THE LIMITS TO CATHOLIC RACIAL LIBERALISM: THE VILLANOVA ENCOUNTER WITH RACE, 1940-1985

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the process of desegregation on the campus of a Catholic university in the North. Focusing on Villanova University during the period from 1940-1985, the narrative explores the tension between the University's public commitment to desegregation and the difficulties of implementing integration on a predominately white campus. Through oral histories, newspaper accounts (especially the student newspaper), University committee meeting minutes, administrators' personal correspondence, and other internal documents, I examine how Villanova students and administrators thought about and experienced desegregation differently according to their race.

In examining the process of desegregation, this dissertation makes two arguments. The first argument concerns the rise and fall of Catholic racial liberalism. In early post-World War II era, Catholic racial liberalism at Villanova was consolidated when the philosophy of Catholic interracialism combined with the emerging postwar racial liberalism. This ideology promoted the ideals of an equitable society where everyone had equal rights but it did so with a specific appeal to Christian morality. Catholic racial liberalism held that segregation, let alone racism and discrimination, was a sin. Therefore, Catholic racial liberals possessed an unshakeable faith in the ideal of integration. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Villanova adhered to the ideal of integration as the number of African American students increased. Indeed, a consensus of Catholic racial liberalism prevailed on campus. As the civil rights movement began to demand more of white Americans throughout the 1960s, the consensus of Catholic racial liberalism began to weaken as white Villanovans expressed racial anxieties. In the late

1960s, when black Villanova students adopted a position of Black Power and threatened to change the campus culture, the orthodoxy of Catholic racial liberalism was shattered. At Villanova, the 1970s were marked by the struggle to increase minority enrollment. These efforts represented a last desperate attempt by racial liberals to keep alive the civil rights movement's promise of integration. Finally, during the 1980s, as affirmative action programs based on race in higher education came under fire, Catholic racial liberalism was replaced by the ideology of diversity. Therefore, I argue that the rise and fall of Catholic racial liberalism on Villanova's campus demonstrated both the possibilities and the limits to this philosophy. Furthermore, the process of the desegregation of Villanova's campus in the postwar period serves, then, as a microcosm for understanding the larger failure of integration in the United States.

Second, I argue that, despite Villanova's adoption of Catholic racial liberalism, meaningful integration proved elusive. The administration's inconsistent efforts to recruit and to include African American students on campus demonstrated that they were unwilling to transform the campus culture to further the goals of the black freedom movement. Indeed, most white Villanovans, students and administrators, expected African Americans to simply be grateful for the chance to be at Villanova. This, of course, left black students on a campus that was desegregated but integrated in only the thinnest and least meaningful sense of the word. Integration is more than the absence of segregation, yet throughout the period of this study most black Villanova students continued to feel the sting of segregation on campus. In place of integration, Villanova University adopted a paradigm of "acceptance without inclusion" with regard to African American students on campus.

In tracing the limits to Catholic racial liberalism and the failure of integration, this research highlights the experiences of historical actors who have not appeared in the previous studies of Catholic higher education – black students. The investigation of the experiences of African American Villanova students reveals a story about race and Catholic higher education that moves the focus away from abstract commitments to racial equality and places it on the men and women who experienced the disparity between public pronouncements and day-to-day practice. To be sure, black Villanova students were not simply pawns in the social drama of desegregation. As such, the narrative examines how black Villanova students, by their presence and their activism, challenged the racial status quo and how white Villanova students and administrators responded to these challenges.

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In completing this dissertation, I had the good fortune to be a part of two vibrant and supportive academic communities. Villanova University is more than simply a place where I work and teach. I also grew up as a historian in Villanova's master's degree program. As a result, I owe a debt of gratitude to my colleagues in the history department, especially Dr. Marc Gallicchio, Dr. Larry Little, and Dr. Maghan Keita. They have not only been supportive and encouraging of my work but, it is from them that I learned the craft of history. In particular, Dr. Keita inspired this work by challenging me to consider how notions of race complicate historical narratives.

At Villanova, I am blessed to work with remarkable colleagues in the Division of Student Life. I received a great deal of encouragement from Kathy Byrnes and Father John Stack. O.S.A., and I am truly grateful to them for their guidance, support, and friendship. I also wish to acknowledge and thank the members of my staff who make my work life rewarding and enjoyable on a daily basis. A few other people at Villanova deserve special thanks. Dr. Terry Nance has always been there to challenge me and to help me think more deeply about issues that matter at Villanova and beyond. She is a dear friend and colleague. I also owe a big thanks to Dr. John Immerwahr who came along at a perfect time in this project and offered his support to read early drafts. I valued immensely his input and benefited greatly from his insights into this project.

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support my endeavors. Father Gallagher, director of the Villanova Archives, was very generous with his time in helping me to locate materials. I enjoyed our long periods of time together in the Archives. And a special thanks to David Uspal who worked hard to help me create the website of the Villanova Black Oral History Project.

At Temple University, I was blessed to work with a dedicated team of historians. Dr. Beth Bailey's comments helped strengthen the final draft of this project but, just as importantly, the seminar I took with her early in my Temple career made me a stronger writer and a better historian. Dr. William Cutler asked probing questions which refined my arguments and I benefited tremendously from our conversations about higher education. This work would not have been possible without the incredible patience and persistence of my advisor, Dr. Bryant Simon. Dr. Simon gave generously of his time to make this a stronger work. He never let me become complacent and constantly pushed me to see the bigger issues at stake. He believed in this project and in me from the start and for this I am truly thankful. He is the consummate professional, a talented historian, and an even better advisor.

This work is dedicated to two groups of people without whom this project would not have been possible – the African American alumni of Villanova and my family. First, I am indebted to all of the men and women whom I interviewed as part of this project. Their willingness to trust me and to open their hearts - and sometimes their homes - to me was inspiring. I was fortunate to have three gentlemen – Dr. Edward Collymore, Ted Freeman, and Napoleon Andrews – respond early on to the invitation to interview. These gentlemen assisted me greatly by reaching out to their friends to join the project. After we finished his interview, Villanova alum Johnny Jones suggested to me that we have a

reunion of black alumni from this period. At that point in time, Mr. Jones had not been back to Villanova's campus in 42 years. I told him, "If you promise to come, I will help to organize the event." The *Back and Black* event in October 2012, where Villanova University welcomed back African American alumni, remains the highlight of my time at Villanova. It was a magical evening for all Villanovans – past, present, and future.

To my family, I owe a heartfelt thank you. To my mother and father, thank you for teaching me the values of hard work, patience, and love. To my wonderful sons – Thomas, Patrick, and Brendan - who put up with a father who occasionally missed a game or family event, I say thank you for your patience and support. I am proud to finally be able to answer my youngest son Brendan's incessant question, "When are you going to be done?" I am thrilled to be able to tell him that we can go have a baseball catch whenever he would like. Most importantly, this dissertation would not have been possible without the sacrifices made by my loving and supportive wife, Meghan. For too many years, she shouldered the family responsibilities while I was squirreled away in the library or in my office. It is my turn to step up in this regard while she pursues her own academic ambitions. I am truly blessed to have her as my partner in life.

Finally, it is my hope that this dissertation and the Black Villanova Oral History project will spark conversation and action around issues of inclusion. It was not easy to find fault, at times, with a place where I fell in love, matured as a professional, and found my life's passion as an educator. Villanova has provided me many wonderful opportunities and, for this, I am truly grateful. I showed the final draft of this dissertation to a colleague and friend who declared this study to be "a work that reflects loyalty and love flavored with deep and unblinking honesty." I could not have said it better myself.

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In examining the process of desegregation at Villanova University, this dissertation makes two arguments. The first argument concerns the rise and fall of Catholic racial liberalism. In early post-World War II era, Catholic racial liberalism at Villanova was consolidated when the philosophy of Catholic interracialism combined with the emerging postwar racial liberalism. This ideology promoted the ideals of an equitable society where everyone had equal rights but it did so with a specific appeal to Christian morality. Catholic racial liberalism held that segregation, let alone racism and discrimination, was a sin. Therefore, Catholic racial liberals possessed an unshakeable faith in the ideal of integration. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Villanova adhered to the ideal of integration as the number of African American students increased. Indeed, a consensus of Catholic racial liberalism prevailed on campus. As the civil rights movement began to demand more of white Americans throughout the 1960s, the

consensus of Catholic racial liberalism began to weaken as white Villanovans expressed racial anxieties. In the late 1960s, when black Villanova students adopted a position of Black Power and threatened to change the campus culture, the orthodoxy of Catholic racial liberalism was shattered. At Villanova, the 1970s were marked by the struggle to increase minority enrollment. These efforts represented a last desperate attempt by racial liberals to keep alive the civil rights movement's promise of integration. Finally, during the 1980s, as affirmative action programs based on race in higher education came under fire, Catholic racial liberalism was replaced by the ideology of diversity. Therefore, I argue that the rise and fall of Catholic racial liberalism on Villanova's campus demonstrated both the possibilities and the limits to this philosophy.

Second, I argue that, despite Villanova's adoption of Catholic racial liberalism, meaningful integration proved elusive. Historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall defines true integration as "an expansive and radical goal, not an ending or abolition of something that once was - the legal separation of bodies by race - but a process of transforming institutions and building an equitable, democratic, multiracial, and multiethnic society."[1] Using this definition, Villanova did not achieve true integration. The administration's inconsistent efforts to recruit and to include African American students on campus demonstrated that they were unwilling to transform the institution to further the goals of the black freedom movement. Indeed, most white Villanova students, faculty, and administrators – even those who embraced Catholic racial liberalism - expected African

[1] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91 (March 2005), 1252.

Americans to simply be grateful for the chance to be at Villanova. African American students were accepted as long as they understood their place on campus and did not demand changes to the culture. When black students did ask for more, some Villanovans bristled. This left black students on a campus that was desegregated but integrated in only the thinnest and least meaningful sense of the word. As Hall argued, integration is more than the absence of segregation, yet throughout the period of this study most black Villanova students continued to feel the sting of segregation on campus. In place of integration, Villanova University adopted a paradigm of "acceptance without inclusion" with regard to African American students on campus.

Therefore, Catholic racial liberalism proved to be not much different from the larger postwar liberalism which has been criticized by proponents of integration as not going far enough. The heart of the conflict was the tension between Catholic racial liberalism's professed faith in integration and the institutional transformation which true integration required. In the end, Villanova was never able to fully resolve this tension, demonstrating the limits and contradictions to Catholic racial liberalism.

In tracing the limits to Catholic racial liberalism and the failure of integration, this research highlights the experiences of historical actors who have not appeared in the previous studies of Catholic higher education – black students. The investigation of the experiences of African American Villanova students reveals a story about race and Catholic higher education that moves the focus away from abstract commitments to racial equality and places it on the men and women who experienced the disparity between public pronouncements and day-to-day practice. To be sure, black Villanova students were not simply pawns in the social drama of desegregation. As such, the narrative

examines how black Villanova students, by their presence and their activism, challenged the racial status quo and how white Villanova students and administrators responded to these challenges.

Indeed, this is not the traditional Southern narrative of white racism and white backlash in response to the demands of proponents of black civil rights and affirmative action. The Northern story is much more nuanced and complicated.[2] Therefore, the examination of the complex racial dynamics on a Catholic university in the North demonstrates how difficult integration was and is in American society. The examination of the rise and fall of Catholic racial liberalism on Villanova's campus in the postwar period serves, then, as a microcosm for understanding the larger failure of integration in the United States. In the end, the Villanova encounter with African American students underscores the enduring significance of race in higher education and, indeed, in the United States.

The Significance of Villanova

At the present time, Villanova University is a highly selective four-year institution of higher education sponsored by the Order of St. Augustine, an order of Roman Catholic priests. The campus is situated in the wealthy suburb of Radnor Township, located

[2] For more on the civil rights in the North, see Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Jeanne Theoharis and Komozi Woodard, eds., *Freedom North: Black Freedom Struggles Outside the South, 1940-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Theoharis and Woodard, eds., *Groundwork: Local Black Freedom Movements in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).

twenty miles outside of center city Philadelphia, in an area known as the Main Line. The campus is set on 200 acres surrounded by neighborhoods of large homes. The University prides itself on providing a strong undergraduate Catholic liberal arts education, though it offers academic programs at both the graduate and undergraduate levels in four colleges – the College of Arts and Sciences (founded in 1842), the College of Engineering (1905), the School of Business (1922), and the College of Nursing (1953). In 1957, the Villanova School of Law was established. Until the College of Nursing was founded in 1953, Villanova admitted only men on a full-time basis.

This study focuses on Villanova University because, throughout its history, Villanova has exemplified the possibilities but also the limits of racial liberalism. The characteristic features of Villanova University – largely Irish, Catholic and located in the suburban North – make the University a compelling case study for understanding the challenges and difficulties inherent in the process of desegregation. Indeed, the study of the Villanova encounter with race is illustrative of some of the larger trends of racial history in the United States, beginning with its very roots.

In the 1830s and early 1840s, the Catholic population of Philadelphia was relatively small and began to face increasing hostility from Protestants in Philadelphia. The hostility increased throughout the 1840s as the ranks of the poor Irish swelled in Philadelphia as a result of the famine. The Irish arrived in the United States as an exploited and oppressed "race," not unlike African Americans.[3] As Noel Ignatiev has

[3] For studies on the Irish American experience, see Michael Coffey and Terry Golway, *The Irish in America* (New York: Hyperion, 1997); Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (New York: Longman, 2000).

pointed out in *How the Irish Became White*, many of the Irish worked with and lived among impoverished free African American communities in Philadelphia. In fact, Ignatiev indicates that the Irish were frequently referred to as "niggers turned inside out" and that African Americans were referred to as "smoked Irish."[4] Nonetheless, the Irish ultimately moved from being an oppressed race to becoming "white." Drawing on W.E.B.DuBois' work and his concept of the "psychological wages of whiteness," historian David Roediger argues that instead of organizing across racial and ethnic lines to realize gains, the white working class, which included the Irish, "settled for whiteness."[5] The Irish Catholic priests who established Villanova unwittingly contributed to this process.

In 1842, Villanova University was established by Irish members of the Order of St. Augustine (whose members use the title O.S.A.) when the Augustinian priests purchased a 197-acre plot of land ten miles west of Philadelphia. By fleeing Philadelphia, Villanova was established in the countryside as a safe haven from the discrimination faced by the Irish in the city.[6] In electing to establish their educational institution in the countryside, the Augustinians, knowingly or unknowingly, contributed to the process of distancing themselves from the possibility of forging an alliance with other oppressed

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[4] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 41.

[5] W.E.B. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction in the United States* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 6.

[6] On the discrimination faced by the Irish in Philadelphia and other urban areas, see Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Michael Feledberg, *The Philadelphia Riots of 1844: A Study of Ethnic Conflict* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1975); Elizabeth Geffen, "Violence in Philadelphia in the 1840's and 1850's." *Pennsylvania History* 36 (1969): 381-410.

groups. It was obvious from the outset that the academy at Villanova was interested in educating its own. Father Patrick Moriarty, O.S.A., declared that the purpose of the academy at Villanova was to provide for the "good education [of]… the children of the less opulent portion of our Catholic people."[7] The fact that Villanova was established to contribute to the education of an oppressed minority - Irish Americans - provided hope that Villanova's mission would include the education of other marginalized groups. Yet, the stated purpose of educating the "Catholic people" also represented the limits of that mission as Villanova remained religiously and racially homogenous for much of its early history.

Throughout the twentieth century, the struggle to integrate Villanova University reflected the tension between two competing versions of racial justice within the Catholic Church. Catholic interracial ideology that was beginning to take shape in the pre-World War II era took hold in the post-war era. Yet, in the 1960s, the Second Vatican Council and the civil rights movements created a split amongst the Catholic population over racial issues.[8] In 1967, priest and author Andrew Greeley observed that Catholic higher education reflected the development of the Catholic population.[9] Villanova, not surprisingly, experienced these same tensions. Some students and administrators expressed sympathy for the goals of the black freedom movement and became powerful allies. Others, however, expressed varying degrees of resistance to the notion of

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[7] David R. Contosta, *Villanova University: 1842-1992: American-Catholic-Augustinian* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995, 12-13

[8] John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1996).

[9] Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic College* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1967), 53.

increasing the number of black students on campus. As such, the crisis within Catholicism, in general, and Catholic higher education, in particular, mirrored and shaped the more general reorientation of American society in the 1960s.[10]

The fact that Villanova was located in the suburban north is also significant for understanding the vexed process of integration. Although black students experienced incidents of racism on campus, overt discrimination was largely absent from the campus. Villanova leaders and administrators tolerated the presence of black students and generally wanted to appear progressive on racial matters. Yet, there were still difficulties. Shedding light on these difficulties strips away the notion that the history of race in the north is a whiggish history. Race relations in the post-war north were not characterized by a gradual process of enlightenment and inclusion. The case of Villanova demonstrates that the process of desegregation was often messy, complicated, and full of missteps.

Historical Contribution

This dissertation seeks to contribute to the historical literature on the concepts of racial desegregation and Catholic higher education in several meaningful ways. First, by focusing on middle class Catholics in a suburban setting, this study complicates the standard narrative of post-World War II white resistance to the integration of African Americans.[11] The class identity of Villanova as an institution and of its students is a

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[10] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 207.

[11] Several recent works that explore the general concept of integration in post-war American include Roy Brooks, *Integration or Separation?: A Strategy for Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999; Sheryll Cashin, *The Failures of Integration: How Race and Class Are Undermining the American Dream* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2005);

crucial factor for understanding white middle class attitudes towards integration. Throughout much of the post-World War II period, Villanova's identity was firmly white, middle class, and Irish.

Historians have traditionally focused on lower and working class whites in urban settings who were prone to harbor deep-seated racist feelings as a result of competition for jobs or housing. With regards to Detroit residents in the immediate post World War II era, Thomas Sugrue argues that working class and poor whites expressed more negative views towards African Americans and, furthermore, that Catholics were more likely than Protestants to express "unfavorable feelings towards blacks."[12] Jonathan Rieder's *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism* analyzes this phenomenon among Jews and Italians in Brooklyn during the 1970s. Through extensive fieldwork and interviews with residents, Rieder demonstrates how working class and middle class residents of this neighborhood resisted integration of African Americans. Rieder argues that residents of Canarsie believed that they were the victims of the liberals who voted for civil rights and desegregation. Canarsians argued that policies enacted by a liberal government drastically changed their existence by disrupting the cultural hegemony within their community.[13] Similarly, John McGreevy's *Parish Boundaries:*

Elizabeth Anderson, *The Imperative of Integration* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010); Barbara Digs-Brown and Leonard Steinhorn, *By the Color of Our Skin: The Illusion of Integration and the Reality of Race* (New York: Dutton, 1999).

[12] Thomas Sugrue, "Crabgrass-Roots Politics: Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* 82, no. 2 (1995): 556.

[13] Jonathan Rieder, *Canarsie: The Jews and Italians of Brooklyn against Liberalism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth Century examines how Catholics in the urban North resisted racial integration by defining their neighborhoods in largely religious terms. McGreevy argues that the neighborhood was ascribed a religious significance and meaning by Catholic residents that moved well beyond mere physical space. McGreevy details many instances of intransigence on the part of Catholics with regards to racial integration of these sacred spaces. Despite official pronouncements against racism by the Catholic Church, McGreevy argues that racial prejudice remained deeply rooted in neighborhoods of urban, northern Catholics.

Other works on white resistance to integration have emphasized how white resistance was mobilized around appeals to their ethnic identity. In his influential work on the Boston busing crisis of the 1970s, Ronald Formisano demonstrates how these appeals were used by working class Irish to counter demands for equality by African Americans. Recognizing that the lower and working classes were not the only ones to harbor racist feelings, Formisano argues that middle and upper class liberals displayed racist attitudes and behaviors in varying, but different, forms as well.[14] The Villanova struggle lacked the "reactionary populism" of the busing crisis yet there was still evidence of resistance to black student demands to change the campus culture. Despite the large presence of students of Irish and Italian descent on Villanova's campus, this resistance was not based on appeals to the student's ethnic heritage as described by

[14] Ronald A. Formisano, *Boston Against Busing: Race, Class and Ethnicity in the 1960s and 1970s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 233.

Matthew Frye Jacobson in his influential work *Roots Too*.[15] This study demonstrates that resistance by Villanova students and administrators alike manifested itself in many different forms.

The studies mentioned above demonstrate that most white Americans, especially Catholics, espoused a parochial view of race relations throughout much of the post-World War II era. Integration was largely viewed through the framework of residence and, as a result, through neighborhood schools. The examination of integration within non-permanent campus residences that are free of the strictures of the traditional boundaries of the neighborhood opens a new window on the meaning of integration.

In an influential review essay on race and the post war liberal consensus, historian Gary Gerstle asked, "Did white groups less historically bound by wage labor and less worried about falling to the level of the African American feel freer to commit themselves to racial equality and to explore their interest in Black culture?"[16] By focusing on a middle class institution of Catholic higher education in North, this dissertation demonstrates that the answer to this question is incomplete. Villanova embraced the integrationist ideal of Catholic racial liberalism throughout much of the postwar period. As will be demonstrated, however, some of same intransigence found in urban neighborhoods was present on the campuses of Catholic institutions of higher

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[15] Matthew Frye Jacosbon, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[16] Gary Gerstle, "Race and the Myth of the Liberal Consensus," *Journal of American History* 82 (September 1995): 586.

education in the North. This study argues that Villanova, like the larger American society, was struggling with the larger meanings of racial integration.

Second, this study adds significantly to the scholarship on race and higher education, particularly Catholic higher education. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz's survey of the history of college student life from the eighteenth century to the present remains one of the only works to analyze the grand sweep of this history. Horowitz's chapter on the 1960s and the Black Power movement in particular provides context for the late 1960s student activist culture yet does not treat the notion of integration in any great depth.[17] Scholars have written at length about black student movements on college campuses.[18] Joy Williamson's *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* and Wayne Glasker's *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Student Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* are two recent works which analyze African American activism on predominately white campuses in the North. Williamson details the rise and fall of black student activism - arguing this paralleled the Black Power movement on a national level - on the University of Illinois campus and ultimately concludes that black students forced university administrators into "more aggressive

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[17] Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1987).

[18] On black student movements on college campuses see William H. Exum, *Paradoxes of Protest: Black Student Activism in a White University* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985); Seymour Martin Lipset, *Rebellion in the University* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972; Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, "Black Power: Its Need and Substance," in *Black Power and Student Rebellion*, ed. James McEvoy and Abraham Miller (Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 1969);

action" than they may have undertaken without such pressure.[19] In *Black Students in the Ivory Tower*, Glasker focuses more heavily on ideology in arguing that black students at Penn embraced a Black Nationalist perspective and were effective in adopting this perspective without isolating themselves from the predominately white campus community.[20] The examination of the black student movement at Villanova reveals similar outcomes to those uncovered by Williamson and Glasker. However, it is this study's examination of the attitudes and behaviors of *white* faculty, students, and staff members towards integration sets it apart from these recent works on race and college campuses in the post-World War II era.

There has been much written on the history of Catholic colleges and universities in post-World War II America; yet, very little has been written on the relationship between Catholic colleges and universities and race in the civil rights and post-civil rights eras.[21] The two most significant works on the recent history of Catholic higher education focused heavily on the increased secularization of American society and the effects that this phenomenon has had on Catholic higher education. Race is largely absent from these

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[19] Joy Ann Williamson, *Black Power on Campus: The University of Illinois, 1965-1975* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

[20] Wayne Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory Tower: African American Student Activism at the University of Pennsylvania, 1967-1990* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).

[21] The following general works on the history of Catholics in the United Sates all give scant attention to race: Thomas McAvoy *A History of the Catholic Church in the United States* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), John Tracy Ellis' *American Catholicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), James Hennessy *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), Martin Marty, *A Short History of American Catholicism* (Allen, Texas: Thomas More Books, 1995).

analyses. Focusing mainly on the period from the 1920s to the 1960s, Philip Gleason, in *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century*, equates the "Americanization" of the Catholic Church in the United States with secularization which he argues has resulted in a loss of Catholic identity for the church's colleges and universities.[22] In *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education Since 1960*, Alice Gallin extends Gleason's arguments to the present by focusing on the period of post-Vactican II. Gallin argues that economic pressures caused by competition and a liberalization of ecclesiastical authority in the post-Vatican II era has led to a weakening of the Catholic identity of many Catholic colleges and universities.[23] Unlike some of the institutions analyzed by Gallin, Villanova University retained a strong sense of its Catholic identity during the post-World War II period. Therefore, the issue of race on Villanova's campus is examined through the lens of the Catholic mission of the institution. There is significant evidence that black and white Villanova students also analyzed the actions and statement of Villanova's administration through the construct of the University's mission.

Finally, this study seeks to tell an untold story of Villanova history as the most recent work on the history of this institution paid little attention to racial matters on campus. Philadelphia area historian David Contosta wrote *Villanova University, 1842-1992: American-Catholic-Augustinian* for the University's Sesquicentennial celebration.

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[22] Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century (*New York: Oxford University Press, 1995)

[23] Alice Gallin, *Negotiating Identity: Catholic Higher Education Since 1960* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000).

In this work, Contosta asserts that race relations started to receive greater attention beginning in the 1950s. In support of this assertion, Contosta mentions several prominent civil rights leaders who were invited to speak at the University, including Thurgood Marshall (1956), Dr. Martin Luther King (1965), Dick Gregory (1969) and LeRoi Jones (1971). He also points to the presence of editorials in the student newspaper the *Villanovan* in the 1950s and 1960s which criticized racism. The author, however, provides no further details concerning these events or any other significant events in the history black students at Villanova. In fact, Contosta concludes weakly that "on a campus where the number of African American students was negligible, the civil rights movement had little personal relevance…."[24] This study seeks to correct this official narrative by shedding light on the hidden history of the desegregation of Villanova's campus.

Chapter One

The acceptance of black students in the 1930s and 1940s demonstrated that Villanova was liberal on racial matters, even for a Catholic institution of higher education in the North. To be sure, this was not the South and Villanova did not experience the battles over desegregation faced by their peer private institutions below the Mason Dixon Line. There were, however, limits to this liberalism as these black men fit a particular definition of an acceptable black student and they did not live on campus. After detailing the early history of black students at Villanova, this chapter traces the roots of the

[24] David R. Contosta, *Villanova University: 1842-1992: American-Catholic-Augustinian* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

Catholic Church's concern over race matters and how this concern manifested itself on college campuses. Led by a Jesuit priest named John LaFarge, S.J., the Catholic Church in the Unites States adopted an ideology of Catholic interracialism. In the 1940s, this philosophy provided the moral foundation for the growing presence of African American students on Catholic college campuses.

This chapter argues that, after World War II, Catholic interracialism combined with an emerging racial liberalism to produce an orthodoxy of Catholic racial liberalism. This ideology promoted the ideals of an equitable society where everyone had equal rights but it did so with a specific appeal to Christian morality. Catholic racial liberalism held that segregation, let alone racism and discrimination, was a sin. Therefore, Catholic racial liberals possessed an unshakeable faith in the ideal of integration. At Villanova, among other outward manifestations, the Interracial Club embodied the tenets of Catholic racial liberalism.

After laying the foundation of Catholic racial liberalism, this chapter examines some of the promises and limitation to this liberalism by focusing on campus race relations during the decade of the 1950s. In the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, white Villanova students appealed to their Christian morality, on the one hand, and to geopolitical concerns of the Cold War, on the other, to express public support for desegregationist policies. The publication of a controversial article on racial differences by a Villanova professor, however, illustrated that these views were not shared by all within the Villanova community. The 1950s also represented the time period where Villanova began to recruit black student-athletes into its athletic program.

This chapter further argues that the experiences of these black student-athletes on-campus and off-campus demonstrated that while Villanova appeared liberal on racial matters, the situation was much more complex on the ground. Despite Villanova's public embrace of non-segregationist admissions policies and their active recruitment of black student-athletes, these black student-athletes found themselves on a campus that integrated in only the thinnest and least meaningful sense of the word. In other words, black students were accepted and invited on to campus but did feel included.

Chapter Two

By the beginning of the 1960s, Catholic leaders in the United States made it clear where they stood on racial issues. There was evidence that Catholic racial liberalism, which was largely dismissed prior to World War II, had become firmly established. Despite official pronouncements against racism by the Catholic Church, historian John McGreevy argues that racial prejudice remained deeply rooted in neighborhoods of urban, northern Catholics. As a result, McGreevy concludes that in the 1960s a conflict developed between liberal Catholics and the traditional Catholic working class over racial matters. McGreevy points to the Second Vatican Council and the civil rights movement as two forces that served to divide Catholics into Churches: one conservative and traditional and the other, liberal and progressive.

Against this backdrop of this division within the Catholic Church, this chapter argues that race relations in the 1960s at Villanova embodied the both limits and contradictions of Catholic racial liberalism. For white Villanova students, the unchallenged acceptance of the limited goals of the early civil rights movement began to

give way to uneasy questions about the tactics and desired outcomes of a more aggressive movement. Yet, throughout the 1960s, Villanova continued to appear liberal on civil rights and on the presence of black students on campus. This chapter further argues that little progress, however, was made in terms of their integration into Villanova's campus community. As will be demonstrated, early efforts to increase black student recruitment and enrollment were attempted yet went nowhere due to a lack of enthusiasm among University administrators. With regard to the black student population, the numbers were still low and their recruitment was limited to mostly star athletes. This fact reinforced the limits of the administration's commitment to racial justice. As the decade of the 1960s came to an end, black Villanova students, observing the disparity between professed ideas of integration and their day-to-day reality, became increasingly politicized and radicalized.

Chapter Three

1968 represented a major turning point for campus race relations. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968 led black students to question their presence on a predominately white campus while white students demonstrated varying responses ranging from guilt to ambivalence. As black Villanova student-athletes began to drive the conversation about race, black Villanova students as a whole – athletes and non-athletes – began to reflect the impulses of the national Black Power student movement and organized themselves into the Black Student League (BSL). Through the founding of the BSL in 1968, black Villanova students adopted their own form of Black Power ideology. The black student movement at Villanova was

characterized by a high degree of racial solidarity, a desire to raise awareness about the campus climate for black students, and, finally, the willingness to demand for far-reaching changes to the campus culture.

This chapter argues that, as black students began their turn towards Black Power, the consensus of Catholic racial liberalism on Villanova's campus began to weaken. When confronted with accusations of racism and discrimination, white Villanova students and administrators reacted in various ways. Taking their cues from black students who described the racism and segregation they felt on campus, some white Villanovans, including select members of the administration, displayed concern about racial equality and acted in support of the BSL. Many white students and administrators, however, dismissed the claims of racism raised by black Villanova students. Furthermore, white students began to express uneasiness over the burgeoning Black Power movement and the impact this movement could have on their privileges. While they accepted the presence of black students on campus, white students rejected the notion that black students did not feel included on campus.

Chapter Four

This chapter examines the development of a multi-variant and complicated brand of Black Power ideology which manifested itself in the activities of the BSL from 1969-1970. In February 1969, the Black Student League participated in two significant demonstrations which signaled their willingness to engage in activism. Beyond their participation in these protests, the BSL strengthened and consolidated itself through the sponsorship of a series of events and publications. In the spring of 1970, the failure of

the BSL to realize all of their demands led to the decision to join forces with the white-student dominated Vietnam Moratorium Committee. This action by the BSL called into question the nature of the Black Power movement on Villanova's campus. Taken together, BSL's actions and demands threatened the racial status quo on campus.

If the turn toward Black Power represented a weakening of the liberal consensus on campus, this chapter argues that the Black Power and the anti-war protests of 1969-1970 shattered it. Through their reactions to these events, Villanova students demonstrated the promise and limits of their racial liberalism. Some white Villanova students expressed support for the goals of the black power movement, while others demonstrated the growing anxiety of white students in the wake of the campus Black Power movement. This anxiety only increased as the black student movement became more and more closely identified with the Black Power movement.

Chapter Five

By the 1970s, affirmative action programs designed to increase minority enrollment were common in higher education. These programs were lauded by racial liberals - including Catholic racial liberals - who sought to advance equality of opportunity for African American in higher education. At Villanova, the Office for Social Action implemented programs designed to enhance the enrollment of black students. Furthermore, in the early 1970s, the Social Action Committee of the University Senate emerged as the leader in advancing minority student enrollment and for the promotion of affirmative action in hiring of staff and faculty.

While Catholic racial liberals supported efforts to increase minority enrollment, affirmative action programs also met stiff resistance. Conservatives challenged affirmative action on several fronts. Some conservatives argued for admissions policies based on a color-blind rationale, insisting that race-neutral admission policies ensure meritocratic, fair access to higher education. Others suggested that preferential programs would weaken the academic profile of the institutions. At Villanova, white students began to show weariness over what they perceived as demands for preferential treatment.

With the Catholic racial liberal consensus in tatters by the early 1970s, this chapter argues that the struggles over minority recruitment and affirmative action at Villanova revealed a desperate attempt by racial liberals to keep alive the ideal of integration. They attempted to change the campus climate by increasing the number of African American faculty, staff, and students on campus. Yet, the resistance displayed by those who opposed compensatory programs for minority students exposed the limits of change. In the end, through a pattern of administrative inaction and organizational subterfuge, conservative forces won out as black student enrollment declined and the number of black staff and faculty remained low. Yet, as will be demonstrated, their victory was a partial one.

As this struggle played out throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, black students at Villanova were left to try to make sense of it all. As a result of the low number of black students and a lack of strong leadership, the black student movement floundered. While the campus debated the merits of efforts to recruit more students like them, black students were left feeling unwelcome. Indeed, an examination of the campus climate at

the beginning of the decade reveals a campus climate where African Americans were accepted but did not feel included.

Epilogue

1985 was an historic year for Villanova. On April 1, 1985, in an epic David versus Goliath matchup, the Villanova Wildcats upset the Georgetown Hoyas to win the NCAA Men's Basketball National Championship in Lexington, Kentucky. The game remains the second most-watched basketball game – college or professional - of all time. Philadelphia sportswriter Frank Fitzpatrick argues that the game was "must watch TV" because of its "fascinating racial framework." In the era of Ronald Reagan's conservative social policies, Fitzpatrick contends that "race remained close to the nation's soul." [25] Indeed, race was still prominent in the minds of many Villanovans.

In the same year, Villanova hired their first admissions officer who was dedicated solely to recruiting minority students. The fight over efforts to recruit students of color demonstrated that, by the mid-1980s, the "diversity" movement - inspired by the Supreme Court's decision in *Regents of the University of California vs. Bakke* (1978) and being championed on many campuses - had not yet reached Villanova. The Villanova struggle over matters of diversity was still largely couched in racial terms.

By 1988, however, Villanova was fully engaged in internal conversations around diversity. This epilogue argues that, in the end, as the diversity movement gathered steam, Catholic racial liberalism was replaced fully by the ideology of diversity. In the

[25] Frank Fitzpatrick, *The Perfect Game: How Villanova's Shocking 1985 Upset of Mighty Georgetown Changed the Landscape of College Hoops Forever*, (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2013), 14 .

process, larger conversations about racism and racial discrimination were eclipsed by the new paradigm of diversity. Despite the lack of attention given to racial issues by the administration, black Villanova students were still confronted with issues of racism on campus. Furthermore, research demonstrated that black Villanova students expressed significantly less satisfaction with their campus experience than white Villanova students. In the end, meaningful integration remained elusive as African American students at Villanova believed themselves to be accepted on campus but not included.

CHAPTER 1

"YOU KNEW YOUR PLACE:" THE EARLY AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE ON VILLANOVA'S CAMPUS

By the 1930s, the Catholic Church in the United States grew increasingly concerned with matters of social justice. The Catholic Action movement, which had its roots in in the late nineteenth century social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, had taken hold among young Catholics who desired to become involved in the work of the church.[1] At Villanova, students in the 1930s involved in evangelization efforts labeled their work as "Catholic Action." As this chapter will demonstrate, Catholic Action at Villanova shifted from strictly matters of faith and doctrine in the late 1930s to matters of racial justice in the postwar period.

At the same time the Catholic Action movement was taking hold among young Catholics, a young Jesuit priest named John LaFarge, S.J., was becoming increasingly concerned about the treatment of African Americans. As a result of his growing interest in racial issues, LaFarge established a Catholic interracial movement. In 1934, LaFarge founded the Catholic Interracial Council of New York and became the editor of the influential magazine *America*. In 1937, he published a treatise called *Interracial Justice* which espoused his philosophy on Catholic social teaching and race relations. Drawing

[1] *Rerum Novarum*, or "Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor," was an encyclical issued by Pope Leo XIII in May 1891 which addressed the social conditions of the working class. The document supported the workers' rights to form unions, criticized communism and affirmed the right to private property. For more on *Reurm Novarum* and the doctrines of Catholic social teaching, see Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching, 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological and Ethical Analysis* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002).

on Catholic theology, LaFarge denounced racism as a sin and a heresy.[2] The development of this interracial philosophy in the 1930s provided a theological and moral foundation for Catholic colleges to desegregate. Yet, most Catholic colleges would not do so until well into the 1940s.

Villanova University was one of the exceptions. In the fall 1933, as LaFarge was preparing to launch his interracial organization, an African American student named Victor Ashe traveled 600 miles from Norfolk, Virginia, to attend a small school outside of Philadelphia then-named Villanova College. Three years, later, he would be joined by James Richardson, an African American student from Philadelphia. The desegregation of Villanova's campus suggested the possibilities of Catholic interracialism. However, an examination of the backgrounds and experiences of these African American students demonstrated that there were limits to this Catholic interracialism.

In the wake of World War II, a new liberal racial orthodoxy emerged across the United States. In 1944, Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal's study entitled *An American Dilemma* raised the awareness of white Americans to the plight of black Americans who suffered under a system of discrimination. Myrdal's work laid the foundation for an increased focus on civil rights in the Truman administration. Furthermore, the geopolitical concerns of the Cold War helped consolidate this new liberal racialism.

Postwar racial liberalism combined with the earlier foundations of Catholic Action and Catholic interracialism to produce the ideology of Catholic racial liberalism.

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[2] David W. Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism, 1911-1963* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1996), xiii; LaFarge's *Interracial Justice* made such an impression on Pope Pius XI, according to historian David Southern, that he secretly contracted LaFarge to write an encyclical on racism and anti-Semitism.[2]

Like racial liberalism in general, Catholic racial liberalism promoted the ideals of an equitable society where everyone had equal rights but it did so with an appeal to Christian morality. Catholic racial liberalism held that segregation, let alone racism and discrimination, was a sin. Therefore, Catholic racial liberals possessed an unshakeable faith in the ideal of integration.

Against this backdrop, this chapter argues that Villanova reflected the possibilities and limits of this Catholic racial liberalism. The tenets of Catholic racial liberalism were expressed by white members of the Villanova community in the wake of the *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) decision and in support of the early civil rights movement. Yet, some Villanova students and faculty demonstrated the limits to this ideology by challenging the orthodoxy of Catholic racial liberalism.

The adoption of Catholic racial liberalism by Villanova reinforced the moral legitimacy of the presence of African American students on campus. Along with the ideals of Catholic racial liberalism, the rise of the prominence of college athletics led to the enhanced recruitment of more black athletes to Villanova. Indeed, the presence of black students was largely unquestioned. The extent of their integration, however, into campus life was another matter. This chapter demonstrates that, despite Villanova's public embrace of non-segregationist admissions policies and their active recruitment of black student-athletes, the University integrated in only the thinnest and least meaningful sense of the word.

The Catholic Church and Race in the Pre-World War II Period

By the late 1920s and early 1930s, the term "Catholic Action" came to encompass much of the social justice work undertaken by various members of the U.S. Catholic church. Actions as varied as "boycotts of morally offensive movies to conferences on world peace" were labeled as Catholic Action.[3] The most well-known example of Catholic Action was the Catholic Worker Movement, which was founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in 1933.[4] The idea of Catholic Action became popular with young Catholics who were seeking solutions to social justice problems. The widespread acceptance of the Catholic Action movement helped lay the groundwork for the Church's racial justice work.

In the 1930s, Villanova students invoked the term Catholic Action to describe work that was undertaken to strengthen the Catholic faith. For example, the *Villanovan* detailed the efforts of students who worked on newspapers at Catholic colleges to establish a Catholic College Press Association. This organization was started to represent the Catholic student point of view. Indeed, the *Villanovan* editors suggested that Villanova students could now be assured that "the thought of his religion and his system of education will be given to the secular press in its true light." The *Villanovan* hailed this accomplishment as "another great step in the furtherance of Catholic Action."[5] As

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[3] Philip Gleason, *Contending with Modernity: Catholic Higher Education in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 153-154.

[4] For more on Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement see, Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: the Autobiography of Dorothy Day* (San Francisco: Harper Publishers, 1997); Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1987).

