westminster's image in 1965, noted the effects of Westminster's adoption of an open admission policy. According to Pressly,

> Admittedly, the wreckage is also a bit personal. Early, for independent schools in the South, Westminster announced a policy of integration. In the backlash, a Board member resigned, two others became suddenly too busy to lend a hand, several rich men removed Westminster from their wills, funds no longer flowed freely our way. I began to wonder—the school, too, among the ruins?"[84]

However, in a different venue, Pressly publicly praised Westminster's efforts to desegregate in an article for *University,* Princeton's quarterly magazine, spring 1967 edition. In "Meanwhile Georgia's Schools Are Getting Better," Pressly attempted to counter the negative images of Georgia's political tensions. Pressly discussed the academic rigor of independent schools, accreditation requirements, freedom of independent schools, and curricular emphasis and offerings. Toward the end of the article, Pressly noted the morality behind the decision to desegregate, Westminster's lead

[84] "Valedictory," Headmasters' Meeting, February 1967, Folder: 10, "Valedictory" Headmaster's Meeting, 2-67, Special Collections—Dr. William Pressly, WA.

in desegregating, and the slow pace of desegregation. Pressly continued to discuss how students and faculty were supportive of the board's decision and the difficulty in finding qualified black applicants. He concluded by stating that with increased knowledge of Westminster's open admission policy, more qualified students were applying to the school.[85]

What is confusing about this article is that, according to Westminster records, no black students entered the school full time until the fall of 1967; perhaps Pressly was referring to Jeannie Hawkins and any daytime summer school students. Additionally, Pressly cited that one student who had sought admission scored at a reading level of fourth grade and a math level of second grade. Pressly wrote, "As we are not a remedial school, we of course could not admit him." Thus, one must wonder if Pressly and other Westminster leaders would adhere to advice that would be given to independent school leaders regarding disadvantaged students or those deemed culturally deprived. Additionally, in this description, Pressly suggested that the onus of desegregation came from school leaders; he did not discuss the various pressures, external and internal, that had pushed Westminster leaders to adopt an open admission policy.

An example from Westminster Board meeting minutes indicated how discussions of race and serving the disadvantaged became a part of the board's deliberations. In response to a talk by Harold Howe, then U.S. Commissioner of Education, at the 1967 NAIS Annual Conference, Pressly suggested to the Westminster Board that tuition for Westminster's summer program be subsidized for thirty underprivileged children. In "The Need for Entangling Alliances," Howe challenged independent schools to be more

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[85] William L. Pressly, "Meanwhile, Georgia Schools Are Getting Better," *University: A Princeton Quarterly*, no. 32 (Spring 1967): 26, WA.

outward and visible with respect to state and national conversations on education. He also pressed schools to enroll disadvantaged students, without lowering their academic standards, but also giving these students the time and space to catch up to other students.

Howe called for independent school leaders to think differently about the term "culturally disadvantaged" by considering how a disadvantaged child could educate more privileged child.[86] According to Westminster Board minutes, "Some of the Trustees questioned the advisability of such a project for fear that some of our own students who need special help would be neglected. Many questions were asked and opinions expressed regarding curriculum, grades, etc., especially in regard to the Middle School."[87] While others would articulate a similar vantage point about what the presence of black students did for white students, Howe's speech pointed to the ways in which schools should have conceived of their white students' privilege and the lessons that others could teach them, not just what the privileged could teach to others.

Transitioning to Desegregation

As a member of NAIS, Westminster was part of a national agenda that sought to include black students in its student populations. For the 1966-1967 school year, NAIS surveyed for the first time its membership about black students; 740 out of 780 schools responded. The "Summary Report on Enrollment of Negro Students," provides a picture of the national climate in which the first black Westminster students were to be a part. Four hundred sixty-two schools reported enrolling 3,720 black students during the 1966-1967 school year; half of the schools enrolled their first black students after 1960, again

[86] Harold Howe, "The Need for Entangling Alliances" *Independent School Bulletin* 26, no. 4 (May 1967): 16.

[87] Minutes, 6 March 1967, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

an indication of independent schools responding to the social and political climate and agency of African Americans to create change in the United States. According to the survey, “this is approximately 3.2% of the student population in the schools with Negro students, and about 1.5% of the total student population in all NAIS member schools.” Schools trying to seek black students (i.e., 95 schools with “open enrollment” did not have plans to recruit black students) continued to report difficulty in finding qualified applicants and establishing communication networks with black individuals in their communities. The survey also revealed that only 149 black teachers worked in independent schools and that nearly half the black students received scholarships.

Table 1 provides a glimpse at statistics specific to NAIS schools in the Southeast. Seemingly, the majority of schools responding to the survey were not interested in having black students. In the conclusion to the NAIS Summary Report, “tokenism,” was discussed—“whether the enrollment of one or two Negro children is more than just a matter of avoiding criticism.” As table 2 shows, in 1967, few of the schools surveyed enrolled more than twenty black students.

Table 1. Enrollment of Negro Students in Southeastern Independent Schools, 1967

	Number of Schools	Percentage of the Total
Negroes enrolled this year	15	15.1%
Negroes enrolled, but not *this year*	1	1.1%
Want to enroll them, but unsuccessful as yet	6	6.1%
None yet, but plan to enroll them	7	7.1%
None yet, "open enrollment," but not seeking	25	27.2%
No Negroes, no plans to take them	42	42.4%
	99	**100%**

Source: Reprinted from National Association of Independent Schools, Summary Report on Enrollment of Negro Students, March 1967, WA.

Table 2. Enrollment of Negro Students in Individual Schools, 1967

No. of Students	No. of Schools
100 or more	2
50 or more	8
20 or more	27
15 or more	25
10 or more	47
5 or more	130
	239

Source: Reprinted from National Association of Independent Schools, Summary Report on Enrollment of Negro Students, March 1967, WA.

As public school desegregation progressed gradually and independent schools began to monitor enrollment of black students, more segregationist academies were established. In a 1976 study on segregationist academies, David Nevin noted that "in 1969 before *Alexander,* the Southern Regional Council called attention to the phenomenon and estimated that some 300,000 southern youngsters were in private schools that were segregated in practice."[88] The Westminster Board remained very much aware of these growing numbers. For example, in the April 1967 board meeting, the following was reported: "The Committee from the Georgia Association of Independent Schools, working on legislation to formulate minimum standards for independent

[88] David Nevin and Robert Bills, *The Schools that Fear Built: Segregationist Academies in the South* (Washington, DC: Acropolis Books, 1976), 8.

schools, is still working on a proposed bill which would be acceptable to the many types of schools involved."[89]

Also Westminster leaders decided again not to accept federal aid. In the May 1967 board meeting, board member Mr. W. Stell Huie presented "a study of 1) available federal aid to Westminster; 2) the needs of Westminster; 3) the experience of similar institutions participating in federal programs; 4) additional burdens participation might place upon Westminster; and 5) conclusions reached by the Committee." The committee noted that the funds available would not necessarily address Westminster's most pressing needs, including construction and debt retirements. With respect to similar institutions, the committee maintained that the most any school participating had received was $2,500 for library funds, "with the exception of scholarships to Negro students." Some of the non-participating schools that the committee contacted had not adopted integration policies, and "others, having adopted such policy, have not yet determined to sign the compliance forms required for federal participation." One of the burdens noted was the "continuous supervision regarding the appropriateness of each expenditure of such federal funds."[90] Thus, the committee's recommendation considered all of these factors and was explained in terms of the school's integration policy. The recommendation was reported as follows:

> after having thoroughly explored the matter, the Committee is of the opinion that the available programs would not be of such assistance to Westminster that they justify subjecting the school to the additional administrative procedures such participation would entail. There would be no need to change Westminster's

[89] Minutes, 12 April 1967, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.
[90] Minutes, 10 May 1967, The Board of Trustees Records, WA.

> policy with regard to the question of integration in order for Westminster to sign a compliance agreement on Form 441-C as required under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Committee's judgment is not therefore based upon or influenced by any belief that the non-discrimination policy of the school as it now exists is inconsistent with participation in federal programs. It is, nevertheless, the Committee's judgment that Westminster should not undertake to participate in any of the programs which are currently available.[91]

As black students prepared to enter Westminster, all of these questions, ideas, and decisions pertaining to the public acceptance of desegregation, academic standards of independent schools, and independent schools' compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were present. Racial issues were affecting every institution including southern independent schools, as evident through Westminster's contradictory and complex school climate, the ways in which the open admission policy came to fruition, and Pressly's desire to maintain a positive image of Westminster. Omi and Winant state, "In the 1960s, race occupied the center stage of American politics in a manner unprecedented since the Civil War era a century earlier. Civil rights struggles and ghetto revolts, as well as controversies over state policies of reform and repression, highlighted a period of intense conflict in which the very *meaning* of race was politically contested."[92] The first black students to enter Westminster, through their presence and actions, would have to navigate this national terrain that had informed the way in which others had conceptualized who and what they were.

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[91] Ibid.

[92] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 2.

Chapter 6:

Courageous Navigation of a Social Experiment, 1967–1970

In total, the number of black students attending elite independent schools increased from 3,720 students in 1967 to 7,616 in 1970.[1] At Westminster, sixteen black students enrolled during these years; eleven would later graduate.[2] These students entered a world with which they were not familiar or accustomed. Except for one boarding student, they traveled from Southwest Atlanta to the Northside of Atlanta to a school whose physical facilities were unparalleled. Tuition was $875 for day students in seventh through twelfth grades and $2,500 for boarding students; the average U.S. salary combined for white males and females who worked year round was $6,535 and for nonwhite males and females $4,355.[3] Westminster enrolled approximately 1,492 students and touted graduates who attended top colleges and universities.[4] In a report on male graduates between 1955 and 1964, Westminster alumni were listed as having careers in a wide variety of professions, including medicine, law, education, and the ministry. Additionally, Westminster alumni held prominent positions in the business world as

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[1] Orsini, 43; Speede-Franklin, 25.

[2] These numbers are based on available pictures of pre-first through sixth grade classes (these students were not pictured in yearbooks until 1975; see "Lynx 1975 Welcomes Elementary School," *Westminster Lynx* 1974, p. 95, WA) and a review of yearbooks and directories—1967-1968 through 1972-1973.

[3] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Median Income in 1967 of Male Year-Round Full-Time Workers 25 years Old and Over," figure, *Current Population Survey*, Series P-60, No. 60, 30 June 1969; and Letter to Faculty and Staff, March 1967, Folder: Correspondence Outgoing, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[4] "Growth of Student Body in The Development of Westminster Schools," President's Report to the Board, November 1972, WA. Between 1955 and 1971, the ten colleges and universities most attended by Westminster alumni included the University of Georgia, Vanderbilt University, the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, Emory University, Duke University, Hollins, Georgia Tech, Washington and Lee, Sweet Briar, and the University of Virginia. Both Yale University and Princeton University were numbers eleven and fifteen, respectively. See List of Colleges Attended by Westminster Graduates Since 1955, Folder: College Admissions Report, 1972, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

presidents, vice-presidents, and executives.[5] Further, the first black students entered a school in which Pressly, then a member of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Board of Trustees and chair of the ETS Nominating Committee, was very knowledgeable of the southern independent school landscape as well as the national agenda.[6]

The first black students entered a school with a well-defined college preparatory curriculum. The educational program at Westminster was characterized by its commitment to each student. As noted in a faculty handbook; "Personal traits and potentials are precious in their individuality, worthy of full development, ultimately limited only by the individual's restricting himself to the demands of living in a community of persons of like worth."[7] Requirements for graduation in both the Boys' and Girls' schools for ninth through twelfth grades consisted of 21 ½ credits in Christian education, English, mathematics, foreign languages, history, science, physical education, and electives.

Archival documents are limited in addressing the reality of school desegregation; oral history interviews, however, illuminate with more veracity both white and black student experiences during this era, including those related to the school's curriculum. According to interviewee reports, certain teachers supported and encouraged black students more than others and stopped harassment occurring in their classrooms. Race was primarily addressed in English and history courses, both from the perspective of novels such as *Black Like Me* and *Cry, the Beloved Country* and pro-white southern

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[5] The Westminster Schools, Folder: Administrative Records, 1963–1965, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers, WA.

[6] Educational Testing Service—Board of Trustees 1967-1968, Folder: Educational Testing Service Nominating Committee, Special Collections—Dr. William L. Pressly, WA.

[7] "The Westminster Schools: A Handbook for the Faculty and Staff," 1970-1971, Folder: Faculty Handbook, 1970–1971, Dr. William L. Pressly—Office of the President, WA.

positions.[8] In 1969, a one-semester course, "The Negro in American History," was added to the Girls' School curriculum. Taught by Ellen Fleming, the class sought to expand students' understanding of black history, contributions by black Americans, and the relevance and longevity of the freedom struggle. Additionally, according to a newspaper article, Fleming wanted "to deepen student's understanding of the social sciences by pointing out the manifold nature of man, by fostering comprehension among people to overcome ethnocentrism, and to show American growth and limitations during various periods."[9] In time, the first black students would complete the high school curriculum, including AP classes, with the variety of subjects conveying different meanings for each student. As indicated in table 3, the black alumni interviewed matriculated to well-known liberal arts colleges and universities, but performing well academically was only one part of their experience. See Appendix D for more detailed information on these interviewees.

Table 3. Black Alumni Interviewees

Year Entered	Name	Grade Entered	Graduation Year	College
1967	Clark, Dawn	4th	1976	St. Andrew's College
1967	McBay, Michael	8th	1972	Stanford University
1967	Wade, Jannard	8th	1972	Morehouse College
1967	Ward, Wanda	8th	1972	Princeton University
1968	McBay, Ron	5th	1976	Princeton University
1968	Ryder, Malcolm	9th	1972	Princeton University
1969	Johnson, Joia	5th	1977	Duke University

Source: Data from Westminster class pictures, yearbooks, directories, and interviewees.

Though academic excellence was a primary reason for attending Westminster, alumni, children of black communities from working-, middle-, and middle-upper-class families, responded in greater detail, especially regarding the initial years of desegregation, to how they made sense of being black at Westminster, the roles of family

[8] John Howard Griffin, *Black Like Me* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1960); and Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

[9] "Interesting Courses Provide Opportunities," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* November 1969, p. 6, WA.

and community, and the factors that fostered their ability to navigate the school. Dr. Wanda E. Ward, the first black female alumna of Westminster, referred to the desegregation of Westminster as a social experiment of which she and the others were a part.[10] With a host of variables, the experiment was tested. For some, there were many negative reactions and for others there were enough positive reactions to foster an overall positive outcome. The students who desegregated Westminster and other southern prep schools unassumingly carried the burden of being first while navigating a racial climate that signaled both directly and indirectly their differences. The students in turn took such signals and became special and courageous "firsts" desegregating an elite private school. Their white peers, in reflecting on the harassment inflicted on black students and the courage needed to attend Westminster, credit the first black students for changing perceptions. Though one may think of race and racism as only a part of the 1960s milieu, race was central, and it informed the experiences of the black students at Westminster, an institution that continued to have a culture of conflicting racial messages and practices.

The First to Desegregate

In the fall of 1967, the first black students enrolled at Westminster. Most were in the eighth grade, though there was also a fourth and a fifth grader. See table 4 for an overview of students and grades.

[10] Wanda Ward, interview by author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.

Table 4. Black Students Attending Westminster, 1967-1968

Name	Grade
Clark, Dawn*+	4th
Billings, Bill	5th
Kemp, Janice	8th
Clark, Isaac+	8th
McBay, Michael*+	8th
Wade, Jannard*+	8th
Ward, Wanda*+	8th

*****Interviewed by author
+Alumnus of Westminster

Source: Data from Westminster class pictures, yearbooks, directories, and interviewees.

Those interviewed had been previously educated in black segregated public schools of Atlanta. Their parents, some of whom were professors at the AUC, believed the superior facilities and array of academic courses would net a better education for their children than the city's public schools. The experiences the students report, however, transcend the academic experience. While Dawn Clark and Michael McBay would experience overt harassment, Jannard Wade and Wanda Ward would not, though race certainly influenced their experiences.

