

OPINION

Commentary

Black Student Finds Opportunities At Behrend College

by Gregory Goldsmith
Collegian Staff Writer

When I first thought of going to college, attending a black institution never entered my mind. Many of my high school friends however, were considering it because they felt they would not be able to handle the transition from a predominantly black to an entirely white world.

I had no problem with this. I remember something my mother told me, "Greg, the world is not all black and the sooner our race realizes it, the better off we'll be." With this idea in mind, I decided to attend a predominantly white university. This, I thought, would give me the direct exposure to what I would be dealing with all my life.

I believe a black student who fails to attend a white university, if given the chance, is cheating

himself. There is so much to learn from this experience. I have found that not all white people are the same. There are those that tend to stereotype blacks and then there are those that ask questions and

"When I chose Behrend, I really hit the nail on the head."

don't pass judgement on my skin color, but rather, on my character.

I am often asked why I chose Behrend. I have always had in mind that I wanted to attend a college with a great deal of diversity and a limited amount of luxuries. When I chose Behrend, I really hit the nail on the head. I wanted a school that could show

me some of the pressures of the world and would see me as educated, and black.

Here at Behrend, I can learn how to deal in a world of white professionals. I see how whites act, what they expect, and what they think. In short, I can see who they really are.

When I graduated from high school, many people warned me about coming this far away from home. I heard horror stories about the cold, the uncultured people, and the boring weekends in Erie. None of this could change my mind, since I felt this was a good opportunity for me to challenge and explore my mental stability and internal strength. It was time for me to try something different.

During the summer before coming to college I thought about all of this, and I formulated a plan

on how to deal with it.

I have really had no problems with the whites here on campus.

"...the professors often seem apprehensive about calling on me. I wonder if they are afraid of embarrassing me, thinking that I might not know the answer."

The only real problem I have had is receiving looks as if I were from another planet. Many people I met have never come in contact with a black person, let alone eaten with one.

It is important that we prove the stereotypes set up for us are wrong. Believe it or not, we do know how to talk, write and carry on a conversation with more than a reasonable amount of intelligence. In time the whites will see that I am just like them and the only real difference is that of my skin color and hair texture. Many have adjusted and some may never.

I am often tested for my reaction to certain "ethnic" jokes. The testers are often surprised when I laugh. They don't realize that I am not laughing with them, but at them for displaying their ignorance. They fall into the proverbial saying, "Better to be thought of as ignorant than to open your mouth and prove it."

In the classrooms, I have no problems with the other students. However, the professors often seem apprehensive about calling on me. I wonder if they are afraid of embarrassing me, thinking that I might not know the answer. I know what I am capable of, and being in a classroom full of whites, not only does my skin color stand out, but so does my intelligence.

Being black at a white college has awarded me many advantages. I am looked after much more than others and more is offered to me. Also, by graduating from a top white university, I have a better chance in the business world than most blacks. I not only have the degree, but the experience of working with the white man. Since the beginning of my matriculation here, I have been made aware of who I am.

One thing I think could change about attending a white university is the attitude towards blacks. All we want is a chance. Whites must not jump to conclusions and stereotype blacks.

The generation of blacks today are tired of being caterers and if the whites don't realize this, they are going to be in for a rude awakening.

OOPS.

You have just become living proof that people read Collegian ads.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS FROM FRIENDS TO FRIENDS.

"I think you've had a few too many."

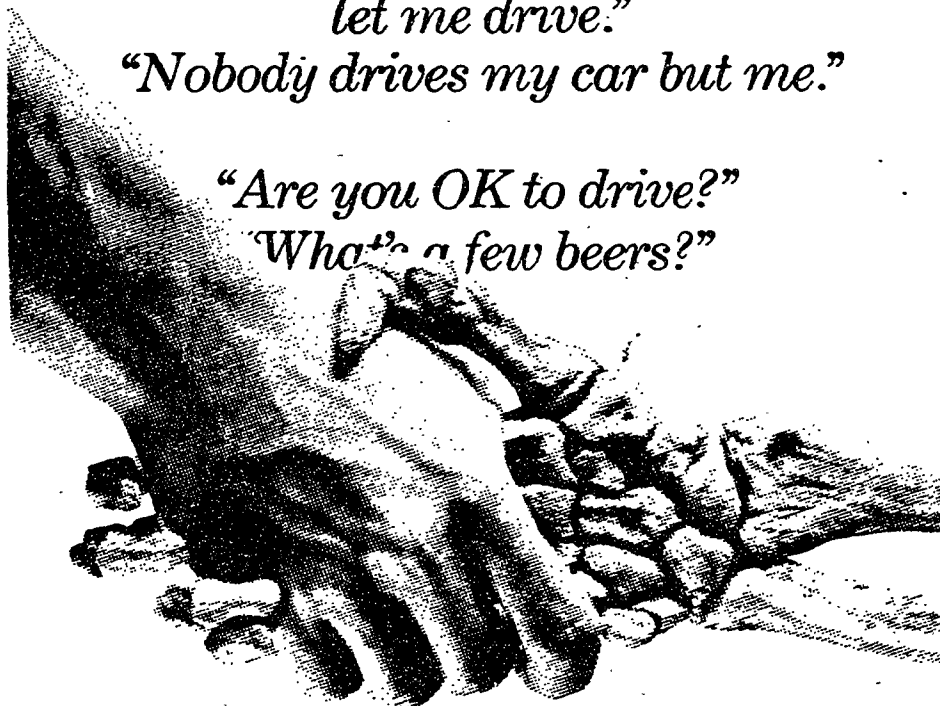
"You kiddin, I can drive with my eyes closed."

"You've had too much to drink, let me drive."

"Nobody drives my car but me."

"Are you OK to drive?"

"Wha? a few beers?"



DRINKING AND DRIVING CAN KILL A FRIENDSHIP.

U.S. Department of Transportation



Penn State Behrend Collegian Member of The Press Association

Editors

Risa Glick

Rod Luery

News Editor..... Michael Ross
Feature Editor..... Paula Maus
Business Manager..... Daniel King
Photo Coordinator..... Napoleon Birch
Advisor..... Robert DiNicola

Staff

Jill Bedford	Thomas Milley	Rob Roth
Judy Bush	Kevin Moore	Lisa Scherer
Robbie Colville	Barrett Parker	Michael Shaffer
Kimberly Ford	Lisa Pavadore	Tammie Starcher
Kurt Freeman	Julie Potochny	Kelly Swisher
Dan Gaston	Greg Rathbun	Anne Waskowitz
Gregory Goldsmith	Julie Reynolds	Roger Whelan
Dana Gross	Steve Roney	Michael Wimmis
Darlene Kasbee		Mark Yeager

REPRESENTED FOR NATIONAL ADVERTISING BY
CASS Student Advertising, Incorporated.
1633 West Central St.
Evanston, Illinois 60201

Mailing Address - Behrend Collegian, Station Road, Erie, PA 16563
Office located in Reed Union Building
Office Hours - 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Monday through Friday
Phone: 898-6221

Opinions expressed by the editors and staff of the Penn State-Behrend Collegian are not necessarily those of the University Administration, faculty, or the student body.