[5] "Catholic Students Act," *Villanovan*, 22 March 1938.

another example, in an editorial entitled, "Real Catholic Action," the *Villanovan* editors encouraged Villanova students to volunteer to teach religious education to Catholic children in Philadelphia who attend public schools. The editors labeled this group as "those unfortunates who have not been blessed with the advantage of a Catholic education."[6] As evidenced by the type of work described as "Catholic Action," Villanova's definition of Catholic Action was narrow and parochial. As will be demonstrated, in the early postwar period the term "Catholic Action" became more capacious and would intersect with the burgeoning Catholic interracial movement founded by a young Jesuit priest named Father John LaFarge, S.J.

At the same time as Catholic Action was taking hold among the young, LaFarge was working to advance black equality in the Catholic Church. LaFarge served as a pastor in St. Mary's County, Maryland, in a parish with a large population of African Americans. In 1924, LaFarge established the Cardinal Gibbons Institute, a school for African American students that was dubbed the "Catholic Tuskegee."[7] At the same time, LaFarge was also active in the Federated Colored Catholics of the United States (FCC). The FCC experienced a divisive split at its 1932 convention over whether to remain an interracial organization or to emerge as a racially separate organization. With the closing of the Gibbons Institute in 1933 and the issues facing the FCC, LaFarge believed that the Catholic Church needed a new and distinct institution to work on interracial justice. In 1934, LaFarge enlisted the help of George Hunton, the head of the Cardinal Gibbons Institute, and together they established the Catholic Interracial Council of New York

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[6] "Real Catholic Action," *Villanovan*, 14 February 1939.

[7] Southern, *John LaFarge and the Limits of Catholic Interracialism*, xiv.

(CICNY). The CICNY would become the "most important church organization engaged in the promotion of racial justice" throughout the 1940s and 1950s.[8] The CICNY helped consolidate the interracial movement.

LaFarge stressed that interracial justice was connected with the larger question of social justice and, thus, a central part of the Catholic Action movement. Furthermore, he believed that the first step toward interracial justice was the recognition that this question was a spiritual and moral issue. In answering critics who equated interracial work with radical leftist politics, LaFarge stressed that this work was consistent with American ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In this way, LaFarge would implicitly state that the Catholic Interracial Council was fully Catholic and fully American in its goals.[9]

The Catholic college student movement around racial justice had its beginnings when CICNY and Catholic Action came together on the campus of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart. After Hunton was invited to speak on interracial justice to students involved in Campus Action, Manhattanville students drew up a series of resolutions which called on white Catholics to "become increasingly interested in the welfare of the Negro; [and] to engage actively in some form of Catholic Action looking to the betterment of his condition, spiritually and materially."[10] From this New York

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[8]Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History of Colonial Times to the Present* (Garden City, NY: 1985), 369.

[9] Martin Zielinski, "Working for Interracial Justice: The Catholic Interracial Council of New York, 1934-1964,"*U.S. Catholic Historian* 7 (Spring-Summer 1988): 236-237.

[10] Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 155-156.

base, the CICNY undertook missionary efforts to spread their work to college campuses along the East Coast. Thus, the interracial student movement was born on Catholic college campuses.

On November 14, 1937, students from Villanova attended the first meeting of the Catholic Interracial Council of Philadelphia which met at St. Joseph's Alumni Library. John LaFarge attended the meeting and spoke to the gathering of area college students, educators, and other social justice advocates. The students of St. Joseph's were so inspired by the work of LaFarge that they formed a student club named after the priest but it quickly died out after only two years of existence.[11] In the mid-1940s, Villanova would establish an Interracial Club inspired by LaFarge's work.

Indeed, there was work to be done on Catholic college campuses in the 1930s and early 1940s. For years, Catholic colleges had excluded African Americans. A survey of Catholic colleges conducted in 1944 found that three-quarters of the responding institutions claimed not to have racial restrictions on admission. However, based on that same survey, at least 22 Catholic colleges, many located outside the South, still had restrictions in place.[12] For instance, the University of Notre Dame, the most prominent Catholic university in the country, had a policy of exclusion up until 1940. In 1922, Father Matthew Walsh, president of the university, explained that the rejection of black applicants was in the best interests of the black applicants themselves. Walsh wrote that the university had many students from the deep South and, therefore recommended

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[11] David Contosta, *St. Joseph's: Philadelphia's Jesuit University, 150 Years* (Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2000), 159-160.

[12] Robert E. Burns, *Being Catholic, Being American: The Notre Dame Story* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 348.

against "exposing a well-deserving colored to the prejudice that unfortunately the Southerner carries with him."[13] By the early thirties, Gleason suggests, "few Catholic commentators would openly defend exclusion, but except for Xavier University in New Orleans, which was founded for African Americans in 1915, only a handful of Catholic institutions enrolled black students." Most of these were urban Northern institutions, with Loyola College in Chicago boasting the highest total of 30 black students. [14] Though there was no official policy that included or excluded African American students, Villanova was one of this select group of institutions of Catholic higher education which accepted black students during the 1930s and 1940s.

Early African Americans at Villanova

African American students were welcomed on to a campus dealing with the aftermath of the economic and political fallout caused by the Great Depression. Throughout the early 1930s, Villanova experienced a decline in enrollment as a result of the deteriorating economic conditions. In 1931, Villanova's enrollment reached a peak of 1,022 students. This number would fall to 701 by the fall of 1935. The student population remained mostly Irish Catholic and mostly Democratic. Historian David Contosta argues that the parents of most Villanova students were Democrats who "connected the interests of the Democratic Party with the interests of the common man and associated the Republican Party with wealthy Protestants and unwarranted attempts

[13] Ibid., 348.

[14] Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 155.

to regulate personal habits of immigrants and their descendants." As such, Villanova students overwhelmingly favored Franklin Delano Roosevelt in campus polls conducted for the 1932 and 1936 elections. As the national economy improved throughout the 1930s, the enrollment increased, reaching 974 students by 1940.[15]

Though it is difficult to ascertain the identity of the first black student to attend and graduate from Villanova, the experiences of several black men who attended the University in the 1930s and 1940s demonstrated the limits to the racially liberal policies of Villanova. Black students were admitted to Villanova but it appears that they had to be the right type of black student. As will be shown, these men were Catholic and were the products of Catholic education. To be sure, Villanova stayed true to its original mission "to educate their own," especially when it came to African American students. Furthermore, these students did not live on campus so their presence on campus contributed to the desegregation of the campus but not its integration.

Born in 1915, Victor J. Ashe grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, in a racially mixed neighborhood known as "Atlantic City." Ashe attended St. Joseph's School and came under the influence of school principal Sr. Mary Magdelene, whom he said had much to do with the development of his prowess and leadership skills. Graduating with high honors, Ashe applied to Villanova on an academic scholarship. However, evidence suggests that Ashe was not allowed to live on campus. According to the *Belle Air*, the University's official yearbook, Ashe was a member of the "Day Hop Club" all four years at Villanova. For many years throughout Villanova's history, "Day Hop" was the term used to describe students who did not live on campus but commuted to school each day.

[15] Contosta, *Villanova 1842-1992*, 116.

Therefore, membership in this group indicates that Ashe did not live on campus. Despite not living on campus, Ashe was active in campus organizations. He was a member of the Belle Masque theater group and was a member of the Junior Prom and Senior Ball committees. He also served as vice president of the Beta Gamma honor society.[16] The yearbook editors provided the following description about Ashe in the 1937 *Belle Air* yearbook: "Quiet, unassuming, likeable is Vic… Credit to the Southland… outstanding in debate and speech work… meticulous in dress and precise in manners… never scowling… be it education or law 'Vic' has 'it' for success."[17] The editors' words about his future success proved prescient. Upon his graduation in 1937, Ashe attended and received his law degree from Howard University.[18]

The fall after Ashe graduated, James Richardson took his place as the only black student on campus. Born in 1917 to a Catholic family, Richardson grew up in West Philadelphia and was the only black student during his time at St. Ignatius grammar school. He attended West Philadelphia Catholic High School for Boys where he fell

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[16] "Victor Ashe, 'Cubby Gill' are Mourned" *Baltimore Afro-American*, 16 March 1974. Bernard F. Ashe, Victor's son, recalls that his father had "good times and bad times" at Villanova. He indicated that he remembers his father telling him that he faced "some discrimination issues" during his time at Villanova (Telephone interview with author, December 12, 2012, notes in author's possession).

[17] Villanova University, *Belle Air* 1937 Yearbook, (Villanova, PA, 1937), Falvey Memorial Library, Villanova University.

[18] After his graduation from Howard, Ashe served in the Navy during World War II. He then returned to Norfolk to practice law. Seeking to become the first black councilman, Ashe ran for City County Council in 1947 but was defeated. Ashe had a distinguished law career which was marked by his involvement in school desegregation cases. He served as a staff lawyer for the N.A.A.C.P. He won the National Bar Association's C. Francis Stradford Award for his work in school desegregation cases in Virginia in 1958-1959. He was later named chairman of the Virginia State Board of Welfare and Institutions. He was the first black person to serve on this board.

under the strong influence of the De La Salle Christian Brothers. Richardson again found himself as the only black student, this time in the halls of one of the largest Catholic high schools in the United States during the 1930s. A promising student with an aptitude for numbers, Richardson excelled academically and was awarded a scholarship by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to attend a Catholic institution of higher education. The Christian Brothers at West Catholic steered Richardson towards La Salle College in Philadelphia as it was founded by the same religious order.[19]

Richardson applied to La Salle College. To his surprise and despite high grades and test scores, however, his application to La Salle was rejected. Richardson was told that his race was the reason for his rejection. La Salle College had just built a brand new football stadium and the school anticipated receiving a large donation from a benefactor. The benefactor wanted La Salle to remain all-white and La Salle did not want to risk losing his support. After his application to LaSalle was rejected, Richardson applied to Villanova. In fall 1937, he was admitted and enrolled in the College of Commerce and Finance.[20]

Despite being the only black student at Villanova during his entire time there, Richardson labeled his Villanova experience to be "the best four years" of his life. Years later, he could not recall a single incident where he felt discriminated against as a black man on campus. Though he was living at home in West Philadelphia and commuting by train to the Main Line school, Richardson indicated that he was involved in campus life and had many white friends. He worked on the *Belle Air* yearbook staff and was a

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[19] James Richardson, interviewed by author, digital recording, December 12, 2012.

[20] Ibid.

member of the Delta Pi Epsilon honor society. He remembers staying overnight at the college with friends during the end of the semester when he would put in long hours preparing for his exams. In addition, Richardson developed strong relationships with several Augustinians, including Villanova president Father Edward Stanford, O.S.A., who served as mentors to him. A deeply spiritual man, Richardson was approached by Father William Lunney, O.S.A., about joining the Augustinians. Richardson considered the offer but he wanted to earn a salary and get married. Furthermore, Richardson also wanted to pay off his financial obligations to Villanova. The scholarship he received from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia did not quite cover all of his expenses. Richardson, however, had been granted approval by Stanford, whom Richardson considered a mentor, to complete his studies on the condition that Richardson repay the money he owed.

On the day of his graduation, Richardson shook the hand of Father Joseph Bartley, O.S.A., dean of the College of Commerce and Finance, with one hand and received an empty diploma portfolio in the other hand. Richardson was behind on his tuition payments and Villanova's policy clearly stated that you were not eligible to receive the real diploma until all of your bills were paid in full. As Richardson accepted the empty portfolio, Father Bartley whispered to him "I'm sorry Jim, I wish it was the real one." Richardson pledged to pay back every dime to Villanova and he eventually made good on his promise, receiving his diploma several years after his graduation. [21] Richardson's presence on the stage and the strong relationships he built with members of the Villanova administration were evidence of Villanova's racial liberalism. Yet, there

[21] Ibid.

were limits to this commitment. Richardson was the only black student on campus during his time and was not permitted to live on campus.[22]

The admission of these first black students demonstrated Villanova's apparent commitment to interracial justice. Although there may have been incidents of discrimination experienced by these men, the fact that they were heavily involved in campus life and enjoyed an active social life demonstrates a level of acceptance for black students during this time period. The fact that neither of these men lived on campus, however, suggests that there may have been limits placed on the integration of black students during the pre-war period.

World War II Era Racial Ideology and Integration

In 1944, Gunnar Myrdal published a fourteen-hundred-page study entitled *An American Dilemma* that raised the awareness of white Americans to the plight of black Americans who suffered under a system of racial discrimination. Myrdal argued that the problems African Americans faced were essentially caused by white Americans who harbored racist attitudes towards black Americans. Indeed, Myrdal argued that "white prejudice and discrimination" were at the root of lower standards of health, education and living for African Americans.[23] Myrdal asserted that the eradication of racial inequality required a shift in the moral compass of white Americans. In a time when the government displayed little incentive to do so, Myrdal encouraged the federal government to develop

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Gunnar Myrdal, *American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

policies to provide equal opportunities for African Americans. Historian Thomas Sugrue argues that "Myrdal was aware of the depth of racial inequality in the United States and of black resentment at the status quo, but he remained profoundly optimistic."[24] This profound optimism became the cornerstone of the emerging philosophy of postwar racial liberalism. Indeed, historian Walter Jackson asserts that Myrdal's study "established a liberal orthodoxy on black-white relations."[25]

Postwar racial liberalism received a boost from the Truman administration. Historian Alonzo Hamby observed that, during the Truman years, "civil rights became a central component of liberalism."[26] In 1947, Truman established the President's Committee on Civil Rights, which was charged with developing recommendations on how to strengthen law enforcement's capacity to protect civil rights. The commission's report, issued in October 1947, was entitled "To Secure These Rights." Jackson argues that "Myrdal's conceptualization of the race issue as a conflict between American ideals and racial practices lay at the heart of the committee's report." Surveying the effects of discrimination in housing, employment, military, education and government services, the report built the case that the doctrine of "separate but equal" was a myth.[27]

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[24] Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008, 60.

[25] Walter A. Jackson, *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience: Social Engineering and Racial Liberalism, 1938-1987* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), xi.

[26] Alonzo Hamby, *Beyond the New Deal: Harry S. Truman and American Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), xviii.

[27] Jackson, *Gunnar Myrdal and America's Conscience*, 275.

Foreign policy concerns also bolstered the development of postwar ideology of racial liberalism. Secretary of State Dean Acheson wrote in 1947 that the "existence of discrimination against minority groups in this country has an adverse effect upon our relations with other countries. We are reminded over and over by some foreign newspapers and spokesmen that our treatment of various minorities leaves much to be desired." [28] In July 1948, as a result of Cold War political reality and pressure from civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph, Truman issued Executive Order 9981 that called for the desegregation of the armed forces.[29]

Thus, historian Matthew Countryman argues "From the confluence of foreign policy and domestic political concerns, there emerged a liberal orthodoxy on race – what can be termed as "civil rights liberalism" – that defined a racially equitable society as in which individual citizens were able to enjoy equal civil and political rights irrespective of race, religion, or creed."[30] Within Catholic higher education in general and at Villanova in particular, this liberal orthodoxy on race would intersect with the established Catholic interracial movement to produce Catholic racial liberalism. Before this ideology really took hold, it would take a crisis in the Midwest to shed national light on the issue of racial desegregation and Catholic higher education.

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[28] Dean Acheson as quoted in Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 80.

[29] For more on Truman and the desegregation of the military, see Michael Gardner and Kwesi Mfume, *Harry Truman and Civil Rights: Moral Courage and Political Risks* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003).

[30] Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press: 2006), 16.

Catholic Racial Liberalism and Desegregation of Catholic Higher Education

Phillip Gleason, a historian of Catholic higher education, argues that the internal struggle over the integration of Saint Louis University, a Jesuit institution located in the border state of Missouri, played a key role in shaping the approach to racial issues by Catholic educators nationwide in the postwar era. The controversy started during the war when Jesuit authorities in Missouri exerted pressure on Saint Louis to open their doors to African American students. In response, the university formed a committee in 1943 to examine the challenges posed by desegregation. In February 1944, Saint Louis University professor Father Claude Heithaus, S.J., unhappy with the slow progress of the committee, delivered a sermon that criticized the university for its "un-Christian" refusal to accept black students. Heithaus sent a copy of the sermon to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* where it received a favorable response from readers. The article caused a stir and created negative publicity for the university. As a result, in April 1944, Saint Louis University president, Father Patrick Holloran, S.J., reluctantly announced that the university would accept its first black students. During the 1944 summer session, five African American students enrolled at St. Louis University.[31] The controversy, however, did not end there.

A segregationist at heart, Holloran convinced the student council to pass a resolution which excluded black students from extracurricular activities sponsored by the university. Heithuas responded with another opinion piece –this one ran in the *Catholic Digest* - which repudiated the policy. As a result of his public dissent, Heithaus received a formal rebuke from Jesuit authorities. Heithaus and one of his most prominent supporters, Father George H. Dunne, S.J., the director of the university's Institute of

[31] Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 237-239.

Social Order, were relieved of their duties at Saint Louis University and were assigned to other posts. The matter was resolved when prominent Catholic theologian Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., was asked by Jesuit authorities to prepare a memo on the admission of black students to Jesuit colleges and universities. Murray argued that the admission of African Americans was advisable based on the "grounds of social justice and charity."[32]

Approximately six months after he was removed from Saint Louis University, the newly-transferred Dunne penned an influential article titled "The Sin of Segregation" in the national magazine *Commonweal*. On whether a Catholic college should admit black students, Dunne remarked that "it is a *Catholic* institution and therefore under strict obligation to conform to Catholic principles. Among those principles is uncompromising repudiation of racism in all of its forms…" Dunne concluded the piece by declaring "Racial segregation is certainly a sin against charity and, in the Christian dispensation, is certainly immoral and not to be tolerated."[33] As a result of the controversy and the intense discussion it generated, Gleason concludes that "though racial integration still had far to go as a social condition, after World War II it could no longer be challenged as a moral imperative which Catholic educators must strive to meet."[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] George H. Dunne, "Sin of Segregation," *Commonweal*, 21 September 1945, 544-545.

[34] Gleason, *Contending with Modernity*, 240.

Emergence of Catholic Interracialism at Villanova

In the immediate aftermath of World War II, Villanova experienced a surge in their enrollment. In September 1946, the enrollment of full-time students at Villanova swelled to 1,946. Historian David Contosta indicated that this number was double the amount of students Villanova had enrolled prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Approximately 1,500 of the students were veterans who took advantage of the G.I. Bill, which offered free tuition and fees to returning members of the military. The men who attended Villanova were still overwhelmingly Catholic and from the Philadelphia area. Over 88 percent had graduated from Catholic high schools and 85 percent were from the Middle Atlantic states.[35] These men displayed growing support for interracial work based on Catholic principles.

If the term "Catholic Action" at Villanova was reserved for ecclesiastical work throughout the 1930s, by the 1940s the Catholic Action movement embraced the interracial movement. Thus, in 1946, the marriage of these concepts manifested itself on Villanova's campus through the establishment of the Interracial Club. The work of the Interracial Club, inspired by this marriage of Catholic interracialism and Catholic Action, was clearly consistent with the racial liberalism espoused by the larger society. Therefore, on Villanova's campus, the ideology of Catholic racial liberalism was consolidated through the work of this organization.

In a May 1946 article on the establishment of the Interracial Club, the *Villanovan* brought the concepts of Catholic Action and interracial justice together when it used the term "Catholic Interracial Action" to describe the club's work. Catholic Interracial Action

[35] Contosta, *Villanova 1842-1992*, 147.

was described as the" work of bringing to bear the influence of Catholic teaching and institutions upon society as to secure just and charitable relations between the various racial or ethnic groups." Furthermore, the *Villanovan* said, the organization was expected to follow the principles of the Catholic Interracial Movement as espoused in LaFarge's work "The Race Question and the Negro" and the *Interracial Review*, a journal edited by LaFarge. The Interracial Club's mission included the following two goals: first, "the combatting of race prejudices" and, second, "the attainment of social justice for the entire group regardless of race." [36]

In March 1947, the Interracial Club sponsored a series of events known as Interracial Justice Week. On March 9, Villanova students attended an interracial forum at St. Joseph's University. Students from Immaculata, La Salle, Rosemont, Chestnut Hill, and St. Joseph's were in attendance as well. The forum featured a panel of community members and students who answered the "controversial Issues and 'questions brought up by the audience concerning the Negro and his rightful place in society." Robert Nix, an African American student from Philadelphia and president of the Interracial Club, represented Villanova on the panel.[37]

On March 11, 1947, the Interracial Club sponsored a basketball game between two local Catholic schools – one predominately African American and one predominately white. African American players from St. Ignatius Parochial School of Philadelphia squared off against the white players of St. Thomas of Villanova Grade School of Rosemont in a game which took place prior to the Villanova - Georgetown men's varsity

[36] "Racial Society Meets to Discuss Group's Program," *Villanovan*, 21 May 1946.

[37] "Interracial Club News," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1947.

basketball game. At halftime of the game, George Guida, a Villanova track star, addressed the crowd, describing the activities of the Interracial Club and it efforts to eliminate "racial prejudice." After the game, Father John T. Mitchell, of St. Ignatius Parish, spoke to "the overflowing audience in the Field House on the application of Catholic principles to the problem of the elimination of racial prejudice and to the establishment of interracial justice." Father Mitchell thanked Villanova for the opportunity as he described his experiences of "racial discrimination against the lads in his endeavor to find recreational and vacation opportunities in and around Philadelphia."[38]

The Interracial Justice Week in March 1947 also inspired two editorials on race relations called "Pride and Prejudice." These editorials demonstrated that Villanova students embraced the tenets of the growing liberal consensus on racial justice. In the first editorial, the *Villanovan* editors refuted the notion of white racial superiority. They argued that no one was "superior to another regardless of race, creed or color for are we not all the children of God." Emphasizing their faith and patriotism, the editors called for action as they declared it was Villanova students' "obligation as Catholics and Americans to rise above the erroneous attitude about white supremacy." Encouraging students to take action to eliminate racism, the editors suggested that "some of us preach a good game, but the man worthy of admiration is the one who substitutes positive action for fine words."[39]

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[38] "Guida Speaks on Racial Problems: Track Star Speaks at Half of Villanova-Georgetown Game," *Villanovan*, 11March 1947.

[39] "Pride and Prejudice," *Villanovan*, 25 March 1947.

The second editorial, which ostensibly analyzed the economic problems faced by black Americans, demonstrated that Catholic racial liberalism approached racial matters from a position of privilege. The editors asked the question: "Is the negro an economic liability?" They responded in the affirmative but also qualified the answer by stating that the reasons behind this must be examined. The editors suggested problems in housing and healthcare were caused by racism and discrimination in society. The editors wrote that Catholics should not be "too hasty to damn the negro. He needs our help so that he can help himself." "That is what he WANTS to do—help himself," the editors suggested, "but without us, he can't." Emphasizing their Catholic faith, the editors believed that Villanova students could help alleviate the economic problems faced by black Americans "by spreading propaganda in the 'Christian Direction' rather than away from the true path."[40] The condescension expressed by the *Villanovan* editors in this article illustrated the limits to Catholic racial liberalism.

Consistent with the goal of integration espoused by Catholic racial liberals, the number of black students enrolled at Villanova, though still very low, began to increase after World War II. This group included two of the most prominent African American alums to ever graduate from Villanova, Robert N.C Nix, Jr. and Hazel Johnson. Nix grew up in Philadelphia and was the son of a successful attorney and politician who was Pennsylvania's first black Congressman. Nix was named valedictorian at Villanova when he graduated in 1950. After graduating from Villanova, Nix attended University of Pennsylvania Law School and would later be elected the Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, the first African American to hold that position in any

[40] "Pride and Prejudice," *Villanovan*, 1 April 1947.

state. Hazel Johnson attended the nursing program part-time and received her bachelor's degree in 1959. After her graduation, Johnson joined the Army Nurse Corps where she rose through the ranks. In 1979, Johnson became the first African American woman ever to be awarded the rank of General when she was also appointed the Chief of the Army Nurse Corps.

Through the 1940s and 1950s, Villanova remained slightly ahead of its peers in terms of African American enrollment, though it certainly wasn't a leader. University officials, it seems, did not proactively recruit African American students to Villanova. It appeared to do enough not to earn a reproach from the progressives within the Church but not enough to truly integrate the campus.

Race Relations in the Wake of *Brown v Board of Education*

On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States declared that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" in handing down their famous decision in the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education*.[41] Despite the seemingly harmonious situation on campus during the early 1950s, the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v Board of Education* tested the Catholic racial liberalism of the Villanova community. By and large, the Villanova community responded favorably to the decision, which was consistent with the liberal stance on desegregation.

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[41] For more on Brown vs. Board of Education, see Charles Ogeltree, Jr. *All Deliberate Speed: Reflections on the First Half Century of Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2004); Mark Tushnet, *Making Civil Rights Law: Thurgood Marshall and the Supreme Court, 1936-1961* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); James T. Patterson, *Brown v Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

The *Brown* decision's impact was felt most heavily in the public education system but Catholic organizations were quick to point out that Catholic schools at all levels were already leading the way toward desegregation. The National Catholic Welfare Conference issued a press release five months after the *Brown* decision which stated that in many areas of the country "where public schools were just beginning to move toward desegregation, or were even dragging their heels, the parochial schools had been integrated for years." [42] In terms of Catholic higher education, Catholic colleges and universities, based mostly in the North and Midwest, were at the forefront of desegregating their undergraduate populations. An article in the N.A.A.C.P.'s *Crisis* in August 1957 analyzed the progress of the enrollment of African Americans at Catholic institutions of higher education. The survey reported that in 1952-53 there were approximately 1085 African Americans enrolled at 22 Jesuit universities. Most Catholic colleges that participated in the survey indicated that they had policies of non-segregation since their inception. These findings demonstrate that the first significant enrollment of African American students, in particular student-athletes, at institutions of higher education occurred at urban, Catholic colleges.[43]

For the most part, white Villanova students reacted favorably to the *Brown* decision. The *Villanovan* editors supported the basis for the decision by declaring that "no scientifically sound evidence on inherent difference in mental ability coincident with

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[42] National Catholic Welfare Conference, "Southern Catholic Schools in Lead in Putting Court Segregation Ban in Effect", NAACP Philadelphia Branch Executive Secretary's Files 1948-1963, Catholic Interracial Council 1954, URB 6/I/79, TUAA.

[43] Albert S. Foley, "The Negro and Catholic Higher Education," *Crisis* (August-September 1957), 416.

physical differences exists." Appealing to their faith, the editors declared, Villanova students "must not be wanting in Christian charity and good will in helping to stamp out racial prejudice.."[44]

In addition to the appeals for racial justice based on Christian spirituality, there were other geopolitical reasons for white people to reject the practice of segregation. Recognizing the inconsistency between segregation and democracy within the context of the Cold War, Villanova students also expressed familiar sentiments about the relationship between racial justice and the threat of communism.[45] In reacting to a series of rallies and events sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of White People in nearby Delaware, the editors of the *Villanovan* expressed frustration over the international implications of such actions. "In the hands of ruthless Communist propagandists," the editors implored, racial discrimination was "a powerful weapon." Finally, the editors feared that the "the folly of white supremacy may eventually lead our country to ruin."[46]

In an article discussing the state of segregation one year after the *Brown* decision, the *Villanovan* editors again chose to highlight the potential global ramifications of continued segregation in the United States. The editors declared that the "whole business

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[44] Bob Farley, "Solution of Racial Bias Misses Basic Problem," *Villanovan*, 27 April 1955.

[45] For a discussion on the relationship between the civil rights movement and the Cold War see Mary Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

[46] John Eddinger, "U.S. Segregation Struggle – Boon to Communism," *Villanovan*, 26 October 1954.

of social prejudice is particularly distasteful and definitely has international implications." The editors feared that countries around the world viewed the United States as insincere and that the Communist Party would exploit this for their benefit."[47]

The various reactions to the *Brown* decision demonstrated the promise of Catholic racial liberalism. Even if their rationale were politically motivated, white Villanova students publicly demonstrated their support for the process of desegregation. These public expressions of support for desegregation, however, would be eclipsed by the work of a Villanova faculty member.

The McGurk Affair

The publication of a controversial article in 1956 by a Villanova psychology professor in the wake of the *Brown* decision shattered the façade of progressive racial thinking on campus. Prior to receiving his doctorate in 1951 from Catholic University, Frank C.J. McGurk worked as a clinical psychologist in Richmond, Virginia, and began researching racial differences in intelligence tests among children. Historian John P. Jackson, Jr. argues that, at first, McGurk accepted the argument that there was a "fundamental difference in the lived experience" of black and white Americans.[48] While not conceding that these differences led to the gap in performance on these tests, McGurk argued that a variety of cultural factors justified different tests for black children. In completing the research for his dissertation, however, McGurk shifted course. Jackson

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[47] "A Study of Segregation a Year After SC Decision," *Villanovan,* 5 October 5 1955.

[48] John P. Jackson, Jr., *Science for Segregation: Race, Law and the Case Against Brown v. Board of Education* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 81.

argues that McGurk would forsake this "nuanced view of the effect of culture on test performance in favor of a claim that Negroes and whites who had equivalent socioeconomic status shared the same lived experiences" in his writings on race and intelligence in 1950s. In 1953, McGurk's unpublished dissertation produced two articles, one of which concluded that the performance gap between black and white subjects did not decrease when controlled for socioeconomic status. [49]

Jackson argues that McGurk's work received enough publicity in 1955 that he attracted the attention of segregationist Senator James Eastland of Mississippi who began sending him mail. McGurk appeared to enjoy the attention and sought a wider forum for his work. As evidence of this desire to set the record straight as he saw it, McGurk wrote a letter to a colleague in which he protested that "the dominant philosophy in race difference theory is social determinism. I think it is time that the biological side of the picture were [sic] made known." [50] After the *Journal of Hereditary* rejected his paper on racial differences, McGurk found a sympathetic forum for his views in the *U.S. News and World Report*.[51]

On September 21, 1956, McGurk argued against the notion of equality between the races in a controversial article in *U.S. News and World Report*. He began by

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[49] Ibid

[50] McGurk to Wesley Critz George , 12 July 1955 in Wesley C. George Papers , Box 2, Folder 15, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, quoted in Jackson, *Science for Segregation*, 82.

[51] Joseph L. Graves, Jr. in *Emperor's New Clothes: Biological Theories of Race* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001) argues that *US News and World Report* consistently ran pro-segregationist articles during this time period.

criticizing the *Brown* decision. McGurk rejected Kenneth Clark's argument that racial segregation had damaging effects on African American children which laid the foundation for the *Brown* decision. He wrote "we will have to be more factual about racial differences, and much less emotional." "As far as psychological differences between Negroes and whites are concerned," McGurk asserted, "we have wished - and dreamed – that there were no such differences." On this notion of racial equality, McGurk believed the country established "a race-relations policy that was so clearly a failure." When this policy was not successful, McGurk noted that the country "appealed to the legal machinery to do what nature was content not to do."[52]

In an effort to avoid what he called "emotion" and to provide data about racial differences, McGurk sought to understand the disparity in intelligence test scores between black Americans and white Americans. He began with tests conducted by the U.S. Army in 1918 which demonstrated a gap in these scores. McGurk then reviewed six studies of test performance carried out between 1935 and 1951 to conclude that "as far as psychological test-performance is a measure of capacity for education, Negroes as a group do not possess as much of it as whites as a group." McGurk reached this conclusion after claiming that the rise of social and economic opportunities for black Americans since World War I should have led to a closing of the gap of standardized test scores. In selecting only six studies, McGurk conceded that there were over 140 studies published in the academic literature which attempted to address the question of racial differences but "only six presented enough material to compare the World War I

[52] Frank C.J. McGurk, "A Scientist's Report on Race Differences," *U.S. News and World Report*, 21 September 1956, 92.

performance of Negroes and whites with latter-day performance." Furthermore, McGurk argued that the six studies he selected were "not a selection of studies intended to emphasize a point of view. They are the only existing studies that relate to the problem."[53]

The article evoked an immediate national response. The *Associated Press* ran a retort by Roy Wilkins, then executive secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., that was picked up by many of country's major newspapers, including the *New York Times*. Wilkins argued that McGurk's views were in stark contrast to the most reputable scientific investigators in the field of racial differences. Wilkins criticized the method and the intent of the article when he characterized it as an "attempt, by means of an unscientific and incomplete presentation of scientific data to implant desired conclusions which could not be so implanted if the whole story were given."[54] In addition, a group of 18 social scientists from institutions such as Columbia, Harvard, and Michigan issued a press release which presented a rebuttal to McGurk article. "Though Negro children generally do not do as well as whites," the scientists stated, "their showing has nothing to do with native intelligence, but is only the result of inferior background and schooling."[55] The Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago issued a statement which declared that the conclusions

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[53] Ibid., 93, 96.

[54] Associated Press, "Negro's Capacity to Learn Argued," *New York Times*, 18 September 1956.

[55] "Education: Report Card," *Time*, 29 October 1956, 21.

reached by McGurk were "entirely unwarranted by the data he used." [56] On Villanova's campus, the reaction was a little less clear.

While there is no evidence of an official administrative response, there is evidence that the administration confronted Professor McGurk over his views. In a 1959 letter written from McGurk to Wesley C. George, founder of the International Association for the Advancement of Ethnology and Eugenics (IAAEE), McGurk hinted at the administration's response. McGurk complained to the University of North Carolina anatomy professor that "for the past three years, Villanova has censored me stiffly. I may not write without their specific approval…" Castigating the Augustinians at Villanova who censored him, McGurk declared that "This is what happens when priests do not fall into line." He also exclaimed a desire to free himself from the stifling environment when he indicated that he was "itching to come south." [57] McGurk would get his wish as he eventually left Villanova in 1961 to accept a position at Alabama College.

Despite his private correspondence which suggested that Villanova was censoring him, there was also evidence that Villanova supported his continued employment under the auspices of academic freedom. At the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in September 1959, McGurk claimed that Villanova had supported him throughout the controversy, despite many calls for his ouster. McGurk made this

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[56] Associated Press. "Race View Denied," *New York Times*, 22 September 1956.

[57] McGurk to Wesley Critz George, 31 July 1959 in Wesley C. George Papers , Box 7, Folder 44, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, quoted in John P. Jackson, Jr. "In Ways Unacademical : The Reception of Carelton S. Coon's The Origin of Races;" *Journal of the History of Biology* 34 (2011): 254.

statement as as he addressed a special symposium on social justice issues.[58] The Villanova law school also provided a forum for McGurk to espouse his views during a special symposium on the role of social scientists in the legislative and legal processes. McGurk asserted that social scientists had a role to play in helping to guide legal process by providing testimony and research but that they should not play the role of "propagandistic social reformer."[59]

In terms of the reaction of Villanova students, there was no mention of McGurk's *U.S. News and World Report* article in the *Villanovan.* Though in theory the newspaper was student-run, the content of the *Villanovan* was subject to the Villanova advisor's approval. Therefore, any desire on the students' part to cover the issue was probably squelched. It is not too difficult to imagine that Villanova preferred to see the controversy disappear without further publicity.

Black Villanova students were not pleased with the article. Edward Collymore, a junior at the time of the publication of the article, remembered that, in particular, one black Villanova student - Frank Gilbert - was so upset that he sought out McGurk to challenge him on his views. Collymore could not remember if Gilbert ever directly confronted McGurk but the clear indication was that black Villanova students were upset by the presence of this professor on campus.[60] Furthermore, black students were left to

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[58] Emma Harrison, "Professor's Right to Views Upheld: Psychologist Says Villanova Resisted Calls for Ouster after Article on Negro," *New York Times*, 8 September 1959.

[59] Frank C.J. McGurk. "The Law Social Science, and Academic Freedom – A Psychologist's View," *Villanova Law Review* 5 (1959-1960): 253.

[60] Edward Collymore, interview with author, digital recording, December 16, 2011.

question whether the University supported McGurk's beliefs as, by all appearances, the University took no public action on the matter.

The McGurk affair demonstrated the complexity of the issue of race relations and academic freedom. On the one hand, Villanova did not want to appear to be insensitive on matters of race. It seems as if behind-the-scenes machinations strived to make it an uncomfortable spot for McGurk in the hopes that the problem would disappear quietly. The censorship of McGurk, apparently behind the scenes, is an indication that they were not pleased with the publicity his work had attracted. Yet, the issue of academic freedom certainly complicated the matter. If Villanova was known to try to influence or constrain the research of faculty members, they would face strong rebuke from the academic community. As a result, McGurk remained on campus until 1961 and served as the department chair of psychology with the rank of associate professor.

In the end, this episode demonstrated the extent to which the administration, despite being open to the admission of the occasional black student, was unwilling to publicly challenge racialized thinking. For black Villanova students this made the environment one that was uncomfortable and represented a clear contradiction between the stated intolerance of racism on campus and the reality of their experience. If Villanova was striving to position itself as a university which did not segregate, the publication of this article and the public handling – or more precisely, the avoidance - of the matter by the administration did nothing to further its reputation in this area.

Integration of the Athletics Program

At the end of World War II, there was great interest in the intersection of sports and race relations in American society. Black newspapers exerted a great deal of pressure on professional sports leagues, in particular baseball, to integrate. Wendell Smith was a prominent advocate who used his sports column in the *Pittsburgh Courier* to argue for the inclusion of black players into the major leagues. Brooklyn Dodgers general manager Branch Rickey responded to the call and signed Jackie Robinson to a minor league contract in 1945. Robinson ultimately made his major league professional debut in 1947. While this was hailed as a landmark achievement for racial justice, many college and university athletic programs, especially those in the North, were already integrated.[61]

Although Villanova demonstrated that they practiced non-discrimination in their admissions policies prior to World War II, the postwar rise in the commercialization and professionalization of big-time college athletics provided additional incentive to enroll black students.[62] In this era of increased interest in fielding winning teams, many universities and their athletic programs saw the recruitment of the best athletes available,

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[61] On Wendell Smith, see the chapter on his campaign to break the color barrier in baseball in David Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997); On Jackie Robinson, see Arnold Rampersad, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography*, (New York: Knopf, 1997); Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Joseph Dorinson and Joram Warmund. *Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports, and the American Dream*, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

[62] On the rise of the prominence of college athletics,s ee Murray Sperber, *College Sports Inc.: The Athletic Department vs. the University* (New York: H. Holt, 1990); Ronald A. Smith, *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-time College Athletics*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Jack Falla, *NCAA, the Voice of College Sports: A Diamond Anniversary History, 1906-1981* (Mission, Kan.: National Collegiate Athletic Association, 1981).

regardless of race, as a way to garner national recognition.[63] As a result of the recruitment of African American athletes, universities could then claim that they were advancing the cause of race relations while simultaneously increasing the profile of their athletic programs.

Against this backdrop of increased enrollment of black student-athletes on predominately white campuses, even if some of the motives were specious at best, there was strong sentiment in society by both black people and white people that sports aided in the process of integration and of negating strongly held beliefs about white superiority. In 1954, Atlanta University president Rufus E. Clement, in an article in the prominent *Journal of Negro Education*, asserted that the presence of blacks in the white-controlled sports world served to refute the notion of black inferiority. He argued that blacks who demonstrated capability and character in this arena advanced their race's struggle for whites acceptance.[64] In the abstract, it was easy to believe that sports had a leveling effect for African Americans during this time period as a result of the manner in which black student-athletes were recruited to predominately white institutions.

The combination of moral imperative and the desire for athletic success led to the increased numbers of black student athletes on Villanova's campus in the 1950s. At Villanova, the recruitment of black students as scholarship athletes started with the storied track program. In fall 1953, Charley Jenkins traveled from the prestigious

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[63] See Adolph Grundman, "Image of Intercollegiate Sports and the Civil Right Movement: A Historian's View," *Arena Review* 3 (October 1979), 18; Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969), 6.

[64] Rufus E. Clement, "Racial Integration in the Field of Sports," *The Journal of Negro Education* 23 (Summer 1954), 223.

Cambridge Rindge Technical High School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to the Villanova campus. In part, he was convinced by his track coach who was close with legendary Villanova track coach James "Jumbo" Elliott.[65] Two years later, Edward Collymore joined his high school teammate at the Main Line institution and they began the first significant wave of African American athletes to Villanova. With their tremendous success on the track and in the classroom, Jenkins and Collymore paved the way for future African American athletes to join Villanova's other prominent athletic program – the men's basketball team. Kenny Harrison signed on as Villanova's first African American basketball player in 1955 and George Raveling followed in 1956.

Yet, on the ground, the integration of black student-athletes into Villanova's campus life in the 1950s proved elusive. Despite the fact that this new generation of African American athletes was offered housing on campus, they were not socially integrated into campus life. Black Villanova student-athletes of the 1950s experienced a campus with few African American students other than themselves and, as a result, the black athletes often felt isolated and alienated. This often made the athletes themselves feel more like commodities than students whom the institution was interested in educating.