Dawn Clark was the first female black student to enroll in Westminster's lower grades. Over time, her experience at Westminster would become more balanced as she developed interest in the subject of religion, participated in extracurricular activities, and enjoyed familial relationships with other black students; however, her first year was remembered in large part through the lens of racial discrimination. The daughter of Charles and Dr. Johnnie Clark, Dawn grew up in Southwest Atlanta in the Peyton Forest area. Dr. Clark was a professor in the School of Business at Atlanta University; she would later become dean. Additionally, Dawn's godfather, John Middleton, was president of Morris Brown College and pastor of Allen Temple AME Church, which she and her family attended. Her godmother, Merlissie Middleton, was also a professor at Morris Brown.

Prior to enrolling at Westminster, Dawn Clark attended M. Agnes Jones Elementary School, where she excelled because of her preparation at home. Clark recalled, "I went to first grade knowing how to read, write, add, and subtract. Only thing I did not know how to do was to multiply and divide."[11] Because her mathematical and literacy skills exceeded those of most other children entering first grade, Clark was not academically challenged. According to Dr. Johnnie Clark, her daughters' teachers suggested private schooling as an option, "because [Dawn] was becoming disenchanted, and a problem in school because she did not have enough to do … so [her father and I] began to look around and in the process ended up at Westminster."[12] Further, in Dr. Clark's estimation, "you have to think in terms of really what kind of academic preparation children are getting and that's when we came to the conclusion that we needed to make a decision to move her to the school where the academics were a bit stepped up more so than they were at the school she attended."[13]

Before becoming a full-time student, Clark attended Westminster's summer program, which in retrospect she thought would have helped her transition to Westminster. She remembered the program being "nice. I mean, it was different … I actually got to learn things and that was exciting … it was just fun."[14] No racial incidents occurred, and she had friends from the Westminster summer program when she enrolled in the fall 1967. Yet, much conversation ensued about Clark attending the school full-time. She stated, "I did not understand what the deal was, why all of a sudden there were

[11] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 26, 2010.
[12] Johnnie Lee Clark, phone interview with author, May 11, 2010.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 26, 2010.

all these adults getting involved and having heated conversations about me going someplace I had just been. You know I did not understand it."[15]

In fact, Clark's first year was very traumatic. She remembered being bullied and harassed, having her head dunked in the water fountain, being tripped, and having the word "nigger" written on her desk. She also recalled her dress sashes being taken by other students. One student, larger than most of the other students, chased, sat, and rolled on her after school, and a disabled student used his walking crutches to trip her. Additionally, Clark's hair "was a constant source of criticism and ridicule."[16]

Clark felt as excluded outside of school as she had during the school day. Not chosen for the one opening in the Girl Scout Troup at Westminster, she became a part of a newly formed troop with future Westminster classmates Joia Johnson and Janice Edwards. Clark also recalled, "being invited to a birthday party that was supposed to be a swimming birthday party [and] … they just changed the day …. And then I remember also being invited over to a sleep-over and we actually went and knocked on the door, and they would not open the door."[17] Clark believed the swimming party was changed to a different date because some white parents did not want their children in the same swimming pool with her.

Clark responded physically at least twice to the harassment. Once, she jumped on the student who would "roll on" on her. Also, "one day I think three people picked on me and three of them I hit, and ended up in Mr. Stevenson's office." (Stevenson was the same administrator who had taken Jeannie Hawkins into his home during the summer

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[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 26, 2010.

program of 1966.) Some white parents questioned the administration about Clark's attendance at Westminster. In response Clark's parents insisted that she be left alone. Further, "Mr. Stevenson made it really clear that I was not going anywhere and that this harassment in class needed to stop and that the teachers needed to be accountable for it, and they [the teachers] needed to tell their children how to behave."[18]

Clark's first year was emblematic of her isolation as the only black female in the lower grades. Though not an excuse for the harassment inflicted, Clark candidly discussed her own demeanor and its influential role:

> I think it was not for every child to be the first of anything. I think that to some degree I was far too young to have been put in that situation. I think that had my personality been different, it might have been different …. I'm one of those sensitive people and my [younger] brother, you can do anything to him and it just isn't going to matter. I think if I had been more like those kids I probably would have gone through it a little differently. I am, was, and still I am probably pretty much a very emotional person, and a lot of my trust in people and feelings and all that kind of stuff was definitely tested in that environment.[19]

The Westminster handbook indicated that teachers in the environment should be attuned to students' individual needs. Had they done so, perhaps Clark would not have experienced the message of rejection that she did. Moreover, school leaders could have taken a more proactive stance versus reactive in communicating expectations to all students concerning race.

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[18]Ibid.

[19] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 31, 2010.

Clark's experiences of rejection were also reported in the story of Michael McBay. McBay enrolled the same year as Clark but entered in the eighth grade. McBay excelled academically and was later considered the student who most embodied attributes of the Black Power Movement, which had begun in 1966. His parents, Dr. Shirley Mathis McBay and the late Dr. Henry McBay, divorced in 1967, but they were also fixtures in the AUC. Henry McBay was on the faculty at Morehouse College in the chemistry department, and Shirley McBay was then a mathematics professor and administrator at Spelman College.[20]

Michael and his younger brother Ron McBay, who began attending Westminster in 1968, grew up in Urban Villa, an "almost entirely black, middle class" neighborhood in the West End of Atlanta. While most of the kids in Urban Villa attended Walter White Elementary School, Michael McBay attended Oglethorpe Elementary School, a school close to the AUC. McBay experienced early mild physical abuse and ostracism at this segregated school because, in his words, he was "not being Black enough for most of the other kids in general." He skipped ahead a grade, from first to second, and was supported by a "wonderful" first grade teacher named Mrs. Montgomery. According to McBay, "she had a strong impact on my life even taking such an interest in my development that she personally drove both Ron and me to Sunday school."[21] McBay would not prove her wrong, because according to his recollection, he graduated from Oglethorpe with the highest scholastic record in the history of the school.[22] With this background, McBay felt

[20] Dr. Shirley McBay also worked at the National Science Foundation and became the first black female dean of students at the Massachusetts Institute for Technology. She is currently president of Quality Education for Minorities, a non-profit organization based in Washington, DC.

[21] Michael McBay, e-mail message to author, September 4, 2010.

[22] Ibid.

prepared to attend Westminster because of "the combination of extreme emphasis on early scholastic training and academic performance at home as well as the curriculum and quality of teachers at Oglethorpe."[23]

McBay received a full-tuition scholarship to Westminster through the Stouffer Foundation, which during its ten-year tenure, supported 140 students of color, mostly black students, to desegregate and attend southern independent prep schools. Anne Forsyth, the founder, was the daughter of Anne C. Stouffer and granddaughter of R. J. Reynolds, owner of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Forsyth used trust money left by her mother to seed the foundation. [24] In addition to believing that the program would aid black students, Forsyth, a white southern female, rationalized starting the program because of the benefits to both black and white students:

> It occurred to me that the white Southern boys who went to equivalent schools in the South probably comprised 80 percent of our leaders in the South, and I felt that if we could pick out really smart kids and show these (white) boys that they (blacks) aren't just basketball players or football players or musicians, but that they are bright, with good attitudes and willingness to learn, in the end I felt it would be a far more enriching program for whites than for blacks. I felt that if we could change the minds, of say, 85 percent of those (white) boys and stop them from being bigots and help them see black people as they are—fellow human

[23] Ibid.

[24] "Southerner Aids 140 Black Students," *Ebony Magazine*, December 1975, p. 136, Box 7, Folder 6, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC

beings—we would have done a great thing. I wasn't just doing something for blacks, I was also helping whites.[25]

On November 22 and 23, 1966, Douglas Lewis, then headmaster of the Summit School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and John Ehle, then a consultant to the Stouffer Foundation, "met with five students who had been selected by a local screening committee." Three of the five students, including McBay, "had the qualities of personality and academic achievement" being sought by the Stouffer Foundation, and those students were encouraged to apply to Westminster for admission to the eighth grade.[26]

In a letter from Ehle to Pressly, McBay's IQ was listed at 162, and he had scored 10 plus in five out of nine categories on the Metropolitan Achievement Test, the standardized test used by the Stouffer Foundation to determine students' academic abilities. Ehle wrote that McBay "is a likeable young man, abundantly personable and assured, who enjoyed talking with us about his books, his experiences and his hobbies, which include drawing. He draws comic strips representing science-fiction ideas, and certain happenings of his school and neighborhood—these he publishes on occasion in the school newspaper or in a neighborhood newspaper which he distributes to the mailboxes of his friends."[27] Ehle further discussed McBay's desire to be a "vertebrate paleontologist" and that the school subjects most interesting to him "revolve around science, so does his reading, so do his imaginings and ambitions."

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[25] Ibid, 142.

[26] John Ehle to William Pressly, December 5, 1966, Jannard Wade Stouffer Foundation Student File, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

[27] Ibid.

During the Stouffer Foundation selection process, McBay was asked about attending an all-white school, and according to the report, "he was unruffled by such prospects," but Michael's initial experience was disturbing.[28] In his words,

> No one could have prepared me for the psychological scarring I was about to receive. The very first day of class—8th grade—I walked in—the "dominant" white males (about 8 of them or so— many on the football team) immediately surrounded me ("How nice!" I naively thought, 'They are welcoming me to class!'). Then they proceeded to humiliate, hit, push, shove, punch, and 'haze' me into hysterics such that I ran to the bathroom to hide and cry.[29]

Further, his younger brother Ron remembered the difficulty Michael experienced. He stated,

> One thing I specifically recall was that it was the season of the 17-year locusts (cicadas). When they emerged from the ground, they shed the outer casing of their exoskeleton, leaving a hollowed out hard mold of this bug lying around in the grass. The white kids would put these shells in my brother's hair, finding it funny that it would get caught up in the naps of his afro and he couldn't get it out of his hair easily.[30]

Michael McBay also stated, "In addition to multiple episodes of racially oriented hazing, two white students even once poured a beaker of boiling sodium hydroxide solution from a second-story chemistry lab window onto me which narrowly missed my eyes and face

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Michael McBay, e-mail message to author, September 4, 2010.
[30] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 24, 2009.

but which literally dissolved my shirt and the t-shirt off of my body."[31] According to McBay, the psychological effects of these incidents and other similar incidents led to significant self-esteem issues, subsequent life-long training in competitive martial arts, and an intense inspiration to do further personal research seeking the unity of spirituality behind the world's various religions.

During the interview process, Dawn Clark and Michael McBay were very reluctant to share their experiences. This reluctance seemed linked to difficult incidents endured. Jere Wells, current assistant headmaster for academic affairs at Westminster and a 1972 white alumnus, stated that he was not "ever aware of any instances in which people said or did things in an intentional way to say, 'you need to leave. This is not your school,'" Yet, Clark and Michael McBay's experiences counter this statement.[32] Their descriptions provide explicit examples of intentional acts of discrimination and displays of power. On more than one occasion, they received explicit messages about how some white students felt about their presence.

Jannard Wade and Wanda Ward also entered Westminster in 1967, but their experiences were different. Race continued to be a factor in the daily lives of the eighth graders, but they were not harassed in the same way as Clark and McBay. Already nearly six feet tall, Wade's size may have contributed to the way he was received. According to Wells, "Jannard was tall, athletic, and had the kind of confidence that frequently goes with boy culture."[33] Additionally, white alumnus Hill Martin noted that Wade was less vulnerable to harassment because of athletics, in comparison to non-athletes, Michael

[31] Michael McBay, e-mail message to author, September 4, 2010.
[32] Jere Wells, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 15, 2009.
[33] Ibid.

McBay and Isaac Clark, another black eighth grader.[34] In Wade's words, "Michael and Isaac, I think, were smaller kids back then, and they probably did experience a little more harassment than I did."[35]

As with Clark and McBay, previous experiences before attending Westminster provided foundations for Wade and Ward. Wade, in his words, was born into a "poor middle class home." His father, the late Fred Douglas Wade, graduated from Morehouse College in 1951 and completed graduate work in education, social, and political science at Atlanta University.[36] He worked as a nursing assistant at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Atlanta. Wade's mother, the late Willie Eva Brown Wade, graduated from Paine College in 1955 and completed graduate study in the field of library science also at Atlanta University.[37] She worked as a teacher and later as a librarian for the Atlanta Board of Education.[38]

Jannard Wade was born and until third or fourth grade was raised in a two-part apartment house on Division Street in the Simpson/Ashby Streets neighborhood in Atlanta. According to Wade, "We stayed in the front. One bedroom, very small. That's basically all I remember. It was a pretty respectable neighborhood. But it was walking distance from the school, and that's where we began."[39] By fifth or sixth grade, Wade

[34] Hill Martin, phone interview with author, March 28, 2010.
[35] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.
[36] Information Form for Referral to Preparatory School, Jannard Wade Stouffer Foundation Student File, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.
[39] Ibid.

and his parents moved to Collier Heights, a middle-class black neighborhood located about four miles west of Division Street.[40]

Prior to attending Westminster, Wade and Ward were both educated at A. F. Herndon Elementary School, a segregated black school, from kindergarten to seventh grade.[41] Wade remembered Herndon in the following way:

> A. F. Herndon was a good school. We didn't have any discipline problems. The facility was adequate. Teachers were pretty good. They cared about the students. We had one in particular in the sixth grade named Mr. Burch that took us to see "The Sound of Music." He took me and Wanda [Ward], and maybe a couple of others. He said we had promise and he wanted to do something special for us. That was kind of neat. It was a solid school. It didn't have a lot of sports and that type of thing. They had a pretty good music director who I still stay in contact with, who may have influenced, a little bit, me to major in Music once I went to college. But nothing spectacular. We had good discipline there, so it was a good environment for learning.

Despite Wade's success at Herndon, his parents believed that he was not being challenged enough and that an environment like Westminster could enhance his

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[40] Ibid. According to the Collier Heights website, "Collier Heights has the distinction of being one of the few communities in the nation built exclusively by African American planners for the upcoming Atlanta African American middle class at a time when most housing for African Americans was "transitioned" away from whites." See http://collierheights.org/about/ (accessed April 2, 2011). For additional historical accounting of the neighborhood as it transitioned from white to black, see Bayor, 64–69; and Kruse, 97–104.

[41] The school was named for Alonzo F. Herndon, a black Atlanta businessman and leader. In 1905, he established the Atlanta Mutual Insurance Association. According to historian Ron Bayor, "The Atlanta Life Insurance Company, as it came to be called, grew into one of the leading black-owned companies in the country and made Herndon a millionaire." See Bayor, 94.

education.[42] In recalling his mother's reasons for wanting him to attend a private school, Wade stated, "She was right there in the school system, and she knew that the private schools were a lot better, had a lot more to offer, would broaden my horizons, be more challenging, and wanted to show that, again, we can compete with anybody, the students that grew up in our neighborhood, given the right tools and guidance."[43] Wade, along with Michael McBay and Isaac Clark, were selected in the spring of 1967 for one of eighteen Stouffer Foundation scholarships from a pool of 200 to receive a five-year scholarship.[44]

Attending Westminster was a significant change for Wade; he was "blown away" by the school, especially by the facilities. He keenly observed his white classmates' wealth as signaled by their cars, their black maids, and the sizes of their homes. "It was like starting college, in my mind. Of course, I had nothing to compare it to except A. F. Herndon. But, yeah I was blown away."[45] Wade also had to adjust to the additional amount of homework and his new classes, including Latin. Yet, he credits the teachers for being able to relate to black students. Wade, an athlete who had not played on organized teams, quickly became involved with the Westminster athletics program by joining the football, basketball, and baseball teams.[46]

As Wade matriculated through Westminster, maintaining balance between home and school grounded him, allowing him to make the Westminster experience work for

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[42] John Ehle to William Pressly, December 5, 1966, Jannard Wade Stouffer Foundation Student File, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

[43] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.

