

# Black History Month: past, present and future need

**By Tony Perry**

Another February has arrived and with it a myriad of activities honoring Black History Month. Admittedly, the question of whether or not we should even have a month dedicated to the celebration of one section of the population is a sensitive one.

There are many who would say that such a celebration only serves to exclude white society from the concerns of black America. They say that every February blacks start acting like they are going to take over. They start using the term "reverse racism."

On the other side of the fence, there are those who say it is about time America admitted to the fact that blacks have played an important role in our history. They say blacks should have a day to celebrate their heritage and a reasonable excuse to educate this nation's youth on the history of blacks in America. Some would even go so far as to say blacks have suffered enough over the years and they deserve to have a month of their own, even if it is the shortest month of the year.

Either way, anyone who really looks closely at the situation in this country would say that the existence of Black History Month signifies an attempt to "make things right" with America's blacks after years of slavery and prejudice. I'm sure the people who first thought of it believed it would be a good way to prove that America has come a long way since the days of slaves and cotton. Whether or not they succeeded in convincing themselves is irrelevant; racism is alive and well in America.

During the 1960s, it was not at all uncommon to speak out against the kinds of injustices that racism creates. However, something happened during the late '70s that changed all of that. Those seekers of the American Dream (remember Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness?) discovered why the ostrich hides its head in the sand. Instead of getting rid of the evidence, ignore it entirely. See no evil, feel no guilt. If we don't look at it, maybe it will simply go away.

That brings us to 1984. The President tells us we are headed in the right direction and that we

are better off than we were a few years ago. Yet over a bathroom door in a diner in a small town in North Carolina is a sign that says "Coloreds."

Perhaps we have overlooked the actual problem for so long that we don't even recognize it anymore. Just over a year ago, Bob Jones University claimed it wasn't racist to forbid, as a matter of policy, students to "cross racial lines in dating."

The fact is this: Racism is more than just white or black or brown supremacy. Racism is more than saying one race is "better" than

another. If we recognize the existence of racial "lines," we are, in fact, being racist. If we feel differently about someone because of his or her race--whether it is in that person's favor or not-- we are being racist. Racism occurs when we allow differences in race to become an issue. Moreover, racism will never be eliminated as long as a person's race matters. A person's race will matter as long

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# Capitol Campus proud

**By Linda McCarty**

Capitol Campus--a mere one-room schoolhouse compared to the huge educational metropolis of University Park--may be suffering from what could be termed a "Penn State identity crisis."

This unusual phenomenon creates confusion among Capitolites.

"Am I or am I not a true-blue, Nittany Lion Penn Stater?" they ask.

University Park answers yes and no. Yes, you can pay Penn State tuition, use Penn State notebooks and even wear Penn State sweatshirts. We are even allowed the Penn State insignia on our diploma as long as the words "Capitol Campus" are written boldly underneath.

But no, we are not granted the privilege of earning University Park degree titles.

The distinction is fairly clear. For whatever reason, it appears we are "sub-Penn Staters" in the eyes of many at University Park.

But if we take a good hard look at ourselves, look past our far from picturesque college setting to our fellow students, our faculty and our educational programs, we can solve our own identity crisis.

We see students, many of them returning after years "away from the books," working full-time, raising families and commuting many miles.

While much of Capitol's student body works against what another learning institution may view as poor academic odds, we see fuel-efficient cars and robots

constructed with a smaller budget than AMP and GM allow for their nuts and bolts.

Few universities can take credit for a student body as dedicated and hard-working as that which exists within the Olmsted Building.

Our faculty? According to Peg O'Hara, Career Placement Counselor, 75 percent of the teachers at Capitol have doctorate degrees. They must meet the same requirements as those employed at University Park.

Capitol students need not "take a ticket" in order to receive individual attention from an instructor. Our faculty have both the time and the opportunity to care about the individual student and very seldom neglect this responsibility.

We are told that Capitol Campus was designed to meet the needs of both students and industry requiring practical education. Practical programs created to educate practical students for the real world does not produce below-par graduates.

Yet larger institutions, said Peg O'Hara, "think we're second class citizens, a hybrid institution. I've heard all of those things."

The stigma still stands and it's up to Capitol to erase it.

We don't have to rely solely on the name recognition of a University whose football team may receive more applause than its academic undertakings. We must first be Capitol Campus Proud and let University Park fly its own "Be Penn State Proud" banners.

Then maybe we'll solve our identity crisis.

**(Editor's Note: Capitol Times plans a series of articles in upcoming issues analyzing degree programs at Capitol and their standing among potential employers.)**

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