According to Collymore, the campus social life in the late 1950s was segregated. As a result of this segregation, Collymore said there was "no social life on campus" for black students during the late 1950s. Indeed, of the nine black students that Collymore remembers being at Villanova in 1955 when he arrived, seven were on athletic scholarships. To experience any semblance of social life during their time at Villanova,

[65] Collymore, interview with author.

black students were forced to go off campus. Collymore indicated that black students often had to drive into Philadelphia to attend social functions at schools with larger black student populations such as Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania. The seemingly lily-white Main Line also provided some viable social options for African Americans at the time as there were small yet vibrant black communities in the nearby communities of Ardmore and Wayne. Collymore indicated that small lodges in Ardmore and Wayne sponsored weekend dances for black residents and area black college students along the Main Line. Collymore and his friends would often hitchhike or catch a ride with Charley Jenkins - who was lucky enough to have a car on campus - to these dances and parties.[66]

In terms of intermingling with white students, Collymore indicated that the black track athletes did not associate with white Villanova students in any significant manner. One of the white students in Collymore's residence hall had a car and he remembers going downtown with a diverse group of students to sneak into one of the major movie theaters during finals time in order to relieve some stress. The other form of "solidarity" that Collymore remembers sharing with white students was a common desire to raid the Augustinians' refrigerator in the monastery which was attached to their residence hall. Other than these occasional activities, Collymore remembers that some of the most meaningful interactions took place around the track meets, such as the Melrose Games and the ICAAAA Championships in New York City. Hundreds of Villanova students attended these meets and cheered wildly for the Villanova team. After these meets at

[66] Ibid.

Madison Square Garden, the team would meet up with their fans at one of the local drinking establishments where they would be "treated like royalty" according to Collymore. There were several white track athletes but Collymore indicated that outside of one or two white athletes, the camaraderie on the track did not extend into deep friendships off of the track. [67]

Even with such low numbers of black students, there were moments of racial tension on campus during this time period. Collymore recalled a time in 1956 when a black student named Frank Gilbert went to the campus barbershop in Dougherty Hall to get a haircut. The barber looked at his hair and told him that he did not want to cut his hair. Gilbert went upstairs to see Father Richard Burke, O.S.A., the vice president of Student Life, and told him his story. The priest went down to the barber shop and told him that if he refused to cut the hair of black students on campus he would be fired. As evidenced by the swift reaction to this incident of discrimination, Collymore asserted that the campus administration was in general viewed as responsive towards the concerns of black students when they were raised.[68]

The administration's handling of the barbershop incident and similar matters demonstrated Villanova's desire to carefully manage race relations on campus. The University appeared, and wanted to appear, liberal on racial matters. Consistent with their support for desegregation, a strict adherence to Catholic racial liberalism demanded the University respond when confronted with charges of racism or discrimination.

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[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid.

Indeed, the Villanova administration showed concern about the reputation of the University with regards to the treatment of its African American athletes. On December 2, 1957, University president Father James Donnellon, O.S.A., wrote a letter to a representative of Cathedral Latin High School in Cleveland, Ohio, who had inquired about Villanova's interest in a prospective black athlete from the high school. In this letter, Donnellon attempted to reassure Brother Francis McCulken that the prospective student-athlete would be welcomed on Villanova's campus. Donnellon wrote:

> As perhaps you know, we have had a number of very successful negro athletes on our track team. We have planned it that way because of the many accusations made by various colored groups in and about Philadelphia as regards discrimination because of color in the Philadelphia Colleges and Universities. A good percentage of our non-athlete students are colored but the public is not aware of this fact. [69]

Donnellon clearly overstated the number of black students on campus at the time when he wrote that a "good percentage" of non-athletes were black. In the wake of the McGurk controversy, however, Donnellon and the Villanova administration probably felt the need to overcompensate to protect their reputation.

In spite of this outward appearance of intolerance for any kind of racism, Collymore described the climate on campus for African Americans in the late 1950s as one in which "you knew your place." The fact that Collymore could name all of the African American students on campus 35 years later speaks volumes about the solidarity

[69] Reverend James A. Donnellon, O.S.A. to Brother Francis Culken, S.M., letter, Donnellon Papers, VUA-2/25, folder 01-02, Correspondence, 1957, VUA.

among the African American students, and of the intensely segregated environment that characterized the school during this time period. [70]

Even more intolerable than the situation on their own campuses was the treatment of some African American athletes on the road. The behavior of fans was particularly brutal in the Deep South, although it certainly was not limited to this area of the country.[71] Sports sociologist Harry Edwards described the situations that the first African American athletes, particularly those in the South, were put into as "refreshingly new but sometimes brutally dehumanizing educational and athletic environments" on predominately white campuses.[72] Several national incidents provide support for Edward's thesis that participation in athletics could often be a dehumanizing experience for African American athletes. Chet Walker starred for Bradley University during the late 1950s and early 1960s and later went on to win an NBA championship with the Philadelphia 76ers. Walker experienced the brutal sting of racism and discrimination on a road trip to Texas during his sophomore season. Walker described a particularly hostile environment at the University of Houston, where the African American players were not allowed to take meals with their teammates. After enduring an onslaught of racial slurs and playing poorly in the first half, Walker said his coach berated him and told him not to quit on him. Walker realized that the coach was not interested in the hurt feelings of his nineteen

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[70] Edward Collymore, interview with author, notes in author's possession, December 3, 2003.

[71] David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse, NY: 1997), 150.

[72] Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: The Free Press 1969), 8.

year old player; rather his only interest was in winning the game. Walker concluded from this trip and from this experience with his coach that he "was valuable as a sports hero… but not as a young black man." [73]

The harsh treatment of African American players was not limited to the Deep South during this time period. In 1959, the New York Metropolitan N.A.A.C.P. chapter called on the administration of Georgetown University to issue a statement of apology for the behavior of some of its fans during a game with the City College of New York. Several African American players from CCNY complained of being taunted with racial epithets during a basketball game on the campus of Georgetown in December 1959.[74]

During the 1957 outdoor track season, the black athletes of the Villanova team experienced similar racism and discrimination during a trip to Texas, where they were to compete in two meets. When the Villanova athletes arrived at the University of Houston for the first meet, Villanova track athlete Ed Collymore remembers that the black athletes were placed on a bus and driven to separate accommodations at Texas Southern University. The residence hall at Texas Southern was not air-conditioned and the rooms were small. By contrast, the white athletes were staying in hotel-like conditions at the University of Houston, complete with air conditioning. The shuttles that they used for the meet displayed signs which directed African Americans toward the back of the bus. Collymore recalled that the signs appeared to have been recently painted over though one

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[73] David K. Wiggins and Patrick Miller, *The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American History in Sport* (Urbana, Ill.; 2003), 277-281.

[74] *Baltimore Afro-American*, 19 December 1959.

could still make out the lettering. During the second meet of the trip, the Villanova track team stayed at the University of Texas. The black athletes had no problems checking into the residence hall; however, they experienced the sting of discrimination when it came to dining. The university's cafeteria was closed on Sunday night and the team was left on its own to eat in the community. Meet organizers told Villanova's black athletes where they could go to eat and be assured of service.[75] These experiences demonstrated that black and white Villanova student athletes had radically different experiences based on their race.

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As the decade turned from the 1950s to the 1960s, the racial situation on campus became more complicated. The Villanova administration, except for their ambivalent public stance in the McGurk case, remained outwardly in favor of civil rights and demonstrated this through, among other things, their non-segregationist admissions policy. Consistent with their embrace of Catholic racial liberalism, Villanova students expressed support for desegregation and generally accepted the presence of black students on campus. Members of the administration were viewed by black students as helpful and could be depended on to confront individual acts of racism and discrimination. There was also evidence that Villanova was liberal in matters of race in athletics. As will be described in the next chapter, Villanova University named an African American student the captain of the men's basketball team for the 1959-1960 season.

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[75] Collymore, interview with author.

Yet, there were areas of concern. On campus, Villanova students continued to live segregated lives. This segregated social life created the mistaken impression of black student contentment at Villanova. This façade would ultimately mask the underlying feelings of frustration and confusion experienced by black Villanova students as the civil rights movement gained momentum into 1960s. This is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

"MINIMAL ENTHUSIASM:" THE CHALLENGES OF DESEGREGATION IN THE 1960s AT VILLANOVA

By the start of the 1960s, Catholic Church leaders in the United States made it clear where they stood on racial issues. In 1958, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the United States issued a statement entitled "Discrimination and Christian Conscience," declaring that the "heart of the race question is moral and religious." The bishops called on Catholics to attack the problem of racism and asserted that "For the sake of generations of future Americans, and indeed all of humanity, we cannot fail."[1] During the 1959 hearings of the United States Civil Rights Commission, Cardinal Francis Spellman, archbishop of the Archdiocese of New York, attacked discrimination saying "that is what the Church has always and must always teach and believe."[2] In a 1960 article entitled "Catholics and Race," Matthew Ahmann, executive director of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, decried housing segregation and discrimination not just in the South but also in heavily Catholic, Northern cities. "Without question," Ahmann asserted, "no other institution of our society could do more than the church to solve this race and housing problem."[3] Indeed, by the early 1960s, Catholic racial

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[1] "Discrimination and the Christian Conscience," *Journal of Negro Education* 8 (Winter 1959), 66-69.

[2] John McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 133.

[3] Matthew Ahmann, "Catholics and Race," *Commonweal*, 2 December 1960, 247-50.

liberalism and its support for integration, which was a minority position prior to World War II, became orthodoxy.[4]

Not all Catholics, however, toed the line over racial matters. In 1959, Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame and a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, observed "so many Catholics can be so good in so many causes… Yet in their social lives and social thoughts they are a dinosaur - completely out of step with Christ and the mind of the Church on basic Catholic doctrine."[5] In his insightful study of the Catholic encounter with race in the urban north, John McGreevy details how Catholics in the urban North resisted racial integration by defining their neighborhoods in largely religious terms. McGreevy details many instances of intransigence on the part of Catholics with regards to the racial integration of these sacred spaces. Despite official pronouncements against racism by the Catholic Church, McGreevy argues that racial prejudice remained deeply rooted in neighborhoods of urban, northern Catholics.

As a result of these differing views on race, McGreevy concludes that, in the 1960s, a conflict developed between liberal Catholics and the traditional Catholic working class. McGreevy points to the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) and the civil rights movement as two forces that divided Catholics into two Churches: one conservative and traditional and the other, liberal and progressive. The struggle between these forces played itself out in institutions of Catholic higher education.

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[4] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 222.

[5] Ibid., 133.

As will be demonstrated, Catholic colleges in the 1960s were populated largely by members of the burgeoning Catholic middle class. Therefore, the struggle over integration on Catholic college campuses demonstrated that this conflict between conservative and liberal forces extended beyond Catholic working class communities in the neighborhoods and into the Catholic middle class institution of higher education. To be sure, the campus struggles were different than those of the neighborhood. There were no cross-burnings on lawns and white students opposed to integration did not flee Villanova as a result of the desegregation of campus. Indeed, the acts of blatant racism appeared to be isolated. Nevertheless, some administrators and students, through their words and actions, resisted a change in the racial status quo. The conservative opposition, however, was often muted by the prevailing Catholic racial liberalism of the administration and students, especially those who controlled the *Villanovan*.

Against the backdrop of the division within the Catholic Church, this chapter argues that racial desegregation in the 1960s at Villanova demonstrated the limits of Catholic racial liberalism. Contemporary observers in the 1960s argued that Catholic higher education reflected the development of the Catholic population.[6] Indeed, the crisis within Catholicism in general and Catholic higher education, in particular, mirrored and shaped the larger struggle for racial equality in American society. Throughout the 1960s, Villanova appeared liberal on civil rights and the readily welcomed black students to campus. Yet, as McGreevy demonstrated in Catholic neighborhoods in the North,

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[6] Andrew Greeley, *The Changing Catholic College* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1967), 53.

abstract commitments to racial justice were often weakened in the local arena.[7] College campuses were no exception. Though college campuses differed from neighborhoods due to the temporary nature of the housing arrangement – there was no fear of loss of property values – the same weakened commitment to racial justice was evident at times at Villanova.

On the ground at Villanova, despite desegregation, little progress was made in the integration of black students in campus life. As will be demonstrated, early efforts to increase black student recruitment and enrollment were attempted yet went nowhere due to a lack of enthusiasm amongst academic administrators. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the number of black students on campus was still low. Most were star athletes. White students expressed support for the overarching goals of the civil rights movement yet were concerned about the tactics and the possible long-term impacts of black students on the campus. As the 1960s came to a close, black Villanova students, observing the disparity between the University's professed ideas of integration and practice, became increasingly politicized and radicalized.

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Villanova in the 1960s: Middle Class, Irish, and Catholic

At the turn of the decade, Villanova as an institution was still largely parochial in its outlook and in its administration. A 1959 Inspection Report written by several Augustinian priests who visited the campus identified several student life problems. The report declared that "an acute lack of priests has led to an unsatisfactory situation in

[7] McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 180.

which discipline is relaxed and guidance is inadequate." Furthermore, the report's authors asserted that relations between the students and the University seemed strained as the report argued that "misunderstanding and lack of communication between the administration and the student body have eventuated into frustration and distress on both sides."[8] Around the same time period, the Middle States Commission viewed the institution through a different lens, challenging the institution to be less parochial. In its overall assessment of Villanova, the Middle States report called Villanova "adequate" but indicated that it had "the potential to achieve 'distinguished' or 'exceptional.'" One of the problems the Middle States Commission identified was the composition of the Board of Trustees. The report unflinchingly stated that "it is an inbred board and should be enlarged by the addition of at least five more men, not all of them Augustinians."[9]

The class identity of Villanova as an institution and of its students is a crucial factor for understanding white middle class attitudes towards integration. Throughout much of the post-World War II period, Villanova's identity was firmly white, middle class, and Irish. In his study of Catholic colleges in the mid-1960s, Roman Catholic priest and sociologist Andrew Greeley provided a demographic snapshot of Catholic college students of this time period which supported this characterization of Villanova as mostly liberal, middle class, and Irish.

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[8] Rev. Joseph L. Shannon, O.S.A., Rev. George Burnell, O.S.A., Rev. Thomas A. Burke, O.S.A., "Inspection of Villanova University," May 18-22, 1959, Donnellon Papers, VUA-21, box 06, folder 07, VUA.

[9] Middle States Institutional Evaluation, May 1960, Middle States Reports, VUA-20, box 06, folder 05, VUA.

In terms of the politics of Catholic college students, Greeley's 1961 study revealed that most Catholic college graduates considered themselves liberal or Democrat. Twenty-nine percent of Catholic college graduates considered themselves "liberal democrats" while only fourteen percent considered themselves "conservative republicans." The rest were split between those who considered themselves liberal Republicans (13 percent), conservative Democrats (15 percent), conservative independents (14 percent) and liberal independents (13 percent). In total, over half of the Catholic college graduates surveyed used the term "liberal" to describe themselves. In comparing the political affiliation of Catholic college students and their parents, Greeley argued that a Catholic college education made it seem "more likely for a young person to be a liberal Democrat than his parents were."[10]

Greeley demonstrated that the typical Catholic college graduate was decidedly more middle class than working class. His study compared the differences between Catholic students who went to Catholic colleges and those who went to non-Catholic colleges. Greeley concluded that Catholics who graduated from non-Catholic colleges were more likely to "come from a smaller city and from a distinctly lower socioeconomic background" than those who went to a Catholic college.[11] In terms of ethnicity, Greeley found that 37 percent of Catholics who attended Catholic colleges were Irish, 23 percent were German, and 11 percent were Italian. Catholic colleges, indeed, were largely

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[10] Andrew Greeley, *The Changing Catholic College* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1967), 36.

[11] Ibid., 33.

comprised of middle class families from ethnic backgrounds closely tied to the history of immigration.

The middle class identity of Villanova was significant in terms of understanding the racial attitudes of its students. Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago conducted during the 1950s and 1960s found a "straightforward relationship" between the racial attitudes of white Americans and their level of education. Whites with higher levels of education were more likely to have "less negative feelings towards blacks" and less likely to "perceive much discrimination" towards African Americans.[12] A 1968 survey undertaken by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan demonstrated differences in racial attitudes according to class. White Americans at the lower end of the earning scale (less than $3,000) were significantly less likely to be "sympathetic to black protest." This survey, however, demonstrated limits to these class differences. When asked if they "favor interracial contact," the response was consistent among the various economic classes. Fifty-nine percent of those who earned less than $3,000 and sixty percent of those who earned $14,000 or more responded affirmatively to that question.[13] This demonstrated that, in the abstract, white middle class Americans were more likely to profess their liberalism on race; however, in practice, they were no more liberal than the white working class when it came to contact with African Americans.

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[12] John C. Brigham and Theodore Weissbach, *Racial Attitudes in America: Analyses and Findings of Social Psychology* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1972), 2.

[13] Angus Campbell, *White Attitudes Towards Black People* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1971), 51-53.

Furthermore, scholars have suggested that one way in which middle or upper middle class identity is achieved and consolidated is by transcending the blatant racism of the lower and lower-middle classes. During the busing crisis of the early 1970s, Ronald Formisano suggests that middle class white Bostonians were able to distinguish themselves from lower class whites by demonstrating that they were not racists, thereby overcoming the "urban redneck" myth. In his study of racial exclusion and public space, historian Bryant Simon argues that, when they could no longer legally exclude, the white middle class separated themselves from integrated spaces but did so in way that did not call attention to their racism. This way, Simon argues, the middle class "could say to themselves and anyone who asked that the sorting of people along race and class lines was natural."[14] Despite the civil rights liberalism which prevailed in public actions, the racial angst of the white middle class was increasingly on display throughout the 1960s at Villanova.

The experience of Jim Harvey illuminated some of the racial anxieties that white Villanovans experienced throughout the 1960s in their quest to desegregate the campus. Harvey was a student at Villanova from 1962 until 1966. Raised in a working class family that came to the United States from Northern Ireland in 1958, Harvey was the first in his family to graduate from high school. When enrolled at Villanova in the fall 1962, he found a student body that was comprised of many who shared his background – white males, mostly Irish, from middle class families.

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[14] Bryant Simon, *Boardwalk of Dreams: Atlantic City and the Fate of Urban America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 14.

Harvey's experiences during his youth provided him with a unique perspective on race relations. Being from Northern Ireland, Harvey indicated that the notion of one group of people discriminating against another one was familiar and that he held a great deal of sympathy for people who found themselves discriminated against. Given this experience with discrimination, Harvey considered himself exceptional among white Villanova students in this regard as most Villanova students came from privileged backgrounds.[15]

Harvey characterized Villanova as an "extremely conservative place." He provided several examples to support his assertion. Harvey's roommate during his sophomore year was a student whom had transferred from the University of Missouri. Harvey recalled his roommate telling him that he traveled to the University of Mississippi during the fall of 1962 to protest *against* the integration of Ole Miss by James Meredith. As the higher education community carefully watched as the Free Speech Movement exploded at the University of California in Berkeley in 1964, Harvey remembered an English professor railing in class against student leader Mario Savio and his fellow protestors.[16] These incidents and more led Harvey to believe that students and faculty who harbored conservative thoughts about college student activism and matters of racial integration felt very comfortable in sharing their thoughts and feelings on campus.[17]

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[15] James Harvey, telephone interview with author, digital recording, November 12, 2012.

[16] Harvey, interview with author; For more on the Free Speech Movement, see Robert Cohen and Reginald Zelnik, *The Free Speech Movement: Reflections on Berkeley in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); David Goines, *The Free Speech Movement: Coming of Age in the 1960s* (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1993).

[17] Harvey, interview with author.

Despite his characterization of the school as an "extremely conservative place," Harvey argued that Villanova helped to expand his consciousness around racial issues. Harvey, like most of his classmates, had limited interactions with African Americans prior to enrolling at Villanova. Years later, he admitted that he held some stereotypical views of black America. These views were shaped, Harvey believed, by the media. Harvey indicated that the dominant narrative of the media in the mid-1960s portrayed African Americans as poor, uneducated, and angry. Harvey indicated that there was little opportunity to challenge this stereotype on Villanova's campus, as there was limited interaction between the small number of black students and white students. [18]

Yet, Harvey's friendship with black Villanova student Prentiss Quincy Yancey provided him with a window into "another section of the black community." Yancey was from Atlanta, Georgia, and he was, according to Harvey, "extremely well-off, well-educated, well-spoken, and well-dressed." In the portrayal of African American community by the mainstream media, Harvey felt that the coverage of upper-class African Americans was sorely missing.[19]

Harvey also felt the same way when he encountered George Raveling through his work in the admissions office as a student. As part of his role as an assistant basketball coach, Raveling visited the admissions office frequently to check on the progress of his recruits. Harvey found Raveling to be "poised, articulate and well-dressed." To Harvey, these men were from "other socioeconomic strands in the black communities that weren't

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

fully apparent in the national discourse."[20] As a result, Harvey was forced to confront his own assumptions and embedded stereotypes about African Americans.

Harvey's interactions with these two African American men were transformative experiences in the development of his racial consciousness. Years later, Harvey reflected back on these experiences and was not proud of the assumptions he held.[21] Harvey's experiences provide a window on both the racial liberalism and its limits that were present on Villanova's campus during the early-mid 1960s.

Early Civil Rights Movement

As the national and local civil rights movement intensified, the discourse on racial justice began to escalate on campus. While white and black Villanovans were largely in agreement on desegregation in the previous decade, the intensification of the civil rights movement led to discord between these students over the goals and tactics of the black freedom struggle. To be sure, there was still support for the legislation which would provide the framework for equality; however, by the early-mid 1960s, the consensus on the goals and tactics of the civil rights movement was coming apart at the seams. White Villanova students began to demonstrate some of the racial anxieties of the white middle class.

The first open disagreement in the pages of the student newspaper came over the methods of protest urged by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Responding to "recent speeches" in Philadelphia by Dr. King in which he urged "Negro disobedience of unjust segregation

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

laws" the editors of the *Villanovan* expressed concern about the use of "civil disobedience." The editors argued that "Dr. King is jeopardizing all the good that has been gained by "non-violent resistence [sic]." "There still remains legal and judicial means of abrogating these laws," the editors suggested, and "…the concrete progress of the sit-ins and bus boycotts have shown this to be the responsible road to acceptance." Dr. King had acted "intelligently and responsibly" in the past and the editors hoped that he would continue to do so.[22] The editors' sentiments demonstrated a trust in the legal system to correct the racial injustices suffered by black Americans. While this reliance on the judicial system appeared to be consistent with their earlier support of the legal remedy provided under *Brown v. Board of Education*, it also represented an aversion to change by advocating a slow approach.

In the next issue of the *Villanovan*, African American students Tom Carter and Paris Von Lockette responded to the editorial by arguing that the editors did not understand the term "civil disobedience" as used. Carter and Von Lockette argued that the editors were "ignorant of the real meaning of sit-ins and civil disobedience" as the protests "were a part of the passive resistance movement which adhered to non-violence." The protests, the two students suggested, were successful and proved effective. Therefore, if these methods proved fruitful in the South, Carter and Von Lockette argued that the only way they would have failed is if Philadelphians reacted "the same as their

[22] "King's Counter," *Villanovan*, 11 November 1961.

counterparts in Montgomery, Alabama."[23] The consensus among Villanova students regarding issues of civil rights was showing signs of weakness by the early 1960s.

The debate leading up to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provided another opportunity for Villanova students to demonstrate where they stood with regard to the larger civil rights movement. Most black students thought their white counterparts were largely apathetic on civil rights issues. As evidenced by his letter to the editor of the *Villanovan* in February 1964, sophomore Eugene Wicks, who was African American and Catholic, was disheartened by the response of the student body towards the civil rights legislation. Wicks wrote that "one of the most demoralizing things that I have noted on the Villanova campus is the ignorance of the students concerning civil rights — its moral and legal implications."[24]

As evidence supporting this lack of interest in the civil rights movement, Wicks pointed to his experiences at two recent lectures on campus on the civil rights movement. The first speaker was George Shermer, a prominent member of the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission, and the second was Joyce Barrett, a member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and veteran of the voter registration drive in Georgia. At Shermer's lecture, Wicks was frustrated by what he described as "queries which were highly indicative of the students' lack of knowledge of the Negro or the problems involved in his quest for first-class citizenship." Barrett's event,

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[23] Tom Carter and Paris Von Lockette, Letter to the Editor, *Villanovan*, 15 November 1961.

[24] Eugene Wicks, Letter to the editor, *Villanovan*, 5 February 1964.

notwithstanding her billing as a "victim of arrests and bombings" during the Georgia campaign, drew few students.[25]

Despite this perceived lack of engagement by the white student body in general, the *Villanovan* offered support for the passage of the Civil Rights Act. The editors wrote that "the ideal situation is the passage of the bill in its entirety."[26] Despite this positive affirmation of the black freedom struggle, the racial liberalism demonstrated by the *Villanovan* in support of the passage of the Civil Rights Act was tested by the riots that took place in Philadelphia in the late summer of 1964.

Racial Unrest Tests Limits

On the evening of August 28, 1964, two Philadelphia police officers (one white and one black) were called to a busy intersection in North Philadelphia where a car was stalled and blocking traffic. Officers found a couple arguing. They refused to move the vehicle. As the white officer tried to forcibly remove the driver – a black female – a black man emerged from the gathering crowd to attack the white officer. When rumors began to fly about the nature of the arrest and about injuries to the black woman, this incident touched off three days of rioting and looting which resulted in 2 people being killed, 339 people being injured, 308 people being arrested, and 225 stores being damaged or destroyed. In his study of Philadelphia during the civil rights and Black Power movements, historian Matthew Countryman argued that the August 1964 riots "destroyed

[25] Ibid.

[26] Bob Healy, "Civil Rights," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1964.

the myth of racial progress that had been so carefully crafted by the Philadelphia liberal-reform coalition." Countryman asserted that the "explicitly racial nature" of the riot provided the "most significant challenge to liberalism."[27]

Indeed, there was evidence that the riots caused Villanova students to re-examine their support for the black freedom struggle. Villanova student Jim Harvey recalled that most white Villanova students of the mid-1960s experienced a crisis of faith when confronted with violence in the North carried out in the name of racial justice. Harvey observed that most Villanova students were sympathetic to the non-violent civil rights movement in the south but "did not understand rebellion in the north."[28] The response from the *Villanovan* editors to the events in Philadelphia during the summer of 1964 was consistent with Harvey's analysis of the feelings of most white Villanova students.

In what could be interpreted as the beginning of the divergence between white and black thinking on civil rights liberalism, the well-meaning editors of the *Villanovan* misunderstood the nature of the urban rebellion. In an editorial entitled "The Grey Sidelash" the editors argued that these "violent insurgences were not racially oriented." "They were the product of hooligans," the editors theorized, "the fomentation of the dregs of the society." The editors argued that this was important because "the actions of this reprehensible riff-raff do not justify indicting all Negroes."[29]

The editors placed blame on a few members of the "riff-raff" without undertaking a complete analysis of the underlying causes. The well-intentioned editors did not want to

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[27] Countryman, *Up South*, 155-160.

[28] Harvey, interview with author.

[29] Jeff Radowich, "The Grey Sidelash," *Villanovan*, 21 October 1964.

offend black Americans by placing blame, yet, in the process they discounted the legitimacy of the concerns held by black residents of Philadelphia. This placing of blame was also central to white Villanova students' understanding of desegregation. They understood segregation to be wrong; however, desegregation, if it was to be done correctly, required the absence of the "riff-raff." Furthermore, the rejection of racism as a cause was consistent with the optimism displayed by racial liberals who believed things would get better as time moved on. If laying blame at the feet of a few troublemakers allowed white Villanova students to ignore larger issues of racism in society, inviting Martin Luther King to campus certainly provided the opportunity to brand the University and its students as liberal on racial matters.

Dr. Martin Luther King Visit to Villanova

During the 1960s, the Villanova Student Government Association sponsored a program entitled the Villanova Forum, which sought to provide the University community with prominent speakers. The Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was invited to campus and was scheduled to appear in November 1964. King, however, was forced to postpone his visit after he checked in to a hospital to be treated for exhaustion. The appearance was quickly re-scheduled for January 1965.

Prior to King's arrival there was tension over the manner in which the civil rights leader and his work were characterized in the *Villanovan*. In the article announcing the appearance of King, *Villanovan* staff writer Walt Baginsky indicated that King had stirred up controversy prior to his Villanova visit by taking a "verbal slash" at FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. Baginsky also complimented King by crediting his "preaching

on non-violence" as the reason for the success of the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. Eugene Griffin, an African American student, took exception to some of Baginsky's assertions in the article. [30]

Griffin refuted Baginsky's claim that King verbally attacked Hoover. He argued that it was Hoover who called King the "most notorious liar in the country" and accused Hoover of failing to protect Southern black citizens from violence and discrimination. Griffin was also offended that Baginsky failed to credit the agency of the many black citizens of Montgomery who were involved in the success of the bus boycott. He called the assertion that King's preaching ended the boycott "patently ridiculous." Lastly, Baginsky's failure to capitalize the word "negro" in his article was a "personal insult" to Griffin. Griffin's response clearly indicated the growing frustration of black Villanovans to the perceived indifference or intellectual laziness demonstrated by white Villanovans on racial matters.[31] For his part, Baginsky responded to Griffin's letter to the editor and dismissed the accusations leveled by declaring: "to quibble over phrases and typographical errors when alluding to such a brilliant, dedicated, purposeful, and sincere individual from the standpoint of Dr. King's ultimate goal would appear meaningless."[32]

This episode demonstrated the complexity of the racial dynamics of white and black Villanovans on a predominately white campus during the mid-1960s. Based on his response to Griffin's charges, Baginsky was a seemingly well-intentioned white

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[30] Walt Baginsky, "Forum Features Dr. Martin Luther King," *Villanovan*, 8 January 1965.

[31] Euguene Griffin, untitled letter to the editor, *Villanovan*, 10 February 1965.

[32] Walt Baginsky, "Rebuttal… In Refutation," *Villanovan*, 17 February 1965.

Villanovan writer who appeared to respect King and his work. He probably thought he was being supportive by writing a front-page story on the appearance of one of the most famous citizens of the United States, Martin Luther King. Yet, the article was perceived by Griffin in an entirely different manner than originally intended as a result of the language and the "typographical errors" in the article. Griffin felt that the diminution of the contributions of many black Americans by simply crediting the work of one man was symptomatic of the problem of race relations on campus. The failure to capitalize "negro" cast suspicions on the motives of Baginsky and led to feelings of distrust of white students by black students. Further, this incident appeared to be complicated by the notions of privilege and inclusion. Baginsky wrote from the perspective of a white student who had the privilege of not having to be concerned about how his words were perceived. Griffin, on the other hand, felt that the perspectives of black students were not included in the analysis of this historic event in Villanova's history.

King's appearance also sparked tension between Villanova University and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. On October 27, 1964, the Board of Trustees of Villanova University debated whether to offer King an honorary degree to mark the occasion of his campus visit. The minutes from the trustees meeting indicated that "it was suggested that [University president] Father Klekotka conduct further investigation of Reverend King's background." Father John Klekotka, O.S.A., moved that, pending the successful outcome of the investigation, King would be offered the degree. The board voted in the affirmative to award the degree.[33] At the next meeting of the committee on December 1, Father

[33] Villanova University Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, October 27, 1964, VUA-1/2, box 04, folder 09, "Minutes, Board of Trustees, 1962-1964," VUA.

Klekotka delivered some unexpected news to the board. Klekotka reported that he had inquired at the office of the Archbishop of Philadelphia regarding the honorary degree. The plan was “first approved, but later it was discouraged.” As for the reason, the minutes reported that King had “violated the rules of procedure at the Vatican and had thus disqualified himself for a degree at a Catholic school.” After “some discussion,” a motion to nullify the proposal to give King an honorary degree was offered and this motion was approved by the board.[34] The invitation to King demonstrated the professed Catholic racial liberalism of the Villanova administration but the acquiescence to the Archdiocese objections to the honorary degree defined the limits to this ideology.

Despite these controversies leading up to his appearance, King’s speech brought the campus together. On January 20, 1965, four thousand people crammed into the Fieldhouse to hear King. Another thousand were not able to gain access to the facility because of seating limitations. University President Father John A. Klekotka, O.S.A., and Thomas J. Furst, the president of the Student Government Association, introduced King to the expectant and respectful throng.[35] King encouraged the Villanova crowd to get involved in the struggle for civil rights, declaring: "If man has not discovered there are some things he is willing to die for, he is not fit to live." He also discussed the recent Civil Rights Act of 1964 and noted "surprising and extensive compliance around the

[34]Villanova University Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes, December 1, 1964, VUA-1/2, box 04, folder 09, “Minutes, Board of Trustees, 1962-1964,” VUA.

[35] Contosta, *Villanova 1842-1992*, 212-213.

South" with the new legislation which he called a "second Emancipation Proclamation."[36] King's speech – entitled "Challenge of a New Age" - was so well-received that the capacity crowd gave him a standing ovation. The *Villanovan* proudly reported that "there were no demonstrations and the talk was covered by numerous radio and television stations."[37]

Recruitment of Minority Students

With the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965, the legal pillars of Jim Crow were now wiped away. The focus of federal legislators would turn toward providing equal opportunities for African Americans in areas such as higher education.

Prior to 1965, colleges and universities in the United States served mostly white males from middle-or upper-income families. In many regions of the country, discriminatory practices kept blacks, other minorities, and women from pursuing higher education. The lack of financial aid also helped to keep access to higher education limited to those with financial means. Following World War II, the G.I. Bill provided aid for tens of thousands of veterans; however, this legislation largely benefited white males who had more options to take advantage of the program.[38]

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[36] "Talk Delivered by Martin Luther King at Villanova University on January 20, 1965," copy of speech in author's possession.

[37] Tom Krause, "Martin Luther King Addresses Capacity Crowd in Field House," *Villanovan*, 10 February 1965.

[38] Wilson Smith and Thomas Bender, *American Higher Education Transformed: 1940-2005* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 1-11.

On January 4, 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared his vision for the Great Society during his Inaugural Address. According to historian Robert Dallek, Johnson harbored an "almost mystical faith" that education possessed the capacity to fundamentally transform people's lives.[39] With regard to higher education, Johnson declared: "For the college years we will provide scholarships to high school students of the greatest promise and the greatest need and we will guarantee low-interest loans to students continuing their college studies."[40] Thus, the groundwork was laid for the Higher Education Act of 1965. The Higher Education Act of 1965 marked a major turning point in terms of access to higher education as it was the first federal needs-based financial assistance program.[41] The section known as "Title IV: Student Assistance Act" provided for grants and low-interest loans, which were designed to increase access for low-income and middle-income students.

In the wake of this act, Villanova student Jim Harvey observed that the "ferment nationally was that something had to be done to improve access to higher education for minorities."[42] Harvey worked part-time in the admissions office as a student and agreed to stay on after his graduation in 1966. Based on his upbringing and his encounter with black students on campus as described earlier, Harvey approached his work in the

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[39] Robert Dallek, *Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 196.

[40] "Lyndon Baines Johnson Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 4, 1965," The American Presidency Project, accessed December 20, 2012, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=26907

[41] Judith Eaton, "The Evolution of Access Policy: 1965-1990," in *Public Policy in Higher Education*, edited by L.F. Goodchild and others (Needham Heights, MA: Pearson, 1997), pp. 237-246.

[42] Harvey, interview with author.

admissions with an eye toward increasing the minority enrollment at Villanova. In the fall of 1966, Harvey attended a meeting called by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Father John Driscoll, O.S.A. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways to enhance the recruitment of minorities. The meeting was attended by the academic deans of all four colleges – nursing, engineering, arts and sciences, and commerce and finance –and several people from the admissions office, including Harvey. Despite Father Driscoll's initiative, Harvey indicated there was "minimal enthusiasm" around this issue expressed by the deans at this meeting. Harvey indicated the main outcome of the meeting was an agreement to develop a five-year program designed for minority students who might need additional academic support. The contours of the plan were that if a minority or low-income applicant was borderline admissible, the student could be offered admission to a five-year program. The first year would consist of remedial courses to get under-prepared students "up to speed."[43]

Despite an agreement in place among all four colleges to develop and implement the program, Harvey indicated that admissions did nothing to promote the development of the program. In spring 1967, a prospective black student whom Harvey thought would make an excellent candidate for the five-year program walked into the admissions office. Harvey brought him over to the College of Engineering to inquire about the program. Much to Harvey's surprise, the Dean's office indicated that they sponsored no such five-year program.[44]

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Ibid.

The University professed a commitment to increased diversity, but was unwilling to do much to make this happen. Therefore, this episode demonstrated the limits to the racial liberalism professed by the Villanova administration. Despite a well-intentioned effort to explore the increased recruitment of minority students on campus, there was a lack of commitment displayed by the deans who were in charge of implementing a program designed to accomplish this goal. The absence of internal pressure to change contributed to the failure to implement a program which had the potential to desegregate the campus further. At this point in Villanova's history, the administration's commitment to the goal of increased enrollment of minority students was still largely symbolic. This was also reflected in the attitude of the Villanova student body.

Campus Awakens in 1967

If the commitment to racial justice on the part of the Villanova administration was largely symbolic, civil rights issues never topped the agenda of the student body either during this time. Consistent with their middle class status, white Villanova students still remained committed to desegregation in the abstract. However, as long as black Villanova students were silent about racial matters, continued to perform well on the athletic fields, and generally felt grateful to be at Villanova, white Villanova students largely ignored racial matters. Yet, white Villanova students were concerned enough about other social issues to take action.

White Villanova students led significant campus demonstrations and protests in 1967, 1971 and 1974 over the issues of students' rights and campus amenities. Taken together, these events challenged the notion that white Villanova students were genuinely

apathetic during the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the issues which they protested against – such as food quality and visitation rights – lacked the progressive idealism of the revolts at Berkeley and Columbia but, nevertheless, Villanova students were not afraid to stand up to the administration over issues which they believed in deeply.

In February 1967, Villanova students, frustrated with quality of campus life issues, formed an Ad Hoc Committee for Student Good and circulated a letter airing their grievances. The *Villanovan* published this "open letter" and featured a story on the front page which declared discontent was rising on campus.[45] The major source of students' disgruntlement appeared to be over the food quality and food service in the resident dining halls. The *Villanovan* indicated that other sources of student frustration included the University bookstore's unwillingness to carry anything other than textbooks and the Dean of Women's perceived inflexibility and authoritarianism.[46] Remarkably, the *Villanovan* foreshadowed events to come when it discussed possible action to address their concerns. "The riot, traditionally students' most spectacular method of expressing opinion from Harvard to Berkeley and points in between," the editors wrote, "has always been discouraged at Villanova, a Catholic University." The editorial concluded with a warning, however, that Villanova students were aware that a riot had taken place at Boston College the previous year.[47]

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[45] Jim O'Hare, "V.U. Student Discontent Seen Increasing," *Villanovan*, 8 February 1967.

[46] On student protests in the 1960s, see Donald E. Phillips, *Student Protest, 1960-1970* (Boston: University Press of America, 1985); Philip Altbach, *Student Politics in America: A Historical Analysis* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974).

[47] Ibid.

As a result of their frustration, Villanova students sprang into action on February 15, 1967. A disturbance led by students who were upset by the quality of food in the resident dining halls spilled out onto Lancaster Avenue and blocked traffic on this major Main Line artery. Despite the disruption which came to be known as the "Diet Riot," the *Villanovan* editorial declared that Villanova, however, was not to be mistaken for the University of California at Berkeley. Mocking the Villanova students' choice of a seemingly trivial issue compared to other student protests around the country, the editors pointed out that the problems at Villanova were more "gastronomical than astronomical."[48] With this protest, the Villanova student body proved they were capable of dissension and even civil disobedience over matters deemed to be important by them. Yet, most white Villanova students did not react as decisively when confronted by issues of racism on campus.

Given the absence of critical incidents of a racial nature on campus to this date, an examination of the student reaction to national events illuminates the broad currents of white student thoughts and feelings on racial matters. The reaction to the urban riots of the summer of 1967 provides an informative backdrop to the later confrontation over racism and discrimination on Villanova's campus. Riots in Newark, New Jersey, took place from July 14, 1967, until July 17, 1967, claiming 10 lives and resulting in millions of dollars in property damage. In Detroit, five days of rioting that began on July 23, 1967, resulted in the death of 43 people, 467 injured and $22 million in damages.[49] Villanova

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[48] Steven Buck and Jim O'Hare, "Foul Food Forces Diet Riot," *Villanovan*, 15 February 1967; untitled editorial, *Villanovan*, 15 February 1967.

students would return for the fall 1967 semester to a Main Line area reeling and unsettled from the unrest in many urban areas. The headline of August 10, 1967 *Suburban and Wayne Times* declared "Rumors of Riots in Paoli Prove Without Any Basis."[50] The rumors of mass arrests, civil disobedience and "race riots" which spread throughout Wayne and Paoli were significant enough for the local newspaper to write an article to dispel these myths in order to alleviate residents' concerns.

On October 28, 1967, in a poignant column in the *Villanovan* called "Both Sides of the Color Fence" a white student author fabricated two letters from men living in Milwaukee. One was from an African American man to his mother still living in the South and the other was from a white man to a friend living in the East. The African American man downplayed the "troubles" by assuring his mother that they were being led by a man who he believes is a minister because people refer to him as Father Groppi. The man wrote that Groppi spoke about "love, about communion" and that "the white men and the Negro are brothers." The fictitious African American author ended this letter by saying that when his newborn baby girl grows up, he wished she would live in a "world of people who would not notice or care about a layer of skin." He prayed for

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[49] For more on the riots in the summer of 1967 in Detroit and Newark, see Sidney Fine, *Violence in the Model City: the Cavanagh Administration, Race Relations, and the Detroit Riot of 1967* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989); Kevin J. Mumford, *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007).