[44] John Ehle and A. Hollis Edens to Mr. Jannard Frederick Douglas Wade, January 31, 1967, Jannard Wade Stouffer Foundation Student File, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

[45] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.

[46] Jannard is pictured on the eighth grade football and basketball team pictures in the 1968 *Lynx*, pp. 144, 152, WA.

him. Reflecting on his childhood, Wade commented, "My parents got me involved in going to a lot of those things so that I wouldn't lose my perspective on what was happening to our community." Moreover, throughout high school, Wade's social life centered on Southwest High School, a predominantly black middle-class public high school. He noted, "I was involved in the Scouts and that kind of thing, a lot in church [Flipper Temple AME Church]. I was really busy on the weekends in my community, kind of doing things. That really helped as far as giving me some normalcy as far as social life. All the girlfriends that I had were from public schools. So I was fortunate to have some really good friends, like I said, over at the other school."[47]

Similar to Wade, Wanda Ward attributed her initial experience and matriculation through Westminster to her family and her personal affect. The role of private education had been a part of Ward's family because her mother, Elaine Jackson, and her siblings had attended the Oglethorpe Elementary Laboratory School (later Oglethorpe became a public school); she graduated from Booker T. Washington, the first black public high school in Atlanta, located in the AUC neighborhood. Ward's grandmother, Renita Pace Phillips, had also attended the AUC and was very instrumental in raising Ward along with her husband Richard A. Phillips, Sr.[48] During her formative years, Ward's mother taught in Head Start Programs, and her grandmother taught in Vinings in Cobb County. Jackson described how her mother commuted each day to Vinings from 1938 to 1972 and that she had "a very good rapport with the whites in Cobb County, and most blacks." Phillips, Jackson's father and Ward's grandfather, worked in a downtown hotel for forty-six years. Ward poignantly described the ethos that emanated from her family:

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[47] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30 2009.
[48] Elaine Jackson., interview with author, Lanham, MD, June 19, 2009.

> So here I had the epitome of the educator married to the traditional black male provider who worked in a hotel, but who also understood and was committed to the value of education. They sent their kids to college, and all this kind of stuff, some of whom finished and some of whom didn't. So in that regard, I think we were typical of what would have been regarded at that time as middle class blacks.[49]

Burch, the same sixth grade teacher who had taken Wade and Ward to the "The Sound of Music," identified Ward's excellent performance at Herndon. In a letter to Wanda's mother, he wrote,

> In all the content areas, Wanda has excelled to such an extent that I wanted to share with you this joyous, satisfying feeling that comes from working with your daughter. Certainly the grades that she has been receiving could not alone tell the entire story; she has exhibited the ability, wisdom, and personality of a mature student, and at such a tender age, this is a rare compliment of which she is more than worthy.[50]

Because of Wade, Burch knew of Westminster's open enrollment policy and of the Stouffer Foundation. Yet, the Stouffer Foundation only recruited males. Nonetheless, Burch recommended Westminster to Ward, as she recollected,

> It was the sixth grade teacher, although I was in the seventh grade by this time, who contacted my mother and indicated that he was aware that there was this private school that was now recruiting, I guess city-wide, black kids to attend. And he felt compelled to let my mother know that he was aware that one of my

[49] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.
[50] D. P. Burch to Elaine Ward, March 14, 1966; Personal Collection of Dr. Wanda Ward.

close friends, who was a black boy, had been recommended to apply or attend Westminster by the school administrators.[51]

Further Ward remembered, "And so had [Mr. Burch] not shown that independence of thought, we wouldn't have even known this social experiment was underway. And so because of that, my mother agreed and was very committed to allowing me … to be considered. That's how I wound up at Westminster in the eighth grade."[52]

Unlike Dawn Clark, Ward's experience was not isolating because Janice Kemp, another eighth grade black student (who was not interviewed), also attended Westminster for eighth and ninth grades. Having a companion in her grade helped mitigate some of the isolation experienced by Clark and allowed Ward to settle into school life. When asked about her feelings of going to Westminster for the first time, Ward, who played on the junior varsity basketball team and served on the Junior High Service Council, could not recall specific emotions.[53] She did, however, remember that she embraced the new opportunity with the personal sentiment of "Okay. Let's do it." Ward's mother, Elaine Jackson, was committed to the opportunity and very enthusiastic, especially because of Burch's outreach. When asked why Ward attended Westminster, Jackson responded, "Wanda was there for the academics, which she was quite capable of performing. I told her [an administrator at Westminster with whom she had a difference]: 'She's not here to make friends. She's here to take advantage of the academics that you provide.'"[54]

During this first year of desegregation, the lack of direct response to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in April 1968 illuminated Westminster's

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[51] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.
[52] Ibid.
[53] *Westminster Lynx 1968*, pp. 172, 180, WA.
[54] Elaine Jackson, interview with author, Lanham, MD, June 19, 2009.

conflicting racial climate. Jannard Wade recalled "that [it] was a scary time when [King] was killed." He further stated,

> That was devastating for me personally. Gosh, it was so long ago. I don't remember anything specifically. I just knew personally how important he was to the Movement and especially the nonviolent aspect and how Malcolm X and some other movements were getting involved and how I was just afraid it was going to be a really volatile situation, especially here in the South, and some things may have become undone that had been done.[55]

Ward also had memories of King's death:

> I remember very profoundly when MLK got killed. A lot of people were saddened. I remember not a lot of my classmates spoke to me about it, and I didn't speak to a lot of them about it, but a few of them did, the more politically conscious, and they were angry. They were deeply, deeply angry and hurt because it was such a loss to the nation. I remember that rather vividly …. I remember being in the cafeteria, and it was—I don't know how to capture that, but it was a deeply historical demarcation. It's like the nation had not—the nation hadn't lived up to its creed, up to its potential .... That was a most unfortunate time.

Although Wade believed that an assembly was held and that some attention was given to King's work, he did not recall "anything special or the kids being apologetic or any discussions really, about it. He was pretty much respected by everybody. There were a couple of knuckleheads that brought up the fact that they thought that he was a

[55] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.

Communist or something like that. But those people, you just kind of considered the source and moved on."[56]

Interestingly, in his memoir on Westminster, Pressly noted that on April 3, 1968 Dr. Henry McBay visited him to talk about Michael. According to Pressly, however, "it was clear that Professor McBay was preoccupied with undercurrents of racial tension in Atlanta." In the immediate days after King's assassination, Pressly asked McBay to take him and Ernest Gordon, the chaplain of Princeton University chapel, to visit the King home. According to Pressly, they were warmly greeted by Rev. King, Sr. (or Daddy King).[57]

Dawn Clark, Michael McBay, Jannard Wade, and Wanda Ward's experiences during the first three years of desegregation reflect several themes. First, these students were reared in the black community, and they continued to relate to their home communities throughout their tenure at Westminster. As noted, Wade's neighborhood high school was important to him. While Ward's family was a constant source of support, so was her neighborhood, the Mayson Turner community, and her church, Big Bethel AME Church, located on the famous Auburn Avenue, which was also home to Wheat Street Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. William Holmes Borders, and Ebenezer Baptist Church, pastored by Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr. Though her family was not actively involved in the movement, Big Bethel, because of its location and membership, served not only as a foundation for "spiritual growth, but social activism."[58] Ward acknowledged that her path was different from most in her church. Yet, these differences

[56] Ibid.
[57] Pressly, 169–70.
[58] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.

were reconciled because, according to Ward, "it wasn't so exceptionally different because we were in that environment that valued the criticality of good education." Moreover, Ward's own younger siblings attended public schools, thereby continuing to link her to the educational experiences of most black Atlantans.

Additionally, these students had experiences in black schools where teachers cared enough to support their efforts and academic success, similar to the support afforded black students in segregated public and private schools. Yet, structural inequality prevented black schools on the whole from being resourced equally to their white counterparts. For example, "in October 1969, 117 of Atlanta's schools were still segregated; only thirty-four were desegregated; and only 20,000 of the system's 100,000 children were in biracial classrooms."[59] The first black students' families' connections to education, including their understanding of this inequality and the dynamics of desegregation such as the dismissal and demotion of black teachers and administrators, influenced conceptions of educational opportunity.

According to Clark, her parents, however, experienced some negativity for sending her (and later her younger brother) to Westminster. She stated, "But the fact that education was laughed at in the neighborhood and even other people who would talk about our parents as being uppity … as opposed to understanding what my parents were sacrificing for me to go to school …. Not only the financial sacrifices but the time sacrifices, the things they could have done for their own entertainment that they did not do because my brother and I were in school."[60] Black families with knowledge of the importance of education sought, either through their own means or through scholarships,

[59] Hornsby, 35.
[60] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 26, 2010.

an opportunity to position their children in a rapidly changing society predicated on racism.

Some students' experiences included overt racism. As described by Hill Martin, a white alumnus who actually worked alongside black workers in the cafeteria and dormitory, "Initially, I think it was pretty tense. There were cutting remarks in class and in the hallways …. I will say that early on I was openly ugly and mean-spirited toward Michael, Isaac, Malcolm [who would enter in 1968], and Jannard. I'm sure that they never trusted me as a result and I don't blame them. I eventually realized that I was being a small minded jerk and quit being abusive/ugly to them (a small measure of change but change nonetheless)."[61]

Yet, even as they experienced harassment or later learned about it as alumni, the first black students did not feel as if they carried the weight of the world as "firsts." Wanda Ward said she "never focused at all on the weightiness or the significance of the experience," which she still believes was a benefit to her. In her words, "I wasn't pioneering this, and I wasn't treading X, Y, Z. I was going to school to excel and to do well in sports, which I did."[62] Further, Dawn Clark noted that she "did not feel that mantel of responsibility probably, until later on. Again, you know, as a fourth grader you are just trying to get used to, you know, my mind wasn't there. [The older students] did make us aware that we needed to watch out for each other, you know. We knew that we were a sub-set of a bigger microcosm, that within this microcosm all of us better stay … stay together and look out for each other."[63]

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[61] Hill Martin, e-mail message to author, March 28, 2010.
[62] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.
[63] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 26, 2010.

Desegregation Continues

On a national level in the fall of 1968, NAIS declared its position on open enrollment admission policies. In describing the considerations before publically supporting open enrollment, the board of directors considered two points: "first, whether a voluntary membership organization should prescribe standards for its members, and second, whether a national organization which is recognized as a spokesman and standard-bearer for independent school education could fail to take a stand on an issue of such primary significance to all educational institutions and the American people." Based on recommendations by a special committee to study the issues, the board was convinced to take a public stand because of the number of NAIS schools that "were either committed to, or making substantial strides toward, integration." The statement did not exclude those schools that did not support integration because, "the consensus was that the time had not yet arrived for an ultimatum from NAIS, and that the cause would be better served by a policy which would support rather than coerce those schools that were working hard to persuade their constituents that restrictive admissions practices were no longer tenable and should be changed."[64]

The policy included three points. The first stated that the "admission of students, as well as the employment of school personnel, should be open to all who are qualified regardless of race or color." Secondly, the NAIS Board clarified its position on private schools intended to preserve segregation by including the following statement: "The Board….believes that such schools are contrary to the best interests of American society and, therefore, of the independent school, and it will not extend to such schools the

[64] National Association of Independent Schools, "Open Enrollment: A Statement of the Board of Directors," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 26 (October 1968): 1–2.

services or privileges of the Association." The third point, therefore, urged all member schools to adopt non-discriminatory policies and practices. The board then outlined several steps to be taken by NAIS, including surveys on black student enrollment, discussions about open enrollment at regional association meetings, and recruitment of black teachers.[65]

As NAIS declared its open enrollment policy, five black students joined the original seven for the 1968-1969 school year. These students included four boys and one girl. One student enrolled in kindergarten; the others were in the fifth to the ninth grade. See table 5 for an overview of attendees.

Table 5. Black Students Attending Westminster, 1968-1969

Name	Grade
Richardson, Lisa	Pre-1st
Clark, Dawn*+	5th
McBay, Ron*+	5th
Billings, Bill	6th
Scott, Julius	8th
Maddox, Anthony	8th
Kemp, Janice	9th
Clark, Isaac+	9th
McBay, Michael*+	9th
Ryder, Malcolm*+	9th
Wade, Jannard*+	9th
Ward, Wanda*+	9th

*****Interviewed by author
+ Westminster alumnus
Bold: First year attending Westminster

Source: Data from Westminster class pictures, yearbooks, directories, and interviewees.

Ron McBay and Malcolm Ryder provide illustrative case studies of the experiences of black students in the second year. Similar to the students who entered in 1967, family, prior schooling, and community experiences were significant in leading new students Ron McBay and Ryder to Westminster and in helping them find their place in the Westminster community. However, the overt harassment continued. McBay attributed his harassment more to his physical stature than race, whereas Ryder was isolated as the only

[65] Ibid.

black boarding student. This isolation seemed to lead to more overt racial experiences for Ryder. In contrast, Jannard Wade and Wanda Ward began high school by becoming more involved in campus life, in part as a defense mechanism and in part because of their personalities and growing level of comfort at Westminster.

Ron McBay believed that his transition was better than those of the previous year because of the following reasons:

> A) it was a year later for the school in general; B) my own classmates had already gone through it the year before with Dawn Clark; C) there were only 3 new students for them to adjust to/welcome into the 5th grade; D) I was joining a coed class of 10-year-old 5th graders; and E) teachers have commented that our particular class of '76 was "sweeter, gentler" than most as middle-schoolers.[66]

According to McBay, Pressly was aware of what happened to his brother Michael the previous year. Ron McBay recalled that one afternoon Pressly approached him and asked how he was doing. After giving a generic, "I'm fine," Pressly responded with, "No. I know what kind of things they did to your brother. If anything like that has happened to you, I want you to tell me."[67]

Like Michael, Ron had been prepared to attend Westminster through his previous schooling at Oglethorpe, where he skipped the second grade. McBay described receiving "a good education" at Oglethorpe and that other "very good students" attended the school. In his words, McBay "was one of the smartest in the class (of 30 or so) but I wasn't the smartest student." Even before starting elementary school, McBay knew his multiplication tables. Yet, he did not like receiving any attention for being an advanced

[66] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 24, 2009.
[67] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 27, 2009.

student. For example, he clearly disliked being torn away from his friends on the first day of what was supposed to be second grade. McBay stated, "So I'm in line with my 1st grade classmates and everybody ahead of me goes into the 2nd grade classroom. When [my teacher] gets to me, she pulls me out of line and tells me (for the first time) that I don't get to go with my friends, instead I have to go across the hall directly into 3rd grade. It was very traumatic being torn away from my friends without any advanced notice. Here again, I was 'The Only One.'"[68] Because McBay skipped grades, he was always a year younger than his classmates and thus a year behind in physical development, making it "bad for sports, bad for social development."[69]

Despite the difficulties Michael encountered, Ron was still excited about the possibility of attending Westminster, a school that he knew as "the best in town." He recalled, "As much as I clearly remember knowing how unhappy he was going there, it was going to be my turn to attend Westminster the next year; but I also remember clearly being excited about the opportunity to go. I was looking forward to it greatly."[70] The women working in Oglethorpe's cafeteria even asked McBay how he did on the Westminster entrance test. Though Michael had received a full scholarship through the Stouffer Foundation, the McBays paid entirely for Ron's schooling at Westminster (except for a small one-time scholarship from an external foundation); Dr. Shirley McBay even took a second job as a bookkeeper for a nightclub.

