

[*Alumni
S. Collins*]

Caucus of Emory Black Alumni
Emory University

Association of Emory Alumni
Atlanta, Georgia 30322
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President's Office

August 1, 1990

Dr. James T. Laney, President
Emory University
408 Administration Building
Atlanta, GA 30322

Dear Dr. Laney:

The Caucus of Emory Black Alumni has spent the past few months in careful study and review of the racial climate at Emory. We acknowledge and laud your personal commitment to creating a multi-cultural diversity within the Emory community as evidenced through such accomplishments as the increase in Black enrollment, the naming of Dr. Delores P. Aldridge to an endowed chair and the Martin Luther King Jr. Scholars program. However, in light of the

incident involving Sabrina Collins, we as Black alumni are compelled to share with you our thoughts in regard to the racial climate at Emory.

It is important to us that you understand the Emory campus greets the young Black teen with a pervasive yet covert aura of racism. There is an undefinable, unidentifiable shadow of intimidation that is always present. Even those of us who seemingly adjusted and excelled at Emory spoke of the side glances, the unreturned greetings and the pointed whispers from some individuals on campus. Aside from this more subtle racist behavior, alumni from the sixties, seventies and eighties reported similar cases of overt harassment. For example, each generation of Black alumni has commented on a chronic problem with Emory Security. Black students at Emory have always been stopped frequently by security and requested to legitimize their presence on campus. We still get reports from recent alumni indicating they are often watched suspiciously as they shop in the bookstore. Also, over the years some majority group, usually a fraternity, frequently displays some racist slur or prank.

A summary of the racial climate at Emory would be unjust without some mention of the portrayal of Blacks in university publications. We do not recall any positive representation of Blacks in any journal. We see photographs and articles discussing only those issues that place Blacks in subservient and

[*Copied to Tom B
Bill Frye*}

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deprived settings. While we, of course, are proud of all aspects of our culture, it would be refreshing to have more current, upbeat and challenging journalism.

We recognize a university president cannot control the attitude and actions of an entire student body. However, we strongly feel that a president and his administrative staff can do a number of things to create a climate that will be healthy and positive for all students. The university should offer intense and comprehensive psychological assistance and support programs for the Black student as a specific entity of the multi-cultural student population. Also, the university must respond promptly to racially motivated acts against Blacks on Emory's campus. In this regard, we underscore promptly. Timely responses will certainly discourage such future actions and provide comfort to Black students on campus.

Finally, we do stand in support of any and all students that fall victim to the climate of racism at Emory regardless of the circumstances. We understand better than many the multiplicity of emotional complications that can occur as a result of covert tensions. We remain available to you as a resource in addressing new concerns as well as a tool in resolving current issues at Emory University.

Respectfully yours,

The Caucus of Emory Black Alumni