[50] "Rumors of Riots in Paoli Prove Without Any Basis," *Suburban and Wayne Times*, 10 August 1967.

"communion."[51] The sentiments of this writer reflected the ideals of the racial liberalism professed by most white Villanovans.

The other letter was written from a concerned white man. He was troubled by the "state of turmoil" in Milwaukee as "them goddamn niggers have been kicking up a storm out here." What seems to really trouble this fictitious gentleman was the strong possibility of "Negroes moving into the neighborhood." He ended his tirade by declaring "I just can't understand what these colored people want anyway… Them niggers should not expect things just for the asking."[52]

The possibilities and limits of racial liberalism within the Catholic Church are illustrated within this article. Although these events were still seemingly distant from the idyllic suburban setting of Villanova's campus, Villanova students familiar with these events saw in Father Groppi a Catholic role model whose activism for the rights of African Americans was rooted in gospel values. The author of the article clearly favored King-style integration by drawing a clear contrast between the communal love espoused by Groppi and the stark racism of the white letter-writer. The article's author demonstrated the potential that the Catholic Church possessed to take a leading role in the white anti-racism movement. However, the column also elucidated the racism harbored by many whites fearful of residential desegregation and the coming Black Power movement.

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[51] William Poliganani, "On Both Sides of the Color Fence," *Villanovan*, 25 October 1967.

[52] Ibid.; For more on Father James Groppi's work in Milwaukee, see Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

In the wake of these urban rebellions, President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed an 11-person committee to establish the causes of the urban rebellions in 1967 and to recommend actions to prevent future occurrences. In February 1968, the final report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, more commonly known as the Kerner Commission after its chair Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, was issued and it suggested white racism was responsible for the conditions which led to the riots. The binary world as depicted by the *Villanovan* author was echoed in the Kerner Commission's conclusion that the nation was "moving toward two societies, one black, one white — separate and unequal."[53] Furthermore, in the section examining the causes of the disturbances, the Kerner Commission Report suggested: "these frustrations are reflected in alienation and hostility toward the institutions of law and government and the white society which controls them, and in the reach toward racial consciousness and solidarity reflected in the slogan 'Black Power.' A new mood has sprung up among Negroes, particularly among the young, in which self-esteem and enhanced racial pride are replacing apathy and submission to 'the system.'"[54]

This new mood among young African Americans, as described in the Kerner Report, played itself out on Villanova's campus as a new crop of black students and student-athletes with an enhanced sense of racial consciousness arrived on campus in 1966 and 1967. These students were increasingly concerned with racial issues and would form the backbone of the black student movement at Villanova. The number of black

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[53] National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1968), 1.

[54] Ibid., 205.

students would also be fortified by Villanova's decision to go coeducational in the fall of 1968.

Villanova Goes Coeducational

In 1967, Villanova announced that, beginning in fall 1968, women were to be admitted to all full-time undergraduate programs. Up until this point, women were only allowed to enroll on a part-time basis, except for the nursing program. For fall 1967, the *Villanovan* reported that the total female enrollment was 387, including 47 in liberal arts, 282 in nursing, nine in engineering and the rest as non-matriculating students.[55] Women were only to be admitted as commuting students at first until a new residence hall for females could be built. Historian David Contosta argued that Villanova made the decision to admit for several reasons. First, as the number of female students in part-time programs increased, it "only made sense to open all of the undergraduate programs to them." Second, Contosta asserted that that "admitting women was also a means of attracting a larger pool of well-qualified students." [56]

The decision received a mixed reception by various campus constituencies. Not surprisingly, Jean Boyle, the Dean of Women, was quoted as saying she was "very happy about the increase in women on campus." The Augustinians seemed less enthusiastic. Father John Driscoll, then the Vice President of Academic Affairs, called the move an

[55] Donna Taylor, "Coed Trend Official with Announcement of Female Entrance," *Villanovan*, 11 October 1967.

[56] Contosta, *Villanova University 1842-1992*, 193.

"inevitable and a good step." Father Jack O'Rourke, Head of the Theology Department, has no comment either way, "Whatever they want to do; it doesn't bother me."[57]

In admitting women in 1968, Villanova preceded two of its local Catholic competitors by two years. In 1970, La Salle College and St. Joseph's University both admitted women for the first time. During the summer of 1969, St. Joseph's convened a Study Group on Coeducation that ultimately recommended the admission of women to full-time undergraduate programs. The task force's final report stressed the potential to increase the applicant pool. This, of course, would obviously result in an increase in the number of applications by women. However, the report also stressed that the decision to admit women would also likely result in more applications from men who preferred to go to a coeducational institution. [58]

The Changing Black Student-Athlete on Campus

As a result of the increased recruitment of black student athletes and the opening its doors to women in 1968, the number of African American students at Villanova increased from roughly 10 in 1959 to 50 in 1968. Black Villanova students started to see strength in numbers. The national mood of black resistance would contribute to the rejection of the "you knew your place" on campus paradigm of the black Villanova athletes of the 1950s. The man who provided the bridge between this earlier period of

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[57] Taylor, "Coed Trend Official with Announcement of Female Entrance."

[58] David Contosta, *St. Joseph's: Philadelphia's Jesuit University, 150 Years*, (Philadelphia: St. Joseph's University Press, 2000), 252.

"you knew your place" to the growing black consciousness of the late 1960s was George Raveling.

George Raveling's career at Villanova serves as a microcosm of the challenges and contradictions of integration of African American students on a predominately white campus during this period. When George was nine years old, his father died and his mother had a nervous breakdown. As a result, Raveling was raised in St. Michael's orphanage in Scranton, Pennsylvania. He converted to Catholicism under the tutelage of the nuns who helped to raise him at St. Michael's. Raveling decided to attend Villanova after visiting the campus and meeting with track student-athletes Charley Jenkins and Ed Collymore.[59] On April 1, 1959, Raveling was named captain of the Villanova basketball team, a first for any black athlete at Villanova. At the annual basketball banquet that same evening, Raveling climbed to the podium and, choking back the tears, said: "I am fully aware of the responsibility that I have, both as Villanova basketball captain and as the first of my race to hold that honor." Raveling thanked his coach Al Severance and "the other wonderful people at Villanova for the chance they have given me to become useful."[60] Raveling graduated in 1960 after a successful basketball career at Villanova. Immediately after his playing days, Raveling claimed that he was the first African American to hold a "white-collar" job at Sun Oil Company. He later became the first

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[59] Red Hamer, "Villanova Rewards George Raveling for Loyal Service," *Evening Bulletin*. 31 March 1966.

[60] *Evening Bulletin*, 2 April 1959.

assistant basketball coach of a predominately white institution, when he joined the Villanova staff in 1963.[61]

When Raveling returned to Villanova one of his main jobs was to recruit black student-athletes for the basketball team. During his time at Villanova as an assistant coach, Raveling was credited with recruiting several African American basketball standouts, including Floridians Johnny Jones (class of 1969) and All-American Howard Porter (class of 1971). The *Villanovan* described Raveling's approach to recruiting:

> George Raveling once said, 'when I scout a negro [sic] boy, I always check out the type of environment he comes from. If he comes from a comfortable middle-class family, chances are he'll play in a carefree fashion. But the kid who had a tough time of it, the kid whose [sic] gone to bed hungry, he'll play basketball like his life depended on it.' Howard Porter comes from a state where black people are about as popular as small pox. The white Southerners do their best to keep negroes [sic] uneducated and poor. Howard knows that if he doesn't make it in basketball, he may end up working in some Textile factory back in Florida.[62]

Raveling's penchant for finding these "diamonds in the rough" eventually helped to return the Villanova basketball team to hardwood glory. The team struggled through the mid-1960s with mediocre seasons. As a result of Raveling's recruiting efforts, however, Jones and Porter led Villanova to several straight postseason tournament invitations which culminated in a Final Four appearance in 1971. As one of the only black men on

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[61] In an interesting side note, George Raveling holds the original copy of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. Raveling was walking around the National Mall prior to the speech when he was approach by rally organizers who were looking for additional security. Because of size and strength, Raveling was placed next to the stage adjacent to the podium. When King finished his speech and turned towards the back of the stage, Raveling simply asked King if he could have a copy of the speech. Over the years, Raveling has been in discussions with the King Center in Atlanta but the speech remains in his possession.

[62] Joe Iacovitti, "A Winner," *Villanovan*, 26 February 1969.

campus to hold an administrative position, Raveling became a mentor to many of the black student athletes and black students in general during his time at Villanova. Raveling helped to bring in the new era of black athletes who, along with the black non-athletes, provided the spark which began the black student movement on Villanova's campus.

Johnny Jones and Bob Whitehead were two of these athletes who arrived in 1965 and 1966, respectively, and ultimately became important participants of the black student movement at Villanova. A brief glimpse of their backgrounds illustrates the diversity of the black student-athletes who would ultimately challenge the racial status quo on campus.

Jones grew up in rigidly segregated Pompano Beach, Florida. Jones faced discrimination at every turn in his quest to receive a quality education. It was even difficult for him to find the opportunity to play basketball at the high school level. When finally given the chance, Jones scored 85 points in a high school basketball game. This caught the attention of George Raveling who saw a story on Jones in *Sports Illustrated's* "Faces in the Crowd" section. Raveling alerted head basketball coach Jack Kraft who flew to Pompano Beach to talk Jones and offer him a scholarship to play at Villanova. Jones received a "feeling of genuineness" from Coach Kraft on that recruiting visit. He agreed to be part of the 1969 class.[63]

Bob Whitehead arrived in fall 1966 as a student recruited to run track for Villanova. Whitehead grew up in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia where his father

[63] Johnny Jones, interviewed by author, digital recording, March 5, 2012.

was a well-respected member of the United States Postal Service. After his father tragically passed away when Whitehead was only nine years old, friends of his father were there to look after and guide the development of the young promising track star. Whitehead attracted the attention of legendary Villanova track coach Jumbo Elliott at a local meet where as a high school senior he beat several Villanova runners. Elliott offered Whitehead a scholarship and Whitehead took an immediate liking to Elliott because, as he recalled, "he was more arrogant than I was."[64]

Bob Whitehead carried with him some self-described "baggage" on to Villanova's campus because, as he remembers it, friends of his father told him not to go to Villanova because of Elliott. The prevailing attitude among the black community in Philadelphia was that the Catholic institution on the Main Line, in general, and Coach Elliott, in particular, exploited their black athletes. Lured by the prospect of being a member of one of the most highly-ranked track teams in the country at the time, Whitehead spurned the advice of his community and decided to enroll at Villanova. He would join a team that was poised to challenge the racial status quo at Villanova.

In 1967, college and amateur athletics were on the brink of a mass black protest movement (this movement will be covered in further detail in the next chapter), one that would galvanize not just sports stars but black students in general. Historian Adolph Grundman argued that on the eve of this movement, the average American accepted as conventional wisdom that the institution of sport treated blacks fairly and that sport contributed mightily to improved race relations. Therefore, by the late 1960s, the belief

[64] Bob Whitehead, interviewed by author, digital recording, April 4, 2012.

that the significant presence of blacks in white-controlled sports indicated improved race relations was accepted in both the black and mainstream presses. By fall 1967, the tension between this perception and the reality of race relations on majority white campuses came to light.[65]

A young black academic and activist named Harry Edwards would inspire Villanova's track and field team to take a dramatic stand for racial justice. Edwards was raised in a broken family. His father spent time in an Illinois penitentiary and never made more than $65 a week. His mother left when he was eight. Edwards saw athletics as his escape from poverty and ended up at San Jose State on a basketball scholarship. The racism he encountered at San Jose State in the dormitories, fraternities, and in the classroom turned him into an activist and helped inspire his civil rights agenda.[66] Edwards graduated from San Jose State and went on to complete his doctorate at Cornell University in 1967. Edwards returned to San Jose State in the fall of 1967 as an instructor and coach and began to organize African American athletes to support civil rights causes.

In October 1967, Edwards and several prominent African American athletes, including San Jose track stars Tommie Smith and Lee Evans, announced that they would boycott the 1968 Olympics unless their demands were met. Edwards and the other athletes called for 1) the reinstatement of Muhammad Ali as heavyweight champion, 2) an end to discrimination against blacks and Jews by the New York City Athletic Club, 3)

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[65] Adolph H. Grundman, "The Image of Intercollegiate Sports and the Civil Rights Movement: An Historian's View," *ARENA-Review* 3 (October 1979): 17-24.

[66] Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969).

the appointment of an additional black coach to the United States track and field team, 4) the barring of South Africa and Rhodesia from the 1968 Olympics and 5) the removal of Avery Brundage (who was perceived as a Nazi sympathizer and racist) as president of the International Olympic Committee.[67]

In November 1967, Edwards added the New York Athletic Club (N.Y.A.C.) to the list of organizations African American athletes should boycott. Edwards alleged that the N.Y.A.C. discriminated against Jews and African Americans in their membership. The N. Y.A.C. was set to host its premier collegiate and professional track and field event on February 16, 1968. This meet was to be the first track and field competition to be held in the new Madison Square Garden and was expected to draw over 18,000 fans.

The N.Y.A.C. boycott gained momentum in late 1967 after a *New York Times* article written by Robert Lipsyte brought attention to the case of Georgetown graduate Ricardo Urbina, who identified himself as African American and Latino. Urbina, who would eventually become a United States District Court judge in the District of Columbia, was denied access to the club. The reason he was given for his rejection was that the membership quotas were filled. Declaring this to be an injustice, Urbina's father sent letters to the sportswriters of major Eastern newspapers demanding they bring attention to the racial discrimination being practiced by the club. Urbina declared, "they can't defend the club and they won't quit it. In a sense they're what I'm fighting, but they are also my friends and the people I want as teammates." The N.Y.A.C. refused to

[67] David Kenneth Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997), 108.

comment on Urbina's application or its admission policies. [68] The boycott received support from its first major individual athlete when Tommie Smith, a protégé of Edwards who would later raise his fist in a Black Power salute at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, declared that he would boycott the upcoming New York Athletic Club Games on January 9, 1968.[69]

As one of the finest teams in the country, Villanova was invited to appear at the N.Y.A.C. Games. Larry James, a sophomore African American star in the 400 meters, approached Dave Patrick, the captain of the Villanova men's track and field team, during the 1968 indoor season concerning the teams' planned participation in the N.Y.A.C. meet in Madison Square Garden. With the blessing of legendary coach Jumbo Elliott, Patrick called a team meeting to discuss what course of action the team should take and the vote was 17-0 in favor of boycotting the meet. On January 31, 1968, Villanova University issued a statement that indicated that the Villanova track team was pulling out of the event. The united team became known as "Jumbo's Togetherness Troupe." [70] Though Elliott allowed his athletes to make the decision as to whether to boycott the N.Y.A.C. Games and, therefore, supported the black athletes in this case, Elliott's reputation among several black athletes took a hit as a result of some contentious interactions the following year.

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[68] Robert Lipsyte, "Running Unattached," *New York Times*, 28 December 1967.

[69] Gerald Eskenazi, "Boycott of New York A.C. Games Threatened by Negro Athletes," *New York Times*, 9 January 1968.

[70] James Francis Elliott, *Jumbo Elliott: Maker of Milers, Maker of Men* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 166.

The *Villanovan* roundly applauded the decision saying the action "gave Villanova more prestige than all the IC4A titles the school has ever won… Telling your children that you competed in the first track meet held in the 'current' Madison Square Garden would be great. But telling them that you were part of a team which played a part in exposing a segment of hypocrisy in America would be even greater." [71] Historian David Wiggins agreed, arguing that the boycott of the N.Y.A.C. allowed black athletes to "realize a new sense of dignity." [72] This was a cause which black and white Villanovans alike could rally around and support. Yet, the sharper turn toward Black Power would test the limits of this support.

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The successful boycott of the N.Y.A.C. Games reflected the promise of the professed racial liberalism of the Villanova administration and of its student body. This represented a public rejection of discrimination and demonstrated that Villanova would not tolerate such outward discrimination, especially when confronted with it in such a public manner. Yet, away from the bright lights of Madison Square Garden and the *New York Times*, the increased racial consciousness of black Villanova athletes led to strained relations between athletes and coaches, including Jumbo Elliott. The increased racial tension in the wake of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the genesis of

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[71] Chuck McElrone, "Hypocrisy in the Garden," *Villanovan*, 14 February 1968; Interestingly, in the wake of the N.Y.A.C. boycott, alums from Notre Dame University called on their own alumni to resign their positions on the board. A team from the College of Holy Cross, who had no black athletes on the team, decided to participate in the Games. For more on this, see Diane Brady, *Fraternity* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2012).

[72] Ibid.

the black student movement challenged this Catholic racial liberalism. Black student-athletes were accepted for admission and were lauded by white Villanovans for their exploits on the fields. However, they often felt segregated on campus, and as a result increasingly chose to separate themselves from the white Villanova community. The establishment of the Black Student League in the fall 1968 provided the support to accomplish the social and political goals of black Villanova students. This is the story of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

"WE TRUSTED THINGS WERE GETTING BETTER;" 1968 AS A TURNING POINT IN CAMPUS RACE RELATIONS

1968 represented a major turning point for campus race relations. The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in April 1968 led black students to question their presence on a predominately white campus while white students demonstrated varying responses ranging from guilt to ambivalence. As black Villanova student-athletes began to drive the conversation about race, black Villanova students as a whole – athletes and non-athletes – began to reflect the impulses of the national Black Power student movement and organized themselves into the Black Student League (BSL). Through the founding of the BSL in 1968, black Villanova students adopted their own form of Black Power ideology. The black student movement at Villanova was characterized by a high degree of racial solidarity, a desire to raise awareness about the campus climate for black students, and, finally, the willingness to demand for far-reaching changes to the campus culture.

This chapter argues that, as black students began their turn towards Black Power, the consensus of Catholic racial liberalism on Villanova's campus began to weaken. When confronted with accusations of racism and discrimination, white Villanova students and administrators reacted in various ways. Taking their cues from black students who described the racism and segregation they felt on campus, some white Villanovans, including select members of the administration, displayed concern about racial equality and acted in support of the BSL. Many white students and administrators,

however, dismissed the claims of racism raised by black Villanova students. Furthermore, white students began to express uneasiness over the burgeoning Black Power movement and the impact this movement could have on their privileges. While they accepted the presence of black students on campus, white students rejected the notion that black students did not feel included on campus.

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White Student Encounter with Black Power

By February 1968, the Black Power movement was gaining momentum in the national discourse but had not yet taken hold among Villanova's black students. In a sense, the editorial board of the *Villanovan* was prescient in its decision to expose white Villanovans to Black Power ideology by inviting some of the leaders of this Philadelphia movement on campus. On February 13, 1968, the white student- controlled editorial board of the *Villanovan*, led by Joe Burt, invited five members of "Philadelphia's Black Nationalist movement" to their office.[1] The white Villanova student encounter with Black Power Movement began with an astonishing exchange between students and black community leaders. After an introductory speech about the current state of American race relations, the Black Nationalist leaders asked if the student had any questions. A "sincere-looking" woman in the back asked the seemingly innocent (at least to the white students in the room) question: "What can we do to help you?" Joe Burt, a *Villanovan* staff writer and the article's author, describes the exchange that followed the question:

[1] The precise name of the black power group was not identified in the article. Historian Matthew Countryman indicates that the Black Panther Party did not organize in Philadelphia until October 1968. The representatives were most likely from an organization known as the Black Coalition. See Matthew Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

> "You people are just too much, I can't believe you can stay so dumb! Why don't you think? THINK! Your neuroses are just amazing! For over a hundred years you've been crawling to us to tell you how rotten you are, so you can get the masochistic joy of hating yourselves. That's why you're here tonight – right? Every white man we meet asks us: 'Tell me how much you hate me… I deserve it! Man you're so ….up! Why ask us what to do. You got white skin – we're black! Listen, friends, if things ever blow, if we ever come out here stabbing people in these nice little dormitories the black man isn't gonna be the one needing help. You're all stuck in the structure, too, baby, only you're just too dumb to know how it's ….n' you up.. Baby, don't worry 'bout us. You've got big problems where you're at."[2]

Burt indicated that the Villanova students responded to this with some objections but that it was obvious the point had been made.

In an article published in the next edition of the *Villanovan* entitled "Racism in Reverse," student Fred Trietsch denounced the use of violence as a means to remedy racial injustice. While conceding that the "racial condition is terribly unfair to the Negro," Trietsch argued that Black Power advocates who threatened violence "have become every bit as prejudiced as any white segregationist… it is racism in the reverse sense of its previous usage." Trietsch strongly objected to the violent language - which he believed was "calculated for shock" - used by the "panel of ghetto inhabitants."[3] Trietsch argued that young people, especially young white people, were ready and willing to help the cause but are not willing to risk the threat of death or injury. Suggesting that white people were crucial for the movement to make progress, Trietsch asserted that the threat of violence, therefore, would keep any meaningful progress from being made.

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[2] Joe Burt, "Reflections in the Black Eye," *Villanovan*, 21 February 1968.

[3] Fred Trietsch, "Racism in Reverse," *Villanovan*, 28 February 1968.

Alum Francis Carter responded to Trietsch's opinion piece by rejecting the notion that the Black Power movement was "racism in reverse." Carter argued that "racism in reverse would mean the black community's wish of exclusion of whites for the purpose of subjugation." According to Carter, subjugation was not the purpose of the Black Power movement. "What Black Power does advocate," he asserted, "is the alleviation of problems by consolidation of our race."[4] Carter ended his letter by suggesting Trietsch read *Black Power* by Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton Jr. to get a complete understanding of what the Black Power movement demanded.

The Black Power-*Villanovan* incident portended the increased tension between white students and black students over the goals and tactics of the Black Power movement. This exchange was significant because it reflected the shift in the larger picture of race relations on campus and in American society. In describing white student activism on college campuses during this time period, historian Helen Horowitz describes the situation as "after the intense early years of working for civil rights, white undergraduate radicals, like their adult counterparts, found themselves in the awkward position of being unwanted, reduced to an unquestioning support of black militants from a distance."[5] White Villanova students, in general, supported desegregation and wanted to be allies in the struggle for civil rights. The *Villanovan* students, in particular, represented those students who were sympathetic to the cause of racial justice. However, the exchange demonstrated that white students, even those who purported to be allies in the black freedom struggle, had a limited understanding of the goals of the Black Movement.

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[4] Francis Carter, "Racism Reviewed," *Villanovan*, 6 March 1968.

[5] Horowitz, *Campus Culture*, 242.

Indeed, the question from the "sincere-looking" female student – "What can we do to help you?" – failed to recognize that one of the fundamental tenets of the Black Power movement was separatism. Furthermore, this incident illustrated that white students still believed that integration was a goal of Black Power activists. White students clung to the idea that desegregation equaled integration and that this should have been enough to advance black freedom struggle. In doing so, they failed to recognize that the Black Power advocates were looking for broader, more systemic change. The sentiments expressed by the followers of Black Power forced white Villanova students to confront their own role in the system which maintained their privileges on campus and in society. Rather than embrace this position, the white Villanovan students failed to recognize their own position of privilege. Indeed, the Black Power-*Villanovan* discussion demonstrated the limits of racial liberalism on a campus where the influence of the Black Power movement was just beginning to be felt by early 1968.

If some white Villanova students who considered themselves allies were struggling to intellectualize the complicated racial issues of the day, other white students attempted to address these issues in a more tangible manner. For these students, identifying and trying to solve problems in the surrounding community, rather than deal with the problems on-campus, was the easiest and least threatening way to engage. In February 1968, Villanova students joined with their colleagues from Haverford College and Bryn Mawr College to sponsor a series of workshops for the children of the "less known, mainly black, working-class, just above the poverty line community on the other

side of Lancaster Pike."[6] The workshops included classes in art for younger children and college preparation sessions for those in high school. Though the program was initiated by students, the University's Office of the Chaplain agreed to provide financial support, including funding for application fees for students who wished to apply to Villanova.

The rationale for the program reflected the ideals of racial liberalism. In an unattributed *Villanovan* article, the program's directors cited two reasons for the establishment of the program. First, the program was established to "help the children" and give them a chance "to learn from our own knowledge." "More important," the authors suggested, was "what we can learn from them."[7] This workshop series was one example of a handful of community service programs initiated by Villanova students during this time period.

As young adults moving into adulthood during a tumultuous period of social unrest, white Villanova students were seeking to create new alternative worldviews based on experiences with those who were perceived as different as themselves. The attitude of service reinforced the possibilities of the Catholic racial liberalism carried by most white, middle-class Villanova students. The delivery of service to less fortunate members "in their own territory," as described in the article, allowed white Villanova students to maintain their distance from people of color while also feeling that they were not racist. Meanwhile, after their service, white Villanova students could return safely to campus feeling confident, in their minds, that they were doing their part for racial justice. They felt they were not being apathetic.

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[6] "Students Hit Community," *Villanovan*, 28 February 1968.

[7] Ibid.

During the same month the community service program was launched, the theme of "apathy in the suburbs" was addressed in a major campus lecture. In February 1968, Daniel Berrigan S.J., a well-known Jesuit priest and activist who had been arrested in 1967 for his anti-war activities, spoke to crowd of several thousand Villanova community members. He had just returned from a "diplomatic mission" in Hanoi with the activist and academician Howard Zinn. Berrigan reminded the Christians in the audience that they were called to "bear witness for love and justice in concrete ways." As reported by the *Villanovan*, his remarks were directed to the "satisfied Christian trying to convince him that all was not well with America and that each Christian has a responsibility to act against the injustices in the status quo wherever they become evident." While Berrigan was known for his staunch opposition to the United States' involvement in Vietnam, he also identified "apathy in the suburbs" as one of the injustices he saw in American society.[8] Berrigan's call to action was grounded in his Catholic faith and allowed white Villanova students to make the connection between their faith and the issue of racial justice.

In February 1968, the Black Power-*Villanovan* exchange, the launch of the community service program, and the Berrigan lecture all raised awareness of issues of racial justice, each in its own particular way. White Villanova students who were paying attention could probably sense the ground shifting beneath their feet. Racial liberalism was evident on campus but the limits of that ideology would be tested by the events of April 1968.

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[8] Joe Burt, "Berrigan: Christians Must Be Responsible," *Villanovan*, 14 February 1968.

Assassination of Martin Luther King and its Impact on Campus

In April 1968, national events again took center stage at Villanova with the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This civil rights leader's murder triggered an outpouring of emotion from the Villanova community.[9] The death of King helped divide the campus further along racial lines. While many white Villanovans expressed sympathy and pledged to support his work, others worked against honoring his legacy. While white Villanovans struggled with how to react, black Villanova students questioned the goal of integration.

The day after the killing, a prayer march, sponsored by the Augustinians, was held on campus and over 400 students attended. At a prayer service following the march, Villanova University chaplain Father James Byrnes, O.S.A., remarked that "in their suffering and their death Dr. King and Jesus are similar but if mankind had heeded Christ's word there would have been no need for Dr. King's death or even for a civil rights movement."[10]

In the immediate aftermath of the assassination, Villanova students and faculty celebrated King's legacy as a unifying force and demonstrated growing support for his anti-poverty initiatives. Prior to the assassination, a Villanova Support Committee was

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[9] The surrounding community also looked to Villanova for comfort in the wake of the assassination. The university sponsored an interfaith service for Dr. King in the Fieldhouse several days after his death. A reflection on the event written by a local resident and published in the *Suburban and Wayne Times* revealed disappointment in the attendance. Rosemary Lynch reported "when we saw the hundreds of empty chairs…we were shocked. Alive, he had packed the place." The service was satisfying to Lynch as it featured a stage filled with 14 ministers and priests and one rabbi and five guitarists, yet the disappointment over the low numbers in attendance overshadowed the event.

[10] "Campus Mourns King Assassination," *Villanovan*, April 10, 1968.

established to garner support for the Poor People's Campaign, the same campaign that had brought King to Memphis. After the assassination, the membership rolls swelled. In an April 24, 1968, article the *Villanovan* reported that over 200 students and faculty members had joined the membership of the committee.[11] Ten days later, a rally of support, co-sponsored by the Villanova Support Committee and the Main Line Support Committee, took place on Villanova's campus. The local paper, the *Suburban and Wayne Times*, roundly criticized the campaign declaring that the "threat of insurrection implicit in this campaign is quite clear." The fear of violence was again evident when the *Suburban and Wayne Times* editors claimed that the "total irresponsibility of this march, with its unforeseen results, can benefit only those who are interested in creating chaos." [12] The students did not take the advice of the *Suburban and Wayne Times* editors, however, as the expression of sympathy, rooted in appeals to Villanova to live up to the ideals of Catholic racial liberalism, continued.

This outpouring of emotion over the King assassination spilled over onto the pages of the *Villanovan* in a dramatic way and demonstrated clear sympathy for the continuation of the movement, at least the liberal ideal of ending segregation. An editorial in the *Villanovan* suggested that no further eulogy was needed to remind people of King's greatness; rather, the editors sent a direct message to the University's students and administration. Anticipating the violence which was to wrack urban areas in the summer of 1968, the *Villanovan* appealed to the ideals of racial liberalism in offering advice to students going home for the summer. The editors asserted that "work will be

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[11] Tom McColgan, "America's Poor to Mobilize in D.C.," *Villanovan*, April 24, 1968.

[12] "Onward…to Washington," *Suburban and Wayne Times*, 2 May 1968.

needed IN WHITE COMMUNITIES to battle the tide of fearful and hateful reaction that one can feel building up." "We are Christians," the editors urged, "so it should come naturally to us to lead the fight against hate." [13]

Then, the *Villanovan* suggested that the University had an opportunity to create a "relevant and prominent symbol on campus" to Martin Luther King, whom they termed the "closest thing to a twentieth-century saint we have." The editors suggested that if "Villanova wants to take a stand for courageous love, brotherhood and reconciliation" the administration building under construction should be named after the slain civil rights leader.[14] The suggestion represented the promise and also the limits of Catholic racial liberalism. Instead of advocating that the University address the issues King was fighting for prior to his death, the editors suggested that the naming of a building could substitute for the harder work of addressing racial inequalities.

Bob Moser, a student from the Student Government Association, backed the naming of the building. Moser was a sophomore from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who was elected class representative and served on the Student Government Association. Moser described himself as not your typical white Villanova student. He had been active in social justice causes since high school where he was a participant in competitive speech contests and once placed second in a state-wide competition. He was told by the judge at the state final that he would have won the competition but his speech on racially

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[13] "Post-Mortem: M.L.K.," *Villanovan*, 10 April 1968.

[14] Ibid.; The building was finished in 1969 and dedicated to John and Robert Kennedy and is known as Kennedy Hall.

restrictive covenants in Lancaster was "too controversial."[15] This only strengthened his commitment to the cause of racial justice. At Villanova, Moser was one of the few students involved in the Poor People's Campaign prior to King's assassination. After King's assassination, he made a motion in a Student Government Association meeting to endow a new building being built on campus with the name "King Hall." But, his motion was rejected by his colleagues in SGA. In reference to his class year, Moser was called "sophomoric" by fellow SGA members and was told that the naming of the building after King was "not going to happen on this campus." To compound matters and anticipating some of the cracks in Villanova's liberal façade, Moser returned to his room the next day to find a note slipped under the door. The note called him a "nigger lover" and warned him to watch himself.[16]

In the wake of the assassination, two other opinion pieces, notable for their analysis of the efficacy of non-violence and for the espousal of white guilt, appeared in the *Villanovan*. Villanova student columnist Jim O'Hare's "On the Black Side" asked readers to put themselves in the place of an African American man who has been told to be non-violent yet sees no real change occurring in society. Now, according to O'Hare, the leader who has advocated non-violence has been killed by the very society who asks black men to be non-violent. O'Hare concludes, "white man says violence is bad but he brings bulldogs after you. And guns. And troops. And tanks. And you see a white man

[15] Bob Moser, interview author, digital recording, November 14, 2012.

[16] Ibid.; As of this writing, Moser still has the note in his possession.

murder his president… And now there is no white man, nobody on this whole earth who can tell YOU not to get violent. ”[17]

Villanovan writer Rick Serano’s article entitled “A Man and His Memory” began simply with “I am no longer proud of my being white.” Serano proceeded to declare that he used to be proud of his whiteness – even though he was self-described as “only a whop.” Now, however, Serano indicated “for the first time in my life I can honestly say that I wish I were black.” Serano recounted an incident at a local drug store where a bigoted man behind him in line loudly suggested that in the wake of King’s death “they ought to do the same the same to the whole lot of them…to millions of them.” Serano indicated that he felt hate then shame, but in the end, he simply paid his money and walked out of the store.[18]

This disconnect between the courage Serano demonstrated in writing his letter and his behavior in the drug store demonstrated the complex interplay of race and privilege. Indeed, Serano’s reaction to the racist man in the drug store provided evidence that often support for civil rights could be symbolic without an accompanying change in behavior. Yet, Serano’s shame over the comment and his guilt over his inaction proved that racist comments and expressions of white supremacy such as this took an emotional toll. Furthermore, it demonstrated that even white people who were committed to the cause of racial justice often chose the path of least resistance.

The assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King illuminated the promise and limits to the Catholic racial liberalism. The death of King helped to radicalize some white students

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[17] Jim O’Hare, “On the Black Side,” *Villanovan*, 10 April 1968.

[18] Rick Serano, “A Man and His Memory,” *Villanovan*, 10 April 1968.

who were sympathetic to the black freedom struggle. Their impassioned editorials were designed to raise awareness about the unfinished business of the civil rights movement. Yet, the failed attempt to establish a lasting symbol to King and the harsh reaction to this effort demonstrated some lingering animosity towards the goals of the increasingly radical black movement. The rejection of the naming of a building also illustrated the resistance to change the traditional campus culture. The tepid response to the assassination left black Villanova students wondering about the future of race relations in American, in general, and on campus, in particular.

For Villanova black students, the assassination served as a wake-up call about the reality of race in the United States. In the wake of the assassination, Jim McIntosh, an African American basketball player, remarked "we trusted things were getting better and then something like this happens and you begin to wonder about the concept of non-violence… the black militants are going to say 'I told you so' and I don't know how many are going to listen."[19] McIntosh's words demonstrated that the King assassination was a watershed moment for many civil rights activists, including black and white students, who were in the process of discerning the next steps in the struggle for black equality.

Taken as a whole, the response to the death of King demonstrated the limits to the racial liberalism possessed by even those who were sympathetic to the cause of racial justice. The various reactions by white Villanova students demonstrated the confusion of whites over how to move forward. Some reactions, such as the support for the Poor People's Campaign, provided evidence that the tragedy could result in gains for the civil

[19] "Campus Mourns King Assassination," *Villanovan*, 10 April 1968.

rights movements. Other reactions, such as the "King Hall" naming controversy, demonstrated the challenges faced in making progress in racial justice issues on a predominately white campus. The assassination and the reactions on campus made integration of black students that much more difficult. In the wake of the assassination, black Villanova students, as evidenced by McIntosh's remarks, began to question integration as a goal. Despite the varied reactions, white students for the most part did not question this notion. This would prove to be the most significant outcome in terms of the long term relationship between black students and white students on Villanova's campus.

Track Team Decision in Wake of Assassination

Several weeks after the King assassination, Villanova's track team faced another difficult decision. Villanova's runners were invited to compete against the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee, in late April. Jumbo Elliot indicated that "black athletes were disturbed over the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and did not want to compete in a dual meet with the University of Tennessee, the state in which King was assassinated."[20] As he did with the N.Y.A.C. boycott issue, Elliott again let the team decide its course of action. Whitehead remembered that the black athletes on the team were split as to whether to go to compete. Villanova was known as a "showcase" team as they did not usually field a full track and field squad but focused on the glamorous sprints and long distance events. As such, they did not get many invitations to large meets such as this and many of the members of the team - black and white alike – did not want to

[20] James F. Elliott, *Jumbo Elliott: Maker of Milers, Maker of Men* (New York; St. Martin's Press, 1982), 166.

miss the opportunity.[21] Dave Patrick, the white captain of the team, wanted to respect the feelings of the black members of the squad and called a meeting to decide. Villanova track star Larry James told *Sports Illustrated* in 1991: "Given that Dr. King was executed, so to speak, in Tennessee, some of us were uncomfortable… The team met. The agreement was that we had to be unanimous to not go. We weren't. So we went." The Villanova team accepted the invitation to compete in Tennessee.[22]

While he was in Knoxville, James heard a rumor that when the news of King's death had been announced on television in the student center on the Knoxville campus, the students greeted the announcement with a standing ovation. This unsettled James. To make matters worse, James recalled that he was jogging across the campus to the track meet when "a VW passed and I heard, 'Run, nigger, run!' I immediately started to walk. And I began to internalize things."[23] James, whose nickname was the Mighty Burner, took his anger onto the track during that meet in Tennessee and won the 440 in 45.2. According to an interview with James conducted by Kenny Moore of *Sports Illustrated*, Dave Patrick, Villanova teammate and fellow Olympic hopeful, yelled to James: "'Do you know what a 45.2 *means*, Burner?' 'Third-fastest ever! It means *Olympics*, Burner!'"[24]

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[21] Whitehead, interview with author.

[22] Kenny Moore. "The Eye of the Storm," *Sports Illustrated*, 12 August 1991, accessed March 21, 2012, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1139928/index.htm

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

As a result of his spring performances, James was invited to the Olympics trial in the summer of 1968. At the trials, James broke the world record by running 400 meters in 44.19 seconds, only to be edged out by Lee Evans who also broke record with a time of 44.06 seconds. Nonetheless, James qualified for the Olympics and was a favorite to win a medal as a result of his performance at the trials. James' participation in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics meant that the intersections of race, sports, and politics would continue to be discussed at Villanova.

The decision to go to the Tennessee games illuminated the complex dynamics of race and sports in the late 1960s. The black athletes on the team were split on their desire to go. Some were clearly not in favor of going and feared for their safety. Other black athletes, however, did not want to pass up the opportunity to compete. Despite the fact that they were not united on this issue, team member Bob Whitehead indicated that all of the black members felt supported by the fact that the white athletes were willing to sacrifice going if it was unanimous.

Black Power Movement Takes Hold

As result of the number of student movements across campuses across the country, 1968 marked a turning point for the African American student movement. In his study of the black student movement at New York University, historian William H. Exum argued that the tense, hot summers of the mid-1960s promoted awareness on campus of what he called the "intractability of discrimination and the institutional basis

of racism."[25] Harvard sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset, argued during this time that to the "growing minority of black students [who] have found themselves in a totally white-dominated world, facing few, if any, black faculty… the concern with black power, with Negro control over their own communities, and particularly civil rights organizations, has won growing support among black college students."[26] As higher education historian Helen Horowitz points out, by the late 1960s "black students felt under intense pressure to identify themselves with other blacks and to adopt a militant posture."[27] Like many other institutions, the founding of the BSL in September 1968 ushered in a new era of activism in which black students willingly embraced a Black Power perspective. The founding of this organization at Villanova reflected the national trend because as James A. Anderson has pointed out "by 1968 some sixty-five African American student organizations existed in traditionally white colleges."[28]

The BSL provided a launching pad for a burgeoning Black Power movement on campus. Black Power movement historian Peniel Joseph argues that the "black power movement, in its challenge of postwar racial liberalism, fundamentally transformed struggles for racial justice through an uncompromising quest for social, political, cultural and economic transformation." Joseph identifies the black college student movements, in

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[25] William H. Exum, *Paradoxes of Protest: Black Student Activism in a White University* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985), 7.

[26] Seymour Martin Lipset, *Rebellion in the University* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1972), 10.

[27] Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 241.

[28] James A. Anderson "Race in Higher Education," in *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, William A., Smith Philip G. Altbach, and Kofi Lomotey, 3-21. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 10.

particular those on predominately white campuses, as significant pieces to the larger Black Power movement. Rejecting the traditional characterization of the Black Power movement as violent, destructive and ultimately antithetical to civil rights, Joseph argues that Black Power instead "defined a movement for racial solidarity, cultural pride and self-determination."[29] Villanova black students adopted their own version of Black Power, but it shared with the national trend, a commitment to racial solidarity and an open hostility to liberalism. Indeed, the establishment of the BSL helped to fundamentally transform the black student experience at Villanova.

Hardge Davis, junior economics major and member of the track team, returned to campus after the troubled summer of 1968 and believed the time was right to unite black students by forming a student organization on campus. Davis enlisted the support of Joe Francis, a senior electrical engineering major, and Johnny Jones, a senior political science major and member of the basketball team, and together they established the BSL. The group received permission from the Villanova administration to distribute flyers to every black student on campus. Davis explained that "there was no force, no intimidation; we just asked anyone interested in being a member to turn out." In explaining his motivation, Davis, who would serve as the organization's first president, explained "we just believed that black people ought to help themselves and that this was a way of doing it."[30]

Indeed, black Villanova students drew inspiration from the philosophy of the national Black Power movement. Black power ideology provided black Villanova

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[29] Peniel Joseph, "The Black Power Movement: A State of the Field," *Journal of American History* 93 (December 2009), 771-776.