Prior to attending Westminster in the fall of 1968, Ron McBay participated in Westminster's summer school, both influencing his mathematical intellect and first

[68] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 24, 2009.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid.

impressions of Westminster. McBay recalled that "'the trick' to math kicked in with me and I 'got it.' That's the first time I remember liking math for its own sake. I'm not sure how much of that is Westminster's doing as much as it's something between me and Math that would have happened even in public school."[71] Additionally, before the summer program McBay had only one white classmate and would see his only white neighbors, a Jewish family, in passing. So for him having only been in all-black environments, his "sense [of] 'normal, average' skin tone was totally out the window in this new environment." McBay noted, "the literal brightness of the skin of white people was a big shock to me." Further McBay "clearly remember[ed] thinking, 'Wow. They really are WHITE!'" [72] Westminster's wealth also shocked McBay. In his words, "the large campus was, frankly, a more posh environment for 1,200 K-through-12 students than the entire set of campuses for 12,000 students at the AUC schools. That was obvious right away."[73]

Several incidents marked Ron McBay's initial years at Westminster, helping to shape his approach to racial issues and his self-concept. One incident occurred in his fifth grade homeroom while playing a game called "G-H-O-S-T." In this game, students sat in a circle and called out letters to spell a word. According to McBay, "When it's your turn, if you say a letter that completes a word ("C"-"A"-"T"), then you're out; but all the letters said (including yours) must be the beginning of a real word, or else you're also out." McBay described sitting in the fifth spot, and the letters before his turn were "T"-"E"-"T"-"R." So he could either spell "TETRA" or say another letter and be challenged

[71] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 27, 2009.
[72] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 24, 2009.
[73] Ibid.

to come up with a word other than TETRA. “So in my mind, my thoughts immediately go to the kinds of things that happened to my brother,” wrote McBay. “So to me, this was ‘Let’s get rid of the black kid right away.’ So I panic and run out of the room crying, run down the hall into the bathroom, and hide in one of the stalls.” A student followed McBay and asked why he left the room crying when they were just playing a game. For McBay, “the genuine innocence of this kid really got to me—he had absolutely no idea that I thought some racial incident had just occurred. Suddenly, I felt bad even thinking such a thing about these people. From that point on, I really never looked for a racial angle in things that happened (even when it might have been there).”[74]

Overall, Ron McBay “felt accepted, special in a good way but not so terribly different,” and race, at least implicitly, informed some of his daily interactions. For example, it was not a surprise that he played “Rudolph” in the class Christmas skit, “Rudolph: The Red-Nosed Reindeer,” and he enjoyed being the star of the Christmas play. McBay recalled how a few students gave him the nickname “Fuzzy.” In his words, “It was just as new for them to be around someone black as it was for me to be around white people. They would rub my hair and think it was cool and different. It probably sounds bad, but it was innocent and sweet.”

Additionally, Ron McBay remembered being interviewed by a television crew about singing “Dixie” in a school assembly; as a ten- year-old, McBay did not believe that he was making any kind of political statement. In his opinion, this response was not well-received by the camera crew On another occasion, McBay recalled how other students and he were talking about dance class. Although McBay was not interested in

[74] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 27, 2009.

taking the class, he distinctly remembered other students stating that their parents would have questioned whether or not to let them participate if only Dawn Clark or McBay were enrolled in the class, and thus without a dance partner.[75] McBay also remembered doing well on a test in fifth grade and that those who did well received commendation from the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.). He recollected "the teacher saying that if the D.A.R. had realized I was black they probably would have rescinded the certificate, 'but we won't tell them.'"[76]

During the summer between fifth and sixth grades, another incident took place. By the end of fifth grade, Ron McBay excelled in reading comprehension. Over the summer, all the students were to read and write book reports, but McBay did not complete the assignment nor had he told his mother about the assignment. Thus, when school resumed, his reading comprehension skills had significantly decreased. During the meeting with McBay's teacher, the teacher blamed Dr. McBay for her son not doing his summer work. According to McBay, "My mom … misinterpreted the situation and thought this white lady was simply saying her black son 'couldn't read.' So my mom was offended over what she perceived as a racial incident." Always, a quiet child, McBay "might speak up once to try and clarify the situation between the two of them, but after that—once the adults don't listen to what a kid is saying, I bowed out of it and just let them argue when neither one understood where the other was coming from."[77]

Outside of school the rise of the Jackson 5 musical group was integral to Ron McBay's childhood. One day, one of Michael McBay's friends from the neighborhood

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[75] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 27, 2009; Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, April 26, 2010.

[76] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, June 8, 2009.

[77] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 27, 2009.

came to their home and immediately put on the record "I Want You Back," released in May 1969. The presence of a younger brother being the "star" of the group was revolutionary for Ron's self-concept. He stated,

> Over the years, I've tried to explain to whites what a revolutionary figure 10-year-old Michael Jackson was and I've never had the sense that they could truly appreciate what he meant. I remind them that for a 10-year-old black kid, the image of "yourself" that you saw on television went from "Buckwheat" and "Stymie" of the Little Rascals to Michael Jackson in one jump with nothing in between. All of a sudden, the world was no longer telling me that I have to be this ignorant joke character; instead, I could be this mesmerizing performer—and the littlest kid was no longer the tag-along; he was the star of the act and the older brothers were his backups.[78]

Ron McBay's candid description points to the ways in which race and self-concept are intertwined. Though he felt accepted as the only black male fifth-grade student, race played a role in his interactions with others and with understanding himself. McBay's initial experiences, like Dawn Clark's, also indicate the ways in which younger black children entered a space such as Westminster. Despite Ron knowing about his older brother's negative experiences, he was still excited to try a new school.

As Ron McBay and Clark, two of four black students in the lower grades, were coming to understand themselves and the world around them, Malcolm Ryder, the first black boarding student, was attempting to navigate Westminster as well. Westminster parents had been notified of Ryder's presence in spring 1968 in a letter from Pressly.

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[78] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, June 8, 2009.

Ryder, born and raised in Norfolk, Virginia, was described as "a boy with very high academic achievement and with much talent in the fields of Art and Music." Pressly continued by stating, "Our policy of admitting students without regard to race has brought us some remarkably fine boys and girls in our day school. We are all pleased with the ease with which they have fitted into the student body, and I am sure Malcolm will fit easily into the dormitory, receiving much from the group and giving much to the group."[79]

Similar to other parents, Ryder's parents, the late Noah Francis and Georgia Atkins-Ryder, had worked at a historically black institution of higher learning, Norfolk State College, where they established and grew the music program.[80] In addition to the community at his church, Bank Street Baptist Church, Ryder learned a sense of community from artists and intellectuals. He recalled, "We [my sisters and I] were constantly seeing them performing and building things with each other. So the idea that you're in a community and the community takes care of itself, it wasn't just an idea to us. That was pretty much all we knew. As children, growing up, that's just the way life was. We actually had to leave home to find out that there was some other way of getting things done." This feeling of community also extended to Ryder's home neighborhood—the Tifton Street Community. It was "one of those streets where almost every house had kids

[79] William L. Pressly, letter to parents of board students, May 17, 1968, Folder: Correspondence Outgoing August 1967–June 1968, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[80] Norfolk State College is now Norfolk State University. Originally named the Norfolk Unit of Virginia Union University, the institution began in 1935. In 1942, the school became Norfolk Polytechnic College, and in 1944 it came under the guise Virginia State College. By 1956, Norfolk State offered its first Bachelor's degree. By 1969, Norfolk State College was a separate entity, and in 1979 the school was granted university status. (http://www.nsu.edu/about/history.html, accessed April 2, 2011).

that were within a few years age of our family's. We knew everyone. We all went to school together for years and years."[81]

Ryder attended black public schools growing up, first at Oakwood Elementary and then at Rosemont Junior High School. His parents had high standards; it was "just expected" that his sisters and he would be A students, and according to Ryder, "we were more than prepared well enough to do that at these schools."[82] Noah Ryder died when Malcolm was ten years old, but he had not been around his father very much beginning at age eight because of his father's illness. Following Noah Ryder's death, Georgia Ryder took it upon herself to provide in the best ways she knew how for Malcolm and his two sisters. About two years after his father passed, Malcolm's mother began to pursue her doctoral degree at New York University, and during her first year there, Malcolm, Diana, and Renee lived with their respective godparents who provided nurturing environments.

As Westminster desegregated in 1967, Malcolm Ryder attended a newly built, desegregated public school, Lake Taylor, which in his words was "well run. We had small classes, and you pretty much had the same group of kids all day. They just moved your group around from one teacher to another. So I made some new friends, and I had white friends for the first time, but not a lot of them."[83] In comparison to his earlier neighborhood schools, Lake Taylor's standards were higher. In comparing Lake Taylor to segregated black public schools, however, Ryder was very cognizant that the school had money, community support, and higher expectations of students, but the students

[81] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 18, 2009.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

were able to meet the expectations because of the increased resources.[84] Ryder, an honor-roll student, did not fit emotionally with Lake Taylor, in part because he considered it a transitional year. He had expected to move to New York City the following year and had already begun an emotional withdrawal from Norfolk.

This transitional year also brought a new opportunity Ryder's way—applying for a scholarship through the Stouffer Foundation. Georgia Ryder, wanting Malcolm to be challenged academically, learned of the Stouffer Foundation from the Goss family, fellow church members and family friends. Wade Goss, similar in age to Malcolm, had been a recipient of a Stouffer award the previous year. His mother, Jocelyn Goss, a teacher and career educator, was very good friends with Georgia Ryder and had suggested the program.

In Malcolm Ryder's student file from the Stouffer Foundation, Lewis described Ryder as "a wispy, quiet, gentle fellow who hopes, at the moment to be an astronaut. 'I think it's different and fascinating—the idea that we can break away from the earth and actually travel in space.'" Ryder was viewed as "handling his present school challenges (including the problem of being one of twenty Negroes in a 1600-student junior high." Lewis noted that Ryder, while subdued and serious in the interview, was "apparently well-liked and respected, having been vice president of his student council in sixth grade, president of the council in seventh grade (both in an all-Negro school), and nearly won the election to the council this year in his new school." Lewis also indicated a recent fight that Ryder had with a "foul-mouthed acquaintance who was messing up the yard.

[84] Ibid.

Apparently, Ryder was fighting defensively, and for a cause."[85] A second interviewer noted, "It would be difficult to find a more suitable candidate for a scholarship than Malcolm Ryder. He is a superior person. He will be a challenge to the preparatory school which receives him, and he will contribute significantly in many areas of work and life at that school."

After being granted the scholarship, Ryder visited Westminster and became excited about the possibilities of going away to school, though Westminster's academics were not a huge attraction. For Ryder, "[Westminster] felt like a college rather than a high school. It communicated opportunity to me. Dr. Pressly also arrived to personally meet me and my mother. We talked just outside of the main hall in the bright sunshine. He said he'd heard about me for a while and was excited that I was coming to study and play music at WM. So overall it initially felt like the place was being given to me."[86] Looking back on his admission to Westminster, Ryder did not think it appeared completely out of the ordinary. "So it's also fair to note that admittance to Westminster was a highly selective thing, and it makes sense that their selections would be a close fit to something they already understood. Despite my being black, my family upbringing made me a very close fit I think to what Westminster already understood before they admitted me."[87] Ryder referred to a middle-upper-class ethos of Westminster.

As a requirement of the Stouffer Foundation, Ryder and the other nineteen recipients attended Duke University's ABC Program, a program philosophically

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[85] Interview report from Douglas R. Lewis, 12 December 1967; Malcolm Ryder Stouffer Foundation Student File, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

[86] Malcolm Ryder, e-mail message to author, May 18, 2009.

[87] Ibid.

committed to "assisting the student with the transition from public to private schools."[88] The daily schedule included classes in English, mathematics, and reading, study hall, cultural activities, and athletics. The classes were not of the remedial level but were intended to enhance and further "the individual's particular needs and capacities, from the fundamentals to esoteric points of excellence." The students also watched movies, including "On the Waterfront," "The Guns of Navarone," "Macbeth," "Living Desert," and "Ulysses"; staged and performed the play "Stalag 17"; visited the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill; and enjoyed a weekend sailing and camping trip.[89]

Additionally, during the time of the program, the Southern Regional Council, a biracial organization established in 1944 committed to solving the problems of the South, sponsored an orientation for the Stouffer Foundation. The orientation was intended to allow the students "to discuss with Vernon Jordan, a Negro leader of Atlanta, and with others, the opportunities and problems they had or would soon encounter as Negro students in previously all-white preparatory schools in the South." Thirty-seven young men attended the retreat; in addition to Ryder and his cohort, some of those who had received the Stouffer Foundation scholarship the year before also attended.[90]

By attending the summer program, Ryder recollected that it was made "very clear with us about the fact that we were going to institutions where black people were few and far between." But the ABC Program in some ways provided a sense of false reality. Ryder stated,

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[88] Duke University, 1968, ABC Report, Box 13, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Rita Kiger to Whom It May Concern, November 1970, Box 8, Folder: Quail Roost Conference, Stouffer Foundation Records, SHC, UNC.

> So they were making sure that we were up to speed with what they considered to be the acceptable regimen at the schools that they were sending us to. It was just us. We were hanging out with each other for the summer. It was a lot of fun, but it was a bunch of black kids hanging out with each other. So I knew intellectually that when we get to Westminster there would be me and maybe a couple of others, and a bunch of white kids, but it just didn't really strike home that I'd be living alone with whites in a single building—that I would be living there, not just going to school there.[91]

Ryder's first couple of years at Westminster were challenging in ways he had not expected. Ryder described three incidents in particular that occurred in the dormitory. The first involved his portion of the bedroom he shared with three other students. He recalled,

> Not long after school started, I came home from classes one day and—so I had three roommates. We were in one of these rooms that's got a divider that's where your closets and things are, so basically there's two of you on one side of this divider and two of you on the other side. So it's basically four bedrooms. So I walk into our room after class and my part of it was totally destroyed and the other three are pristine. So it's very clearly targeted vandalism.

A second incident occurred when Malcolm returned to his dorm room to find a hunting knife sticking out of his closet door. He described a third situation as follows: "Then there was another time when I came in and most of my notebooks—the spiral bound kind—had been opened and filled, just page after page of about threats and insults, 'Go

[91] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 18, 2009.

home, nigger.' Pretty predictable stuff." But Ryder at that time had not experienced this "predictable stuff" and did not know the source. The incidents caused fear and affected Ryder emotionally. He stated, "that's where it went from being weird to being scary because you never know. It just kind of threw me into being very kind of self-protective and wary, and it kind of shut me down." But in his words, he was "rescued" by an older white student who also lived in the dorm; "when he took me under his wing virtually all of this stuff stopped," stated Ryder. "He was a white guy, and I think it just kind sent of a message to everyone who needed to get it."[92]

Ryder had been isolated in the dormitory, and these incidents were allowed to happen. As he struggled to find his way, Ryder acknowledged that he did not fully connect with his ninth-grade black classmates, but their example was not lost on him. Ryder played on the ninth-grade football team—in large part because of Jannard Wade's example of being involved—and participated in the band as a trumpet player.[93] Looking back on his first year at Westminster, Ryder stated:

> If I could rewind and go through it again, I would certainly stick a lot closer to them than I did. The example that they offered to me, just being themselves, was enormous. I think that—I really shudder to think of what they thought of me in my first year there. I'm glad to have some humility about it, but I was going through this thing in the dorm and really not connecting to the other students, and in particular not connecting to them, not because I'd singled them out, but because they all lived at home, elsewhere, and I naively assumed they couldn't

[92] Ibid.
[93] *Westminster Lynx 1969*, pp. 123, 177, WA.

understand. But if anybody could have helped me it would have been them, and I totally blew that opportunity.[94]

As Ryder endured these challenges in the ninth grade, the black day students had begun to find their niches in school life, both in academics and extracurricular activities. Michael McBay was listed among sixteen other students on the freshman honor roll.[95] He would later become a cartoonist and writer for the *Bi-Line,* and he used the vehicle to raise concerns of African Americans along with larger social and political issues. In the Westminster yearbook that year, Wanda Ward and Janice Kemp were both pictured on the freshman honor roll, the junior varsity basketball team, and as members of the Quest Club, a discussion group open to all freshmen and sophomore girls. Ward was also pictured on the varsity basketball team, which had a successful season of fourteen wins and four losses.[96]

During ninth grade, Jannard Wade became even more involved in school life following his mother's passing. As ninth grade commenced, Wade's involvement "was probably one of the best things that could have happened to me because that exposed me to a lot of different activities that a lot of students kind of just would blow off. Anything I could try, I did try." For example, Wade was the first black student to play soccer, and he fondly remembered why he tried out for the team: "They thought I was going out for basketball because I was black, so I went out for soccer. Coach Sims, the soccer team [coach],…recruited me," and Wade became a standout.[97] Part of the team description in the yearbook read: "The first year boys were led by Alan Simons, John Wilson, Tyler

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[94] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 18, 2009.
[95] *Westminster Lynx 1969*, p. 101, WA.
[96] Ibid., 150, 152, 171.
[97] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.

