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Founder/Chairman, New-Age Black Men Society

MR. EDWARD M. GARNES, JR.

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“The university system, supposedly committed to diverse ideals and higher consciousness, has in reality become a white-centralized institution of exclusion.”

The Historical Context of Integration, its Underlined Purpose, and its Subsequent Implementation

To fully grasp the effects integration presently has on African-American collegiate throughout the country, we must analyze its initial purpose. To do this effectively, we must understand why it came into existence, and what its original goal was. I want you to take a trip with me back to the early 1400s, where the age was dark, and knowledge was acquired by a select few.

The Roman-Catholic church controlled the majority of literary works in Europe up to this point. The common person had no means of learning, for literature was widely unavailable to the masses. However, this was changed due to the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg. Arguably the most significant educational invention in the world, this leveled the playing field dramatically, given basic literary resources to the masses. In addition, this spurred the so-called Renaissance movement in Europe, even though on the African continent, this "movement" was in its 14th consecutive century.

I'm sure you are wondering why I would mention the invention of the printing press while discussing integration. Well, the mere definition of integration is supported by this invention. To receive a better understanding of what I'm referring to, let's fast forward 500 years ahead to 1954. Yes, I'm referring to the landmark case of Brown vs. the Board of Education.

During this time, segregation was practiced by all and accepted by many as the proper method in separating blacks from whites. This was not implemented on a wide-scale basis across ethnic lines. The battle lines concerning education, politics, and social and economic welfare were drawn exclusively between blacks and whites. Unfortunately, the country as a whole was structured for the majority; instead of being inclusive. As a result, all standards were determined and measured by the majority. How does this relate to education, you ask? Well, if the majority determines you can only obtain certain liberties (namely, economic stability) only by having a particular amount of education, then you (the person) may be in jeopardy based on that. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. knew this, and pushed vigorously for equal educational funding for segregated blacks. In contrast, the

majority interpreted this as the opportunity to "implement" Dr. King's vision of an united and colorless America by "admitting" blacks into a predominantly white institutions of higher learning. This is where equality will be obtained (in their eyes). And while the notion of integration seems noble in theory, in practical application it has been '1- major failure.

The Politics of Miseducation

The university system supposedly committed to diverse ideals and higher consciousness, has in reality become a white-centralized institution of exclusion. At predominately white universities, integration has been an intricate and brutal assimilation process anchored in the views, practices, and values of Europeans. The history of exclusion and the miseducation of African Americans is summed up by Carter G. Woodson in a very poignant critique of the American educational system.

The thought of the inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he enters and in almost every book he studies. Much of what universities have taught as economics, history literature, religions, and philosophy is propaganda...that involved a waste of time and misdirected the Negroes thus trained...When a Negro finished his education in our schools, then, he has been equipped to begin the life of an Americanized or Europeanized white man...The education of the Negroes then, the most important thing in the uplift of Negroes, is almost entirely in the hands of those who have enslaved them.

As Woodson notes, education has been essential in the continued underdevelopment and oppression of African Americans throughout history. Educators often employ historical amnesia; and the absence of African Americans in historical literature has severely silenced the perspective of the oppressed and marginalized. The stories, the pain, and cries of black folk become displaced, creating a culture of silence. These selective omissions made by our cultural and textbook makers' reveal a devious intent and uncovers America's uncanny ability to hide the hideous treatment of the "minority."

African American students find themselves confronted with campus climates where oppression, racism and discrimination permeate in covert and overt forms. The tragic irony is that liberal institutions that use diversity and multiculturalism as its calling cards often have discontent students fighting for full inclusion and empowerment. The cries and concerns of students who don't fit the status quo fall upon deaf ears and silenced mouths. The same smooth talking mouths that vigorously recruit African Americans often find it hard to explain under-representation in student governments, inadequate funding for multicultural programming and offices, and the invisibility of students of color in campus curriculum, student life and overall culture. Campuses' reluctance to recognize African-American students and legitimize their complaints points to flaws in the humanity and character of our universities. The apparent inability to recognize this further wounds the psyche of students outside the status quo. While the physical violence of integration is duly noted, little attention is often paid to the psychological trauma integration inflicts. The pain of being treated like a stranger in unfamiliar surroundings persists in one's conscience long after protesters have gone home, funding is finally solidified, and racist graffiti is removed from dorm rooms.

Presenter:

Jeffrey J. Peoples, Jr. born in Las Vegas, NV on June 20, 1974 at Sunrise Medical Hospital. He has lived the majority of his life in Las Vegas up to 1992. Since 1992, he has resided in Indiana and Tennessee. Upon his arrival to Knoxville College in Knoxville, TN (Sept, 1997), he reassessed his dedication to education of others less fortunate than I. Right away; he was selected to be on the Student Judiciary Committee (1997-1999). assisting the administration with sensitive student conduct issues. He also co-founded the Black Entrepreneur, Scientist, And Engineers organization. Starting the Fall Semester in 1998, he became fully engulfed in campus life and activities associated with it. Throughout my participation in the Contemporary Issues Committee (1998-1999), I aided faculty and administrators in organizing events and speakers on campus on a weekly basis. My fellow classmates elected me their Class President (1998-1999). and later would join the rest of the Student Body in electing me their President(1998-2000). Upon my acceptance, I immediately became a Member (ex- officio) of the Board of Trustees for Knoxville College (1998-2000). Outside the classroom, he was inducted into the Project Management Institute-Southern Nevada Chapter as a Student Member (1998-1999), where he was the principal designer for the website. In May 1999, he resigned from his position as a Project Manager for the United States Department of Energy to work as the CEO of Mindworks Entertainment Services and Chairman of the New Age Black Men Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to issues of serious educational impact to African Americans.

Edward M. Garnes, Jr. was born in Atlanta, GA on April 14, 1977. He has lived the majority of his life in Atlanta, GA up to 1995. Since 1995, his primary residence has been Greencastle, Indiana. He graduated from DePauw University in '99 with a BA in English writing and minors in Mass Communications and Black Studies. During his tenure as a student at DePauw University, he metamorphosed from a listener to a speaker; from a follower to a leader. He became a committed revolutionary on the forefront of institutional change by serving in the capacity of leadership positions; some of the positions held are: President, Association of African-American Students; Co-Founder, Student Coalition for Awareness Revolution and Education (SCARE); Cabinet-Board Member and Social Reform Task Force-Board Member, Student Congress. Reflecting on the sound background in policy and issue analysis led to his participation in the drafting of a formal Hate Crime Policy. Currently, he works as a Graduate Assistant in Multicultural Affairs at DePauw University, a self-created position. This position grants him the opportunity to develop programming that seeks to equalize the disenfranchising effects of power, privilege, and historic inequalities on different groups. In addition to being a graduate assistant, he serves in the capacity of Teachers Assistant in the Black Studies Department. He has formally delivered presentations at colleges throughout the United States, including Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, Wabash College, Davidson College, and the University of North Carolina-Greensboro. He is also President of Mindworks Entertainment Services and the New Age Black Men Society.