[30] "Black Villanova." *Villanova Alumni Magazine*, May 1969, 18.

students with a useful framework to intellectualize and analyze their situation as students on a predominately white campus. Villanova black students drew particular inspiration from the work of Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton as evidenced by the numerous references to them made by black Villanova students in interviews and articles throughout this time period. It is clear that black students read and were familiar with the nuances of the Black Power ideology. Carmichael and Hamilton described Black Power as "a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community." "It is a call for black people," the authors asserted, "to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations, and to support those organizations."[31]

Black Villanova students appropriated Carmichael and Hamilton's philosophy to create their own form of Black Power on a predominately white campus. Black Villanova students characterized the University as a white racist institution. Furthermore, they joined the search for black identity, called for racial solidarity, and vowed to educate the larger white majority about the broader implications of Black Power movement. Indeed, the establishment of a student organization *for* Villanova black students run *by* Villanova black students was the clearest manifestation of this embrace of Black Power ideology.

For all of its positive contributions to the Villanova black community, the establishment of the BSL placed a strain on campus race relations. As will be demonstrated, throughout the late 1960s, white student reactions hardened as black student activism on Villanova's campus began to take on the appearances of the larger

[31] Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, "Black Power: Its Need and Substance," in *Black Power and Student Rebellion*, ed. James McEvoy and Abraham Miller, 237-252. (Belmont CA: Wadsworth, 1969), 244.

Black Power movement. White students were influenced by the media images of some of the violent aspects of the Black Power movement that existed in the minds of white Americans – for example, "gun-toting Black Panthers."[32] Therefore, most white students viewed Black Power as simply a rejection of integration. The adoption of Black Power ideology, therefore, threatened the ideal of integration, one of the cornerstones of the Catholic racial liberalism operational at Villanova.

Black Villanova students recognized that the idea of Black Power might be threatening to the liberal white Villanova students and they endeavored to explain their position to their classmates. Chuck Williams of the BSL refuted the notion that Black Power is always violent. In exploring this myth, he argued that an examination of the term "Black Power" is necessary. Williams asked: "How can 'Black' be violent? Are Blacks inherently violent?" He asserted that blacks, of course, were not naturally violent so why would other forms of "power" not seem violent? Williams concluded that article with an explanation of the differences between Black Power and civil rights. Williams argued that the triumph of the civil rights struggle may, in fact, provide black Americans opportunities and eliminate the most glaring examples of discrimination, but that problems will remain. Williams contended that Black Power was "concerned with HUMAN values, HUMAN rights."[33] Williams' article demonstrated that black Villanova students were aware of white fears of Black Power. Therefore, they sought opportunities

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[32] Joseph, "The Black Power Movement," 751.

[33] Chuck Williams, "To The Misinformed And/Or Asinine Bigots," *Villanovan*, 22 April 1970.

to espouse their own version of Black Power, one that would affirm their own humanity while not appear too threatening to white Villanovans.

Racial Solidarity as a Goal

The establishment of the BSL had tremendous symbolic and psychological value to black students who were struggling to find their place on an overwhelmingly white campus. Founding BSL member Joe Francis asserted that "the solidarity was already there, the feeling of community, but with this movement we set out to change the structure of things in a way that would make it better for black students coming here from now on and I think we succeeded."[34] Barry Young, a white sociology professor, confirmed the larger meaning of the establishment of the BSL when he pointed out that "in the psychology of groups, this sort of pulling together might be the best possible thing…" Young further stated that "regardless of its other achievements, the BSL has a value and significance just in that it exists."[35] Bob Whitehead, who would serve as the second treasurer of the BSL, described – in bold language - the value of the group when he stated "too many other blacks think that guys who go to Villanova are a lot of Uncle Toms sitting up here on our asses, contented house niggers not worrying about anything. Now I tell them we are organized, we stress what Villanova is doing, not what it isn't."[36]

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[34] "Black Villanova." *Villanova Alumni Magazine*, May 1969, 18.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

In increasing the solidarity among black students on campus, Davis said the BSL was important because it was trying to add more activities for black students, including a black fashion show, a black student newspaper, and black speakers. Black student leader Farrell Forman explained the importance of these types of activities for prospective students as well. Forman asserted that "black students wonder why they should come to Villanova, and really we don't have a reason to give them, because, for us, there really is no opportunity for cultural advancement, as far as Villanova is concerned." Forman further argued that this was something black students had to do for themselves. "Since we can't count on white students to help us in this," Forman declared, "we have to do this ourselves. We don't want white students to help us."[37]

A minor disagreement arose during the first organizational meeting of the BSL. Johnny Jones recalled getting to the first meeting early as he had an idea which was designed to send a message to all of those in attendance. Jones went to the blackboard and drew a heart and a donkey. He then wrote a few words on the board which had the effect of saying "if your [heart] is not in the movement then get your [ass] out." Jones said that fellow BSL leader Joe Francis was angry with Jones when he saw the writing on the board. Francis objected to the tone it would set and was afraid it would scare some students off. Jones indicated that he wanted to send a message to some students who they suspected were telling the administration about the proposed plans and activities of the newly-formed black student organization. Jones agreed to erase the drawing after

[37] Joe Burt, "The Other Villanova," *Villanovan*, 12 October 1968.

listening to Francis' objections.[38] As demonstrated by this minor conflict, Villanova black students did not always agree on all matters.

Villanova football player and student Gene Arthur went to an all-white high school and had developed strong friendships with several of his white teammates. Arthur was aware of the concerns of black students on Villanova's campus but did not participate heavily in the burgeoning black student movement. Between his rigorous studies in the College of Commerce and Finance and his participation on the football team, Arthur felt that he lacked the time and energy to devote himself to the BSL. Though he did not mention this to any of his fellow black students at the time, Arthur's father became ill during his sophomore year and this caused him to re-double his efforts to succeed in college as he recognized that he might be called on one day to help support his family. While he was sympathetic with some of the issues that black students were concerned about, he felt that his first obligation was to himself and to his family.[39]

Arthur was torn between his identity as a black man and as a Villanova student-athlete. He chose to emphasize the latter over the former and this caused him to feel ostracized from the larger community of Villanova black students. Arthur asserted that no one said anything directly to him but he felt that he was treated differently. He felt that he was labeled as an "Uncle Tom" by those who favored the ideology of separatism. The fact that Arthur felt excluded by other black students illustrated the extent to which black Villanova students embraced this ideology. When asked how many of the roughly 50 black students on Villanova's campus fell into the same category in 1968, Arthur said

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[38] Jones, interview with author.

[39] Gene Arthur, interview with author, digital recording, August 9, 2012.

that there were only a handful of black students who were not active participants in the BSL.[40] As evidenced by Arthur's observation that almost all of the black Villanova students were active members of the BSL, it appears that the organization was largely successful in achieving the goal of racial solidarity.

Black Students Educating the White Student Body

Along with fostering racial solidarity among black students, the BSL embraced the desire to educate white Villanovans on the issues faced by black students as one its core goals. This education extended to raising awareness not just about the movement itself but about the reasons why the movement began in the first place – the campus climate for black students. Recognizing that they had the power and support of the BSL behind them, black Villanovans increasingly began to express their opinions on the campus racial climate for African American students. By and large, they were not content with the state of affairs. Two clear examples of this increased willingness to speak out on racial issues were George Raveling's October 1968 address to the Student Government Association and a remarkable interview with four black students which appeared in the *Villanovan* during that same month.

An analysis of the reactions to these two events by white and black Villanova students demonstrates how difficult the process of ending racism and discrimination was on Villanova's campus. Indeed, these two events sparked a discussion on race that dominated the campus discourse throughout the fall of 1968. Black Villanovans had for

[40] Ibid.

the first time openly and honestly articulated in public their feelings about the racism that they experienced on campus. These feelings were expressed in such a dramatic and public way that it was difficult for white students to ignore. Historian Helen Horowitz argues in her study of college campuses during the late 1960s that "as blacks struggled to define their own life on campus" white students often responded with "varying degrees of sympathy, indifference, and hostility."[41] White Villanova students followed this trend by demonstrating a wide variety of responses to the issues raised by black students on campus. While initial accounts of the racism felt by black Villanovans were often met with sympathy and calls for positive action, white student reactions hardened as black student activism on Villanova's campus began to reflect the larger Black Power movement.

The October 12, 1968, edition of the *Villanovan* featured an article entitled "The Other Villanova." Based on a four-hour long interview with four African American students – Jim McIntosh, Farrell Forman, Joe Francis and Rich Walker – the article provided an opportunity for these students to discuss their experiences as black men on a predominately white campus. The interview was conducted by Joe Burt, who earlier penned the article on the visit by Black Power leaders from Philadelphia.

Jim McIntosh, a senior political science major and member of the basketball team, told the reporter: "the main thing is that the social life HERE is nil.. So, what I'm saying is that the school itself has reached a, de facto segregation, so to speak, a complete separatism… there are two completely different campuses.." McIntosh summed up his

[41] Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 242.

feelings saying "I never experienced any kind of prejudice or de facto separation before I came to this campus and this is what upset me so much."[42]

Jim McIntosh was from the Holmesburg section of Philadelphia, home to one of the largest and most continuously settled African American communities in the North. Men and women who escaped slavery settled in the area prior to the Civil War and the community was later reinforced during the Great Migration northward in the mid twentieth century. Despite the presence of a large African American community in his neighborhood, McIntosh lived in the predominately white section of the neighborhood. No one on the block made him to "feel less than," McIntosh said. Indeed, McIntosh contended that, in an era where everyone looked after and occasionally disciplined each other's children, he "got beat up just as much by Mrs. Murphy as by Mrs. Stankowitz." These experiences led him to conclude that while he was young he "didn't even know [he] was black."[43] Until, that is, he went to Villanova.

In the interview with the *Villanovan*, McIntosh discussed the perceived intolerance for interracial dating on campus. On the prospects of dating a white woman, McIntosh lamented that if "you're a black person, it seems that, well, you can do everything BUT." "What I'm trying to say is," McIntosh remarked," I don't want it thought that I want to be like you, or to date your girls, but I wanted to bring out what college life is supposed to be, you know, a typical life; social, academic, athletic,

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[42] Joe Burt, "The Other Villanova," *Villanovan*, 12 October 1968.

[43] Jim McIntosh, interview with author, digital recording, March 6, 2012.

everything."[44] McIntosh indicated that he dated girls of all different races and ethnicities when he attended Lincoln High School in Holmesburg. He never anticipated that he would have to change his dating patterns as he progressed into college.[45] The description of the lack of a dating scene was clearly directed at trying to foster an awareness of the indignities faced by black Villanova students. As a whole, the article served to educate white Villanova students about the realities of life for black Villanova students, many of whom Villanova students just knew as athletes.

The editorial written by the white *Villanovan* editors which accompanied the article was remarkable for its expression of sympathy and for its call to redress the black students' grievances. The editors were concerned that African American students, in particular student athletes, were still facing racism on campus. The editors felt that the student-athletes were "used by the University for their athletic prowess" and were "never granted recognition as sensitive, intelligent persons." Judging by the comments expressed in the interview, the editors concluded the experience of African American students on Villanova's campus was a "truly lonely lot."

In order to ameliorate the situation, the editors called for a dramatic reversal of the racial status quo by increasing the numbers of African American students. The editors suggested that "we need more negroes on campus… We need blacks to complete our community, to complete our personalities, to complete our understanding of all human nature."[46] In calling for more black students on campus, the editors seemed to suggest

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[44] Ibid.

[45] McIntosh, interview with author.

that the low enrollment of black students, not the attitudes of white students, were to blame for their woes. Other white students recognized some of the larger systemic issues at play.

Acknowledging the impact of the article from the previous week, *Villanovan* student columnist Kevin Finneran declared "Villanova is a racist institution not because of overt hate but because of the social structure that leads whites to think of the blacks only as athletes, that prevents blacks from having a normal social life, that forces blacks to become 'culturally bleached' in order to be accepted, and that prevents black students from taking part in activities like the radio station, the newspaper, and the student government." Finneran called on white students to examine their own preconceptions and to further examine the nature of the "egalitarian society" in which they live. Finneran ended his piece by calling on white students to support the BSL in their efforts to increase the number of courses dedicated to black studies and to increase the numbers of black students and faculty members on campus. Furthermore, Finneran advocated that "whites must examine their own society and renew their commitment to the eradication of poverty and social injustice that are the products of the white power structure." [47] Finneran's condemnation of Villanova's role in perpetuating stereotypes about black students as athletes was a remarkable and courageous statement from a white student. This statement illustrated the extent to which some white allies felt that Villanova was not living up to its mission.

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[46] "On the Darker Side," *Villanovan*, 12 October 1968.

[47] Kevin Finneran, "Who, Me?" *Villanovan*, 19 October 1968.

Finneran's article and the *Villanovan* editorial divided white student opinion. *Villanovan* reporter Greg Pirmann described in detail one conversation provoked by the article. The discussion among Pirmann and his friends took place at the Pie Shoppe, the 1960s Villanova version of the campus Starbucks. Pirmann wrote that his white Villanova friends found the whole article "silly." According to Pirmann, the line in the article which stated "Villanova is the racist product of a racist society" proved to be the most contentious. Pirmann attempted to defend the statement as he wrote that a "university set up to conform to white middle class standards to produce conformers to that ethic must be racist because the standards are racist." Pirmann's friends did not agree with this, however, as they wanted "concrete examples of Villanova bigotry." "They wanted to see racism at Villanova," Pirmann insisted, "not in American society."[48]

Pirmann confessed that he could not provide the concrete examples his friends were looking for because he was not black. He could not provide the details of racial slurs or of condescending attitudes by whites that he heard black students describe. He attempted, instead, to discuss "admittance tests geared to white middle values" but his friends did not want to hear any of this. Finally, a frustrated Pirmann concluded:

> I tried to talk of all these things, but I was shouted down. I was told we didn't have to give anyone anything. We didn't have to make allowances for anyone who has been slighted by our "Great Experiment". I was told how "they" always stuck together and why should "we" intrude. I was told a lot of things. Maybe I should find some new friends.[49]

Pirmann's experience with his friends again demonstrated the difficulties white student allies had in trying to lend support to the black student movement. Pirmann's friends

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[48] Greg Pirmann, "Friends," *Villanovan*, 26 October 1968.

[49] Ibid.

reflected the mindset of white middle-class students who were unable or unwilling to consider the possibility that acts of racism could occur on campus. Pirmann's friends rejected the notion that Villanova was racist because they saw no overt incidences of discrimination. Being white on a predominately white campus, Pirmann's friends had the privilege of not having to confront the concepts of racism and discrimination on a daily basis. Therefore, Pirmann's friends, and white Villanova students who thought like them, believed that the racism and discrimination were one in the same.

The very presence of black students on campus signaled to most white Villanova students that the institution was not racist. If integration was a cornerstone of Catholic racial liberalism, the mere presence of black students at Villanova satisfied this key goal for many white Villanova students. For many Villanova students, the campus was more diverse than their neighborhoods; therefore, they could not imagine Villanova being labeled as "racist." Pirmann's friends were unaware of their own privilege as they did not have to think about their racial identities on a daily basis as they were on a predominately white campus.

Although the black students interviewed in "The Other Side" article did not expressly mention fraternities, Thomas McDermott, president of Tau Kappa Epsilon, took exception to what he believed to be an accusation of discrimination within the fraternity system. Throughout the 1960s, the fraternity system provided much of the social life on campus, including the sponsorship of cocktail parties and dances. In the interview, McIntosh mentioned a lack of invitations to such events as one indication that there was a "complete gap" in the social life on campus. McIntosh also mentioned that in order to get into certain organizations "you really had to put yourself out, there is a

separation, a de facto separatism on this campus."[50] In response, McDermott wrote a letter to the editor of the *Villanovan* in which he argued that fraternities did not "discriminate against any interested student because of his color." McDermott argued that if fraternities recruited one or two black members that they would be accused of "token integration" and "trying to look liberal."[51] McDermott's response was consistent with the racial liberalism of the time. In the absence of any rules discriminating against black students, McDermott believed there was equality of opportunity and, therefore, racism within the system could not be present. Again, in McDermott's mind, just like those of Pirmann's friends, the absence of blatant discrimination proved to them that there was no racism.

The letter from McDermott, in turn, provoked a response from a white freshman student who implored fraternities to make it a goal to attract black students. Challenging the notion that this would be seen as "token integration," Alan Kohn asked, "In whose eyes, I ask, will this be considered 'token integration?'" Kohn argued that only racists, those "who want to keep the black man in his place," would consider the acceptance of black students into fraternities as token integration. Kohn ended his letter by quoting Dr. King: "This is no day to pay lip service to integration, we must pay LIFE service to it. Get to work!"[52] The suggestion for fraternities to examine, and possibly reinvent, themselves in order become more attractive to black students and, indeed, the call for

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[50] Burt, "The Other Villanova."

[51] Thomas McDermott, "Frats and Blacks," *Villanovan*, 19 October 1968.

[52] Alan Kohn, "Frats and Blacks II," *Villanovan*, 30 October 1968.

more black students on campus represented a significant challenge to the racial status quo on campus.

In response to the *Villanovan* editors' assertion that "we need more negroes," white Villanova student John DiNolfo asserted that the goal of increased enrollment of African American students was a laudable and worthy endeavor. DiNolfo argued that efforts to increase the enrollment of African American students into predominately white institutions were critical "to alleviate the paucity of blacks within the professional world and consequently reduce the present economic disparity between the races." The question for DiNolfo turned on the remedy to achieve this ambition. The idea to simply admit more black students without increasing the total number of students, however, was unacceptable to DiNolfo. DiNolfo argued that this solution would "cause incalculable attitudinal problems within the white community with the inevitable result that prejudices will be reinforced and barriers reestablished." Therefore, DiNolfo concluded that funding should have been provided by either the institution through its endowment or by the federal government to ensure that the same of numbers of white students were accepted.[53]

In the same issue, another student advocated for a continuation of what he described as Villanova's colorblind admissions policy. James Pierce argued that Villanova's admissions application did not ask for a picture and did not ask an applicant to disclose their race. Pierce unabashedly asserted that "certainly there is no denying that Villanova is a white man's school, but the paucity of black students exists only because more qualified Negroes do not apply." Pierce felt that the solution was in the enlargement of the black middle class which would in turn enlarge the pool of black applicants. Pierce

[53] John DiNolfo, "Whitey and Blackie," *Villanovan*, 26 October 1968.

was content to wait for this to occur as he concluded that "eventually this will come to pass and more Negroes will be admitted to Villanova with a textbook under their arm and not a basketball."[54] The concept of waiting for progress was a cornerstone of post-war racial liberalism. The urgency of the demands being made by black students illuminated the weakness of this ideology in addressing their concerns.

Knowingly or unknowingly, Pierce's comment about the basketball reinforced one of the major grievances black Villanova students had which was that every African American student on campus was presumed to be on an athletic scholarship. In the *Villanovan* interview, McIntosh referred to this misconception as one of the major complaints of black student-athletes on Villanova's campus. In seeking to be treated with a sense of dignity, black students wished to be considered students first and athletes second.

The dialogue provoked by "The Other Side" article demonstrated the contradictions and limits of the racial liberalism espoused by many Villanovans. In general, white Villanovans did not want to appear insensitive to the claims of racism by black Villanova students. Yet, as Greg Pirmann's conversation with his friends pointed out, many white Villanova student questioned the accuracy of these claims of racism on campus. These white students were looking for proof, preferably the type of racism that you could see or hear – the kind of overt racism that constitutes discrimination. In the absence of blatant acts of discrimination, white students had a difficult time believing that racism existed on campus and in American society.

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[54] James Pierce, "On the Black Lack," *Villanovan*, 26 October 1968.

Furthermore, white students demonstrated the limits to where they were willing to go in the name of racial justice. True integration required a transformation within the institution and clearly some white Villanovans were not interested in such dramatic change. As the opinion pieces on admissions illustrated, some white Villanova students were unwilling to entertain the notion of preferential admission, which had the power to transform the campus culture. This demonstrated the contradiction between Catholic racial liberalism's professed embrace of integration and the reality of the process of desegregation at Villanova.

For black Villanova students, the issue was whether they felt included on campus. Clearly, as a result of the segregated social life, black students did not feel included within the campus community. Speaking out about the campus climate, within the context the establishment of the BSL, represented a form of protest which would only strengthen as the Black Power movement gained momentum. The expressions of dissatisfaction with the campus climate would make white students feel uncomfortable and divide the campus further.

The second incident in October 1968 that stoked racial feelings - Raveling's address to the Student Government Association - also represented an effort to shed light on the campus climate for black students. Raveling described in particular the alienation felt by Villanova's black athletes. Raveling helped to recruit and to subsequently serve as a mentor to many black athletes at Villanova and was, therefore, in a unique position to observe the campus climate for black students in general. Raveling began his speech by recounting the story of Rip Van Winkle, that staple of American literature who slept for twenty years and missed the American Revolution. In 1968, Raveling argued that there

was another revolution taking place in America - a social one – and Raveling declared that "the Negro community, especially the Negroes at Villanova are not sleeping through this revolution."[55] By implication, Raveling was also suggesting that white Villanovans may have been sleeping through the revolution.

Raveling provided an overview of the situation on campus for African American students and offered several concrete steps of action. Raveling indicated that black students often displayed distrust of white students for their failure to accept "black customs, black culture, black people themselves, black students," with the possible exception for those black students who were also athletes. To combat this distrust, Raveling pushed for the introduction of more black history courses and the recruitment of more black faculty. Reacting to a sense of "false liking" that many black students felt in their relations with white students, Raveling also intimated that African American students "would rather be treated honestly, respected or disliked for what they are, rather than for how well they play basketball or run track." Raveling ended his speech with a wake-up call to both black and white Villanova students when he declared that "the Villanova Negro is no longer content to run like hell on the playing field and be ignored the second the game is over. He is not going to be a 'good nigger' for us anymore." [56]

These words signaled a clear and distinct shift in the trajectory of black student activism on campus. Raveling's warning reflected the culmination of a dramatic change from the "you knew your place" attitude of the 1950s athlete on campus to the "black

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[55] Harry McShea, "Black Alumnus Speaks on *Identity Crisis*," *Villanovan* 26 October 1968.

[56] Ibid.

student revolution" of the 1960s that would include both black student-athletes and non-athletes.

Villanovan student columnist Tom Tourish described the impact of Raveling's speech to the SGA on him, an impact that he described as "overwhelming." Tourish described American universities as the "troubled conscience" of society as it has often forced society to look at forgotten or ignored social problems. Tourish argued that, given the lack of regard for African Americans in the academy (save black student-athletes), universities were now forced to face their own hypocrisy. Tourish sympathized with the plight of the black students and encouraged white students to take action. "If there was ever a problem that the student and only he can solve," Tourish implored, "it is this one of white racism on campus."[57]

The white students' printed reactions to the black students' feelings revealed by the "Other Side of Villanova" article and by George Raveling's speech were overwhelmingly sympathetic. These feelings carried over into action taken by the white-controlled Student Government Association. In the immediate wake of the "The Other Side of Villanova" article and the increased activism of the BSL, the Student Government Association passed two proposals which dealt with the "appalling conditions of black students on campus." One recommendation called for more courses on black history and culture taught by black professors. The second called for the University bookstore to stock titles that were "varied in content and theme." Suggested authors included James Baldwin, Frantz Fanon, and Malcolm X. The *Villanovan* described the action items as "reiterations of proposals and interviews that have sparked student interest and action

[57] Tom Tourish, "Troubling the Conscience," *Villanovan*, 19 October 1968.

since the commencement of 1968 Fall Semester. They are the result of feelings and omissions that have built up over the years and have now been brought to the fore via the widened channels of communication and serious attempts to understand the 'ravelings' of strings tying this university up into the neat academic and social bundle it presents to the public." The Student Government Association Senate passed the resolutions unanimously.[58] The actions taken on behalf of African American students by the Student Government Association appeared to have been largely symbolic as other more culture-changing recommendations made by black students – such as increasing the enrollment of black students suggested by the *Villanovan* – were not included in the proposals passed. The adoption of these largely symbolic measures at the expense of other measures demonstrated the limits of change within a predominately white institution.

The Struggles of the Villanova Black Athlete

By 1968, the larger Black Power movement had taken hold in the arena of college and amateur athletics. Confrontations over race and sports in the academy became commonplace as athletes often led the charge for black students' rights on predominately white campuses. Harry Edwards estimated that in 1968 alone some thirty-seven black athletic revolts took place on predominately white campuses.[59] The issues sparking these

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[58] Donna Taylor, "Motion of S.G.A. Calls for Courses in Black History," *Villanovan*, 19 October 1968; "Appalling conditions of black students on campus" was quoted in the story and was this language was seemingly lifted from the "The Other Side of Villanova" article based on interview. "Ravelings" was single quoted in the story and is an obvious and clever reference to George Raveling.

[59] David K. Wiggins, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America* (Syracuse, NY: 1997), 124.

"black athletic revolts" varied from dress code to inadequate treatment of injuries to the lack of African American coaches. [60] As historian David Wiggins asserts, "because they lacked consistency of status on predominately white campuses and felt pressure to become actively involved in black political activities, black athletes were exerting both a newfound sense of independence and an apparent willingness to speak out on racial issues."[61]

Sportswriter Jack Olsen described the changing black athlete in 1968 in his groundbreaking and controversial *Sports Illustrated* series entitled "The Black Athlete: A Shameful Story." Olsen's series was credited with raising the awareness of the general public to the plight of the black athlete in both professional and collegiate sport. Olsen asserted that "what is happening today amounts to a revolt by the black athlete against the framework and attitudes of American sport…" [62] Olsen argued that the modern black athlete was "dissatisfied, disgruntled and disillusioned." With specific regard to collegiate athletes, Olsen declared that, "to a man" black collegiate athletes felt that they were "dehumanized, exploited and discarded, and some even say they were happier back in the ghetto."[63]

At the University of Notre Dame, two incidents during the 1968-1969 academic year revolving around race and athletics received national attention. In 1968, Notre Dame

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[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Jack Olsen, "The Black Athlete –A Shameful Story," *Sports Illustrated*, 1 July 1968, accessed March 15, 2012, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1081325/2/index.htm.

[63] Ibid.

had a 67 black students out of 6000 total undergraduates, which amounted to just over one percent of the student body.[64] In November 1968, forty black Notre Dame students, all members of the Afro-American Society, conducted a protest outside of the football stadium prior to a game against Georgia Tech. The demonstration highlighted the low minority enrollment and the small number of black professors at Notre Dame. The Afro-American Society, founded at Notre Dame in 1966, also called for the introduction of black studies courses. In response, Father Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame, formed an ad-hoc committee to work with the Afro-American Society.[65]

In February 1969, the five black members of the Notre Dame men's varsity basketball team - Austin Carr, Sid Catlett, Collis Jones, Bob Whitmore, and Dwight Murphy – demanded an apology from the student body of Notre Dame after they were booed when all five black players were placed on the court at the same time during a game against Michigan State. The players wrote a letter to the campus newspaper stating: "If we don't get this apology, we will no longer practice or play with the university." "You can even throw us out of school," the players further threatened. Jay R. Rossi, president of the Student Council at Notre Dame, issued an apology which declared: "The student body does not condone this action by students or any other spectators. As the representative of the students, I wish to convey the apology of the majority of the

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[64] Richard Conklin, "Black Ivy," *Notre Dame Alumnus* 47 (February 1969): 10.

[65] Michael Oriard, *Bowled Over: Big-Time College Football from the Sixties to the BCS Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 44.

students for the booing and the rudeness the black players received." [66] The black players accepted the apology and returned to practice the next day.

Unlike Notre Dame, there were no outwards signs of a black student athlete protest at Villanova in 1968. White athletes and black athletes, as we have seen, banded together to join the protest against the discriminatory policies of the New York Athletic Club. This was a public stand against discrimination which was taken by Villanova. In the late 1960s, most confrontations over race within Villanova athletics, however, went on outside of the public view. Yet, this did not make them any less significant. At the same time, they show the difficulty in integrating black student athletes into the Villanova community. By the very nature of being offered a scholarship and admitted to Villanova, black athletes felt that their presence was accepted. An examination of their experiences reveals, however, that they often did not feel included in the campus community.

For many Villanova black student athletes, tensions with the University started with what they perceived as unfair treatment based on their race from their white coaches. As black athletes began to embrace the larger Black Power movement, their turn away from racial liberalism created conflicts with white coaches who did not understand the black athlete of the late 1960s. This phenomenon was not unique to Villanova's campus. As the emphasis of the black freedom struggle moved from black Americans simply seeking equality of opportunity to an emphasis on obtaining recognition of their full humanity and contributions, many coaches failed to recognize that the needs of black athletes had changed. Indeed, even coaches who seemed to have the best interests of their

[66] "Notre Dame Boos, Stars May Quit," *Baltimore Afro-American* ,15 February 1969.

athletes at heart did not seem to know how to handle the new black athlete of the late 1960s. Jack Olsen argued that "the coaching world is full of well-meaning figures who fail to come to grips with the needs and sensibilities of the black athletes performing for them on the field. Some of the best coaches, some of the most intelligent, some of the most patient and understanding, seem to draw a blank where Negroes are concerned."[67] Much of the misunderstandings occurred around the goals and expectations of the student-athletes.

The black athletes of the late 1960s wanted to be treated as *student*-athletes. Indeed, as George Raveling so frankly stated in his speech to Student Government in 1968, "the Villanova Negro is no longer content to run like hell on the playing field and be ignored the second the game is over."[68] Yet, Olsen argued that most coaches still believed that integration was the goal for black athletes on predominately white campuses. Olsen argued that most coaches "go about in a dream world of race, imagining that they are assisting in the slow evolutionary processes of integration." Olsen asserted that often coaches were "men of good will, good men, like the coach who calls Negroes 'animals' at the drop of a shoelace" but did not have not "the slightest idea what they are doing—or not doing."[69]

Indeed, black Villanova athletes of the late 1960s experienced frustration and heartache in dealing with their coaches. The attitudes they encountered with their coaches

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[67] Ibid.

[68] McShea, "Black Alumnus Speaks on Identity Crisis."

[69] Olsen, "The Black Athlete – A Shameful Story."

were consistent among the three major sports programs of Villanova at the time – football, basketball, and track and field. For the black Villanova athletes, the actions of the coaches often reproduced the racial inequalities found in the larger society. According to the black Villanova student athletes, the racism and discrimination perpetuated by the coaches included the use of racist language, a system of "stacking," the use of quotas for black players, and other incidents of exploitation. As a result of this treatment, black athletes began to question race relations on campus and, indeed, in American society. They viewed these incidents as part of a pattern of racism in white society. By extension, they argued that Villanova, as part of this white society, contributed to the reproduction of racial inequality. While some stopped short of calling Villanova a "racist" institution, they believed some "bias and discrimination" existed within the administration.[70] Therefore, these experiences radicalized black athletes and inspired them to press for changes to the campus culture.

Take the case of Ted Freeman. Freeman was just 17 years of age when he walked on to Villanova's campus for the first time as a freshman. Arriving prior to the beginning of school because of football camp, Freeman was assigned to a corner room in Austin Hall. He remembers feeling "intimidated" by the campus. At 6'2" and 240 pounds, Freeman also remarkably felt like a small guy next to some of the upperclassmen football players. Freeman received a rude awakening to college ball. The very first day of practice Freeman had his teeth knocked back into his mouth by a running back during drills where they were supposed to be going at half-speed. Indeed, freshmen often felt as though they

[70] Jones, interview with author.

were used as tackling dummies at practice. [71] But Freeman got something else. He recalled two racially-motivated incidents that happened during his sophomore year his last year as a player. [72]

Freeman's natural position was at nose tackle but he was moved to defensive end. The position of nose tackle plays across from the offensive team's center and on many teams is responsible for calling the signals for the defensive line. Freeman was frustrated with the move at the time because he felt that he had the knowledge and skill to play this important role. Although it did not enter his mind at the time, Freeman later believed that he was moved as a result of the phenomenon known as "stacking."[73] In sports, stacking can be explained as certain ethnic or racial groups being excluded from positions with the greatest opportunity for determining the outcome of the game or competition. Under this theory, white and black players are placed in positions in which they are stereotyped to be best suited, in terms of attributes and ability. The stacking phenomenon is an illustration of how racism (the belief in the intellectual inferiority of black athletes) led to discrimination (the exclusion of black athletes from certain positions). The quintessential example of this phenomenon is the white monopoly of the quarterback position in

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[71] Larry Barnes, telephone interview with author, digital recording, January 27, 2012.

[72] Ted Freeman, interview with author, digital recording, March 7, 2012.

[73] There is a wide body of literature on the phenomenon on stacking in sports, see D.Stanley Eitzen, *Sociology of North American Sport* (Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown Co., 1978); John Loy and Joseph McElvogue, "Racial Segregation in American Sport," *International Review of Sport Sociology* 5 (1970): 5-23. Greg Jones, et al., "A Log-linear Analysis of Stacking in College Football," *Social Science Quarterly* (March 1987): 70-83.Author Diane Brady, in *Fraternity*, tells a remarkably similar about Ted Wells at Holy Cross during this same time period. He was dissuaded from playing center because he was told it took a "sophisticated understanding of the game," which his coaches apparently felt he did not have as a black student-athlete.

football. For years, white players dominated this position because white coaches did not feel that black athletes had the intellectual ability to play the most important position on the field. Indeed, there existed a mentality in football of "white up the middle."

Again, evidence provided by Jack Olsen suggested that this problem was widespread in collegiate football programs in the 1960s. Olsen interviewed several players on from major college football program and concluded that "there is, in fact, hardly a college team on which Negroes are not stacked in certain positions and held to firm quotas. " Olsen pointed specifically to Kansas University and University of Washington football. KU football players, Olsen reported, were "convinced" that there was a formal quota system that is "rigidly enforced."[74]

The problems for Freeman, however, extended beyond stacking. Freeman played defensive end and his job was to prevent the opposing runner from getting into the end zone. During a film session, the tape showed that the offense ran to his side two times and gained only one yard in two attempts. On the second play, Freeman made the stop but was stood up a little bit by the offensive lineman when his goal was to stay low. The coach verbally accosted Freeman. After unsuccessfully attempting to score on Freeman's side, the opposing team's offense ran the ball to the other side of the line and scored easily. Freeman distinctly remembers waiting for the fury to be unleashed on the white players on that side of the line. There was silence from the coaches. Freeman felt that he was treated differently as a result of his race.[75] Admittedly, this may not have been a perception based solely on his race. In the tumultuous times of the late 1960s, however, it

[74] Olsen, "The Black Athlete – A Shameful Story."

[75] Freeman, interview with author.

was often difficult for black students on a predominately white campus to view these issues through anything other than a racial lens.

The most painful incident for Freeman took place in Toledo, Ohio on September 20, 1969. The University of Toledo was one of the top football programs in the country during this time and had two highly touted black players – quarterback Chuck Ealey and defensive back Curtis Johnson. Johnson was a second-team All-American who would go on to play for the Miami Dolphins in the National Football League. Villanova was getting pounded by Toledo in the second half when Billy Sather, a running back for Villanova, ran a sweep toward Villanova's sideline. Johnson came up to make the hit and in the process delivered an elbow to the head of Sather. One of Villanova's position coaches immediately yelled "Get that nigg…" but before the entire sentence could be uttered, the coach looked at Freeman who was standing on the sidelines. The coach abruptly cut off his sentence.

As an 18 year-old sophomore, Freeman was angry and confused. He did not know what to do, he wanted to take his uniform off right on the field and walk away but he knew he would risk losing his scholarship. Instead, he simply tried to figure out how to deal with the betrayal by his coach, someone whom he had trusted.[76] Based on this incident, Freeman decided to quit the football team the next year but he remained at Villanova to finish his degree.

Johnny Jones felt similarly betrayed as an African American basketball player at Villanova. From 1965 until 1969, Jones had an outstanding career for the Wildcats,

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[76] Ibid.

displaying remarkable skill in all phases of the game - defense, passing, shooting and rebounding. Over the course of his playing days, Jones amassed 1568 points and 694 rebounds in only three varsity seasons (freshmen were ineligible for varsity at this time). These impressive statistics place him in the top 25 all-time at Villanova in both categories. His 19.6 points per game average still ranks in the top five all-time at Villanova. As a result of his remarkable performances in games against fellow Philly schools, Jones was selected to the Philadelphia Big 5 Hall of Fame in 1981.

During his senior season, the Wildcats compiled an impressive 21-4 regular season record and secured a spot in the NCAA Tournament, where they suffered a disappointing first-round loss to Davidson. During Jones' senior season, Villanova played in the prestigious Holiday Festival at Madison Square Garden. Despite appearances in the tournament by All-Americans Lew Alcindor of UCLA and Charlie Scott of North Carolina, *Sports Illustrated* wrote of Jones' performance: "The best all-round player of the tournament was Villanova's Johnny Jones, who seemed to be everywhere at the same time—passing off, setting up plays, rebounding, hitting on layups and outside shots and scoring 43 points in two games."[77] At the time, these were accomplishments and statistics worthy of someone who might have a professional career in basketball.

Jones, however, stood at 6’4” and was given indications from scouts that in order to play at the next level, he would have to play at the guard position. Though 6’4” is considered on the small side for a forward, Jones was put into the forward position by Coach Kraft. Concerned over his future professional career, Jones went to discuss the

[77] Herman Weiskopf, “Basketball’s Week,” *Sports Illustrated*, 6 January 1969, accessed June 20, 2012, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/vault/article/magazine/MAG1148080/index.htm

issue with the coach. Kraft indicated that he needed Jones to play forward because he didn't have anyone else to play the position. Jones was frustrated because he believed that there were two black players on the bench who were better than some of the white players currently being used in the games. These players – Sam Sims and Clarence Smith – could play the forward position but were relegated to the bench. Jones believed that the quota system for black players which was widely believed to have been in place for college athletics was being used at Villanova at the time.[78] Jones indicated that "it was known" that you could only start two black players at a time. Though he could not prove it, Jones felt that there was pressure from either the administration or the alumni that prevented Coach Kraft utilizing the best players regardless of race.[79]

Jones went to see Coach Kraft and told him that since the coach was not concerned about him or his career, he would refuse to play. Somehow they came to an agreement and Kraft moved Sam Sims into the lineup as a forward, allowing Jones to move to guard. When the team's performance suffered after the switch, Jones was moved back to the forward position and the team got back on the winning track. Still, Jones believed that Kraft carried a grudge over this incident.

At the end of the season, a coach from the Miami Floridians of the American Basketball Association, who was interested in drafting Jones, came to visit Villanova to

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[78] Jones, interview with author; For a discussion on the quota system in college basketball, see Frank Fitzpatrick, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: Kentucky, Texas Western, and the Game That Changed American Sports*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999).

[79] The allegations of the use of a quota for black players in Villanova basketball stretched until the 1980s. In his interview for the Black Villanova Oral History Project, Stefan Roots claimed that a member of the basketball team in the early 1980s told him that he suspected that there was a quota as rarely, if ever, did the coach place five black players on the court at the same time.

interview the player and his coach. Jones said he was summoned to the basketball office where the Floridians coach asked Kraft to describe the best aspects of Johnny's game. Jones indicated that Kraft weakly replied that "he rebounds with both hands" and that was the extent of his comments. Jones said those comments were "indelibly engraved" in his mind and heart and he left Villanova a bitter man, feeling as though Coach Kraft and Villanova did not have the future interests of its student athletes in mind.

Jones believed that his treatment was symptomatic of the larger problem of racism in society. Jones declared that "racism existed in basketball." While Jones admitted that these problems were not isolated to Villanova, Jones argued that Villanova could not "be absolved" for their treatment of black athletes during this time period. He believed that, indeed, "within the Villanova system, there existed some bias, some prejudice."[80]

The experiences of two members of the Villanova track team – Bob Whitehead and Hardge Davis - in the late 1960s further illustrated the strained relationship between white coaches and black players. Whitehead found a source of fellowship and camaraderie amongst all of the members of the track team. Yet, Whitehead did not harbor the same feelings towards his coach. Whitehead described legendary track coach Jumbo Elliott as "aloof." Even more, he did not think that Elliott knew how to relate to the black athletes. Whitehead recalled an incident where Elliott, who occasionally stuttered, addressing members of the team and where he tried to say, "I've always treated my Negroes..." Yet he stuttered over the word "Negroes" to the point where Whitehead and other members of the team felt that he almost said the word "nigger." Whitehead said

[80] Jones, interview with author.

that Elliott tried to relate to black members of the team by telling them that as an Irishman in the United States he understood discrimination because there were country clubs on the Main Line area where he was not welcome. Whitehead and the other black members of the team were incredulous that he would try to equate the racial discrimination felt by black Americans at the time to the inability to join a particular country club. Whitehead was left to wonder whether Elliott held outdated racial stereotypes about African Americans.[81]

Furthermore, Whitehead questioned whether white and black athletes were treated equally on the track team. As he was preparing for the outdoor season in the winter of 1969, Whitehead pulled a muscle. Whitehead was an integral member of several of the relay teams and, therefore, was encouraged to keep running throughout the season. Coach Elliott instructed Whitehead to cut back on the practice schedule but he was still expected to run in the meets. By the end of the season, Whitehead could feel a baseball-sized knot in his leg. When he went to the National Championships in 1969, Whitehead's leg flared up again and one of the Villanova coaches gave Whitehead a vial full of a brown liquid that smelled awful. The coach told him to rub it on the area that was bothering him. Whitehead recalled that as soon as he rubbed the liquid on the leg it "felt like knives" when it went in and he immediately could "taste it in his mouth." When the leg bothered him again during the competition, Whitehead went to go see the official meet trainers, who were not affiliated with Villanova. The trainer looked at his leg and asked him how he had been running on the leg all year. Whitehead responded that Elliott told him that he

[81] Whitehead, interview with author.

would be fine. Whitehead told the trainer about the liquid he had been given. The trainer told Whitehead that the liquid he had been given was dimethyl sulfoxide (DMSO). Furthermore, the trainer told Whitehead that the drug was illegal and not approved for human use. In fact, the trainer said, the liquid can cause cataracts and is used to treat horses.[82] This incident left Whitehead feeling as if Coach Elliott, in particular, and Villanova, in general, cared little about the health of their athletes but were more interested in their athletic performance.