Spratlin, and youthful future greats Jannard Wade, Scott Pendergrast, and Charlie McCoy."[98]

Although Wade was seemingly making a good transition, his athletic experiences were affected by race. For example, in ninth or tenth grade, a football coach remarked after practice, "Now if we work like a bunch of niggers, we'll win the State Championship." The remark scarred Wade, because he was the only black player on the field; the only other black person was Willie Harris, the team bus driver and trainer. According to Wade, the coach "was later fired for [the remark]," and "his son later came and apologized to me for his father's comments … And even the coach himself apologized. He just said he used to be in the Klan or something and that was just his upbringing, and he didn't really mean anything by it. But, you know, it's just something that you don't say. That was his first exposure to us and our first exposure to them."[99]

Wade would later have some "rough" experiences including a game against Fitzgerald in the first round of the playoffs for the state championship. According to Wade, "I was cursed out, called names the whole game. The referee wouldn't call the plays. If I did something, he'd say I'm out of bounds, or whatever …. But that just made us more determined to kick their butts, and we did. But it was kind of scary because South Georgia and Atlanta are two different animals, even today." He also remembered a team outing to the movies in Rutledge, Georgia in which whites were allowed to sit downstairs and blacks were made to sit upstairs. Wade pointed out that his teammates protected him as the only black player on the team.

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[98] *Westminster Lynx 1969*, pp. 132, 133.
[99] Jannard Wade, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, June 30, 2009.

For Wade, participation in sports served as an important factor in his Westminster experience. Wade noted that nearly the entire Westminster team and their parents attended his mother's funeral. Through sports, Wade believed, "You learn a lot of different things. You really get to know people. When you're in the trenches together and you have a common goal, the race thing kind of goes away because your goal is to win that championship."[100]

Additionally, black workers were important to the black students' experiences. Wade had a close relationship with Willie Harris, the athletic trainer. In a December 1967 *Bi-Line* article, while invoking southern race relations, Harris, a former star player at Morris Brown and semi-professional athlete, was described as the "do-all babysitter" of the Westminster teams and was praised for his dedication and friendship to coaches and players. C. E. Lovelace, Pressly's assistant, lived in Wanda Ward's neighborhood and volunteered to drive her and other black students to Westminster, a commute that felt incredibly long; it "was like to the other end of the world." Ward fondly recalled, "He was so proud of us that he often volunteered. He told my family if they would just drop me off at his house, I could ride to school. So there was a community pride, again, the significance of which I was not up on. So there was a lot—it meant a lot to the community, I guess, if you will, the communities from which we came."[101] Some of the slight changes in the environment students experienced the second year may also be linked to Westminster itself.

As desegregation progressed, some strides were made to address black students' needs, but these strides were also connected to public relations. During the September

[100] Ibid.
[101] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.

1968 Faculty Public Relations Committee meeting, some members expressed a desire to highlight the achievement of black students.[102] Additionally, in October, Dr. William Borders, pastor of Wheat Street Baptist Church and civil rights activist, spoke during Religious Emphasis Week; a year later his granddaughter Lisa Borders enrolled at Westminster.[103]

Pressly also continued to discuss race. In the 1968 Report to the Board, he noted the following as part of Westminster's purpose: "They will need to be able to live with their fellows, respecting differences, sympathizing with feelings."[104] In February 1969, during a speech delivered at the Arlington School Convocation, Pressly spoke out against segregationist academies, stating that to deny students on the basis of race is denying access to black students and "adequate atmosphere" to white boys and girls; in his words, "it is a refusal on the basis of color, to recognize the worth of another human being." He then stated that the same admission standards were applied to the twelve "Negro" girls and boys attending Westminster, referenced NAIS' October 1968 statement on open enrollment, asserted that current segregated schools needed time to desegregate, and concluded by discussing Christian love in accepting all students. [105]

The second year of desegregation had brought two firsts—a pair of black siblings and a black boarding student, and both Ron McBay and Malcolm Ryder, like Michael McBay, had to make sense of the harassment they experienced. Although it is unclear

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[102] Public Relations Committee Meeting, 18 September 1968, Folder: Faculty Committee 1968–1970, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[103] "Dr. William Borders Speaks to Students," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, October 30, 1968, p. 1, WA; *Westminster Lynx 1969*, p. 8.

[104] Report to the Board, 13 November 1968, Folder: President's Report to the Board 1968–1973, Dr. William L. Pressly Papers—Office of the President, WA.

[105] 10th Anniversary Convocation Speech at the Arlington School, 4 February 1969, Folder: Arlington School, 2-4-69; 10th Anniversary Convocation Speech, Special Collections—Dr. William L. Pressly, WA.

how much Pressly's statement may have influenced the first black students settling into their new schooling environments, extracurricular activities were identifiably becoming very important to student adjustment, and communities—whether that of neighbors or of Westminster's black workers—were important to their emotional stability. Yet, neither of these made the students immune from issues of race.

Enduring the Subtleties of Racism while Finding Niches

While black students navigated their new school environments, white Westminster students became even more involved in community service as Westminster entered its third year of desegregation. During the 1969-1970 school year, several projects were undertaken, including tutoring, improving the Army Church in Vine City in collaboration with Morris Brown College students, and operating a wholesale grocery story with a student group from The Temple. In December 1969, the Vine City group, which was "composed of students and teachers working together to make Vine City, an Atlanta slum area, a better place to live," invited to Westminster a group of students from Harper High School, a black public high school located in the Collier Heights neighborhood.[106] The stated purpose of the visit was "to better racial understanding among the youth in order to improve the problems between blacks and whites as they grow older."[107]

The presence of Westminster students in the environment could be applauded, as some Westminster students seemed genuinely interested in serving the community. For example, in January 1969, in a letter to the editor, more students were called to volunteer

[106] "Vine City Group Sets Up Store; Projects Help Area Residents," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* February 1970, p. 3, WA.

[107] "Harper Students Make Return Visit," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* December 1969, p. 6, WA.

in Vine City. Yet, the reasons for going to Vine City resonated with concepts of race: white liberalism of the era and stereotypes of black individuals. As one student wrote,

> The answer to the "why go down" question is easy. The ghetto child is born with a load to carry. This load, the one Vine City Project is interested in, is the one of poverty. Because of this poverty, they feel they are born to failure …. Their parents have other things on their minds than their children, but even without parental motivation, these kids are willing to work hard to learn. It is through learning that they will relieve and possibly get rid of the burden of poverty. They need all the help they can get.[108]

The lens through which the white students viewed their experiences was also dominated by racial overtones. In "Vine City Workers Bridge Race Chasm," the reporter expressed how both the Vine City students and the Westminster students were curious about one another during the summer program. The student later offered the following description:

> Their dialect was difficult to understand for one thing, and they fought all of the time—instant emotion which was gone just as instantly. Their worst insult to each other was you "nigger" which betrayed their serious identification problem. They were far behind schedule in their academic achievement and were very limited in the variety of experiences they had had; oceans, mountains, streams, boats, vacations, restaurants, etc were beyond the experience and could not be used effectively as examples in teaching.[109]

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[108] "Letter to the Editor," *The Westminster Bi-Line*, January 28, 1969, p. 2, WA.

[109] "Vine City Workers Bridge Race Chasm," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* September 27, 1968, p. 1, WA.

Despite these cross-cultural exchanges, white students demonstrated limited changes in the Westminster environment. For example, the slave auction continued through 1969. In March 1970, as part of the Mardi Gras celebration, the freshman class float was described as "Dixie in the 1860s." Although the float came in fourth place, the class skit, "As Easy As Whistling Dixie," won first place.[110] Even in the midst of black speakers on campus, including Dr. Borders and Vernon Jordan, these racialized traditions continued.

In the fall of 1969, four new black students joined the eleven black students who were continuing at Westminster; two males were enrolled in pre-first and third grades, and two females were enrolled in the fifth and seventh grades. See table 6 for a listing of students and grades.

Table 6. Black Students Attending Westminster, 1969-1970

Name	Grade
Harvey, Nickey^{+}	Pre-1st
Richardson, Lisa	1st
Benson, Teddy^{+}	3rd
Johnson, Joia*$^{+}$	5th
Clark, Dawn*$^{+}$	6th
McBay, Ron*$^{+}$	6th
Billings, Bill	7th
Borders, Lisa^{+}	7th
Scott, Julius	9th
Maddox, Anthony	9th
Clark, Isaac^{+}	10th
McBay, Michael*$^{+}$	10th
Ryder, Malcolm*$^{+}$	10th
Wade, Jannard*$^{+}$	10th
Ward, Wanda*$^{+}$	10th

*****Interviewed by author
$^{+}$ Westminster alumnus
Bold: First year attending Westminster

Source: Data from Westminster class pictures, yearbooks, directories, and interviewees.

This third year of desegregation would bring some continued harassment, but as recollected by alumni, also a more keen sense of the subtleties of racism and significant memories of identity development. Additionally, involvement in fine arts programs like

[110] "Mardi Gras Expresses Simplicity," *The Westminster Bi-Line,* March 1970, p. 6, WA.

chorale would help to revolutionize Malcolm Ryder's experience and highlight the way in which white teachers were able to connect with the first black students.

Similar to Ryder, Joia Johnson, a new fifth grade student, had experienced a majority white school setting prior to attending Westminster, and as with a number of the black students, extracurricular activities would "save" her as she matriculated.[111] Joia, the only child of Aaron and Dr. Joyce Johnson, was raised primarily in Southwest Atlanta. Joia spent part of her early childhood, ages three through seven, outside of Atlanta. As Dr. Johnson completed her doctorate at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, Aaron Johnson, a former teacher in APS, worked in Rock Island, Illinois. The family resided half the distance between each location in Davenport, Iowa. In Davenport, Joia attended St. Catherine's Catholic School, an all-white private school. Joia did not recall any racial issues at St. Catherine's nor did she recall any other black students attending St. Catherine's.

Upon returning to Atlanta, Joia Johnson attended Oglethorpe, the same school that Ron and Michael McBay attended. At the time, her parents worked at Spelman College with her father serving as the assistant to the president and her mother as a professor in the music department.[112] Johnson spent two years at Oglethorpe for second and fourth grades; she had been allowed to skip third grade. When asked about Oglethorpe, Johnson remembered it as "an easy school … maybe that's because I had a good foundation from St. Catherine's."[113] According to Johnson, one of her teachers

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[111] Joia Johnson, phone interview with author, March 30, 2010.

[112] Aaron Johnson is now a retired management consultant and health care administrator; his last position was vice president of Georgia Baptist Health as well as independent consultant. Dr. Joyce Johnson is a retired professor of music at Spelman College; she had also been department chair. Dr. Johnson continues to serve as the college organist.

[113] Joia Johnson, phone interview with author, March 30, 2010.

recommended Westminster, and her father jokingly stated, "Yeah, we sent Joia to Westminster because she was at Oglethorpe. She skipped the third grade, and we knew she wasn't a genius."[114] In all seriousness, Aaron Johnson commented that he and his wife wanted Joia to be more academically challenged, despite the financial sacrifice of affording Westminster's tuition.[115]

For the first time in her childhood, Johnson encountered racial issues as a new student at Westminster. She vividly recalled,

> I don't remember the fact of it being white overwhelming to me or the work being overwhelming. What I do remember though is that it was the first time that I'd experienced … I don't know that I would say racism but … it was the first time I can remember name-calling about race and so that was just a big shock, and that was in the fifth grade and it was on the basketball court. You know it's the kind of thing you never forget. I was on the basketball court and there was another girl whose name I remember but I will leave out …. I think I stole the basketball from her or something and she didn't like that and she called me 'a little black sambo nigger.' All of it in one … We got into a fight and my mother had to come down to the school because you know it was my first year there.[116]

According to Johnson, both students were reprimanded. From this experience, Johnson came to understand "that there were people who would, you know, sort of denigrate you for your color."[117] Though Johnson did not recall other overt racial incidents from her initial years at Westminster, she stated, "I don't remember anything negative other than

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[114] Ibid.
[115] Aaron Johnson, phone interview with author, May 13, 2010.
[116] Joia Johnson, phone interview with author, March 30, 2010.
[117] Ibid.

that one incident in the fifth grade and then just the subtle experiences of which there were many."[118] When asked to elaborate on the subtle experiences, Johnson answered, "It is not as if I remember specific incidents, I just remember a feeling … It's just a feeling that you have when you're just an outsider."[119] What Johnson experienced is described by white alumni as the subtleties of body language and at times not so subtle racially charged humor. These subtleties stood in stark contrast to Johnson's welcoming environment in the black community where she participated in her local Jack and Jill youth group, attended First Congregational Church, and enjoyed Spelman's campus.

In contrast to Johnson, Dawn Clark, now a sixth grader, was in her third year at Westminster. Clark's feeling of being an outsider started to subside slightly. "I had come to an appreciation of having the right to be there, and no one had the right to tell me anything else. But that was a process for me that took me a couple of years of being there and dealing with it every day … also by the time I was in sixth grade I realized what my parents were trying to do. First couple of years, I did not get it."[120] When asked to elaborate on what her parents were trying to do, Clark responded with the following:

> My parents were trying to give me the best educational opportunity and education that I could get, so that I would be as well prepared as I possibly could be to traverse this world. And my parents thought that education was the number one key … they did not really care about socializing, they did not really care about

[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Dawn Clark, phone interview with author, March 26, 2010.

> your feelings or cares … bottom line, you have to get your education, then you can do what you want to do.[121]

Of course, all black students navigated the world of a black home community and a white Westminster community. Most students reported that the black community helped to fortify them for Westminster. Nonetheless, living between two worlds was not without challenges.

Though he did not feel completely like an outsider, Ron McBay, as he continued through Westminster, described his internal emotions as a “schizophrenic existence”:

> I began to feel like I was playing two different roles in two different worlds. At school, I was a smart, skinny, “nerd,” non-athlete. At home, which was all about playing sports and socializing, being good at schoolwork held almost no sway. I clearly remember one neighborhood kid … yelling at his younger sister … to "Stop talkin' proper!" because using correct grammar was a negative thing; it was "putting on airs" to feign superiority. We used to play pick-up basketball nearly every night of the week. One time ... [a star varsity player at Turner High who went on to play college basketball] asked "what was wrong with me"—he didn't understand why I didn't trash talk after scoring a basket (like you were supposed to). The “answer” that satisfied him was finding out that I was a good student: “Oh, you're one of them smart M*****-F******s—I just thought you were retarded.” (Somehow, in his mind, those two things were on the same end of the spectrum).[122]

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[121] Ibid.
[122] Ron McBay, e-mail message to author, May 29, 2009.

In some ways, this schizophrenic existence helped McBay. "Anyway, the upside of 'living in two worlds' simultaneously was that it gave me a very clear understanding from an early age of what things had to do with the particular environment and what things didn't," said McBay. "If I got treated one way at school, but differently in the neighborhood—(e.g., valuing intellect vs. valuing bravado)—then that treatment really wasn't about me." As McBay continued, he referenced being skinny as a characteristic more dominant than race. "In neither place was it a good thing to be quiet or to be skinny. By far, I was more traumatized as a kid over being skinny than I was (if ever) over being black." As the younger students grappled with race, racism, and their developing identities, the high school students, now in their sophomore year, found ways to become a part of the Westminster community.