Whitehead conceded that his maltreatment may not have been due to his race. There was a pecking order on the track team and, as one of the last members of a relay team, Whitehead was not considered one of the stars. The difference in treatment may have been a result of the fact that Whitehead was considered replaceable. However, Whitehead's previous experiences with his coach caused him to question whether Elliott thought he was expendable due to his race.[83]

Furthermore, the prevalence of the mistreatment of injuries suffered by black athletes at other institutions supports the assertion that the issue may have been racially motivated. *Sports Illustrated*'s Jack Olsen detailed the existence of a double standard for white and black athletes when it came to how injuries were handled. After interviewing several black collegiate athletes, Olsen wrote that that discrimination in was a common complaint "aired by every dissident group of black athletes that has publicly made an issue of its grievances." Many black athletes felt that college athletics personnel –

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[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

coaches and trainers – felt that black athletes were "superhuman" and should be able to overcome injuries quickly.[84]

The relationship between Hardge Davis, a political science major and Coach Elliott matched the experiences of Whitehead. In an interview with the *Villanovan* in 1969, Davis explained that many things he and fellow track athlete Larry James did annoyed Coach Elliott. According to Davis, Elliott didn't "realize that black athletes are different than white athletes." Davis indicated that he felt the coach's communication patterns towards white athletes and black athletes differed. For instance, Davis asserted that if Elliott wanted to "reprimand one of [the black athletes] he always sent an intermediary."[85] By contrast, Elliott appeared to have no problem directly confronting a white athlete when necessary.

Davis described himself as a "young black intellectual striving to be a revolutionist." As one of the student leaders who founded the BSL, he was in the vanguard of the black student movement at Villanova. Befitting of the times, Davis often wore a black beret which reflected the style of Black Power activists of the late 1960s. At the end of one of his races, a photographer, seeking a post-race photo, asked Davis to remove the black beret he was wearing. Davis refused to remove the beret. Responding to a complaint by the photographer, Coach Elliott approached Davis and asked him to comply with the request. Davis once again refused. Coach Elliott asked him to turn in his equipment and dismissed him from the team.[86] Davis never ran for Villanova again. This

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[84] Olsen, "The Black Athlete – A Shameful Story."

[85] Sharon Lafferty, "Interview with Hardge Davis," *Villanovan*, 5 November 1969.

incident demonstrated the tension between young black athletes and their coaches. Indeed, Davis felt that Elliott did not realize that black athletes of the late 1960s were different than those "in the past." Indeed, Elliott failed to recognize that asking Davis to remove his cap might be an affront to the young black activist. For Davis, the significance of this request went far beyond the simple removal of a cap.

Black Villanova student-athletes were also upset that coaches tried to keep them away from the BSL. Ted Freeman recalled an incident where head football coach Jack Gregory sent a message through one of the white players to Ted Freeman and another black student-athlete Greg Waring. Apparently, Coach Gregory was concerned with the involvement of the two black student-athletes in the BSL's activities. Coach Gregory's message indicated that the players should refrain from such behavior and forego membership in the organization to concentrate on football. Freeman, now fed up with double standard and encroachment on his freedom, defiantly told his teammate to tell the coach that he would remain in the BSL.[87] Freeman's refusal of the coach's request was particularly courageous in light of his vulnerable position as the coaches held tremendous power over the student-athletes with their ability to grant or to pull their scholarships.

Beyond the playing field, black athletes felt exploited in the classroom as well. The feelings of academic mistreatment felt by Villanova athletes were consistent with what other black athletes on predominately white campuses were experiencing at the

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

time.[88] Olsen, in his *Sports Illustrated* series on the black athlete, observed that "with rare exceptions, the American college coach expects his Negro athletes to concentrate on the job for which they were hired." "The aim is neither graduation nor education," according to Olsen, the main objective "for the Negro athlete is maintaining his eligibility."[89]

At Villanova, a student needed a 2.0 cumulative grade point average to graduate but could be passed on to his senior year with a 1.8 grade point average. Whitehead found the system of passing student-athletes on with a grade point average lower than what was required to graduate was exploitative. This policy applied to all Villanova students but, again, black athletes viewed this process through the lens of race and found it to be manipulative. Whitehead knew of several athletes who were awarded certificates of attendance from Villanova instead of a university diploma. He felt this was unfair as they were often told about that they would not receive a diploma after they had already used up all of their athletic eligibility. Johnny Jones' experience in a biology course during his last semester of his senior year supported Whitehead's contention that Villanova cared more about black athletes' performance on the athletic field than their work in the classroom.

Jones' biology class met during the basketball season. The Villanova team was scheduled to go on a road trip at the same time the class was required to dissect a frog. Jones went to see the professor and he was told he would not be able to make up the dissection if he went on the trip. Feeling obligated to attend the game because of his scholarship, Jones missed the assignment. Despite efforts made by Jones to make up the

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[88] Jones, interview with author; Whitehead, interview with author.

[89] Olsen, "The Black Athlete – A Shameful Story."

dissection, the professor informed him that he would fail the class. When Jones took his case to the administration and to the athletic department, he found no one who was willing to overturn the professor's decision. At the last minute, the registrar informed Jones that he had to take the course over again in the summer and could not participate in the graduation ceremonies. In the expectation that her son was graduating, Jones' mother traveled up from Florida for Villanova's commencement. On the day of Villanova's commencement, instead of walking across the stage to receive his diploma, Jones and his mother went into Philadelphia to visit relatives. Jones left Villanova a bitter man.[90]

As a result of these experiences, black Villanova athletes became radicalized. They developed a theory that Villanova really did not want black students on campus unless they contributed to the athletic prominence of the school. Even then, the black athletes believed that Villanova expected them to perform to the best of their ability on the playing fields but that they cared little about their classroom performance. As evidence of these claims, black athletes believed that Villanova did nothing to recruit black students who were not athletes. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, in February 1969, black athletes, therefore, led a protest to force the University to take action in this regard.

[90] Jones, interview with author. As a result of these two experiences, Jones did not return to the campus of Villanova until 2012, forty three after his graduation. Jones was inducted into the Villanova Athletic Hall of Fame and the Big Five Hall of Fame but did not return to accept these honors in person.

Social Life on Campus

Beyond the specific issues faced by black student-athletes, black Villanova students continued to experience a segregated social life on campus during the late 1960s. At the time, the world for white students on Villanova's campus revolved around the fraternity system. Few of the existing fraternities had black members. Black students who desired membership in historically black fraternities were required to either attempt to establish a new chapter on campus or to join an existing chapter at another local university. These extra steps demonstrated how the experiences of black students and white students on campus were different. When it came to finding opportunities to socialize with those who shared your racial identity, black students were forced to work a little harder than white students.

Johnny Jones and a group of African American men wanted to establish a chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, a historically black national fraternity, on Villanova's campus. Eventually, after a series of discussions with the administration, Omega Psi Phi was granted a charter on campus and Jones and eight black students became the founding members.[91] Meanwhile, Larry Barnes, who grew up in Palmyra, New Jersey, joined a fraternity off-campus. Prior to his junior year, Barnes moved off-campus into West Philadelphia to save money and ended up becoming friends with many University of Pennsylvania students. He joined Alpha Phi Alpha, another historically black national

[91] Ibid.

fraternity, which was then known as a city-wide chapter because they drew members from several different colleges within the greater Philadelphia area.[92]

Bob Whitehead, who was from the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia, would often bring fellow black Villanovans home with him on the weekends to attend parties in the neighborhood and to just get a home-cooked meal. Whitehead's roommate during his freshman year was Sam Sims, an African American basketball player from Phenix City, Alabama, who was recruited by George Raveling. Whitehead often thought about how big the adjustment to the North must have been for Sims. Whitehead said he brought track teammate Larry James home so often that his mother often joked that the native New Yorker was her "adopted son." For many black Villanovans the highlight of the week was Sunday night dinners cooked by Ma Pankey.[93] Marian Pankey was from Philadelphia and attended Villanova from 1969-1973. She lived at home and so she would invite her Villanova friends over to her home for meals cooked by her mother. Larry Barnes described the meals as "the best I've ever had" and indicated that these dinners were the highlight of the week and a welcome respite from the grind of football practice and academics.[94]

The low number of black students on campus contributed to the lack of a social life. Similar to the sentiments expressed by black student-athletes, black students in general felt that Villanova only made token efforts to recruit more black students to

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[92] Barnes, interview with author.

[93] Whitehead, interview with author.

[94] Barnes, interview with author.

campus. This made them resentful made them resentful as they believed that Villanova could have provided them a better social life with more black students to campus.

Issues of Racial Identity

Beyond the segregated social life on campus, black Villanova students struggled at times with the largely white, Irish, middle-class background of the majority of Villanova students. Many black Villanovans felt interactions with white Villanovans were awkward and strained. They also believed that these exchanges were informed and shaped by the past experiences of both parties. For some black Villanova students, their ideas on white racial identity were shaped in the neighborhoods in which they grew up. Bob Whitehead's background led him to believe that the white students he would encounter would all be progressive on racial issues. Whitehead grew up in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia which was in some respects touted as a model of racial integration. Most of the white kids who he encountered were Jewish and liberals. Whitehead realized after being at Villanova a short time that young Irish Americans had different views on race than Jewish Americans. Whitehead found the Jewish kids he encountered to be much more sensitive to the racism and discrimination experienced by black Americans during this time period. He did not anticipate that he would have to make an adjustment to the white students he would encounter at Villanova.[95] As previously mentioned Jim McIntosh grew up in the integrated section of Holmesburg in

[95] Ibid.; For a discussion on the racial integration of Mount Airy see a recent dissertation by Abigail Perkiss, "Racing the City: Intentional Integration and the Pursuit of Racial Justice in Post-WWII" (PhD diss., Temple University, 2010). Perkiss argues, in fact, that Mount Airy's Jewish community was particularly instrumental in efforts toward residential integration.

Philadelphia in a neighborhood of many different ethnicities and had very little problems as a young black man. Yet, he still found the middle-class to upper middle class white students to be different than those he experienced in his neighborhood.[96]

Bob Whitehead recalled that white students on campus had not interacted much with black people. As a light-skinned African American, he found that students who had never met a black person before or knew very few black people seemed to be much more at ease talking to him rather than to some of his friends who were darker-skinned. Once white students discovered that Whitehead identified himself as African American, he heard comments such as "Oh, I have a friend who is black." Whitehead indicated that this would often be followed up with a comment such as "he was a funny guy" or "he was a great athlete."[97] While white students probably perceived these comments as helpful and were likely uttered in an attempt to establish rapport, black students found them to be condescending and patronizing. These types of social interactions strained the relationships between white and black students and further radicalized black students.

Black students felt that individual notions of racialized thinking were not just a function of one's skin color but were also cultural. Whitehead learned a great deal about white racial identity from his teammates from Ireland. One night on a train back to Villanova from Philadelphia, Whitehead discovered that not all white people held similar views on race. Furthermore, the racial views of white Americans were likely a result of the way in which they were socialized into thinking about race.

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[96] McIntosh, interview with author.

[97] Ibid.

Whitehead's girlfriend during college lived in what he described as "tough" section of North Philadelphia. This was a section of town where Whitehead said rocks were thrown at his car just for driving through, probably because he was mistaken to be white. This was the last part of the city where he expected to encounter white Villanova students. Late one Saturday evening during his sophomore year, Whitehead got on the train going back to Villanova after visiting his girlfriend. At the next stop, still in the heart of North Philly as Whitehead described it, Frank Murphy and Desmond McCormick piled on to the train after what appeared to be a night of drinking and fun. Whitehead immediately questioned his two Villanova track teammates from Ireland as to what they were doing in an all-black area of North Philadelphia so late at night. Murphy and McCormick indicated to a stunned Whitehead that they had met some young black women in the city and they took them to a party in North Philadelphia. The Irishmen told Whitehead that they had a great time.[98]

Years later, Whitehead still remembers the eye-opening conversation the three of them had about race, culture, and discrimination on the train ride back to campus. Murphy and McCormick described how they could not understand the obsession with race in the United States. The Irishmen indicated that, of course, they understood discrimination and oppression but theirs was religious not racial. From this exchange, Whitehead began to think that racism was not inherent in white culture. If his white teammates from Ireland could freely interact with African Americans without discrimination, Whitehead concluded that white Americans were socialized into racist

[98] Ibid.

society. Therefore, Whitehead held out hope that racism was something that could be challenged and undone.[99]

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The experiences of black student athletes and black students in general in the late 1960s at Villanova were both unique and representative of race relations in the larger American society. On the one hand, their experiences reflected the struggle of the larger Black Power movement in American society during the late 1960s. They were unique in the sense that Villanova did not undergo the public protests found at many other college campuses. Yet, in the case of the athletes, their protests reveal that there was a great of bitterness and resentment toward their coaches, who represented the white power structure. As such, their encounters with racism are a significant part of the hidden history of desegregation of Villanova. The analysis of their experiences demonstrates how strained race relations were produced and reproduced on a predominately white campus.

Many of these experiences radicalized the black students and black student athletes and helped fuel their participation in the expanding black student movement on Villanova's campus. They increasingly saw these experiences of racism not just as isolated incidents but as part of a larger system of racial discrimination. The consciousness of the black athletes was raised during this period. These radicalized students were key participants in the movement by the BSL to press their demands on campus. This is the story of the next chapter.

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[99] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4

"NO DOUBT IT IS TOKEN:" THE BLACK STUDENT MOVEMENT CONSOLIDATES, 1969-1970

In February 1969, the Black Student League participated in two significant demonstrations which signaled their willingness to engage in activism. Beyond their participation in these protests, the BSL strengthened and consolidated itself through the sponsorship of a series of events and publications. In the spring of 1970, the failure of the BSL to realize all of their demands led to the decision to join forces with the white-student dominated Vietnam Moratorium Committee. This action by the BSL called into question the nature of the Black Power movement on Villanova's campus. Taken together, BSL's actions and demands threatened the racial status quo on campus.

If the turn toward Black Power represented a weakening of the liberal consensus on campus, this chapter argues that the Black Power and the anti-war protests of 1969-1970 shattered it. Through their reactions to these events, white Villanova students demonstrated the promises and limits of their Catholic racial liberalism. Some white Villanova students expressed support for the goals of the Black Power movement, while others demonstrated growing anxiety towards the demands of movement. This anxiety only increased as the black student movement became more strongly identified with the Black Power movement.

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Locked Door Affair – February 1969

By the spring semester in 1969, several BSL members, including Johnny Jones, were angered that Villanova was not doing enough to recruit black students who were not

athletes. Jones indicated that black students were under the impression that Villanova was not taking advantage of scholarship money made available to them by federal and state government programs designed to enhance access to higher education for African Americans. The perceived failure by the administration to utilize this money furthered black students' suspicions that Villanova only cared about recruiting black athletes. Jones believed that Villanova was reluctant to change the campus culture too quickly and, therefore, "didn't want blacks except athletes or a chosen few."[1]

In addition to the issue of recruiting more black students, BSL members were concerned about the lack of classes dealing with the black experience in the United States. At the time, there was only one course that covered African American-related topics. That course was euphemistically called "The Urban Experience" and was taught by an adjunct professor, Claude Lewis, a prominent African American reporter for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Black students flocked to Lewis' class but it wasn't enough to satisfy the demand.

On Tuesday, February 18, 1969, Hardge Davis, president of the BSL, and several other BSL members burst into the Tolentine Hall offices of Father Donald Burt, O.S.A., the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. They went to speak to the Dean about the small number of black students and faculty on campus as well as the lack of classes exploring the black American experience. Refusing to leave until a meeting was granted, they locked the door behind them. The incident became known, then, as the "Locked

[1] Jones, interview with author.

Door Affair."[2] The "Locked Door Affair" represented the BSL's first major effort to force the Villanova administration to address black student concerns.

When they walked into the office, the black students found the Dean sitting at his desk with a resigned look on his face. According to Ted Freeman, BSL member and student-athlete, Father Burt uttered something to the effect of "I knew you would come."[3] Despite the drama of the meeting, it turned to be a rather civil affair.

Behind the locked doors, Father Burt conceded that scholarship money was available but argued that the University had a hard time convincing black students to enroll at Villanova. When pressed to describe these recruitment efforts, Johnny Jones recalled that Father Burt acknowledged that the University could use some help.[4] Burt asked the BSL to pitch in and help immediately. As a result, the BSL worked closely with Villanova administrators on several projects designed to attract more black students to campus and make things easier for them once they arrived on campus. Despite Villanova's claims that it was difficult to recruit black students to go to Villanova, there was progress when the BSL spearheaded the effort. Davis said the BSL and George Raveling went out and recruited over 40 students to apply to Villanova and 32 were admitted for the 1969-1970 academic year.[5] Furthermore, Father Burt credited the members of the BSL with establishing a special orientation program for black freshman students. Davis and Francis, in particular, assisted with the University's "Motivation"

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[2] Mary Ann Cibotti, "BSL Interview," *Villanovan*, 26 February 1969.

[3] Freeman, interview with author.

[4] Jones, interview with author.

[5] "Black Villanova."

program, which was designed recruit and attract black students from across the eastern seaboard to campus. Villanova black students also assisted with other recruitment programs which brought black Philadelphia high school students to campus.[6]

With regard to black studies courses, the Dean promised to add several options. Ted Freeman, a successful high school debater, suggested a communications course that focused on the study of black rhetoric would be a welcome addition. Freeman was pleased when the Dean suggested that he work with a faculty member to propose such a course. Freeman remembered that he pulled out his Dick Gregory vinyl albums and worked with Dr. James Richardson from the department of communications to develop a course entitled "Black Rhetoric." A theology course focusing on black liberation theology was also proposed and accepted shortly after the protest.[7]

Although BSL members were pleased with the Dean's initial response to their demands, they still wondered about his sincerity and commitment. Hardge Davis characterized the effort as "no doubt it is token."[8] Ted Freeman argued that the reaction to the black student demands demonstrated that Villanova "recognized the need for change" but, as an institution, simply "needed help moving forward."[9] In the spring of 1969, BSL student leader Joe Francis expressed similar sentiments when he declared that the BSL "came along at just the right time… at a time when Villanova is ready for change." Francis agreed that there were allies within Villanova's administration. He

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Freeman, interview with author.

[8] Cibotti, "BSL Interview."

[9] Freeman, interview with author.

indicated that there were "men within the University structure who are politically and morally aware enough not to just dismiss us as radical nuts, but to try and understand our point of view, to see if there is logic behind our proposals."[10] Still others in the BSL were not convinced. They saw Villanova as a conservative institution reluctant to change its campus culture.

Turns out, the skeptics were right. The Villanova administration moved slowly to address the BSL's concerns, especially when it came to minority student recruitment. The administration's foot-dragging would lead to another protest in the spring of 1970 and was further evidence of the disparity between the professed commitment to the ideals of integration and the reality of the administration's actions.

The "Locked Door" affair demonstrated that the Villanova administration was willing to at least pay lip service to the demands of black students. Their Catholic racial liberalism, with its commitment to the cause of integration and to the presence of black students on campus, demanded them to respond. Yet, the lack of movement on these issues illustrated the limits to their liberalism.

Furthermore, the administration's response to the "Locked Door Affair" also provided insight into how the Villanova administration managed race relations on campus. It appeared that Villanova often attempted to co-opt the protests by giving in to some of the easier demands. In this case, the addition of one or two black studies courses appeared to be an easy fix. In addition to seeking to appease black students on campus, Villanova cared about its reputation and did not want to appear unfriendly to African

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[10] "Black Villanova – Progress??" *Black Wildcat*, 11 March 1970.

American students. This incident was covered in the local Philadelphia press so the potential of negative publicity outside of the University also appeared to motivate the Villanova administration to handle these matters efficiently.[11]

The University City Science Center Protest - February 1969

As black Villanova students were taking over the Dean's office in February 1969, white Villanova students began another protest movement. Several leaders of the BSL ultimately joined in and supported this movement as well. The protest was centered on the University City Science Center (U.C.S.C), located just off of the campus of the University of Pennsylvania. The U.C.S.C. was created by President Gaylord Harnwell of the University of Pennsylvania in April 1967 in response to campus opposition to scientific military research. The creation of an independent entity conducting research on chemical and biological weapons would, it was hoped, deflect criticism directed at Penn's administration.[12] Penn students had protested against the university's involvement with this research in 1966 and 1967, but events reached a boiling point when the U.S.C.S. announced plans to invoke "eminent domain" to expand into the surrounding black neighborhood of Mantua.[13]

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[11] "Students, Dean Discuss Negroes at Villanova," *Evening Bulletin*, 19 February 1969.

[12] Glasker, *Black Students in the Ivory* Tower, 46-47.

[13] These issues were very similar to the protest at Columbia University in 1969, where Columbia students protests against the university's plan to encroach into Harlem to expand the campus. For more on this protest, see Stefan Bradley, "'Gym Crow Must Go!': Black Student Activism at Columbia University, 1967-1968," *Journal of African American History* 88 (Spring, 2003): 163-181; Mark, Rudd, *Underground: My Life with SDS and the Weathermen*, (New York: William Morrow, 2009).

The Penn chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) scheduled a rally for Tuesday, February 18, 1969, and ultimately decided to hold a sit-in of the College Hall administration building. In a show of support, Penn's black student organization – Society of African and Afro-American Students – voted to support SDS and participated in the sit-in.

On Friday, February 21, 1969, four Villanova students met with University President Father Robert Welsh, O.S.A., concerning Villanova's role in the U.S.C.S. Villanova was one of twelve original investors in the U.S.C.S. and Father Welsh served as a board member. The students described the meeting as an "open discussion." At the conclusion of the meeting, Father Welsh read a statement to over 100 Villanova students who were sitting in the hallway of Tolentine Hall awaiting the results of the meeting. Father Welsh declared that "Villanova does not wish to be a part of any injustice." With this in mind, he asked the Social Action Committee to "conduct an independent investigation of the matter."[14] The Student Government Association followed up with a resolution supporting the protesting students. The *Villanovan* praised Father Welsh's measured response as an "example of Christian responsibility," but chastised him for not being aware of the situation sooner.[15] The students of the BSL would later be praised by Father Donald Burt, O.S.A., Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, for their work on the Science Center affair.[16] The Science Center protest represented a rare opportunity for

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[14] "Father President," *Villanovan*, 26 February 1969.

[15] Ibid.

[16] "Black Villanova." *Villanova Alumni Magazine*, May 1969, 19.

white and black student activists at Villanova to come together on the same issue at a time where the BSL became increasingly concerned with what they deemed to be black student-only matters.

White Student Reaction to Protests

Judging by the student reactions to the February 1969 protests, the consensus on Catholic racial liberalism was shattered in the wake of these events. Some students criticized the perceived liberal nature of the student activists in general. Others railed against a plan to increase the number of black students to campus. Taken together, these criticisms reflect the growing anxieties of white Villanovans in the era of Black Power and exposed the growing racial fault lines on the campus.

In an interview with *Villanovan* reporter Mary Ann Cibotti shortly after the "Locked Door" affair, BSL president Hardge Davis refused to disclose what happened behind closed doors in his meeting with Father Burt. Cibotti questioned why the BSL wanted to keep its activities a secret to anyone outside of their membership. Cibotti observed "responding with a familiar jargon of H. Rap Brown, [Davis] said that the Black students 'wanted to do their own thing.'"[17] Cibotti's seemingly dismissive tone reflected a growing wariness on the part of some white students towards the ideology of the Black Power movement.

Villanovan writer Gerard Banmiller's more clearly expressed the anxieties of some white students about black student demands. In the article entitled "Underground Railroad," Banmiller's criticized a proposal to provide scholarships for "fifty deprived

[17] Cibotti, "BSL Interview."

ghetto children." Outraged at what he termed a "misappropriation" of tuition money, Banmiller lambasted the liberal philosophy which he believed now pervaded the school's administration. He contrasted the current situation to a time when Villanova "knew they could not handle social betterment."[18] Banmiller concluded that he "is not painting the administration black; they are only following their conscience. However, by no means do they have the right to impose their conscience on others."[19]

Banmiller saw a retreat from liberalism among Villanova students as he questioned whether the protests on campus represented the entire student body. The writer attacked the "ultra-liberal philosophy" of the Villanova student activists, whose numbers he described as "miniscule." Banmiller suggested that the activists "seem to be a large voice" but argued that "the same writer of the leftist article is also a member of the SDS, the Social Action Committee, and even perhaps playing sympathy music for the Penn sitdowners." He concluded by suggesting that most Villanova students "do NOT like the idea of the abject minority assuming the position of spokesman for the university." While concerned about the activities of the student activists, Banmiller seemed most concerned about what he discerned as an "erosion of the Villanova tradition."[20]

The resistance to the increased enrollment of African American students and the concerns over the "erosion of the Villanova tradition" demonstrated the limits of how far white Villanovans were willing to go on racial matters. This represented the tension

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[18] Gerard Banmiller, "Underground Railroad," *Villanovan*, 26 February 1969.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Gerard Banmiller, "A Final Statement," *Villanovan*, 26 March 1969.

between Catholic racial liberalism's embrace of integration and the changes to the campus culture required to achieve this goal. Even white Villanovans in favor of increasing the black enrollment qualified their positions by stating that this could not be done at any expense to potential white applicants. Seemingly gone were the cries of "we need more negroes" by white Villanova students. Now, the rallying cry was no preferential treatment for black students. The white student response to affirmative action-type programs was a significant part of the white student backlash and will be covered in greater detail next chapter.

White Villanovans Attack Discrimination on the Main Line – February 1969

Despite this growing resistance to the black student movement, not all Villanova students gave up on racial change. Some white Villanova students grew frustrated with the slow progress on racial justice produced by the proponents of Catholic racial liberalism. As a result of their growing disaffection with this ideology, some students veered left and reflected aspects of the New Left student movement. For example, a group of *Villanovan* writers sought to expose the failures of the integrationist ideal espoused by racial liberalism by looking at the housing discrimination taking place within the surrounding community of the Main Line.

In a February 1969 article entitled "Main Line Façade Hides Deep Racism," Margaret O'Donnell, Greg Pirmann, and Rick Serano conducted a series of interviews with black homeowners and uncovered extensive housing discrimination within the Main Line. The authors declared that the article was written about African American professionals who had been "denied the right to live where they please, buy the houses

they desire and do what they want with their lives." This condition, according to the students, "exists all over the country, but our concern as Villanovans is with our community." The authors contended that the Main Line was synonymous with "respectable gentility, with above average wealth, with the life of high society…[yet] no one sees, or cares to look at the bias and hatred that exists alongside the fancy houses and columns in the Society pages."[21]

Though the *Villanovan* students interviewed more than fifty people, the article featured the stories of five men. Each detailed the difficulty he had in obtaining house showings and how they were treated once it was discovered they were African American. One couple, identified as Mr. and Mrs. Young described their difficulty in finding a house in neighboring Lower Merion Township, even though Mr. Young was employed by the township as a police officer. Mrs. Young related how the couple made an appointment over the phone to see a home. When they showed up to gain the keys to access the house, however, they were informed that the realtors did not have them. They were told to come back the next day. When they did, they were told that the owner "did not want to sell to Negroes." Instead of discouraging the couple, this incident only strengthened their desire to buy in Lower Merion Township.[22]

Shortly after this incident, the Youngs were informed that a house in the same area was going up for sale and they were very interested in the property. Their offer on the house was accepted and they later came to find out that there was considerable

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[21] Margaret O'Donnell, Greg Pirmann and Rick Serano, "Main Line Façade Hides Deep Racism," *Villanovan*, 5 February 1969.

[22] Ibid.

pressure placed on the seller (a single woman) not to sell to the African American couple. In fact, Mr. Young stated that one family offered the seller $2,500 to the seller to "keep a Negro from moving in." Ironically, the couple who made the offer later informed the Youngs of this fact after they became friendly with their new neighbors![23]

In a follow up article, *Villanovan* reporter O'Donnell wrote that the Main Line Realtors Board did not have a single African American member. Margaret O'Donnell pointed out that it was unlikely this situation would change as one of the requirements for entrance on to the board included a strict adherence to the Board's code of ethics. Part of this code, O'Donnell asserts, is that members would have to accept the word of any other members at face value. Therefore, O'Donnell argued that "with current real estate practices the way they are, it is difficult to conceive of a Negro being accepted into this Board without forsaking the Black cause entirely."[24]

In the conclusion to the story, the authors clearly rejected the mindset of Catholic racial liberalism they found at Villanova. "The majority of Villanova students come from suburban neighborhoods," the authors asserted, and therefore, "do not confront the racial problem." Favoring the explanation that white racism was the problem, the students rebuffed the inclination of liberals that racial discrimination could be solved through community service such as "painting tenements or planting flowers around North Philly." In order to attack racism, the authors argued that white students must "attack the minds of our own white communities" by recognizing and analyzing the prejudices in them. The authors conclude: "WE must stop this insanity of hate and distrust that has poisoned the

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Margie O'Donnell, "Realtors Exposed," *Villanovan*, 19 February 1969.

country for so long. Only we can change the thinking of America by opening our eyes and placing the blame where it belongs."[25]

In advancing these arguments, the *Villanovan* students who pursued the story on racial discrimination on the Main Line reflected some of the impulses of New Left student movement. Their assertion that the problem was institutional in nature and needed to be addressed systemically was consistent with this emergent philosophy. As the national civil rights movement moved toward Black Power, the New Left student movement, embodied on campuses by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), endorsed the this shift. Historian Douglas Rossinow argues that "black power played a decisive role in turning the white left's gaze in on itself…The most urgent task for white sympathizers, according to black power doctrine, was to temper the racism of the white community."[26]

In advocating that white Villanova students focus on white racism within their own communities, the *Villanovan* writers clearly agreed with the Black Power demand for whites to engage in some self-reflection. While the *Villanovan* endeavored to educate Villanova students on issues of racism and discrimination within their neighborhood, black Villanova students utilized the printed word to advance the Black Power movement on campus.

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[25] "Main Line Façade Hides Deep Racism."

[26] Doug Rossinow, *The Politics of Authenticity: Liberalism, Christianity, and the New Left in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 259.

The *Black Wildcat* Appears – April 1969

On April 23, 1969, the BSL published the first edition of the *Black Wildcat*. The unmistakable clenched fist on the front cover sent a clear signal to the Villanova community that the BSL was clearly staking out a position of Black Power (Figure One). With its controversial articles and opinion pieces, white Villanova students grew increasingly anxious by the BSL's publication. In the end, therefore, the *Black Wildcat* served to increase the racial divide and hasten the collapse of the liberal consensus.


BLACK WILDCAT

Raison D' Etre

The Case For Rebellion

Figure One. The cover of the first edition of the *Black Wildcat*. Source: *Black Wildcat*, 23 April 1969.

The BSL said that it needed an "autonomous publication" for two reasons. First, the *Black Wildcat* sought to unify "black people by presenting an aggregate of ideas and theories" of Black Power. Second, the publication set out to create "awareness among whites of black theories and idiosyncrasies." Clearly, as the second purpose suggests, the goal was to reach the white student audience as well as the black students on campus. The desire to reach the entire Villanova community was also evidenced by their decision to distribute it with the *Villanovan*.[27]

An article by Charles J. Hamilton, Jr., a Harvard University student, reprinted in the *Black Wildcat*'s first edition, placed the struggles of black students on predominately white campuses into national context. Hamilton posited that the reasons for increased activism and racial solidarity by African American students across the country were tied to the "deeply entrenched and difficult to perceive realities involved on the day-to-day experience of being a Black student on a white campus." Hamilton described the social conditions which led to the existence of a "soul table" in a sea of white tables in the dining hall and of constantly being asked "what sport do you play?"[28] The editors of the *Black Wildcat* clearly related to some of these experiences and included this piece to demonstrate the universality of the struggle of black students on predominately white campuses. In summing up the state of the campus, Joe Francis, one of the founding members of Villanova's BSL, declared in his column, "America must listen attentively to

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[27] Jim Anderson, "Rasion D' Etre," *Black Wildcat*, 23 April 1969.

[28] Charles J. Hamilton, "Old Myths…New Realities," *Black Wildcat*, 23 April 1969.

minority dissent or there can be no majority rule… in the words of St. Malcolm X: 'There must be freedom for everyone or there will be freedom for no one.'"[29]

Even as it tried to educate white students, the *Black Wildcat* provided the Villanova community with a unique window into some of the internal struggles and debates going on within the black community at Villanova as well. A majority of black Villanova students embraced the ideas of Black Power; however, others struggled to define what blackness meant. Hardge Davis, in his article "What is Black?" draws a distinction between the terms "Blacks" and "Negroes." Davis argued that while both "Negroes" and "Blacks" were being oppressed, "Blacks" were aware of this and were attempting to do something about it. Consistent with this definition of blackness, Davis argued the BSL was established to create awareness about the oppression of black people and to eliminate this oppression.[30]

A November 12, 1969, editorial in the *Black Wildcat* called for unity among African American students around the ideas of blackness. James Anderson exhorted his fellow students to remain focused on the ideals of the "black revolution" which he called a "24 hour-a-day struggle." Anderson cautioned, "As we journey towards Blackness, we often delude ourselves into false complacency and inflexibility by accepting as "Black Awareness" behaviorisms which are both hypocritical and inadequate…" Instead, Anderson argued that "True Black Men and Women are draped in cloaks of self-assurance, pride and determination. They are too concerned about their future and the future of their children to sneer, to disparage, to rap, to back-stab, to loaf, to lust, to

[29] Joe Francis, "The Case for Rebellion," *Black Wildcat*, 23 April 1969.

[30] Hardge Davis, "What is Black?" *Black Wildcat*, 11 March 1970.

become diverted, to hate for unwarranted reasons, and to spend most of their time drinking, partying and getting high."[31] Anderson's words were designed to create a clear definition of blackness and directed towards black students. Black students, however, also used the *Black Wildcat* to analyze their experiences of being black on a predominately white campus.

The critique of Villanova students and the institution as products of white privilege was prevalent in the accounts of black Villanova students as they described their experiences on campus. Black Villanova students demonstrated an understanding of how white privilege worked in the larger society and drew the conclusion that white Villanova students were a product of this problem that was systemic in nature.[32] One example of this was provided by a BSL member who wrote:

> An impression: standing in front of the chapel talking with pre-med student Sam Sims, you suddenly become aware of the light tan strip of band -aid standing out starkly against his dark face. Most students at Villanova would term that bandage "flesh –colored" Whose flesh? That is the point.[33]

Joe Francis declared that his objection to Villanova was that it was an institution that catered "to the white middle class." He argued that it was not done "purposely" but was

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[31] James Anderson, "My Brothers and Sisters," *Black Wildcat*, 12 November 1969.

[32] For an excellent overall discussion of the notion of white privilege see Allan Johnson, *Power Privilege and Difference* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2005) ; Historical works which have analyzed the notion of whiteness and white include: David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1999)*;* George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple, 1998); Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: The Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005).

[33] "Black Villanova – Progress??

just a result of the type of student that Villanova attracted.[34] Freshman Chuck Peterson described how the notion of race and privilege intersected with campus social and dating life. Peterson argued that white students would often play matchmaker on the basis of race alone. Peterson indicated that white students often said to him, "'I saw a nice girl for you. Damn she can be the ugliest thing walking, but because she's black, she's a nice girl for you."[35] Indeed, black Villanova students felt the sting of white privilege on the predominately white campus. They ultimately grew tired of bearing the burdens of their feelings of oppression alone. Coming together to draw attention to the ways in which white privilege manifested itself on campus was one important outcome of the BSL.

The *Black Wildcat* also provided a means for black Villanova students to express themselves artistically. Art and politics often fused together within the Black Power movement and manifested itself in the Black Arts Movement.[36] In 1968, Larry Neal, a writer and major influence within the movement, proclaimed the Black Arts Movement "the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept."[37] Influenced by the Black Arts Movement, the *Black Wildcat* featured political cartoons and poetry written by black Villanova students. The inaugural edition of the *Black Wildcat* featured the following:

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[34] Ibid.

[35] "Black Villanova." *Villanova Alumni Magazine*, May 1969, 18.

[36] For more on the Black Arts Movement, see James E. Smethurst, *The Black Arts Movement: Nationalism in the 1960s and 1970s*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[37] Larry Neal, "The Black Arts Movement," *The Drama Review: TDR* (Summer 1968), 29.

Watch 'Em

By Chukk Peterson

These new Niggers, you'd better watch 'em, now
They 're getting a little book learning, now
And you know they're starting to speak up, now
And they're using those big words you used to foot them.
Yea these new Niggers you 'd better watch them, now
They're moving into your neighborhood now.
And they're bringing everything; their
Tradition and even their dog now.
They're parking their Fords and DeSotos by your Hog's now
You 'd better call the real estate man.
Yea, these New Niggers you'd better watch them now,
But I'm sure you'll search out a way to keep them down.
Don 't ask me for help, I'm just a passerby.
For all you know I might just be high.
But I'm sure you 'll make out, we did somehow.
Hey, don't get shook and lose your peace of mind. Now![38]

Indeed, the *Black Wildcat* provided a creative vehicle for black students to espouse Black Power sentiments and educate the Villanova community on the realities of the black student experience at Villanova.

One of the most serious topics addressed in the *Black Wildcat* frequently was interracial dating. Interracial dating was a source of tension on campus between white and black students. For white Villanova students on campus, interracial dating represented a challenge to the traditional campus culture which was defined by their whiteness. Of course, white Villanovans did not publicly express their opposition to interracial dating. To do so, white students would run afoul of the paradigm of acceptance to which most Villanovans adhered. However, black students, feeling increasingly

[38] Chukk Peterson, "Watch 'Em," *Black Wildcat*, 11 March 1970.

radicalized by the Black Power movement, were willing to speak out and to challenge accepted norms of behavior.

James Anderson, a leader in the BSL, examined the concept of interracial dating in an article with the striking headline "Can a Nigger Love a Honkie?" Anderson began by lamenting the difficulties of relationships in general during the "social drama" of late 1960s America. According to Anderson, the situation was complicated further when the dynamic of race was introduced into a potential relationship. Anderson argued that "If then, it is difficult for members of like racial groups to find compatibility and genuine love, what is the probability for survival of an interracial relationship? Starkly — can a Nigger love a Honkie?"[39] Anderson concluded the piece by declaring that love between a white person and a black person was simply love between a man and a woman. He optimistically believed that if people simply stripped away their "frailties and myths" that they would not fear the reactions of a "regimented, impersonalized society."[40] Judging by the assessments of the campus social scene made by black male students, this sanguine view of interracial dating was not the dominant view held by Villanova black students. The inability for black students to be able to choose dating partners freely and without judgment was one example of the limits of liberalism many black students encountered on Villanova's campus.

Despite the perceived intolerance for interracial dating, a few black Villanova students dared to test the boundaries. Against the warnings of his white teammates on the football squad, Gene Arthur dated a Villanova student whom he described as a "red-head

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[39] James Anderson, "Can a Nigger Love a Honkie?" *Black Wildcat*, 12 November 1969.

[40] Ibid.

from Pittsburgh." Arthur knew that this was something that was not generally acceptable to the both white and black students at Villanova but he did not care. As Arthur argued, he was "comfortable in his own skin" and willing to accept any criticism that he received while he was following his heart and expressing his individualism.[41]

Interracial dating also posed a problem for some black students who were immersed within the Black Power movement. The Black Power ideology called for racial solidarity. Despite a lack of overt opposition, Arthur knew that crossing the color line in private was something that the "more militant" members of the BSL looked down on. [42]

As a light-skinned African American, Bob Whitehead faced fewer constraints dating across the color line while at Villanova. Based on his experiences with several white young women, Whitehead described himself as a "starter black man." He indicated that white women often approached him to ask him questions that demonstrated the women had no experience with talking to or dating black men. Whitehead suspected that some of these women were interested in talking to some of the other black men as well but that he was less intimidating because he was light-skinned and trim young black man. Still, Whitehead argued that interracial dating was still seen as taboo on campus. [43] The perceived prohibition on interracial dating reflected the historical fear of miscegenation held by white Americans. This fear also represented a challenge to the racial liberalism espoused by white Villanova students.