The harassment Malcolm Ryder experienced as a freshman living in the dormitory negatively affected the fall semester of his second year, but during the spring semester he would find an outlet that set him on a course for success. Having earlier retreated into a personal shell, he, an honor-roll student, had sought solace in academics and thought that doing well academically would help him solidify an identity at Westminster.[123] By this time, however, Ryder realized that "getting good grades wasn't actually proving anything …. It didn't make anything else better. So I had played my ace and got nothing back in return, and just was lost … and I didn't want to go back [after Christmas break]."[124] But his mother insisted that he return to Westminster, and his experience would change dramatically through his involvement in chorale, after a female dormitory student, who was white, invited him to a rehearsal. Though Ryder played the

[123] *Westminster Lynx 1970*, pp. 26–27, WA.
[124] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 25, 2009.

piano and was in the Westminster band, he had never thought of himself as a singer. Ryder stated,

> My mom and dad, both true artists, had sent me off in life with the predisposition to be an artist, but oddly I had just been going through the motions. I knew how to play piano because I was made to take piano lessons from day one, and all these things were just givens in the family. So I wasn't actually connected to it emotionally. Boggs [director of the Chorale] connected me to it emotionally, and then it just seemed like it was like somebody gave me the keys to the bank. [125]

Unlike the band—which Ryder described as a young orchestra, serious, and something he understood by training—energy and particularly camaraderie characterized the chorale. According to Ryder, "The chorale was a whole different thing. It was extremely social, and I think it was the most casual, yet developed group I'd ever been a member of." Additionally, Boggs infused the group with an infectious spirit:

> He just had a belief in himself that no matter who you were if you didn't already know how to sing he could teach you to sing, and that singing was going to be the greatest thing that ever happened to you. That was the spirit that he had infused this whole outfit with so that whether you were in rehearsal, or at a concert, or just awake in the middle of the night, or standing in a bus stop or something, you had this feeling that he gave you that you could just sing and everything would be fine.[126]

Ryder adopted this spirit and his life at Westminster changed. He found himself with new friends, new energy, and always busy with music. "Just this explosion of energy, all of it

[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid.

very upbeat. So it was a tremendous kind of breakaway and a chance to just reboot and start all over again at this place." Ryder became emotionally connected to music and even more so to his father's music because of Boggs' interest in it. According to Ryder, "So all these connections started happening, and he inspired me and challenged me at the same time."[127]

Other students would also speak of chorale in favorable ways. Having come from black communities and schools with evidence of a care ethic, black students responded to Boggs' leadership. Educational scholar Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, in discussing her more contemporary work with urban teachers, stated that "students indicated that caring teachers laughed with them, trusted and respected them, and recognized them as individuals …. Students defined caring teachers as those who set limits, provided structure, had high expectations, and pushed them to achieve."[128]

Boggs embodied these characteristics as he drew on a wide variety of music for the students to perform. Shortly after joining chorale, Ryder and the group traveled to Panama City, Florida, for spring break and then later that semester traveled to Europe. While in Europe, Boggs asked Ryder, much to his surprise, to perform a couple of solos. Ryder remembered the performance going well. "The audience got a big kick out of it. It was really kind of a special thing." Later that night, when Boggs was doing a head check at the hotel, he told Ryder, "You know, don't worry about things, you're going to be just fine," and according to Ryder, "he just left it at that. I was kind of stunned and confused." Shortly after returning to school, Boggs asked Ryder to consider being a student

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Jacqueline Jordan Irvine, *Educating Teachers for Diversity: Seeing with a Cultural Eye* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2003):10.

conductor. Ryder later learned that Boggs had spoken with his mother. As an adult reflecting on the experience, Ryder believed that "part of [Boggs'] thing was he thought he could do something for me that would help me reflect on my dad in ways that he could—he could kind of put a couple of stones in the path for me to step on. That's what he was up to."[129]

Apparently, other teachers drew on attributes of a care ethic as a way of supporting black student experiences. Jannard Wade fondly remembered Coach Sims, his soccer coach, and his wife. Coach Sims, in being an early proponent of soccer, recruited football players who had never played soccer and taught them the game. According to Wade, Coach Sims was "just a great teacher and really took the time to teach us the skills so that we could become a decent soccer team."[130] Similarly, important to Wanda Ward's success on the basketball court was her coach, Sam Van Leer. She recalled, "he didn't pamper any of us but sort of recognized the talent. So if he recognized any talent, he would drive you, drive you, drive you."[131] Similar to her admiration of her coach, Ward has maintained contact with her chemistry teacher, Martha Thurmond, whom she described as "no nonsense" and chiefly concerned about her students getting the "'work right.'"[132]

Being a part of chorale launched a new persona for Ryder and a new start at Westminster. He came to recognize that many students were involved in many different facets of campus, and he was no exception. Ryder stated, "I had my own routine, but it was very mixed. I was comfortable, but not because there was huge amount of repetition

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[129] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 25, 2009.
[130] Jannard Wade, phone interview with author, June 30, 2009.
[131] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.
[132] Ibid.

or simplification. It was kind of the opposite." Ryder became more outgoing, and Westminster "went from being kind of a terrible place … to being some place really wonderful." However, "Not every day was great. There was still plenty to complain about, but I just felt on top of it. Just on top of the school, the whole place … I felt like I had a lot of friends, so it was very supportive. The feedback was constant and generally pretty good. There was a lot of reward for being involved, involved with people and involved with different organizations."[133]

As Ryder began to flourish, Wade, also a musician, developed into a standout all-around athlete on the varsity football, soccer, and baseball teams. Additionally, he also participated in the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.[134] Wanda Ward also excelled as a sophomore, but the beginning of the year had brought new circumstances. As Ward's family felt the financial toll of sending her to Westminster, her mother considered pulling her out, but Westminster offered her a full scholarship to continue through high school. Just as importantly, Janice Kemp, the only other black female in Wanda's grade, had left following ninth grade. Kemp's departure profoundly affected Ward because for two years she had not existed in isolation in the Girls' School, and after Kemp left, her experience was "not peaches and cream in the Girls' School." Ward believed that, in the eighth and ninth grades, Kemp and she both adjusted well to the academics at Westminster. The difference, however, in her estimation was social integration. Ward noted, "I believe I was more integrated into the school socially, and I think my being an avid athlete and a leader in student government made the critical difference."[135]

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[133] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 25, 2009.
[134] *Westminster Lynx 1970*, pp. 120, 133, 145, WA.
[135] Wanda Ward, interview with author, Arlington, VA, December 10, 2008.

Ward had become an integral player on the basketball team. With a record of fifteen wins and four losses, "the 1970 Cats' first string was not new at the game, as evident from their high final scores, but the first-string players, with the exception of returning Senior Laura Smith, were new to first-string. Vicki Gross, Ann Ambrose, and Wanda Ward made the points while Laura Smith, Dancy Hoyt, and Annette Neville made sure the Wildcats retained their lead."[136] In addition to maintaining her grades, Ward continued to be active with the Quest Club and served as secretary of the Service Council Board.[137] As illuminated through these student examples, by the spring of 1970, black students, despite overt racism and constant racial subtleties, were active members of the school life.

While institutional behavior and norms consisted of mixed messages about race, black students' presence and involvement influenced and changed Westminster, according to white alumni of the school. Jane Haverty, along with her four siblings, had attended Westminster since the lower grades, and like many of her white classmates, black females had helped to raise her. As president of Havertys Furniture Company, her father, Rawson, was a part of the business elite of Atlanta during the era of desegregation. Jane, now an Atlanta lawyer and a 1972 alumna who dated Michael McBay their senior year, maintained that black students could not be ignored because of their skin color *and* because of their individual characteristics, academic abilities, and various talents. Even with limited exposure to her black peers, Haverty stated, "you realize how smart they were, how capable they were, how talented they were, how much they suffered, how different their lives were, and how tall they stood in spite of all that, and you know, how

[136] *Westminster Lynx Yearbook 1970*, p. 130, WA.
[137] *Westminster Lynx Yearbook 1970*, pp. 188, 196, WA.

accomplished they could be in spite of all that."[138] Hill Martin, who recalled growing up around adults who made disparaging comments about black individuals while being looked after by a black housekeeper "as if [he] were her own," illuminated what the black students did for him:

> What they cannot possibly know is that their example in my life changed the way I felt, thought, behaved and believed about people ever since. I never knowingly, consciously made the mistake again of assuming something about someone strictly because of race. When I went away to college, it was with a totally different attitude on this subject than I would otherwise have had.[139]

As indicated by white and black alumni, both groups were adjusting to different worlds and encountering one another in large part for the first time as peers; black workers had long been a part of the school and the lives of white students, who lived in all-white communities centered by their families and association with Westminster. With the desegregation of Westminster, white students' ideas about race were challenged first by the sheer presence of black students and secondly by their character and talents.

The inclusion of stories of black students who enrolled but eventually left Westminster could enrich our understanding of the larger effects of desegregation. The recollections of black alumni featured in the chapter, however, provide a glimpse into what life was like for black students at Westminster in the early years of desegregation. These students drew on their family and community experiences and academic abilities nurtured by segregated black schools to traverse an elite independent school in the late 1960s. It was not easy, for according to Ryder, Westminster was not a place that "went

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[138] Jane Haverty, interview with author, Atlanta, GA, September 16, 2009.
[139] Hill Martin, e-mail message to author, March 28, 2010.

out of its way to do anything for me just because I was black. Once I got there it was just, 'Okay well now you're here and this is what the place is like.' It took me a while to kind of catch on to it, and when I did it worked out great."[140] Overall one could say that it did work out for most of these alumni; yet, the great detail with which some remember these experiences and also the reticence of some to talk about their experiences both signify just how deeply courageous they were to be a part of this social experiment.

[140] Malcolm Ryder, phone interview with author, May 25, 2009.

Conclusion

The students who entered Westminster and other independent schools in the late 1960s joined a group of black Americans who gained access to educational institutions that had historically educated members of the white power structure. Yet the institutions themselves were creations of a society permeated by racism, thereby reflecting and reinforcing the inequities of the larger society. By 1970, independent school leaders were confident enough in their progress on the issue of race to further their distinction from segregated private schools, especially when the IRS required private institutions with tax-exemption status to have non-discriminatory admission policies. William Pressly, president of Westminster and an appointee in 1969 to a newly established NAIS Committee on Governmental Relations, became a spokesperson on the differences between independent schools and segregationist academies. His presence in the national independent school community linked Westminster once more to national conversations about race, access, and equity.[1] Attention to this moment is warranted for considering the import of Westminster's story of desegregation, the implications for studying independent school desegregation, and the ways in which this history provides impetus for new scholarly directions.

Challenging Segregationist Academies

Informing the ruling on tax-exemption status were the continued legal battles over the enforcement of public school desegregation. In the 1968 case *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County,* the Supreme Court found freedom of choice plans

[1] National Association of Independent Schools, "NAIS and Governmental Relations—The Establishment of a Special Committee," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 28 (February 1969): 2.

unconstitutional because "such plans placed the burden of integration on blacks, who were reluctant to transfer in the face of intimidation," and "that schools must dismantle segregated dual (or segregated) systems 'root and branch.'" A year later in *Alexander v. Holmes County [Mississippi] Board of Education,* the Supreme Court ordered that schools be desegregated and that districts subsequently maintain unitary schools.[2]

As legal remedies were sought to enforce public school desegregation, segregationist academies, whose student populations were increasing, continued to have their tax-exemption status questioned, eventually leading to the 1970 decision. As Nevin noted, "After *Alexander,* in late 1969, [the Southern Regional Council] raised the estimate to 400,000. In 1970 it estimated 500,000 and the following year 535,000 students in [private schools that were segregated in practice]."[3] For example, Mississippi's council schools were "operated by the Council School Foundation, which was formed by the Citizens Council in response to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ... the first Council school opened in September 1964, and by the next year had 110 students. A second school opened in 1967. In 1969, with a major integration order imminent in Jackson, the Council schools began to boom."[4]

Black Mississippians challenged the tax-exemption of such private schools in *Green v. Kennedy*, a case filed against David M. Kennedy, secretary of the treasury, and Randolph W. Thrower, commissioner of internal revenue.[5] The plaintiffs questioned

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[2] Gary Orfield and Susan Eaton, eds., *Dismantling Desegregation: The Quiet Reversal of* Brown v. Board of Education (New York: New Press, 1996), xxi–xxii. See also *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County,* 391 U.S. 430 (1968) and *Alexander v. Holmes County [Mississippi] Board of Education,* 396 U.S. 19 (1969).

[3] Nevin and Bills, 9.

[4] Ibid., 12–13.

[5] Interestingly, a similar case was filed in 1969 in the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia. The plaintiffs, which included the NAACP, sought "a permanent injunction against the use of state funds for

"whether or not the federal tax benefits normally conferred on private schools by sections 501 and 170 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 are valid when such schools are racially segregated."[6] In its 1970 ruling, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia built on legal precedent from the 1969 decision in *Coffey v. State Educational Finance Commission*, whereby "the court held unconstitutional state tuition grants, provided by the legislature of Mississippi by bills adopted in 1964 and amended in 1968, to Mississippi children attending private, segregated schools."[7] Therefore, in *Green v. Kennedy*, the court stated "that the tax benefits under the Internal Revenue Code mean a substantial and significant support by the Government to the segregated private school pattern" and "constitutes a derogation of constitutional rights."[8] With this decision, the court granted a temporary injunction and, in June 1970, a permanent injunction against the IRS.

That same summer, Pressly and Reese Cleghorn, director of the Leadership Project of the Southern Regional Council, testified before the Senate's Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity chaired by Senator Walter F. Mondale. Cleghorn argued that segregationist academies were "concentrated in certain areas and undermine the public schools." Cleghorn further said, "We cannot lightly dismiss any development which deprives large numbers of white children of good educations and frequently

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support of sectarian schools and other private schools whose policies, 'by purpose or effect,' discriminate against persons by reason of race or religions, and goes on to assert that the defendant schools and nonpublic schools generally are *de facto* segregated and that aid to them will perpetuate such segregation" (National Association of Independent Schools, "Schools Politics, and the Law," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 30 (October 1969): 2).

[6] "Civil Rights: Segregation: Federal Income Tax: Exemptions and Deductions: The Validity of Tax Benefits to Private Segregated Schools," *Michigan Law Review* 68, no. 7 (1970): 1411; *Green v. Kennedy* 309 F. Supp. 1127, 1970 U.S. District Court.

[7] *Green v. Kennedy* 309 F. Supp. 1127, 1970 U.S. District Court.

[8] Ibid.

exposes them to anti-democratic nostrums and preachments; and which further postpones the South's coming to grips with the fact that it is a bi-racial society wherein both whites and blacks are deprived by the social and economic costs of separatism."[9]

Pressly discussed that independent schools were part of a dual education system, which in his estimation was a rationale for not supporting segregationist academies. In his testimony, Pressly stated, "Believing in both systems, then, we do not think that either ought to be segregated. Segregated independent schools, like segregated public schools, defy the ruling of the Supreme Court. Furthermore, such schools cannot prepare girls and boys for life in a country that wants to offer equal opportunity for all."

Pressly also spoke about the process of increasing open enrollment admission policies in independent schools. When NAIS declared the open enrollment policy in 1968, schools with discriminatory practices were not to be dropped from membership. Pressly now believed that the leadership was ready to reverse that policy. As such, Pressly issued a strong critique of segregationist academies:

> To those of us familiar with independent school education, it is obvious that many of these schools are not offering, and cannot offer, even an adequate educational program. In many cases, the physical facilities are far below standard. In many of them the faculty is not receiving sufficient compensation to attract certified, capable teachers. As a consequence, retired teachers and teachers lacking professional training largely make up the faculty. In an endeavor to make the schools available to people of average income in the smaller towns, tuition fees

[9] Dick Ritter, "Tax Exempt Status Seen Doubtful," *Federal Times*, July 15, 1970, p. 27, Special Collections—William L. Pressly WA.

> are placed at such a low level that it is obvious that sufficient funds are not available to operate a school of even minimum standards.[10]

Pressly also stated that proposals were being considered in Georgia "for the licensing of non-accredited independent schools." He concluded by suggesting the federal government needed to ensure integrated, adequate, and equal education in both public and private schools.