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[41] Arthur, interview with author.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Whitehead, interview with author.

One of the reasons that interracial dating was such a prominent issue on campus for black male students was the negligible numbers of female black students on campus. As mentioned previously, the University announced in the fall of 1967 that all of its academic programs would be open to women for the 1968-1969 academic year. At the time, there were 361 women enrolled in daytime programs at Villanova, three-hundred and seventeen of them were enrolled in the College of Nursing. Among of the nursing students there were a handful of black women, but until 1968, none of these women lived on campus, and therefore, did not fully participate in campus social life.[44]

In discussing controversial topics such as interracial dating and segregation within campus social life, the *Black Wildcat* was an excellent medium to provoke discussion on campus. While this may have proven cathartic for Villanova's black students, the publication also exacerbated racial tensions on campus as white students expressed anxiety over black students' turn towards Black Power.

White Student Reaction to *Black Wildcat*

The *Black Wildcat* dramatically exposed white Villanova students to the growing Black Power orientation of many African American students. Not surprisingly, the publication caused uproar. Faced with "considerable numbers of persons" who protested the decision to allocate space in the campus newspaper to the *Black Wildcat*, the editors of the *Villanovan* attempted to "justify its journalistic actions" in the next issue. The editorial of November 19, 1969, argued that black students deserved "the opportunity to express themselves." Furthermore, the editors believed that "if anything, we need to be

[44] Contosta, *Villanova 1842-1992*, 192.

made more aware of the opinions of our black students." The editorial also illuminated a sense of distance between the black students and white students on campus. The editors called black students "an obviously unique group" and "socially autonomous." "They hold views which differ radically, the authors argued, "from those which the average white student seems to maintain."[45]

Further support for the publication of the *Black Wildcat* came from a white freshman student named Frank Marafiota. In his letter to the editor Marafiota expressed his "anxiety and pleasure" about the *Black Wildcat* supplement. He felt anxiety because he "was afraid of being exposed to something disturbing yet true, pleasure because I realized that it was indeed time for Villanova's stereotyped minority to speak out." Marafiota was also grateful to BSL president James Anderson for pointing out that the "subtle idiosyncrasies of prejudice and misplaced values which some would pretend exist only in the white Villanovan, do also exist in Black students." Marafiota argued that this was evidence that black people were "indeed of human nature."[46]

Even within these expressions of agreement with the decision to publish the *Black Wildcat*, there is evidence that the liberal consensus was in ruins. While justifying the decision to publish the *Black Wildcat*, the editorial lacked the clear expressions of sympathy and support for the thoughts and actions of the black students which appeared in previous editorials. The earlier sentiments of "we need blacks to complete our community" had now given way to talk of radical views held by an "obviously unique

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[45] "Black 'Cat," *Villanovan*, 19 November 1969.

[46] Frank Marafiota, untitled letter to editor, *Villanovan*, 19 November 1969.

group." In his letter to the editor Marafiota described "mutual inhibitions" among black and white on students and described brotherhood on campus as "evasive."[47]

White Villanova students, on the whole, did not want to appear ambivalent on racial integration. To do so would be to appear racist. The protestations experienced by the editors of the *Villanovan* in the wake of the publication of the *Black Wildcat* demonstrated that there was much more resistance to the black student movement than met the eye. In part, this unseen resistance explains how and why the integration and inclusion of black students on a predominately white campus was so difficult. Furthermore, this resistance was evidence of the growing anxiety of white students in the wake of the campus Black Power movement. This anxiety only increased as the black student movement became more and more closely identified with the Black Power movement.

Black Student League Programs – March 1969

The *Black Wildcat*, however, was not the only mechanism which allowed the BSL to fulfill their mandate to educate the Villanova community. Programs and events which were sponsored by the BSL and which were made available to the general public also had the effect of raising awareness of issues which concerned black students.

Two significant talks on campus in March 1969 helped to keep the issues of racism and Black Power at the forefront of campus discourse during the spring 1969 semester. In what *Villanovan* writer Frank Schierberl termed "possibly the most inspiring speech ever delivered on Villanova Main Line's campus," prominent civil rights activist

[47] Ibid.

and comedian Dick Gregory spoke to over four thousand members in the Field House on March 20, 1969. Scheirberl indicated that the largely "conservative student body" was "surprisingly responsive." As reported by Schierberl, Gregory's message to Villanova students was simple: "WAKE UP!... Decide what kind of world you want to live in and get the hell out and change it!."[48]

The BSL also sought to provoke conversation amongst black and white students on campus through a series of "Black-White Confrontations." The program's format consisted of panels of black and white students debating issues of the day such as busing and affirmative action. When asked about the programs, BSL President James Anderson, replied: "Theoretically the purpose is simply to allow formerly alienated social-groups the chance to come together and exchange ideas, opinions, myths, etc. Only through social intercourse can ethnic and social groups iron out their differences." [49] These programs were significant as they provided the opportunity for meaningful exchanges between white and black Villanova students to take place.

In March 1969, a panel on urban unrest and the civil rights movement was held, featuring Steve Frazier, a student leader of Temple's chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and an unnamed member of the Black Panther Party of Philadelphia.[50] Frazier indicated that he believed urban problems were acute and politicians were ineffective in dealing with them because they were too interested in

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[48] Frank Schierberl, "If the Lollipop Fits, Suck On It," *Villanovan*, 26 February 1969.

[49] Cy Crocker, "Black-White Confrontation Set," *Villanovan*, 1 October 1969.

[50] Flip Ferara, "Black Panther Speaks on 'Freedom for All,'" *Villanovan*, 26 February 1969.

promoting their individual self-interests at the expense of solving the problems of the cities. The Black Panthers announced that the party goal was "freedom for all, white as well as black… however, he contended that that the Panthers are mainly concerned with freedom for Negroes, as black people seem to bear the brunt of racial oppression in our society." [51] The *Villanovan* reported that the audience was attentive, yet the Black Panther member appeared to become upset when some students starting "squirming and talking during his speech."[52] This provided further evidence of the growing uneasiness of white Villanova students.

The Office for Social Action Established – Fall 1969

The establishment of the Office of Social Action in the fall of 1969 demonstrated the possibilities and limits to Villanova's Catholic racial liberalism. The office was charged with continuing the community service efforts of the existing Social Action Council while also addressing the issue of the recruitment and retention of minority students.[53] Therefore, when viewed from the perspective of its mission, the founding of the office could have been viewed as a major step forward in the struggle for racial justice on campus, a reflection of a desire by the institution to become less parochial in its

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Michael DeRosa and Bob Lancelotti, "Community Action Office Instituted: First at V.U.," *Villanovan*, 17 September 1969.

outlook.[54] Yet, one could argue that the University was simply seeking to co-opt the black student movement by channeling them to one specific area of the administration.

The staffing of the new office indicated that co-optation might have been the objective. In keeping with the parochial tradition of placing qualified Augustinians in leadership positions, the Villanova administration tapped Father James Ryan, O.S.A., to serve as the director of the new office. To fill the assistant director position, Villanova president Father Welsh personally called on former Villanova student-athlete Edward Collymore. Collymore returned to Villanova after service in the Marines and as a juvenile probation officer in Boston. According to Collymore, the arrangement worked well because Father Ryan was more interested in community service aspect of the office's role while Collymore emphasized the recruitment and retention of underrepresented and economically disadvantaged students.[55] The office would become the leader in the struggles over affirmative action and the increased recruitment of minority students. These battles will be described in greater detail in the next chapter.

The editors of the *Villanovan* praised the University for establishing the office, calling it a "significant and necessary innovation." With a backhanded compliment, the editors also congratulated Villanova for its "belated and still insufficient sensitivity to social problems." The *Villanovan*, however, praised the selection of Collymore, adding

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[54] The selection of the name "Social Action" reflected the terminology that was in vogue during the late 1960s. The social action approach espoused by Max Weber argued that humans were rational beings responsible for the creation of society. Social action theory also attempted to explore the relationship between social institutions and structures and its effect on the thoughts and behaviors of individuals.

[55] Collymore, interview with author.

that this was indication that Villanova "has recognized the obvious: black students have unique problems and concerns which can be best treated by a black administrator."[56] These sentiments reflected a rejection of earlier universalist arguments expressed by white Villanova students regarding racial matters.

In hiring its first black administrator, Villanova sent a message that the administration was sensitive to the demands of the black student movement and their white student and faculty allies. Yet, it also, wittingly or unwittingly, contributed to the compartmentalization of black student affairs. The prevailing sentiment was that there was now an office designed to handle the problems of Villanova's African American students. Over the years, this would become a source of tension as this office was called on to handle many situations involving black students on campus, whether or not it fell within their purview.

The Office of Social Action was born out of the U.S.C.S. protest and the Villanova administration was hoping the establishment of the office would prevent future protest movements. If this was the goal of the administration, it did not succeed.

The BSL-Vietnam Moratorium Committee Protest – February 1970

In order to protest the involvement of the United States in Vietnam, Villanova students formed the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, which came to be known on campus as simply the Moratorium Committee. Villanova students had spoken out against the war and had held several silent vigils but it wasn't until 1969 when they organized

[56] "Social Action," *Villanovan*, 17 September 1969.

themselves into a student movement. The calls for a nationwide moratorium spurred Villanova students to action. On October 15, 1969, the committee organized a day of lectures and other programs focused on an examination of the actions of the United States in Vietnam. The featured speaker for this day was Allard Lowenstein, the United States House of Representatives member from New York, who was an outspoken critic of the war.[57]

At the same time that the Moratorium Committee began make its presence felt on campus, the BSL was frustrated by the lack of progress on some of the demands they had made the previous spring when they took over the Dean's office in February 1969. Knowing this, the Moratorium Committee, under the direction of student Bob Moser, sensed that there might be some benefit to joining forces.[58] Moser approached the BSL leaders about forming a coalition to press for some of their individual and collective demands. Moser extended the invitation and awaited a response.[59]

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[57] Villanova students were active on both sides of the political spectrum with regard to the Vietnam War. Students at Villanova initiated a nationwide campaign called "Operation Mail Call Vietnam." Three Villanova students who helped initiate and organize the campaign were invited to the White House in December 1970 to meet with President Nixon. The student argued that their campaign to collect thousands of greetings cards to send to the troops in Vietnam was non-political. David Contosta argues, however, that their visit to Nixon, a man whom many antiwar activists, saw as the very personification of an immoral war, seemed to reflect the somewhat limited opposition to the war on the Villanova campus. (Contosta, *Villanova University 1842-1992*, 217).

[58] In the late 1960s white activists of the New Left student movement at the national level expressed "fervent political solidarity" with militant black activists. As historian Douglas Rossinow points out, the New Left "operated in white America and anti-racist activism was replaced by anti-war and countercultural activism in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and associated groups, yet the issue of race was never too far from the minds of white leftists." White activists often "longed for the interracial contact for the political legitimacy and aura of authenticity that it conferred." (Rossinow, *Politics of Authenticity*, 197).

[59] Bob Moser, telephone interview with author, digital recording, November 14, 2012.

BSL member Charles Williams, in an interview years later, asserted that there was a split in the black student organization as to whether to accept the invitation. Some of the BSL members of the group felt the strong currents of black nationalism and wanted to go it alone. Other members of the BSL believed there was "strength in numbers" and that it was pragmatic to form a coalition.[60] After much discussion, the BSL voted to join forces with some of the most activist elements of the white student body to press forth their demands together. At the time, Williams, a writer for the *Villanovan* in the late 1960s, interviewed two unnamed representatives of the group – one identified as a member of the BSL and one identified as a member of the Moratorium committee - to discuss how the coalition came about. One representative indicated that the coalition was formed as the groups "wished to assist each other in the attainment of certain demands that are needed in the university, also in unity there is strength..."[61]

In consenting to join the coalition, black Villanova students went against the national trend. Historian William Van Deburg described protest movements at Duke University and University of Massachusetts, in 1969 and they appeared to be conducted by black students only.[62] In this regard, the Villanova protest was unique. By rejecting the racially-exclusive posture of the national Black Power movement, the leaders of BSL accepted the limitations of being black student activists on a predominately white campus. The "strength in numbers" argument was compelling but it also appeared to be

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[60] Charles "Chuck" Williams, interview with author, digital recording, August 9, 2012.

[61] Ibid.

[62] William Van Deburg , *New Day in Babylon: The Black Power Movement and American Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 66.

an admission by black students that they did not have the power to go it alone. This decision demonstrated the powerlessness felt by the BSL members.

The BSL-Moratorium Committee coalition brought together the two most "radical" students groups on campus. The BSL's turn towards Black Power proved threatening to even Catholic racial liberals who espoused the peaceful integration of black students into the Villanova campus. With their emphasis on direct action, the Moratorium Committee represented the impulses of the New Left student movement on Villanova's campus.[63] The combination of these two student groups into a single coalition carried with it enormous potential to bring about change.

Therefore, an analysis of the BSL-Moratorium Committee protest and its impact reveals the splintering of the liberal consensus on campus. On the one side, the BSL and Moratorium students were pursuing far-reaching changes which threatened to have a dramatic impact on the campus culture. On the other, the Student Government Association and the administration sought to downplay and to manage the demands being made by the combined effort of the radicalized students.

The protest began when the BSL students, with the blessing of the Moratorium Committee, drew up the list of demands.[64] On February 18, 1970, the *Villanovan* published the petition. Coalition members dropped off the demands at the office of Father Welsh but the president was not in the office to receive them. Though not an exhaustive

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[63] For more on the differences between traditional liberals and New Left, see Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984), 310; see also Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantan Books, 1993).

[64] Moser, interview with author.

list, the entreaties included: no tuition increase, unlimited class cuts, more black students on campus, more black faculty members, assistance with housing issues, and better food service. Some of the demands were very far-reaching, including the elimination of a core curriculum and the theology course requirement.[65] The coalition also demanded a statement from Villanova criticizing the role of the United States in Vietnam. The items listed on the petition presented by the students to the administration were consistent with demands at other protests that occurred during the same time period.[66]

The coalition's tactics came under fire. The opposition expressed by the students and administration demonstrated a split in the liberal consensus. SGA president Mike Lotito explained that while he was sympathetic to the demands of the BSL and Moratorium Committee coalition, he could not "formally support them" as the issue was a "basic disagreement in philosophy." Lotito indicated that the coalition favored a "mass movement show of support for their cause" and that due to his position he favored different tactics. Lotito favored orderly discourse. In an interview with the *Villanovan*, unnamed coalition representatives said that they believed that Lotito was not sympathetic to their demands. Furthermore, the protestors added that they believed Lotito viewed the combined BSL-Moratorium relationship with disdain.[67] It appeared that the existence of an accord between activist white students and increasingly radicalized black students - however fleeting - proved troubling to the Villanova student body.

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[65] Margaret McCarvill, "BSL Moratorium Seeks Answers," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1970.

[66] Van Deburg, *New Day in Babylon*, 68.

[67] Chuck Williams, "An Interview with Coalition Representatives," *Villanovan*, 25 February 1970.

The leaders of the BSL believed that the Student Government Association, in speaking out against the coalition, cowered in the face of opposition by the Villanova administration. It was widely known that University president Father Welsh was no fan of student protest movements. In November 1969, University president Father Welsh gave a speech to the Italian-American Club in Wayne and spoke of the national student protest movements. Welsh's speech was quoted extensively in the *Suburban and Wayne Times* and his remarks were reprinted in the *Villanovan*. Welsh lamented:

> I have about had it. I am willing to engage in dialogue, but the students are not interested in dialogue, but only in their own views… We have had the cult of youth too long. We need a recrudescence of values.[68]

In the wake of rumors of a protest march by the coalition, there was speculation that Father Welsh was compiling a list of student leaders who were potential troublemakers. Williams was told that he was on that list. Furthermore, Williams recalled that Welsh had threatened the expulsion of certain members of the BSL if there were any signs of disruption. This threat did not deter Williams from participating in the process.[69]

White Villanova students also expressed concern about the BSL-Moratorium protest. *Villanovan* columnist Tom Watson questioned the authority of the BSL and Moratorium coalition to speak on behalf of the student body. Specifically, Watson was concerned with the recommendation that the core curriculum and the mandatory theology courses be abandoned, a demand he called "irresponsible." Watson called for dialogue on the issue but suggested that the groups must have the requisite authority to enter into

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[68] Contosta, *Villanova 1842-1992*, 219.

[69] Williams, interview with author.

those discussions. Watson asked, "Father Welsh can speak for the University administration but can the BSL and the Vietnam Moratorium Committee speak for the student body?"[70]

BSL member Richard Walker responded to Watson's column and attempted to clarify the core curriculum issue while also addressing the issue of representation. Walker indicated that the students were seeking not a total abandonment of the core curriculum but they attempted to provide choice for the student body. According to Walker, the ultimate goal was "a more socially and morally aware student" and he believed that providing more choice in the curriculum would lead to students being able to take more classes that would, upon graduation, help them to combat "pollution, racism, war, and humanity."[71] In terms of the issue of whether the BSL and Moratorium were authorized to speak on behalf of the student body, Walker argued that there existed a "situation where you have almost ineffective student representation and a lack of communication between the students and the guiding forces of the University." This provided further evidence of the lack of communication and mistrust between the BSL and the Student Government Association. In the end, Walker asserted that the BSL and Moratorium Committee" just thought something should have been done so they did it."[72]

The BSL and the Moratorium Committee spent much of the spring 1970 semester meeting with various University administrators and would eventually make progress on

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[70] Tom Watson, "Various Unrelated Questions," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1970.

[71] Richard Walker, "BSL Demands Defended," *Villanovan*, 22 April 1970.

[72] Ibid.

some of their demands and made precious little headway on others. Coalition members met with President Father Welsh on March 1, 1970, to discuss the demands. Moser, the student leader of the Moratorium Committee, described Father Welsh's response to the demands as "vague and unsatisfactory." Both sides agreed to meet with a larger group of administrators to discuss the demands in detail. BSL members did not wait for this meeting to occur and went to meet with Deans and other administrators individually.

On March 18, 1970, the *Villanovan* reported on the status of the BSL-Moratorium Committee coalition demands. There was significant progress made with regard to some of the proposals and precious little movement on some of the other issues. In terms of recruitment, Father George Burrell, O.S.A., the Dean of Admissions, suggested that black alumni or students accompany athlete recruiters and try to recruit non-athletes on the same trips. The *Villanovan* reported that several meetings were held between the student coalition and the theology department. Although the discussions were deemed to be productive, there was no movement on the coalition's demand to drop the theology course requirements. The same could be said for the meetings held with the Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee, as there was no promise to overhaul or eliminate the core curriculum.[73]

Substantially more progress was made on student life issues. A meeting was held on March 5, 1970, between the BSL, Father Welsh, and several student life administrators. The BSL immediately received an assurance from Father Charles Tirrell, O.S.A., Dean of Students, that they would be granted office space for the organization. In terms of the discrimination in off-campus housing, there was an agreement reached that

[73] Margaret McCarvill, "BSL Moratorium Seek Answers," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1970.

Villanova would send a letter to landlords to question them on "their attitudes towards accepting blacks and foreign students." Landlords who indicated that they would not rent to these students would be placed on a list which indicated that they practiced discrimination.[74]

With regard to on-campus housing, the coalition demanded a review of the manner in which beds were allocated to students who were recruited by the Social Action Committee. The *Villanovan* reported that the order of priority had been: 1) out-of-state needy students, 2) out-of-state students, 3) local needy students, and 4) local students. The BSL-Moratorium Coalition sought to increase the chances of local needy students to receive on-campus housing in order to "enable disadvantaged students from the Philadelphia area to work and study in a more stable environment." The administration agreed to change the order of priority so that needy local students would be considered the second priority.[75]

National issues proved much more intractable. The Moratorium Committee could not get the University to budge on the Vietnam War. Father Welsh stated that he believed that a statement from Villanova University would have "very little effect on Washington." The *Villanovan* reported that a "lively discussion" ensued but, ultimately, those who were seeking a favorable response from the administration on the issue of the war walked away from the meeting unsatisfied.[76]

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[74] Margaret McCarvill, "BSL Moratorium Seek Answers," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1970.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

The results of the BSL-Moratorium protest demonstrated that when the moral legitimacy of the claims was clear and it benefited the University, the administration was often willing to respond positively. However, the University administration was unwilling to bend on demands which were central to the institution's mission as a Catholic liberal arts school. For instance, there was little movement on the demands to drop the theology course requirement or to provide choice within the core curriculum requirements.[77]As Father Welsh stated in the fall of 1970, the administration of the University indicated that it wanted to be helpful to an extent and that it was sympathetic to the demands.

Yet, the BSL-Moratorium protest also demonstrated that the University operated in a largely reactive mode. When the takeover of the Dean's office in 1969 produced only token action on some of the BSL's demands, the BSL was forced to regroup and to enter into a more public protest movement with the Moratorium Committee. To achieve any real progress on issues which concerned black students, such as increasing black student enrollment, it was evident that it would take persistent effort by the BSL.

One thing was clear. By the fall semester of 1970, the priorities of white student activists appeared to begin to shift. The war in Vietnam and the issues of parietals (the visitation policies in residence halls for members of the opposite sex) began to take precedence. During the 1970-1971 academic year, the discourse of race and discrimination in the pages of the *Villanovan* slowed to a trickle as the parietals issue

[77] Indeed, to this day, Villanova has these requirements in place, though they have been modified since the late-1960s. Currently, the theology requirement is met by taking two courses. One is an introductory course focused on Christianity and the second is an upper-level course which can be fulfilled by taking courses in non-Catholic subjects such as Peacemaking,

emerged. Finally, a mass sit-in in April 1971 over the issue of parietals took place demonstrating the primacy of students' rights issues in the hearts and minds of white Villanova students.

The BSL-Moratorium protest marked the end of the liberal consensus on race. The formation of a coalition of the most radical student elements, which were not all that radical in a relative sense, divided the campus. Some white Villanovans supported the far-reaching changes espoused by the BSL-Moratorium coalition while the majority of white students appeared to reject their ideas as undesirable. In the end, this episode demonstrated that Villanova was unsuccessful in resolving the conflict between the University's public support for integration and the institutional transformation which would make this possible. This divide exposed the limits and contradictions of Catholic racial liberalism.

Tension Over Race and Space

Throughout the late 1960s, housing remained an area of tension between black Villanova students and the administration. Indeed, the availability of reasonable and non-discriminatory housing off-campus was one of the demands articulated by the Moratorium-BSL coalition. The examination of the housing situation for black students reveals the contradiction between Villanova's professed acceptance of black students and the reality of their lived experience. Simply put, as a result of their experiences with both on-campus and off-campus housing, black Villanova students did not feel included in the Villanova community.

The on-campus housing situation frustrated many black Villanova students. Bob Whitehead was assigned a single room in the corner of Austin for his freshman year. It did not take Whitehead long to notice that there were two other athletes on his floor – Sam Sims and Gene Arthur – who were also assigned corner rooms. Whitehead immediately felt marginalized by the Villanova community. He believed that it was Villanova's way of telling them that "there was a place for us – in the corner."[78] Hardge Davis described the preferential treatment offered to white students during the housing process on campus. Davis asserted that, on Villanova's campus, "nothing is geared to black people." "If they happen to be going to room a white and a black guy together," Davis argued, "they ask the white guy if he'd mind living with a black. They never ask the black guy if he'd mind living with a white."[79] The concern for white students' reaction to having a black roommate but not the other way around served as one clear example of the privilege associated with being a white student at Villanova during this time period.

In 1970, the social situation for black Villanova students improved when they began congregating in the newly-renovated lounge of Austin Hall. This space was not intended by the University to be the black student lounge but gradually black students took it over. At first, the lounge was an integrated space with white students and black students using it together to study and socialize, albeit in their respective groups. Yet, as the African American students began to congregate there more frequently and in greater

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[78] Whitehead, interview with author.

[79] "Black Villanova – Progress??"

numbers, the white students began to abandon the area.[80] Through a process of self-segregation, the Austin Hall lounge became known across campus as the area where the black students hung out. Given the less-than-desirable housing conditions and campus social climate for black students, they took great comfort and pride in their new space. The Austin Hall lounge became an important gathering place for black students to socialize during the day and this was the place where they would eventually hold the weekly BSL meetings.

The lounge was even more important as a social center. This is where black Villanova student Napoleon Andrews learned to play pinochle and then perfect his game. Even self-described "serious students" like Al Pride often found himself wasting too much time in Austin Hall playing pinochle.[81] The BSL eventually petitioned for and received an office in this area, further cementing its claims on the space. This office was utilized by the leaders of the BSL to continue to plan events, such as Black Week, which would emphasize racial pride and educate the Villanova community on the realities of being black in American society.

Black Student League's Black Week – March 1970

Villanova's first ever Black Week in March 1970 was designed to raise awareness of issues of black equality and social justice. The week featured high profile speakers such as former heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali and civil rights leader Roy Innis as well as performances and social events. At the outset of Black Week, BSL leader

[80] Andrews, interview with author.

[81] Al Pride, telephone interview with author, digital recording, January 27, 2012.

James Anderson wrote a letter to explain the goals behind the establishment of Black Week. Anderson declared that the BSL hoped that "this novel experience will provide stimuli for enjoyment, awareness and involvement." In a message seemingly directed towards white Villanovans, Anderson assured them, "Do not feel inhibited or disconcerted over the continual emphasis given to "Black or Blackness" during the week, for such terms are synonymous with "Humaneness" for which we all should strive…"[82]

Interestingly, Anderson's assertion that "humaneness" was synonymous with "Black or Blackness" demonstrated an awareness of the possible limitations of a Black Power movement on a predominately white campus. In emphasizing the broad continuum of ideas associated with the Black Power movement, Anderson could deflect any criticism of the term "Black Power," which was associated with violence and hatred in some circles. Anderson presciently anticipated resistance to the use of language which might be perceived as exclusionary.

Nonetheless, an editorial in the *Villanovan* urged all Villanova students to support the activities of Black Week. The editors criticized the Villanova student culture, declaring the "apathy which filters through the classrooms and corridors of Villanova is the same brand that contributed to the enslavement of black Africans three centuries ago, and that continues right here amidst the fruits of free enterprise, our beloved Main Line…" "Black Week is an obvious attempt by one group within our loosely defined University Community," the editors opined, "to foster a little more understanding, and a little more hope, in an area that needs quite a lot of both qualities." The editorial ended

[82] James Anderson, "Black Week – Why," *Villanovan*, 11 March 1970.

with a passionate plea for all Villanovans to attend the Black Week events.[83] Here again, the *Villanovan* demonstrated support for the goal of the black student movement to educate the campus community about racial issues and to instill a sense of cultural pride.

Boxing great Muhammad Ali's appearance highlighted the week's activities. Ali was a both a Black Power and New Left hero. The fighter was convicted of dodging the draft in June 1967 and was stripped of his title. His sentence would ultimately be overturned by the United States Supreme Court in June 1971. In the meantime, Ali was traveling around the United States speaking on college campuses about the war in Vietnam and about civil rights for black Americans. In the spring 1970, Ali was living in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia. Ed Collymore, serving as advisor to the BSL at this time, and several students from the BSL went to Ali's home to convince him to come speak at Villanova. They went directly to Ali because they heard that he was commanding a hefty speaking fee if his agent was involved. The BSL received a small budget from the University to conduct their business but could not afford the fee. Collymore and the students told him they did not have a lot of money and they convinced him to accept the invitation.[84]

Ali's appearance in front of 1200 people in the Fieldhouse represented a strained and awkward moment for the campus community. The evening started off well as Father Joseph Bradley, O.S.A., the University chaplain, welcomed the audience and praised the BSL for their work in sponsoring what he termed the "first annual" Black Week. *Villanovan* reporter Linda Kerrigan indicated that the main focus of Ali's talk was his

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[83] "Yes, Apapthy!" *Villanovan*, 11 March 1970.

[84] Collymore, interview with author.

recommendation for "black geographical, cultural and economic separation from America's white society." Ali labeled African Americans who wished to integrate as "Frankensteins created by whites." Kerrigan described an uncomfortable part of the speech where Ali tried to gauge where the audience stood on the question of integration versus separation. He asked for a show of hands and when he received little interest for either solution, he appeared to be agitated. "Blacks," he asserted, "have processed minds." Only "Uncle Toms", Ali said, "opposed separation." The speech appeared to have ended abruptly as Ali cut the question and answer period short and left the stage after he declared "my wife is holding dinner for me."[85]

A theatrical performance by students led by BSL vice president Farrell Foreman was one of the more original programs sponsored during the week. The performance featured skits written, directed and acted out by BSL members about their daily experiences as black students on Villanova's predominately white campus. Foreman indicated that the purpose of the performance was to" let the white members in attendance see what some of the Black experience was like."[86] At the invitation of the BSL, Muhammad Ali returned to Villanova to attend the performance on Villanova's campus. He indicated he was pleased with the performance and said he had been asked to bring the performance to other colleges, including LaSalle University. In fact, Ali was so impressed with the performance at Villanova that he also attended the LaSalle performance, simply to show support for the BSL.[87]

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[85] Linda Kerrigan, "Ali at Field House," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1970.

[86] Chuck Williams, "Black Week," *Villanovan*, 18 March 1970.

In spite of the BSL's efforts to bring awareness to the issues faced by black students on campus, racial tensions on campus persisted. In April 1970, these tensions were evident to *Villanovan* writers covering the intramural basketball championship game in April 1970. The game pitted the all-white Jets against the all-black Black Panthers. *Villanovan* writers Rick Kolman and Bill Brennan described the action in the following manner:

> Villanovans, who have been for so long ignoring any thought of a racial problem on campus, saw the game degenerate into an out and out racial confrontation. The real significance of the event was not in the outcome of the game, but in the attitude of players and spectators alike. Tensions were aroused before the game as Blacks and Whites filled opposite sides of the gym, and inflamed during the game by loud jeering, clenched fists, unusually hard contact, unnecessary noise (drum and singing) and a general lack of sportsmanship on the part of players and onlookers. The game was thus torn out of the realm of athletics and into the touchy problem of race at Villanova. On the court, Blacks and whites were concerned with something other than athletic victory, and this is where the problem lies. It is, of course, impossible to present simple solutions. The important thing now is the realization of the problem.[88]

The article on the incident brought out into the open what had been known for several years by African American students on campus, but was often denied by many white students and the administration. Race mattered at Villanova.

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In March 1970, a team from the Middles States Commission on Higher Education visited Villanova's campus to conduct an evaluation as part of the accreditation process. Despite the upheaval of the 1969-1970 academic year, the Middle States evaluators

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[87] Freeman, interview with author.

[88] Rick Kolman and Bill Brennan, "Black vs. White Basketball," *Villanovan*, 29 April 1970.

gained the general impression that students are" loyal to the University." The panel concluded the report by stating that there was, in general, a "quiet optimism" which was "the prevailing mood on the Villanova campus." They further detected "an air of expectancy, an apparent confidence" that boded well for the University's future.[89] In arriving at this conclusion, the evaluation team ignored a lot of the evidence of student disgruntlement. Both white and black students had their issues with the administration.

Despite their frustration, black Villanova students had reason for some optimism as the University entered the decade of the 1970s. In the fall 1969, the number of black students on Villanova's campus climbed to 50 out of 5000 undergraduates.[90] Furthermore, the number of black students who were not on athletic scholarships outnumbered those who black students who were for the first time since the 1940s. There was reason to believe that these numbers would continue to rise as the Office of Social Action was established and Villanova's first black administrator had been hired. The BSL was effective in unifying black students and in pressing their demands on campus. Whether or not this optimism would translate into significant gains for the black student movement on campus remained to be seen. This is the story of the next chapter.

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[89] Report of the Inspection of Villanova University by an Evaluating Committee of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1970, VUA-21, folder 07-06, Middle States Evaluation (Review), 1970, VUA.

[90] John Gillespie, "Blacks Only One Percent at Villanova," *Evening Bulletin*, July 20 1969.

CHAPTER 5

"ALBATROSS AROUND OUR NECKS:" THE STRUGGLE TO MOVE VILLANOVA FORWARD, 1970-1985

The history of affirmative action in higher education in the 1970s and 1980s is the story of the unfulfilled hopes of integration promised by the civil rights movement. The belief that color-blind public policies would be able to transcend the effects of racial discrimination dominated the discourse of the early civil rights movement. The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act provided the legal groundwork to achieve this aim. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act specifically prohibited spending federal funds in higher education institutions that discriminated on the basis of race color or national origin. By the late 1960s, however, it was evident that race-neutral programs of nondiscrimination would fail to guarantee equal opportunity in higher education. The enrollment of African Americans rose only slightly as a result of a pattern of non-compliance by colleges and non-enforcement from the federal government.

By the 1970s, therefore, affirmative action programs designed to increase minority enrollment were common in higher education. These programs were lauded by racial liberals - including Catholic racial liberals - who sought to advance equality of opportunity for African American in higher education. At Villanova, the Office for Social Action, established in 1969, implemented programs designed to enhance the enrollment of black students. Furthermore, in the early 1970s, the Social Action Committee of the

University Senate emerged as the leader in advancing minority student enrollment and for the promotion of affirmative action in hiring of staff and faculty.

While Catholic racial liberals supported efforts to increase minority enrollment, affirmative action programs began to meet stiff resistance. Conservatives challenged affirmative action on several fronts. Some conservatives argued for admissions policies based on a color-blind rationale, insisting that race-neutral admission policies ensure meritocratic, fair access to higher education. Others went further suggesting that affirmative action programs would "destroy the quality of higher education and posed a threat to the moral vibrancy" of the enterprise.[1] At Villanova, white students began to show weariness over what they perceived as demands for preferential treatment.

This chapter argues that the struggles over minority recruitment and affirmative action at Villanova revealed a last desperate attempt by Catholic racial liberals to keep alive the ideal of integration. They worked to change the campus climate by advocating for increased numbers of African American faculty, staff, and students on campus. Yet, the resistance displayed by those who opposed compensatory programs for minority students exposed the limits of change. In the end, through a pattern of administrative inaction and organizational subterfuge, the conservative forces won out as black student enrollment declined and the number of black staff and faculty remained low. Yet, as will be demonstrated, their victory was a partial one as the University took decisive action to address the issue of minority student enrollment in 1985.

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[1] Howard Ball, *The* Bakke *Case: Race, Education, and Affirmative Action* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2000), 15; see also discussion of Spiro Agnew's resistance to the University of Michigan's program in Matthew Johnson, "The Origins of Diversity, Managing Race at the University of Michigan, 1963-2006," (PhD diss., Temple University, 2011).

As this struggle played out throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, black students at Villanova were left to try to make sense of it all. As a result of the low number of black students and a lack of strong leadership, the black student movement floundered. While the campus debated the merits of efforts to recruit more students like them, black students were left feeling unwelcome. Indeed, an examination of the campus climate at the beginning of the decade reveals a campus climate where African Americans were accepted but did not feel included.

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Campus Climate in the Early 1970s

When Napoleon Andrews stepped off of the Paoli Local train and onto Villanova's campus for the first time in the fall of 1970, he felt like he was entering another world. The resident of Baltimore, whose neighborhood was being destroyed by failed urban renewal projects and the devastation caused by men going to and returning from Vietnam, decided to attend Villanova University without ever having seen the campus. Donning a coat and tie because he thought they were still mandatory, he dragged his steamer trunk across the tree-lined paths until he found the residence life office. When he went to check in and receive his room assignment, the woman behind the desk looked up at his smiling black face and broad shoulders and told him he was in Austin Hall, the dormitory "where all of the athletes stay" she told him. There was only one problem; Napoleon Andrews was not a student-athlete. Andrews was a member of the second incoming class of students under a new program called the Academic Advancement

Program. Throughout his time at Villanova, Andrews struggled to feel accepted on a campus where he was often treated as different.[2]

Andrews stepped onto a university that was publicly committed to integration but still sharply divided along racial lines. The tension between professed values of integration and the lived experience for African American students was exacerbated by the burgeoning Black Power movement. Emboldened by this movement, black students arrived, albeit in small numbers, to Villanova's campus with a strong sense of racial pride and consciousness. They were faced by a white student population that was increasingly preoccupied with students' rights, including visitation rights in the residence halls. At the same time, white Villanova students were also growing increasingly weary and suspicious of the demands made by advocates of Black Power. This often made for uneasy and uncomfortable interactions between black and white students on campus. For black students, this sense of not feeling welcome was compounded by an administration that publicly supported integration of black students yet was prone to inaction in advancing this goal. Despite public pronouncements supporting the integration of African American students, the integration of black students on Villanova's campus remained elusive.

In the early 1970s, black and white students on Villanova's campus did not interact much. The low number of black students on campus created an environment which promoted isolation. Of the interactions between white and black students on campus, one black student observed in the early 1970s that "Villanova, as it exists now,

[2] Andrews, interview with author.

promotes both racism and separatism by following a path of non- contact between minorities, especially blacks, and white students." The student argued that it was "so easy to avoid contact between races when there are so few minority students at Villanova."[3]

Despite the low number of black students on campus, Napoleon Andrews said that the 109 black students who were on Villanova's campus when he arrived in 1970 were "his universe." His transition to this strange environment was eased by the fellowship he found within the community of black students. Andrews recalled how it was expected that black freshmen students would get involved in the BSL. The black students in the upper classes introduced themselves to the freshmen and told them that they would see them at the next BSL meeting.[4]

Not all black students during this time period thought there was unity within the black student community at Villanova. On February 23, 1972, black freshman Jacquelyn Morrell wrote an article in the *Villanovan* on the occasion of the sixth anniversary of the death of Malcolm X. Extolling Malcolm X's call for black Americans to continue the struggle of black nationalism, Morrell chastised the black students at Villanova for not doing enough to carry on his legacy. While Morrell confessed that she was new to Villanova, she insisted that she was "familiar with the apathy and passivity" which tainted "every aspect of black student life." Black students, she said, were "virtually unheard and unrepresented in any other student organization [besides the BSL]." Despite this marginalization, she was disturbed by the "lack of unity and progress of the Black Student League." Morrell declared that the "potential power of a group like the BSL in an

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[3] John Taylor, "Villanova: PR Man for Racism and Separatism?," *Villanovan*, 19 April 1972.

[4] Andrews, interview with author.

environment like Villanova is infinite," split by "petty differences, ego trips and selfish ambitions."[5]

Andrews believed that his attitude towards Villanova and the white student population reflected how many within the black student community felt. Andrews was interested in working the "system" and then getting out. He did not go out of his way to socialize with white students as he believed they held different values than the black students. Andrews was turned off by what he perceived as the binge-drinking culture of the white students. Beyond that, though, Andrews just felt more comfortable with black students with whom he believed had a shared experience. Of this time period, Andrews indicated that it was the "racial politics of the day that kept us separate and proud." According to Andrews, the stance which black students took was "not adversarial or violent but separatist."[6]

Normadene Murphy had a similar experience to Andrews which led to her feeling singled out on campus. In 1972, Murphy, an African American student from West Philadelphia, arrived on campus as a freshman. During her first semester in the residence hall, Murphy and her fellow black students in Good Counsel Hall came across a master list of the dormitory's residents. They noticed something peculiar on the list. The lowercase letter "c" was handwritten on the list next to the names of each of the black students in the hall. The students knew that the "c" stood for "colored." When the students confronted residence life officials they were told that the "c" did not stand for

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[5] Jacquelyn Morrell, "In Honor of Malcolm X," *Villanovan*, 23 February 1973.

[6] Andrews, interview with author.

"colored" but instead stood for "Collymore." The implication was that all of the students were recruited by Ed Collymore, the director of the Office of Social Action, and were members of the Academic Advancement Program (AAP). The AAP program was designed for students from underserved areas who demonstrated aptitude to do college-level work but did not have the standardized test scores for regular admission. But, there was a problem with this analysis according to Murphy. Not all of the black residents in Good Counsel Hall were recruited to go to Villanova by Collymore and not all were a part of the Academic Advancement Program. Stung by the fact that the administration felt the need to categorize and to mark differently the black students in the hall, Murphy said that for the rest of her time at Villanova she felt like she had an "albatross around her neck."[7]

Outside of her residence hall, Murphy said the campus environment felt "sterile" and that she felt like an outsider. Murphy said she often felt like a "novelty" on campus. Indeed, Murphy recalled that she was the only black student in many of her classes and this made her feel different. She remembers that when it came time to pick a partner for a group project or a laboratory experiment she was often left without a partner. Faced with these snubs, Murphy joined the black students in her hall to create their "own little world."[8]

Indeed, throughout the 1970s, black Villanova students felt isolated and unwelcomed on the predominately white campus. These feelings demonstrated that the

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[7] Normadene Murphy, interview with author, digital recording, March 30, 2012.