Pressly, a southern independent school leader, had called for the equalization of schools. He had not openly stood for desegregation at the beginning of the 1960s but changed because of the coalescing of factors on local, regional, and national levels. Less than ten years after the first black student attempted to gain admission at Westminster, the IRS officially stipulated in 1971 non–tax-exemption status for private schools with racially discriminatory policies.[11]

In many ways, a perfect storm converged with this decision. NAIS could now rely on this tax-exemption status stipulation to enforce membership requirements. Simultaneously, NAIS entered into a new phase of examining race. In 1967, the NAIS Committee on Minority Affairs, of which Pressly was a member, had been established, but African Americans remained absent from the NAIS staff. In November 1969, this changed. With the support of the Luce Foundation, William Dandridge, an African

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[10] Testimony Prepared for Select Senate Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, Folder: Testimony for Senate Committee on Equal Education Opportunity, Special Collections—William L. Pressly, WA.

[11] "The Judicial Role in Attacking Racial Discrimination in Tax-Exempt Private Schools," *Harvard Law Review* 93, no. 2 (December 1979), 380.

American and then a twenty-nine-year-old teacher from Philadelphia, was hired as the first director of minority affairs.[12]

Considerations of Westminster's Story

The culminating decision in 1970 concerning tax-exemption status of private schools symbolized the intimate connection between public school desegregation and private schools in the two decades following the *Brown* decision. Southern independent school leaders, in distinguishing their schools from segregationist academies and in wanting to maintain national stature, sought black students such as Dawn Clark, Joia Johnson, Michael McBay, Ron McBay, Malcolm Ryder, Jannard Wade, and Wanda Ward. John Ehle, who worked with the Stouffer Foundation, is now a noted American novelist in his eighties. When asked about black students attending all white prep schools, Ehle discussed their hesitancy. "There was a good amount of hesitation, as you can imagine. They were being asked to be the first black students in schools that were traditionally white."[13] Indeed they were cautious for good reasons, as gleaned through Westminster's story of desegregation.

Westminster, a previously all-white school, benefitted from the time period in which it was established. Although its date of founding predates those schools deemed as segregationist academies, Westminster grew to prominence during an era when white parents removed their children from APS. Additionally, the leadership of Westminster may posit that the school did not benefit from the racial turmoil of the 1950s and 1960s, but it became a safe haven for the children of Atlanta's elite during the tumultuous mid-

[12] National Association of Independent Schools, "NAIS Affairs—New NAIS Staff Member Welcomed," *National Association of Independent Schools Report*, no. 32 (February 1970): 3.

[13] John Ehle, interview with author, Winston-Salem, NC, June 26, 2009.

twentieth century. Because of Pressly's desire to build a school of national reputation with a rigorous academic program, Westminster garnered the support of prominent white Atlantans such as Robert Woodruff, Ralph McGill, Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., Nan Pendergrast, and Rabbi Jacob Rothschild. While most of these individuals advocated for civil rights and social justice, their children attended Westminster.

Only when particular factors coalesced did Westminster policymakers decide to desegregate. On the local level, the decision was influenced by the actions of neighboring schools, internal deliberations brought on by changing societal norms, and pressure received by GACHR, Rabbi Jacob Rothschild, and black Atlantans seeking admission for their students. On the national level, as independent school leaders wrestled with independent schools' relationship with the greater public, race logically became a part of their discourse, and increasingly, black students were recruited to independent schools.

In the 1960s, Pressly, a nationally known independent school leader, could not sit idle on the issue of race, and in 1965, Westminster became the first non-sectarian school in the South to have an admissions policy that would allow for the consideration of all applications, regardless of race. While Westminster is credited for this historic decision, it was actually one of the last private schools on the Northside of Atlanta to desegregate. In 1963, Trinity School and the Atlanta Speech School had desegregated. In 1966, the Lovett School had announced an open admission policy, and Pace Academy, "conceived in 1958 as a for-profit white flight school," had admitted its first black student.[14]

When Westminster did desegregate, black students entered into a contradictory and complex environment where it was commonplace for the Old South to be promoted

[14] Gannon, 115.

through school traditions, while students, both progressive and conservative, engaged in dialogue about the era. Newspaper accounts and yearbook excerpts provide evidence of negative racial traditions, such as May Day celebrations depicting Uncle Remus stories and a slave auction fundraiser. Race permeated student coverage of national and local politics, the Civil Rights Movement, and school desegregation in the South, in Atlanta, and at Westminster, and the banning of black bands. During the initial years of desegregation, this milieu of contradictions continued. Despite the inclusion of prominent black speakers in campus assemblies, more public appreciation of black workers, and the addition of a black studies course, Westminster, with an-all white administration and faculty, continued to reflect its power as a southern institution whose students received conflicting messages about race. The Old South was still celebrated, and the slave auction fundraiser occurred through 1969. Moreover, as Westminster students engaged in community service in black lower-class neighborhoods, their descriptions harkened to that of Moynihan's thesis of black pathology and the national discourse surrounding the disadvantaged.

The first black students that attended Westminster inherited the dual legacy of public and private education for African Americans that developed following the Civil War. Though the majority of these students had been educated primarily in black segregated public schools, their families had connections to private institutions either as sites of their own educational experiences and/or professional lives. With their knowledge of schooling and the era, parents overwhelmingly chose Westminster because of its academic offerings. As the first black students matriculated through Westminster and navigated the worlds of home and school, they, coupled with the care-ethic of

particular teachers, drew on their previous experiences to develop their own niches at the school. Race, however, was central to their experiences through very overt racial harassment and everyday racially loaded subtle actions and words. Despite it all, these students forged pathways in a new educational opportunity for black southerners and changed white students' notions of race and power.

New Directions, Same Struggles

This study has multiple implications for theoretical, historical, and contemporary scholarly directions. From a theoretical perspective, the desegregation of Westminster, including the preservation of its image, appeared to be what current critical race theorists might deem a moment of "interest convergence." As defined by critical race theorist Derrick Bell, interest convergence occurs when "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interest of whites in policy-making decisions."[15] In addition to furthering the tenet of the centrality of race, this study is a starting point for examining the unintended consequences of interest convergence for both institutions and individuals.

Westminster's story of desegregation is the foundation for three historical investigations. First, a logical extension of this current study would include the years 1970–1973. Ryder, McBay, Wade, and Ward graduated in 1972, and nineteen more black students entered between 1970 and 1973, including the first female boarding student, Corliss Blount Denman (see Appendix E for a listing of black students by year). Though her experience was emblematic of those students who entered in the late 1960s, Corliss broke a different barrier at Westminster by becoming the first black Miss Mardi

[15] Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants:* Brown v. Board of Education *and the Unfilled Hopes for Racial Reform.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69.

Gras in 1973. According to Denman, "I think the biggest thing—and I think that got probably more excitement than a lot of things when I was there…the girls pulling [the float]…were not of color. That was like a huge deal, and they—of course, it was the white swan, which years later people were like, 'Were you trying to make a statement?' At the time I don't think so."[16] Collectively, the thirty-five black students who entered between 1967 and 1973 did make a statement, as Westminster, in its first twenty-two years, became a leading southern independent school.

Examining the school's early history provides a window into how William Pressly continued to be a part of the national conversation concerning race through his retirement in 1973. In total, a study focused on the years 1951–1973 would yield continued considerations of black educational opportunities in the South, school desegregation, and independent schools, but it could also raise larger questions about the ways in which African Americans laid claim to public *and* private spaces in the Civil Rights Movement and the role of liberalism in the development and perpetuation of the national independent school agenda.

Secondly, *Southern and Independent* beckons for a more robust study of private school desegregation, independent and parochial, in Atlanta, Georgia. As a New South city that would become the mecca for black citizens, analyzing in more detail the relationship between public and private schools along racial and class lines would provide in-depth considerations for how the dual U.S. educational system operated in a southern context during the mid-twentieth century. By the late 1960s with black Atlantans' growing electoral power and disenchantment with the existing power

[16] Corliss Blount Denman, phone interview with author, July 20, 2009.

structure, the black-Northside alliance that had paved the way for gradual desegregation in 1961 was dissolved. Departing from the business community's mayoral candidate, black Atlantans helped to elect a Jewish mayor, Sam Massell, and a black vice-mayor, Maynard Jackson.[17] By 1973, the desegregation of APS was resolved through a political compromise.[18] Additionally, both more whites and African Americans began to attend private schools in the area.[19] Knowing the history of how private schools positioned themselves in the era would illuminate why they became more sought after.

Third, as African American students became a part of the fabric of independent schools, considerations are necessary for how they were supported and how race continued to affect independent schools nationally. Through the twelve-year tenure of Dandridge, one gleans how he created a network of individuals, including Bill Walters, Bobette Reed Khan, Bill Beckler, Bobby Swain, and Betty Ann Workman, to become the chief advocates for black students, faculty, and staff in independent schools during an era of increasing conservative policy reform. Dandridge, along with these individuals,

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[17] Plank and Turner, 599; and Virginia Hein, "The Image of 'A City Too Busy to Hate': Atlanta in the 1960s," *Phylon* 33 (1972): 220-221.

[18] As noted by Hornsby, by 1973, "the percentage of black students in the Atlanta system had reached almost eighty percent, with only slightly more than twenty percent of whites remaining" ("Black Public Education," 37).The NAACP and the school board, under court order, submitted new desegregation plans in January 1973 that included busing options, but local NAACP and other black leaders joined by a group of white business and professional leaders agreed to abandon such plans, leading to the Compromise of 1973. The Compromise consisted of four main sections: 1) student assignment plan, 2) plan for staff desegregation, 3) majority to minority transfer plan, and 4) plan for desegregation of administration. The plan called for every school to have a minimum black student enrollment of 30 percent, which in turn left many schools all black. Moreover, it was agreed that blacks would become more integral in the administrative control of the largely black school system including a black superintendent and 50 percent of all administrative posts reserved for blacks. See Hornsby, 40; and Plank and Turner, 600.

[19] As accounted for by Wei-ling Gong, white students leaving APS fled either to suburban schools or private schools. In citing Research Atlanta's survey of 1973, Gong wrote, "the city's private school enrollment for the school year of 1972-1973 was 20,146, an increase of about 2,000 students over the 1971-1972 total and an increase of 5,000 from the total enrollment for 1970-1971." Moreover, similar to trends in Richmond, black students began constituting more of the enrollment in private schools. Gong stated, "The survey also indicated that black students accounted for 13 percent of the private school enrollment in metro Atlanta." See Gong 157, 159.

countered the repressive and stereotypical negative portraits of black individuals prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s.[20]

Contemporary implications of this historical study resonate with current debates over school choice and school vouchers, as this study helps to elucidate the history of private schooling in the African-American tradition and sheds light on the decisions that African-American parents made in the era of desegregation.[21] For African Americans, education is still about positioning one's children to best succeed in a society undergirded by racism. Thus, contemporary school choice can often be a gray matter for black parents, as noted in *Both Sides Now*. Amy Stuart Wells and a team of researchers interviewed over 280 high school graduates from the class of 1980 who attended racially mixed public high schools, and part of what they consider is how those graduates make decisions for their children today. Wells et al. observed:

> graduates of color talked about the difficulties they faced in finding schools for their children that were both academically rigorous and diverse in the sense that their children would not be the only minorities in their classrooms. They knew that schools enrolling larger numbers of white students were more likely to have more resources, the most qualified teachers, and a challenging curriculum—the white powerful parents would ensure this. At the same time, they did not want

[20] William Dandridge, interview with author, Boston, MA, December 11, 2008; Philadelphia, PA, October 22, 2009; and Atlanta, GA, February 20, 2010; Bill Walters, interview with author, Durham, NC, February 27, 2010; Bobette Reed Khan, phone interview with author, February 23, 2010.

[21] Recent accounts that provide a wider sociocultural perspective on school choice include Eric Rofes and Lisa M. Stulberg, eds. *The Emancipatory Promise of Charter Schools: Toward a Progressive Politics of School Choice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004); and Lisa M. Stulberg, *Race, Schools, and Hope: African Americans and School Choice after* Brown (New York: Teachers College Press, 2008).

their children to be "tokens" in schools that catered to the demands of white families.[22]

As school desegregation continues to be fought over in the courts and as African Americans continue to have these types of dilemmas and endure gaps in access and equity in public schools, historically white private schools are sometimes deemed the better choice. Yet as noted by DeCuir and Dixson and a host of other scholars, racism transcends school type.

Currently, with over 36,000 African-American students attending independent schools, this study provides insight into how and why more black students came to attend these schools. Yet, one might say that there is nothing new in this story for the experiences of black students desegregating and attending predominantly white public and private schools, whether at the primary, secondary, or higher education level, mirror one another. Moreover, it can be said that like many institutions, Westminster was a product of its era and location. Both statements, however, reduce the impact of black students becoming a part of the most elite primary and secondary circles in the South and the nation. For example, President Barack Obama and Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick are graduates of independent schools, and former Atlanta City Council President, Lisa Borders, is an alumna of Westminster. Also diminished are the complex dilemmas faced by black families historically and contemporarily in struggling with the many variables that affect black students' academic, social, psychological, and emotional outcomes. Third, the careful positioning of Westminster in the era of desegregation

[22] Amy Stuart Wells, Jennifer Jellison Holme, Anita Tijerina Revilla, and Awo Korantemaa Atanda, *Both Sides Now: The Story of School Desegregation's Graduates* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 270.

negates a simplistic notion of its time and place. In order to gain an understanding of why these dilemmas persist, while at the same time black students succeed in politicized educational contexts, studies such as *Southern and Independent* are warranted.

In summary, *Southern and Independent* highlights one process by which a formerly all-white institution became open to black students. Moreover, this study investigates the undergirding political and social maneuvering that influenced an institution's decision to change its policies, thereby adding a unique example to the historiography concerning the legacy of school desegregation. Further, considerations of local, regional, and national phenomena and their contextual effects signify the ways in which educational decisions are made in response to society and vice versa. Lastly, this research advances conceptualizations of the ways in which policies and practices affect schooling opportunities for marginalized groups, the interplay between public and private schools, how private schools contend with public matters, and how students of color and their families navigate this tenuous terrain in securing educational access to both academics and the larger political economy.

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Appendix A: Primary Sources

	1951-1957 Westminster Develops	1958-1965 Westminster During Challenge and Change	1966-1970 Westminster Desegregates
School Level Sources	• Westminster Archives ~Papers of William L. Pressly *Administrative Records* *Annual President's Report to the Board* *Correspondence* ~Board of Trustee Records ~Development Office Records ~School newspapers and yearbooks	• Westminster Archives ~Papers of William L. Pressly *Administrative Records* *Annual President's Report to the Board* *Correspondence* *Faculty Meeting Minutes* *Parents Council Meetings* ~Board of Trustee Records ~Development Office Records ~School newspapers and yearbooks	• Westminster Archives ~Papers of William L. Pressly *Administrative Records* *Annual President's Report to the Board* *Correspondence* *Faculty Meeting Minutes* *Parents Council Meetings* *Speeches and Articles* ~Board of Trustee Records ~Development Office Records ~School newspapers and yearbooks
Local/Regional Level Sources	• Agnes Scott College Archives ~Papers of J.R. McCain, President of Agnes Scott; Westminster Board Member • North Avenue Presbyterian Church ~Papers of Vernon Broyles, Jr. Minister of North Avenue; Chair, Westminster Board	• Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University ~Robert Winship Woodruff Papers ~Eliza Paschall Papers /Greater Atlanta Council for Human Relations ~Biographical Files: Roland M. Frye, Westminster Board Member; Chair of Committee on Public School Dilemma	• University of North Carolina Southern Historical Collection ~Stouffer Foundation Records
National Level Sources	• *Independent School Bulletin* • National Council of Independent Schools ~*Report*	• *Independent School Bulletin* • National Council of Independent Schools ~*Report* • National Association of Ind. Schools ~Annual Conference Reports ~*Report* (published quarterly) ~Publications: David Mallery, *Negro Students in Independent Schools* (1963)	• *Independent School Bulletin* • National Association of Ind. Schools ~Annual Conference Reports ~*Report* (published quarterly) • Westminster Archives ~Papers of William L. Pressly *Summary Report on Enrollment of Negro Students from NAIS, March 1967*

**Source:* Compiled by author. National Level Sources were received via interlibrary loan from the following libraries: University of Washington-Seattle, University of Chicago, University of North Carolina-Charlotte, University of Rochester, Bowling Green University, University of California-Los Angeles, and Georgia State University.

Appendix B: Interviewees

Interviewee	Connection to Project	Interview Communication Method, Date, and Approximate Length
Bolton, Vic	African American Westminster Alum ’76	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; March 29, 2010; 2 hours and 5 minutes
Clark, Betty	Mother of Isaac Clark (Westminster Alum ’72)	--Via Phone, July 30, 2009; 1 hour
Clark, Dawn	African American Westminster Alumna ’76	--Via Phone, March 26, 2010; 1 hour and 20 minutes --Via Phone, March 31, 2010; 1 hour
Clark, Johnnie	Mother of Dawn Clark	--Via Phone, May 11, 2010; 1 hour and 20 minutes
Dandridge, William	First Director of Minority Affairs for NAIS	--In Person, Boston, MA; December 11, 2008; 2 hours and 40 minutes --In Person, Philadelphia, PA; October 22, 2009; 1 hour and 40 minutes --In Person, Atlanta, GA; February 20, 2010; 1 hour and 30 minutes
Denman, Corliss Blount	African American Westminster Alumna ’73	--Via Phone; July 20, 2009; 45 min --Via Phone; July 20, 2009; 1 hour and 10 minutes
Dimon, Scoot	Caucasian Westminster Alum ’70	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; June 15, 2009; 40 minutes
Ehle, John	Director of Stouffer Foundation, ’67-’76	--In Person, Winston-Salem, NC; June 26, 2009; 1 hour and 10 minutes
Haverty, Jane	Caucasian Westminster Alumna ’72	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; September 16, 2009; 1 hour and 40 minutes
Jackson, Elaine	Mother of Wanda Ward	--In Person, Lanham, MD; June 19, 2009; 2 hours and 5 minutes
Johnson, Aaron	Father of Joia Johnson	--Via Phone, May 13, 2010, 40 minutes
Johnson, Chuck	Former Dorm Director, Westminster Schools	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; May 12, 2010; 40 minutes
Johnson, Joia	African American Westminster Alumna ’77	--Via Phone; March 30, 2010; 1 hour and 20 minutes
Major, Donata Russell	African American Westminster Alumna ’77	--Via Phone, May 12, 2010; 50 minutes
Martin, Hill	Caucasian Westminster Alum ’72	--Via Phone, March 28, 2010; 1 hour and 20 minutes
McBay, Michael	African American Westminster Alum ’72	--Via E-mail, May 28, 2009 --Via E-mail, September 4, 2010
McBay, Ron	African American Westminster Alum ’76	--Via E-mail, May 24, 2009; May 27, 2009; May 29, 2009; May 31, 2009; June 8, 2009; June 13, 2009; June 16, 2009; April 26, 2010; additional follow-up via e-mail
Peck, Jim	Former Westminster Teacher, 1964-1968	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; September 17, 2009; 1 hour and 40 minutes
Pendergrast, Nan	Caucasian Mother of Seven Westminster alumni	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; July 29, 2009; 1 hour
Reed, Bobette Kahn	African American, Former Administrator in independent schools; active educator in NAIS	--Via Phone, February 23, 2010; 1 hour and 10 minutes
Rothschild, Bill	Caucasian Westminster Alum ‘66	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; 1 hour and 10 minutes
Russell, Herman J.	Father of Donata Russell Major	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; June 21, 2010; 45 minutes
Ryder, Malcolm	African American Westminster Alum ’72	--Via Phone; May 18, 2009; 1 hour and 30 minutes

Interviewee	Connection to Project	Interview Communication Method, Date, and Approximate Length
		--Via Phone; May 25, 2009; 2 hours --Follow-up via e-mail
Wade, Jannard	African American Westminster Alum '72	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; June 30, 2009; 1 hour and 15 minutes
Walters, Bill	African American, Former educator in independent schools; active educator in NAIS	--In Person, Durham, NC; February 27, 2010; 2 hours and 45 minutes
Ward, Wanda	African American Westminster Alumna '72	--In Person, Arlington, VA; December 10, 2008; 1 hour and 25 minutes --Via Phone; July 23, 2009; 1 hour --Follow-up via in-person, via e-mail and via phone
Wells, Jere	Caucasian Westminster Alum '72	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; June 15, 2009; 2 hours and 10 minutes
Williams, Rev. Allison	Caucasian, Former Board of Trustee Member, Westminster; Retired Pastor of Trinity Presbyterian Church	--In Person, Atlanta, GA; June 23, 2009; 1 hour

Appendix C:

Notes on Methodology

Primary Sources

At Westminster, I reviewed materials in 20 boxes/containers, including approximately 125 folders; all school newspapers published between 1951 and 1973 (approximately 125 newspapers); and all yearbooks published between 1951 and 1973. I took notes separately for each container. I included general information such as research site, container, and date reviewed; relevant findings; and notations of intriguing and/or important points. When photocopies were not allowed of materials such as Board of Trustee Minutes and President's Reports, I typed all direct quotes. For every newspaper article related directly to the racial climate of the school, I completed a document summary sheet that included general information such as research site, document, folder/container, and date reviewed; initial reactions; summative notes; and questions about implications.[1] The following decision rules were used for Westminster sources: a) identified text pertaining to issues related to the desegregation of Westminster and/or issues of race on local, regional, or national levels; b) identified text pertaining to issues of Westminster's position within the national network of independent schools; c) identified written text pertaining to black/white race relations and/or visual materials pertaining to black life/culture. In multiple stages, I collated Westminster archival findings chronologically and thematically. I also wrote summative memos, synthesizing across the various types of sources from Westminster, in the initial stage of analysis.

[1] Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris, *The Methods and Skills of History* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2000), 147-149.

For local and regional level materials, I created notes for each container including general information such as research site, container, and date reviewed; relevant findings; and notations of intriguing and/or important points. For all materials photocopied or photographed, I later reviewed for specific content. I followed similar decision rules as were used for the Westminster sources. Both separately and collectively, I collated these findings chronologically and then thematically, typically alongside school level sources.

For national materials, I first reviewed all volumes that included *Independent School Bulletins* (approximately 84), *Reports* (approximately 109 publications), and Reports from Annual Conferences (1962-1973). Initially I took photos or photocopied materials that pertained to the national organization's coverage of legislation, public image, race, and the recruitment and retention of black students and also created indexes of all materials reviewed noting both individual and summative findings. Second, I reviewed all of these materials for specific content. I collated materials chronologically and thematically across sources.

Oral History Interviews

The process of locating interviewees was quite involved. With respect to black alumni of Westminster, I was able to identify them through yearbooks, but I was not provided any current contact information by the school. I located my initial interviewees through internet searches and personal contacts. Subsequent interviewees were located with the aid of initial interviewees, including referrals to other alumni, and again, internet searches. Because of my interviews with black alumni, I was able to make contact with the black parents that I interviewed. I identified white interviewees through my conversations with black alumni, and I contacted white interviewees, alumni and other,

based on internet searches and referrals. With respect to William Dandridge, an elite informant, I first made contact with him because my advisor identified his connection to my research. Through conversations with Dandridge, I have been able to contact and interview two other African American educators affiliated with NAIS. Because of the trust that my interviewees have graciously granted to me in sharing part of their experiences, I took great care in establishing relationships with each interviewee through various and multiple communication methods including in-person meetings, phone calls, e-mails, letters, and thank you notes.

Interview analysis occurred in multiple stages and varied according to relevance to research questions. I listened to digital recordings of interviews while I reviewed transcriptions (primarily completed by professional transcribers). I noted interviewees' tone and cadence, the flow of conversation, and important passages and themes. Due to the centrality of their narratives to the stories, I gave each black alumni of Westminster interviewed and the first director of minority affairs for NAIS a synopsis of interview(s) to review. Additionally, I provided the opportunity to read transcriptions of interviews. Black alumni interviews had first been coded for six emerging themes related to the factors that influenced their enrollment at Westminster and their subsequent experiences. Other interviewees were allowed to review any direct quotes used from their interview(s). Additionally, information shared by participants was compared to any preexisting primary and secondary sources, if available. However, on occasion when oral histories did not fully adhere to tests of reliability and validity, these accounts were not dismissed but were used to explore new perspectives. As Alessandro Portelli wrote, "importance of

oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in."[2]

While I have reviewed every school newspaper and yearbook published between 1951 and 1973, all board meeting minutes and presidential papers during these same years, and additional primary sources on the regional and national levels, oral histories helped to bolster and bring to life the story informed by archival documents. Indeed as a historian, I have attempted to analyze my oral history interviews carefully because I know that my interviewees are making sense of the present, including issues of race and racism, as they recount their past experiences to me. Yet because of oral histories with those affiliated with Westminster and with others, the story of one school's desegregation is not only told by the written record but also by the memories of those participating in a vastly changing political and social era. Because of my interviewees, I am able to render more complex the daily student experiences in an elite independent private school, pre- and post-desegregation than I would have been able to do based solely on written materials.

[2] Alessandro Portelli, "Peculiarities of Oral History," *History Workshop Journal* 96 (Autumn 1981): 100.

Appendix D:

Biographical Information on Black Alumni Interviewees

Dawn Clark, following her graduation from Westminster in 1976, attended St. Andrew's Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, North Carolina and graduated in 1980 with a degree in theater. After college Dawn returned to Atlanta and worked for Citizens and Southern National Bank (now a part of Bank of America), the National Processing Center, and Mellon Bank (now the Bank of New York Mellon), primarily in the lockbox departments, and operated her own business, "Its Cookie Time." In 1992, Dawn moved to Knoxville and earned her MBA from the University of Tennessee. Between 1998 and 2001, Dawn served as head of the business department and as a professor at Knoxville College. Though unable to work full-time due to multiple sclerosis, she continues to consult on an occasional basis.

Joia Johnson, who currently resides in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary for Hanesbrands Inc. Following graduation from Westminster in 1977, Joia attended Duke University and graduated with majors in public policy and economics. She then earned a master's of business administration from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania and a juris doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Joia returned to Atlanta and began her legal career at Long & Aldridge (now McKenna, Long, & Aldridge). In 1989, she became the first General Counsel for H.J. Russell and Company, one of the largest minority-owned construction companies in the United States, and remained there until 1999. She then became the first General Counsel for Rare Hospitality International, Inc., a restaurant company. After approximately eight years, Joia moved to Winston-Salem for her current position with Hanesbrands Inc.

Michael McBay currently resides in Los Angeles, California where he periodically alternates between the professions of medicine and music. Following graduation from Westminster in 1972, Michael matriculated to Stanford University with the assistance of a partial scholarship from the National Science Foundation. While performing commercial rock music semi-professionally and continuing his passion for competitive martial arts, Michael earned his medical degree from the University of California-Los Angeles and trained in emergency medicine at King/Drew Medical Center, also in Los Angeles. Michael is also the co-author of *Spiritual High: Alternatives to Drugs and Substance Abuse*¸ published in 2005 with his spiritual teacher of 30 years John-Roger.

Ron McBay currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia and is an independent computer consultant. Following graduation from Westminster in 1976, Ron matriculated to Princeton University and graduated with a bachelor's degree in Mathematics. He also earned an MBA from Stanford University. Following Stanford, Ron worked briefly as an account manager for AT&T. Additionally he has been a computer programmer in the private sector and at the Atlanta University Center.

Malcolm Ryder currently resides in Oakland, California, and is an architect and management consultant for CA, Inc., formerly Computer Associates. Prior to joining CA nearly four years ago, Malcolm operated his own consulting firm and was in partnership with CA. Malcolm received his bachelor of arts from Princeton. He was an independent major in visual arts and was one of the first photography graduates from Princeton outside of the art history program. Upon completing college he worked as professional photographer which led to him work with the National Endowment for the Arts. Following his time at the National Endowment for the Arts, Malcolm created the IT programming for the arts funding departments' business operations at the New York Foundation for the Arts, and he was a member of the advisory council for the National Association for Arts Information Exchange. Upon moving to California with his family, he began working for a small consulting firm in San Francisco's financial district and has continued in IT as an executive or consultant until his present position.

Jannard Wade currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia. Since graduating from Morehouse College in 1976 with a bachelor of arts in music, Jannard has worked in financial services. Immediately following college, Jannard began working for New York Life in sales and sales management. In 1999, he was voted President of the Atlanta Association of Life Underwriters, an organization that encompasses all life insurance agents in Atlanta. After 20 years with New York Life, Jannard was recruited by New England Financial in 2001, for which he worked as a sales manager. Beginning at the end of 2008, Jannard has been with Futurity First Insurance Company.

Wanda Ward currently resides in Lanham, Maryland, and is Senior Advisor to the Director at the National Science Foundation. Previously she served as the Deputy Assistant Director the National Science Foundation's Education and Human Resources. Wanda earned her bachelor of arts in psychology and Afro-American studies from Princeton University in 1976 and her doctorate in psychology from Stanford University in 1981. Before joining the National Science Foundation in 1992, Wanda was an associate professor of psychology and founding director of the Center for Research on Multi-Ethnic Education at the University of Oklahoma, Norman. Further, she has also held academic positions at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Center for the Study of Reading.

Appendix E: Black Students Attending Westminster, 1967-1973

	1967-1968	1968-1969	1969-1970	1970-1971	1971-1972	1972-1973
Pre-1st		Lisa Richardson	Nickey Harvey	Elinor Benson		*Todd Alexander
1st			Lisa Richardson	Nickey Harvey	Elinor Benson	
2nd				Lisa Richardson	Nickey Harvey	*Elinor Benson
3rd			Teddy Benson		Lisa Richardson	*Nickey Harvey
4th	Dawn Clark			Teddy Benson		Lisa Richardson
5th	Bill Billings	Dawn Clark Ron McBay	Joia Johnson		Teddy Benson	
6th		Bill Billings	Dawn Clark Ron McBay	Joia Johnson		*Teddy Benson
7th			Bill Billings Lisa Borders	Dawn Clark Ron McBay Vic Bolton	Billy Borders Janice Edwards Leslie Hill Joia Johnson	Shawn Sanders *Lynn Jackson
8th	Janice Kemp Isaac Clark Michael McBay Jannard Wade Wanda Ward	Julius Scott Anthony Maddox		Bill Billings Lisa Borders Buddy Cooper	Dawn Clark Ron McBay Vic Bolton	*Billy Borders *Janice Edwards *Leslie Hill *Joia Johnson *Carolyn Patterson *Clarence Bolton *Arnetta Hill *Clarence McGhee *Donata Russell
9th		Janice Kemp Isaac Clark Michael McBay Jannard Wade Wanda Ward Malcolm Ryder	Julius Scott Anthony Maddox	Edward Moore	Lisa Borders	*Dawn Clark *Ron McBay *Vic Bolton Stephen Brooks
10th			Isaac Clark Michael McBay Jannard Wade Wanda Ward Malcolm Ryder	Anthony Maddox Corliss Blount Karen Meeks	Edward Moore	*Lisa Borders Chuck Dowe

	1967-1968	1968-1969	1969-1970	1970-1971	1971-1972	1972-1973
11th				Isaac Clark Michael McBay Jannard Wade Wanda Ward Malcolm Ryder	Corliss Blount Karen Meeks	Edward Moore
12th					*Michael McBay *Jannard Wade *Wanda Ward *Malcolm Ryder	*Corliss Blount *Karen Meeks

*Denotes Westminster Alumni

Source: Data from Westminster class pictures, yearbooks, directories, and interviewees.