[8] Ibid.

campus, while desegregated, did not experience the integration espoused by Catholic racial liberals. Yet, there were pockets of support to which black could turn. Within the BSL, black students found a social life and a sense of solidarity. Furthermore, the Office of Social Action also provided support for black students on campus.

Office of Social Action and the Academic Advancement Program

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Office for Social Action was created in the fall of 1969. One of the office's primary functions was to establish and administer the new Academic Advancement Program (AAP). At the recommendation of the Social Action Council (the precursor to the Social Action Committee), Villanova established the AAP program to enhance the recruitment of students from economically challenged environments where education was underfunded. The program's purpose was to "identify students who would not normally be admitted because of poor performance on standardized tests, inadequate high school preparation, or both" and to enroll and support them at Villanova.[9] Of the students enrolled in the program, Collymore attested they were "highly motivated" and that the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was "not a valid way of selecting" the most qualified applicants.[10]

Two misconceptions which plagued the program from the outset were that it was a program for minorities only and that the participants received full scholarships.

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[9] Villanova University, Middle States Institutional Self-Study, February 1980, VUA-21, "Reports, Middle States Institutional Self-Study," Box 07, folder 04, VUA.

[10] Michael DeRosa and Bob Lancelotti, "Community Action Office Instituted: First at V.U.," *Villanovan*, 17 September 1969.

Although many of the students enrolled in the program were from the Philadelphia area and were classified as minority, the program was open to all students who met certain economic standards. There was also a strong misconception that all of the AAP program participants were on full scholarship. In an interview with the *Villanovan*, Collymore tried to correct this by declaring: "People coming in are not all on scholarship… they follow the same procedure" with regard to applying for financial aid. Collymore suggested that many of the students coming into the program were black because of the program being housed under his office.[11] Collymore felt the need to clarify the role as a result of the perceived white backlash to special privileges being afforded to black applicants.

Despite these criticisms, the AAP program was, in fact, not designed to be a minority recruitment program. The main criterion for eligibility for the AAP program was economic need. Yet, the program became the main vehicle to recruit minority students as the University had no other effective mechanisms absent the AAP program and the intercollegiate athletics program. In fact, the University relied on Collymore to fulfill the role of minority recruiter. Collymore carried out this task by attending many college days in Philadelphia area high schools, such as West Philadelphia High School.

High school senior Normadene Murphy and her friend Cheryl Dennis were roaming the halls of West Philadelphia High School during the school's annual college fair day. Each classroom was occupied by representatives of the various colleges and universities proudly displaying colorful brochures and smiling faces. At this

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[11] Anita DeBartolomeo, "Alumnus Directs Social Action," *Villanovan*, 20 September 1972.

predominately black high school, the rooms with representatives from Temple University, Cheney State University, and Howard University were overcrowded with prospective students. Murphy and Dennis stumbled across a room where Murphy spotted a "young, good-looking gentleman sitting all by himself." Murphy asked where he was from and Collymore said Villanova. Collymore asked the women if they would like to hear more about the school. Intrigued, Murphy and Dennis decided to listen to his pitch. Collymore told them about Villanova's academic offerings and then informed them about a new program called the Academic Advancement Program. This program, Collymore explained, had support services available and they could also qualify for financial aid. Murphy and Dennis liked what they heard and decided to apply to Villanova.[12]

Murphy's story demonstrated the ad-hoc nature of Villanova's efforts to recruit minority students. There was no comprehensive University plan, outside of the AAP program, designed to increase the enrollment of black students. Therefore, the responsibility for black student recruitment resided within the Office of Social Action, and not the Office of Admissions. While struggling to increase black student enrollment, the Office of Social Action began to take up the related cause of affirmative action in the hiring of faculty and staff. Indeed, the Social Action staff clung to the ideal of integration and believed that it could be achieved through the increased presence of African Americans on campus.

Within Catholic higher education, the establishment of a program designed to increase enrollment of minority students was not unique to Villanova. Boston College established a similar program in 1968. Though its undergraduate enrollment was 7000

[12] Murphy, interview with author.

students compared to Villanova's 5000 students, Boston College was considered a peer school for Villanova during this time period. Both institutions were Catholic, suburban, and had solid academic reputations. Both schools had well-developed athletic programs and, in fact, they were rivals on the football field and on the basketball court. Boston College appeared to face many of the same difficulties in the recruitment of African American students and this led to the founding of the Negro Talent Search program. The management of this new venture, however, took a radically different course than the AAP program at Villanova.

Boston College's Negro Talent Search Program

In February 1968, Rev. Michael Walsh, S.J., president of Boston College, announced the establishment of the Negro Talent Search program. He committed $100,000 over four years to the effort of recruiting black students to Boston College. Boston College enrolled 34 students under this program for the fall of 1968. In the fall 1969, the enrollment of black students under this program more than doubled to 75.[13]

On March 18, 1970, black Boston College students mounted a takeover of their main administration building - Gasson Hall - to raise awareness about black student issues on campus. Similar to the Villanova black students' protest in February 1969, black students at Boston College demanded more scholarship money, more black faculty, and more courses on the black experience in the United States. Feeling isolated on the outskirts of Boston, the students also demanded transportation so that they could take

[13] "Office of AHANA Student Programs History," Boston College, accessed January 21, 2012, http://www.bc.edu/offices/ahana/about/history.html.

advantage of the social life found in the black communities around Boston. The protest ended when the administration gave in to some of the student demands, including the provision of two vehicles for their use and a pledge to increase enrollment of black students to 10 percent of the student body.[14] This public commitment for a Catholic institution of higher education was unique and far-reaching.[15]

If this pledge by the administration was not ground-breaking enough, the events of January 1971 represented the "extreme end of the spectrum" of Catholic higher education and race at this time.[16] In January 1971, A. Robert Phillips, director of the newly re-named Black Talent Search program, resigned his position over a dispute concerning the budget. The college administration decided not to replace him but instead allowed the students of the Negro Talent Search program to assume leadership of the program. Al Folkhard, director of the College of Arts and Sciences honors program, supervised the students, but many of the duties fell directly upon the students themselves. Julianne Malveaux, a black Boston College student and current president of Bennett College for Women, called the experience "empowering." "We had the applications come to us," Malveaux remembered, "and we made admission decisions." The students

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[14] William Bole, "Power of the People," *Boston College Magazine*, Spring 2009, accessed January 21, 2012, http://www.bcm.bc.edu/issues/spring_2009.

[15] Matthew Johnson details a similar struggle and a subsequent promise to increase minority student enrollment to ten percent at the University of Michigan in 1970 in his recent dissertation, see Matthew Johnson, "The Origins of Diversity, Managing Race at the University of Michigan, 1963-2006," (PhD diss., Temple University, 2011), 61.

[16] Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) as quoted in William Bole, "Power of the People," *Boston College Magazine*, Spring 2009, accessed January 21, 2012, http://www.bcm.bc.edu/issues/spring_2009.

also made decisions on academic status, including whether students should be dismissed for academic reasons. [17]

The Negro Talent Search program experienced several difficulties while under the leadership of the students. The program ran into conflicts with the admissions office that was also charged with recruiting black students. Admissions office staff resisted the idea of student leadership and felt that the effort would be best served through a more coordinated effort. The black students themselves were split on the idea, many of them citing the burdens that running the program placed on them. Despite these obstacles, student leadership of the program lasted for several years. In 1976, Boston College's president, J. Donald Monan, S.J., created the Office of Minority Student Affairs and placed the responsibility for recruitment and retention of minority students under this office.

The Boston College program was matchless. Fabio Rojas, author of *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* asserted that he could not find "a single place where students had such sweeping control over admission and other core administrative responsibilities."[18] The Boston College experience demonstrated the lengths to which some Catholic colleges and universities were willing to go to increase their enrollment of minority students. The target of 10 percent minority enrollment set by Boston College was aggressive and

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[17] Bole, "Power of the People."

[18] Fabio Rojas, *From Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007) as quoted in William Bole, "Power of the People," *Boston College Magazine*, Spring 2009, accessed January 21, 2012, http://www.bcm.bc.edu/issues/spring_2009.

ambitious. Villanova would make no such promises. In fact, as will be demonstrated, Villanova officials were pessimistic about their ability to exceed a minority student enrollment of *three percent* of the total student population. This demonstrated that the optimism associated with Catholic racial liberalism at Villanova was clearly a distant memory.

The Struggle to Implement Affirmative Action

Throughout the late 1960s and into the 1970s, black Villanova students complained about the lack of black faculty and administration. The few black faces that students saw on campus worked in the dining halls or in the physical plant. To black students and their allies, this was an affront to the image of an inclusive campus. Nevertheless, for black students and their allies, the idea of affirmative action held out hope that Villanova would increase the number of minority faculty and staff members.

The genesis of the term "affirmative action" is commonly associated with President Lyndon Johnson's issuance of Executive Order 11246 in 1965. This order required federal contractors to "take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed, and that employees are treated during employment, without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin." Nicholas Lemann, however, found the policy's origins in President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925, promulgated in 1961, which prohibited discrimination in federal government hiring on the basis of race, religion or national origin.[19] Historian Ira Katznelson argues that it was Johnson who

[19]Nicholas Lemann, "Taking Affirmative Action Apart," *New York Times Magazine*, June 11, 1995; For more on the origins of affirmative action policy see Hugh Davis Graham, *The Civil*

advised Kennedy that the federal government's nondiscrimination clause for government contracts should be changed from merely avoiding discrimination to the more forceful language of "affirmative duty" to employ minority applicants. [20]

After Johnson's issuance of Executive Order 11246, Katznelson argues that federal agencies and federal courts soon "required that employers and educators take race into account to rectify the second-class status of African Americans."[21] Affirmative action would be further consolidated under the administration of Richard Nixon as he shifted the burden to focus on the impact of these programs. The "Philadelphia Plan" required the construction trade to ensure that minority workers were hired in proportion to their percentage in the labor force. Finally, in the early 1970s, the Nixon administration endorsed a standard of "underutilization" which could be used compared the percentage of minority workers in any given area of employment with percentage of available minority workers.[22]

Villanova's Non-Discrimination Statement

Affirmative action's origins at Villanova began meekly with the adoption of a policy of nondiscrimination. In 1968, Father Welsh, the University's president, formed a

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Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy, 1960-1972 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); John Skretny, *The Ironies of Affirmative Action: Politics, Culture and Justice in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Terry H. Anderson, *The Pursuit of Fairness: A History of Affirmative Action* (New York: Oxford University Pres, 2004) .

[20] Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), 145.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

small committee to discuss the development of a policy of non-discrimination in employment practices at Villanova. At their meeting of October 28, 1969, the Board of Trustees of Villanova University passed a resolution on non-discrimination called the "Equal Opportunity Employment Policy." This policy required Villanova to "provide employment, compensation, promotion and other conditions of employment without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, sex or age except where age or sex are essential, bona fide occupational requirements." Furthermore, all hiring decisions should be based on "uniformly applied standards of ability, training, experience, past performance, health and other factors…" The statement concluded that "in recognition of a major national problem, the policy includes the seeking out and the cultivating of additional sources of qualified applicants from minority groups."[23]

Despite the adoption of the non-discrimination policy, there is no evidence that the Board of Trustees' action yielded positive results in terms of the hiring of African American or other minority candidates. Furthermore, there is no evidence as to suggest that anyone was assigned to monitor compliance with the new policy. The failure to ensure accountability and the resultant lack of progress demonstrated the ambivalence with which the administration of Villanova approached the issue of enhanced minority employment. This lack of oversight also demonstrated that, while there was an abstract commitment to the ideals of Catholic racial liberalism, there were limits to its implementation.

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[23] Father Robert Welsh to Joseph Ryan, "Affirmative Action," November 4, 1969, Driscoll Papers, VUA-2/28, "Correspondence Affirmative Action, 1969-1972," box 01, folder 03, VUA.

"The Social Conscience of a University"

In addition, the debate over minority student recruitment illustrated the rupture of the consensus of Catholic racial liberalism. In March 1971, Father Ryan brought attention to this growing cleavage in an article entitled "The Social Conscience of a University," which can be described as a manifesto on the status of "social action" on campus and the recruitment of black students to Villanova.

Most black students enrolled at Villanova were either members of the AAP program or student-athletes. This fact reinforced white stereotypes that the only black students welcomed at Villanova were those who could excel athletically or those who came from an underprivileged background. Father Ryan, reflecting the tenets of Catholic racial liberalism, warned of the dangers of this stereotype. Ryan boldly stated: "there are simply not enough black and other minority students in the undergraduate student body of Villanova." He indicated that he did not make this statement out of an "apostolic feeling of charity" but to point out that "the chief reason for having minority students in the student body is the contribution they make to the education of our majority students." Yet, Ryan believed that he was one of the only administrators at Villanova who recognized the value of having African American students on campus and who wanted to see it change. Ryan lamented: "however, in all honesty, the feeling that I sense on our campus is that not many people are genuinely concerned about the low percentage of minority students or the dim prospects for the future." Furthermore, Ryan declared that "most of the University community seems to feel that minority recruitment falls into the category of social assistance to disadvantaged people and is a luxury which we cannot now afford." "In an atmosphere where people are unaware of the inadequacy of their

education in a de facto segregated situation," Ryan argued, "the need for integration is even greater but less likely.[24] Ryan sensed that most of the campus did not care about the low numbers of black students on campus. The luxury of not having to think about this issue represented a privilege of being white on a predominately white campus.

Absent a strong program to recruit minority students besides athletics, this cemented in the minds of many Villanovans the idea that African American students were either athletes or participants in the AAP program. Despite this fact, the goal of having more minorities on campus was pursued vigorously as men like Collymore and Ryan saw the educational and social benefits of having of increased numbers of black students on campus.

White Student Backlash and the "Black Madness" Controversy

Not all members of the Villanova community viewed the enrollment of more African American students in the same way. Some members of the predominately white Villanova student body demonstrated that it had grown weary of the rhetoric and demands of the Black Power movement. Talking about the white student backlash, higher education historian Helen Horowitz writes:

> Since the years following World War II, many college students had taken pride in crossing racial and class barriers. In the 1970s, the walls went up again. Increased minority enrollment meant one thing when the economic pie was growing larger. But as it shrank, some white undergraduates felt that their privileges were being eroded by opening up admission and financial aid to blacks and browns and by compensatory programs; and they turned hostile to any indication of reverse discrimination.[25]

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[24] Joseph Ryan, "Social Conscience of the University," 24 March 1971.

[25] Horowitz, *Campus Life*, 257.

Indeed, there were indications of this white student backlash expressed in the pages of the *Villanovan* during the early 1970s.

In April 1972, white Villanova student Bruce Wilson wrote an article entitled "Black Madness." Nothing obvious seemed to provoke the article, which stood outside of the reigning liberal orthodoxy. The article amounted to a diatribe on race which exposed the frustrations of one white student. Yet, the reactions that followed demonstrated the tensions between those who held conflicting views on matters of racial justice.

Wilson argued that "the black man is a captive of racial paranoia." Furthermore, Wilson explained that this racial paranoia was defined as a "mental disorder marked by delusion and irrational suspicions." Wilson felt that black Americans harbored at least two delusions – one around the slogan "Black is Beautiful" and the other around the issue of reparations for slavery. With regard to the phrase "Black is Beautiful" Wilson asked: "Is there any bromide as devoid of sense? Is one to believe that simply because a person is black he is beautiful?"[26] On the issue of reparations, Wilson called the demand for reparations "racist." He argued that linking "the enslavers of yesteryear to whites today" was in and of itself a racist statement. In the final paragraph of the article, Wilson hinted at his motivation for writing the article. Wilson stated that the article "was not written as a sociological study, but as a warning." "According to Wilson, "For too long white people have been sitting still, listening to absurd accusations and demands made by fools,

[26] Bruce Wilson, "Black Madness," *Villanovan*, 19 April 1972.

while they remain mute -- later to claim sympathy as their excuse, for cowardice."[27] Wilson's comments reflected the fears that many white Americans had in the wake of the Black Power movement. Wilson appealed to white people to take a stand against what he characterized as irrational behavior on the part of black Americans.

Not surprisingly, the article hit a nerve in the black Villanova community. Their rebuttals were swift and impassioned. The BSL published an official response that dismissed the article out of hand by stating that it was "bigoted and ignorant, thus being unworthy of our anger." The leaders of the BSL were concerned, however, "that Mr. Wilson's opinion could be shared by a great number of students in this Villanova community." Therefore, they worried that a lack of response on their part "might have been misconstrued as apathy or guilt." To Wilson's claim that the black community suffered from racial paranoia, BSL retorted, "Is the lynching of 3,585, Black people between the years of 1889 and 1928 what Mr. Wilson means by paranoia?" With respect to the concept of "Black is Beautiful," BSL responded that "we do not claim that Black is beautiful at the expense that white is ugly." Furthermore, they question "is beauty not in the eye of the beholder?" The BSL ended their letter in somewhat contradictory fashion. On one hand, they praised Wilson for "having the courage to express his beliefs." In a postscript, however, the BSL strongly denounced his views, arguing that they thought he was just "irrational" but also realized that the author was sick too." They ended dismissively by quoting Shakespeare: "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing..." [28]

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[27] Ibid.

Alum Charles Williams, a former member of the BSL and staff writer of the *Villanovan*, echoed BSL's thoughts. At first, Williams hoped that the inclusion of the piece was a joke but then realized that it was "impossible to understand any positive value [that] the injection of such sick humor into an already polarized, insensitive, racist, individualistic society could possibly have toward any kind of future harmony." From there, Williams went after Wilson's logic and arguments. He argued that Wilson lacked knowledge of the "imposition of white, European beauty standards" which caused him to misinterpret the "Black is Beautiful" slogan. Basically, Williams argued that the author knew little about race in America. In the end, Williams suggested that Wilson might want to take advantage of the educational opportunities before him to open his mind. Williams urged the writer to "to find the courage to do something very difficult; seek out a Black student (or students) and/or attend a few classes where such things are being discussed, and intelligently engage in the dialogue."[29]

The published reactions from Villanova's white community demonstrated the promise and limits of Catholic racial liberalism. These replies ranged from support for Wilson's opinion to bitter condemnation. Senior business student John Kent wrote an article which largely supported Wilson's arguments and attempted to analyze the angry responses by black students. Kent argued that the "incredible" response to the article resulted from the "fact that black students don't realize just how racist they are." Furthermore, Kent suggested that "to try to force 'race guilt' upon white men because some of their ancestors may have had slaves; or because some white men now

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[28] The Black Student League, "Related to What?" *Villanovan*, 26 April 1972.

[29] Charles Williams, "On Black Madness," *Villanovan*, 26 April 1972.

discriminate against black men; or because one white man shot a black man; is to encourage black men to be racists…" Kent believed that the answer to racism was "individualism." He believed that "each person is an [sic] unique individual to be judged on his own merits only." [30] Kent's rejection of race as an identifying characteristic and his emphasis on individuality was consistent with the more universal rejection of affirmative action programs by white Americans during this time period.

Trying to lend some academic objectivity to the discussion, Father James Ryan, O.S.A., director of Social Action Programs, attempted to reframe the issue as one that should be analyzed using social science data. Ryan indicated that, although he could not clearly follow the author's argument, he found the "general drift" of the article to be "distasteful." Ryan argued the racial crisis should not be "analyzed on an emotional level." Rather, Ryan argued, "opinions and policies must be based on the available facts such as the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, income figures, employment records… per pupil expenditures in the schools, housing statistics, etc." To be sure, Father Ryan rejected the premise of Wilson's emotional analysis.[31]

While it was heartening to black students and their supporters to see a letter written by a Villanova administrator that didn't embrace Wilson's views, white student support was also evident. The letters of support, however, displayed a proclivity to use language that was insensitive. Jim Markham, a white sophomore began his letter to the editor by suggesting that "the spirit of Mr. Wilson's article is watch out- uppity –niggers 'cause we won't stand it anymore." Markham declared Wilson's attitude was "one we

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[30] St. John Kent, "An Answer To Black Madness," *Villanovan*, 26 April 1972.

[31] James Ryan, untitled letter to editor, *Villanovan*, 26 April 1972.

could probably do without." Without providing any specifics, Markham assured *Villanovan* readers that Wilson's "picture of Black Americans and black opinion is a misleading and false one."[32]

The "Black Madness" controversy exposed the breach within the consensus on Catholic racial liberalism. Although the published reactions to the "Black Madness" article by the white Villanova community were mixed, Markham lamented that the attitude expressed by Wilson was "more likely the rule than the exception."[33] The "Black Madness" controversy, therefore, provided evidence that white *Villanovan* students were clearly weary of, to use Wilson's words, the "absurd demands" made by black Americans.[34] To bring it closer to campus, white Villanovans were concerned over how the demands made by black students over the years – increased minority enrollment, more black studies courses, more black faculty members - might transform the traditional Villanova community.

Father McCarthy's Conservative Administration

The Villanova president stood at the head of this traditional Villanova community. While most Villanova presidents in the postwar period appeared to embrace the principles of Catholic racial liberalism (or at least did not publicly reject them) there is no evidence to suggest Father Edward J. McCarthy, O.S.A., did so. By all accounts, Father McCarthy was a traditionalist in every sense of the word and appeared impervious

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[32] Jim Markham, Letter to Editor, *Villanovan*, 26 April 1972.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Wilson, "Black Madness."

to change in general. McCarthy's conservatism may have been a result of experiences prior to his assumption of the presidency. His conflicts with his fellow Augustinians demonstrated that there was a split with the Augustinian ranks over matters of social justice. Therefore, McCarthy's term (1971-1975) represented a setback for the ideals of the Catholic racial liberalism.

Born in 1912, in Troy, New York, Edward McCarthy graduated from Villanova in 1934 with a degree in philosophy. After his ordination to the priesthood, Father McCarthy graduated from Catholic University of America with a doctorate in history. Father McCarthy's first assignment was to teach history at Villanova which he did so until 1946. In June 1946, he went to the Universidad de San Tomas de Villanueva, in Havana, Cuba, as Dean and professor of history. In 1947 he returned to his teaching position at Villanova College and was appointed as the first Dean of Arts and Sciences (1948-1950) and then Dean of the Graduate and Extension Schools (1950-1953). In 1953 he returned to the Universidad de Villanueva as Academic Vice President. After the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, Father McCarthy and the other Augustinians were arrested. Believing they were going to be executed, the Augustinians were lined up in the school auditorium, but were told instead to leave Cuba immediately. In 1961, McCarthy became the founding president of Biscayne College in Miami, Florida. Biscayne College was opened by the Augustinians as a successor to the Universidad de Villanueva and served mostly Cuban immigrants.[35] Historian David Contosta argues that McCarthy's

[35] Contosta *Villanova University, 1842-1992*, 220.

experiences with the Cuban Revolution may have "made him view any challenge to authority with suspicion."[36]

After there was some student unrest over the issue of parietals of the spring of 1971, McCarthy was selected to bring stability and order to the campus. Yet, McCarthy struck an adversarial tone from the beginning. He declared that violent protests were "intolerable" and that he disapproved of unrestricted visitation between men and women on campus. Furthermore, he declared that students "didn't know enough to determine school policies." Praising his tough stances, the editors of Philadelphia's *Evening Bulletin* and the *Main Line Times* welcomed his return.[37] McCarthy's return marked a turning point in the relationship between the students and the administration. McCarthy's tenure marked one of the most tumultuous times in Villanova's history.

If the students found Father McCarthy inflexible and difficult to work with at times, some of his fellow Augustinians also found life under his administration difficult. Augustinian administrators who tried to make change often became disillusioned and resigned or found themselves being reassigned. This proved problematic to Villanova's black students as some of these administrators, in particular Father Ryan and Father Charles Tirrell, O.S.A., Villanova's Dean of Students, were viewed by black Villanova students as allies.

Father Ryan, director of the Office of Social Action, was outspoken on social justice issues and this placed him at odds with McCarthy. In June 1972, Ryan wrote a

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[36] Ibid., 223.

[37] A Return to Villanova," *Main Line Times*, 9 September 1971; "New Man at Villanova," *Philadelphia Bulletin*, 1 September 1971.

letter to the editor of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in which he was critical of the Cardinal John Krol, then Archbishop of Philadelphia. Ryan characterized Cardinal Krol's opposition of a teacher's union in the Catholic elementary school as "incredible." He sent the letter on University letterhead and signed his name and University title. As a result, Ryan was "reassigned" from his position as Director of Social Action and Collymore was tapped to take over as director effective the fall 1972 semester.[38]

A year later, Father Charles Tirrell, O.S.A., stepped down from his role as Dean of Student Activities. The editors of the *Villanovan* were clearly disappointed when Father Tirrell tendered his resignation, calling him a "buffer between the students and the administration responsible for making decisions." Furthermore he was viewed by the students as one "whom the students could place some semblance of faith." On the reason for his resignation, Tirrell cited conflicts with McCarthy. In a rare moment of publicizing open conflict among Augustinians, Tirrell told the *Villanovan* of his relationship with McCarthy: "As soon as you don't agree with him, he treats you like a little boy and won't accept your judgement [sic] as a professional."[39]

Driscoll Memo on Affirmative Action

While the adherents of Catholic racial liberalism faced an uphill battle to try to make change to the racial status quo during McCarthy's time, the struggle to implement affirmative action continued. In the fall of 1972, the Vice President of Academic Affairs,

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[38] Mike Lotito, "Consistency Questioned," *Villanovan*, 11 October 1972.

[39] "One More Departure," *Villanovan*, 7 March 1973.

Father John Driscoll, O.S.A., sent an interoffice communication to all of the deans and department chairs informing them of the University's obligations under federal law with respect to affirmative action. In legalistic language, Driscoll wrote: "In compliance, with federal legislation and as a guideline for faculty recruitment, I have been directed to call your attention again to Villanova's legal responsibilities with respect to the employment of minority groups." Driscoll further declared that the University must take "affirmative action to overcome the effects of past discrimination." In terms of implementation of the policy, Driscoll indicated that department chairs were "expected to exercise initiative as well as take appropriate action on referrals." The memo provided no specifics on resources to assist department chairs in identifying minority candidates or to assist them with compliance. [40]

The monitoring of the University's affirmative action plan became, by default, part of Edward Collymore's role as the Director of the Office of Social Action. Collymore was already overwhelmed as he was serving as the University's minority student recruiter, the head of the AAP program, the director of community service programs and, increasingly, the disability services coordinator for the entire University. Villanova University's decision to house the responsibility for affirmative action compliance under Collymore's office all but guaranteed that there would not be proper oversight of the program. Furthermore, the University's decision to group all of these functions under the one office in the University with a black administrator further reinforced the notion that racial discrimination was a problem for black people to solve.

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[40] Father John Driscoll, "Faculty Recruitment: Equal Opportunity Employment," undated, Driscoll Papers, VUA-2/28 "Correspondence, Affirmative Action, 1969-1972," box 01, folder 03, VUA.

This action can be seen as a pattern of subterfuge when it came to how the administration dealt with the sticky matters of race.

Fall 1972 Resolution on Minority Students

After Father Ryan was reassigned in the wake of the controversy over his letter-to-the-editor, one of Collymore's first acts as director of the Office of Social Action in the fall of 1972 was to advocate for greater funding for minority students. Collymore and the members of the Social Action Committee drafted a resolution on this issue to present to the University Senate. As a tuition-based institution with a very low endowment, the University was in a difficult financial situation in the early 1970s.

Total undergraduate enrollment declined from 5486 in fall 1973 to 5284 in fall 1974. From this low in 1974, the enrollment increased steadily and reached 5612 in 1977. In 1971, the University received approximately 6000 applications but by 1975 this number declined to approximately 5000. The numbers steadily increased until 1979 when applications reached 6600. By 1983, the number of applications received was 8300.[41] Despite the declining applications and enrollment, there was no evidence that the University considered aggressive recruiting of African American students as a way to bolster applications. One reason for this may have been the limited availability of financial aid due to budget constraints. Villanova relied heavily upon student tuition and fees for almost all of its operating income. In 1977, the *Villanovan* estimated that 96 percent of the University's total operating budget was derived from tuition and fees paid

[41] Contosta, *Villanova 1842-1992*, 232.

by students. Only 1 percent of the budget came from endowment income.[42] As a heavily tuition-based institution, Villanova had few resources to devote to financial aid.

Recognizing this situation, the resolution to enhance enrollment of minority students was carefully crafted so that the increased resources would come from fundraising sources and not the University's operating budget. Therefore, the resolution called on Villanova's fundraising arm, the Office of Development, to "place the highest priority on the solicitation of funds for the support of minority students." In justifying the request, the resolution appealed to the Catholic mission of Villanova by stating: "Whereas Villanova is a Catholic University and committed to the principle of equal educational opportunity…" Furthermore, the motion, espousing Catholic racial liberalism, also declared that "a valid education in the 1970s cannot be provided in a racially isolated situation."[43]

Anticipating questions about who might qualify as a "minority," the final paragraph of the resolution provided a definition. The drafters stated that the definition was taken from the categories required by the "Compliance Report of Institutions of Higher Education" under the Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964. These categories included: "Negro, American Indian, Oriental, and Spanish surnamed… Only Americans are considered in these categories."[44] The resolution passed in the University Senate by a

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[42] Tony DiFrancenco, "State of Economy Hinders Fund Raising Efforts," *Villanovan*, 18 November 1977.

[43] Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, September 15, 1972 , VUA 1/3 "Minutes/University Senate, 1972-1973," box 01, folder 04.

[44] Resolution, Social Action Committee Minutes, February 1, 1972, VUA 1/3/1 "Minutes/ University Senate (Social Action Committee)" box 03, folder 11, VUA.

27-2-4 vote. In the abstract, this vote demonstrated overwhelming public support for the increased diversification of Villanova's student body. It remained to be seen whether results would follow.

As the administration grappled with the larger goals of racial justice in the abstract, black Villanova students were still struggling on the ground with what it meant to be a black student on a predominately white campus in the early 1970s. The Student Government Association presidential election campaign of 1973 provided further evidence that the ideals of integration, as espoused by Catholic racial liberalism, were frayed.

1973 SGA Elections

Junior Kirk Johnson, an African American business student in the Navy ROTC program, became the first black student to run for the position of SGA president. By all accounts, Johnson was active on campus and was well-qualified to serve as president. He was a member of the varsity track team, a member of the BSL, vice president of the Resident Student Association, and a member of the Freshman Orientation committee. Johnson's platform included typical items such as: securing a Student Bill of Rights, working to curb rising tuition, and seeking the "improvement of the co-ed situation."[45] Johnson made no mention of race in his platform.

Johnson's campaign got off to an inauspicious start as a result of an incident in his residence hall. On February 23, 1973, Johnson claimed that he was walking down the

[45] Kirk Johnson, "Candidates: They are Off and Running - Kirk Johnson," *Villanovan*, 21 March 1973.

corridor of his residence hall carrying two sodas back to his room when he encountered John Fields, the residence hall counselor. Fields tried to strike up a conversation with Johnson, but Johnson was busy and could not talk. Fields asked if he could come into Johnson's room and he replied "No!" Fields then asked Johnson if he had a girl in his room, which would be a violation of the visitation policy. Johnson insisted he did not and tried to close the door and walk into his room. Johnson wrote that Fields prevented the door from fully closing and asked Johnson to step into the hallway. Fields accused him of not following orders and told him of the possible consequences of such behavior. Johnson insisted that Fields not try to enter the room and he went back inside. Johnson was later charged with insubordination under the student code of conduct and was given a sanction of removal from his residence hall and probation.[46] On March 21, a letter to the editor appeared in the *Villanovan* which supported Johnson's version of the events. The letter, signed by "A Resident Student," claimed that the "irrationality of this counselor's actions is self-evident" and the letter called for an apology.[47]

Despite his removal from campus, Johnson continued his campaign and finished second out of five candidates. He received 555 votes, or 25.4 percent of the total. This placed him in a run-off with John Sangiorgio who received 709 votes or 32.5 percent of the total. A poll conducted by the *Villanovan* between the first round of voting and the run-off, however, revealed some disturbing information about how white Villanovans

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[46] "Right to Privacy Termed Insubordination," *Villanovan*, 14 March 1973.

[47] Not By Any Means," *Villanovan*, 21 March 1973.

viewed Johnson's candidacy. Despite his involvement in many other activities, Johnson was defined by his BSL membership in the minds of many white Villanova students.

The poll included 200 students of all class years and was comprised of both liberals and conservatives alike. The poll, however, included no black students as the editors insisted no black students "were to be found to participate." According to the poll, the editors declared "all two hundred students polled (both conservatives and liberals alike), stated that without a doubt, they would vote for John Sangiorgio." The editors concluded that "This fact in and of itself might not be surprising; however, the reasons given were, in the words of the paper, "shocking and appalling." The editors argued that the "students do not want to vote for Johnson because, as all two hundred students stated in one way or another, 'Kirk is a black man, and we don't want him bringing his Black Student League friends into the SGA.'"[48]

The fact that Johnson received over 500 votes in the run-off raised some interesting questions concerning the poll conducted by the *Villanovan* editors. The number of black students on Villanova's campus at this time numbered approximately 120; therefore, Johnson obviously pulled in a large number of white votes. One plausible explanation is that a form of racial solidarity discouraged white Villanova students from admitting to other white students that they might vote for a black Villanova student.

Overall, the evidence suggested the campus was still sharply divided along racial lines. Black students felt comfortable enough on the campus to be able to get involved in traditional white student activities, such as SGA, but their experiences in these

[48] Ibid.

organizations demonstrated the limits to their integration. Black students were accepted by Villanova but, throughout the 1970s they still did not feel included.

Black Student Decline in Enrollment During the 1970s

In 1964, black students constituted only 6 percent of all students enrolled in institutions of higher education in the United States. As a result of civil rights legislation and affirmative action programs, by 1974, the percentage rose modestly to 8.4 percent.[49] This increase was largely fueled by the expansion of federal aid programs designed to increase minority access to higher education. Noted higher education researcher Alexander Astin concluded "there is reason to believe that federal aid programs focused on the financial and nonfinancial barriers to access and participation in higher education contribute to increased access, improved persistence and fuller participation."[50] At Villanova, the AAP program did not succeed in this capacity.

Until 1974, Villanova's AAP program was funded solely the University out of its general operating expenses budget. In 1974, Villanova University received its first Act 101 grant from the state of Pennsylvania to supplement the University's funding. Three years earlier, the Pennsylvania General Assembly passed the Higher Education Equal Opportunity Act (referred to as Act 101) in order to encourage colleges and universities

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[49] Charles Teddlie and John Freeman, "Twentieth-Century Desegregation in U.S. Higher Education: A Review of Five Distinct Historical Eras," in *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. William A. Smith, Philip G. Altbach and Kofi Lomotey (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 83-85.

[50] Alexander Astin, *Minorities in American Higher Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), 128.

in the state to establish programs that met similar goals as Villanova's AAP program. Act 101 provided funding for those students with "substantial potential for success in college and for future leadership in the community" who "because of financial, home and community environmental conditions are unable to pursue a higher education and attain their full educational capability."[51] Under this program, Villanova agreed to provide tutoring and counseling services to the students eligible for the program. Since this was a Pennsylvania state-funded program, there were strict guidelines on the financial eligibility criteria and the students had to be residents of Pennsylvania. In the absence of any other program or effort to recruit minority students, the AAP program became the primary vehicle to attract nearby black students to Villanova's campus.

As a result of limited resources and a lack of enthusiasm to recruit black students, the enrollment of Villanova's African American students did not increase throughout the 1970s. As the University's financial aid budget shrunk through the mid-1970s, so too did the funding for scholarships available for the AAP program. Although exact numbers were not provided, the Budget Committee of the University Senate recognized on February 7, 1975, that there had been a "diminution of scholarships available to the Social Action Program." The Budget Committee recommended that the scholarships be restored "so as to reflect Villanova's commitment to the Social Action Program."[52]

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[51] Department of Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Grant Agreement, September 18, 1974, McCarthy Papers, VUA2-29, folder 02-08, "Affirmative Action Legal, 1972-1975," VUA.

[52] Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, February 7, 1975, VUA-1/3, box 01, folder 06, "University Senate, 1974-75," VUA.

Despite the efforts to restore the scholarships, the enrollment of black students continued to decline throughout the 1970s.

Revisiting Affirmative Action in the Fall 1974

As part of his role, Collymore invested a great deal of his time and energy in increasing the number of African Americans employed on campus. Despite his efforts, Collymore knew the problem needed to be addressed directly with those who were in a position to hire staff and faculty members. Therefore, in November 1974, Collymore decided to hold a meeting with academic department chairs and hiring managers to discuss the affirmative action policy. Collymore invited Carl Francis from the federal government's Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The object of the meeting was to provide greater awareness surrounding the issues related to affirmative action and hiring practices. Collymore indicated that the deans and department chairs all seemed receptive to the idea but he conceded that it "is tough to say we went out of our way" to make progress on the hiring of African Americans in staff and faculty positions. Collymore declared that there were some "good individual efforts" among the department chairs but that the "overall group" had failed in their efforts to increase the number of minority faculty members.[53]

As a result of Collymore's efforts, in the spring 1975, the University began a review of its affirmative action policy. Father McCarthy released a statement to the Villanova community on the University's plans to review and revise its affirmative action plan. McCarthy wrote:

[53] Collymore, interview with author.

> I have directed that the University's policies be rewritten to insure the elimination of any present and potential discrimination and that all policies and practices be fully documented, disseminated and implemented to reflect our moral and legal commitment. Goals and timetables will be set and positive steps toward affirmative action will be taken. These efforts will be monitored and the success of our efforts measured with appropriate reviews and revisions of the Plan made periodically.[54]

On March 21, the University Senate reaffirmed the University's commitment to the nondiscrimination statement and the affirmative action program by passing a resolution. The resolution stated that the "Villanova University Senate, in keeping with its egalitarian ideals, fully endorses in spirit the concept of nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action, and recommends that all parts of the Villanova community continue to implement this concept."[55] The issue of affirmative action policy provided further evidence that Villanova professed to be liberal on matters of race and nondiscrimination, yet, the reality suggested otherwise.

The statistics showed that Villanova had a lot of work to do in this regard. The EEOC report filed by Villanova in 1976 indicated that there were 2 black female faculty members and 1 black male faculty member out of a total of 366. This report also indicated that, out of a total of 50 professional staff positions, Collymore was the only black male in a professional staff position and that there were no black females in these types of roles. Taking into account the clerical roles, there were 5 black females and no black males out of 195 employed in these positions. Therefore, there were nine black

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[54] "Affirmative Action Program," *Villanovan*, 19 March 1975.

[55] Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, March 21, 1975, VUA-1/3, box, 01 folder 06, "University Senate, 1974-75," VUA.

staff members out of 611 on Villanova's campus in 1976.[56] Despite the public statement by the president and the reinforcement of this commitment to the goals of affirmative action by the University Senate, between 1976 and 1983, Villanova made very little progress in terms of increasing minority employment.

The review of the affirmative action policy was one of the last initiatives undertaken by Father McCarthy as president. In January 1975, Father McCarthy announced that he was stepping down from the presidency. Though McCarthy, who was then sixty three years old, claimed it was his age, David Contosta argues that his resignation "saved him from having to compromise his views on parietals, which he saw as inconsistent with Catholic morality, and from allowing the students a greater role in university governance, which he deemed contrary to the rational and legitimate powers of the president and the board."[57] The Board of Trustees selected Father Driscoll, then Vice President for Academic Affairs, as McCarthy's successor.

Born in 1923 in Philadelphia, John Driscoll was a 1948 graduate of Villanova. Father Driscoll earned both his master's degree and his doctorate in philosophy from Catholic University. He was ordained in 1951, and began teaching at Archbishop Carroll High School in Washington, D.C., shortly thereafter. In 1956, he was transferred to Merrimack College, another Augustinian college, where he served as a philosophy teacher and later as vice president and dean. He remained there until he became vice president at Villanova. Father Driscoll immediately assumed a more collaborative style of

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[56] Edward Collymore to Father Driscoll, "Affirmative Action Plan," October 12, 1983, John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA-2/30 "Correspondence/Affirmative Action," box 08, folder 12, VUA.

[57] Contosta *Villanova University, 1842-1992*, 223.

leadership than Father McCarthy and this helped him to gain student support. As will be demonstrated, Father Driscoll appeared to favor a slow approach to the issue of increased minority recruitment. To brand him as a devout liberal on racial matters may be an overstatement, but, evidence indicates that he was generally in favor of the goal of more minority students on campus. Yet, under his leadership, progress on the issue was often slow and halting at Villanova. In general, Ed Collymore found him to be receptive to his ideas but needed to be pushed in order to do so.[58]

During Father Driscoll's presidency, he would be faced with a sweeping Supreme Court decision that would affect college admissions policies and procedures. Though there is no evidence to suggest that the decision in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) had any impact on Villanova's admissions policies, the decision established the diversity rationale which the Villanova administration would ultimately embrace.

Bakke **Decision**

In 1973, Allan Bakke applied to the University of California – Davis Medical School and was rejected. Bakke, a white man, believed that he was rejected because of his race. The UC-Davis Medical School set aside sixteen slots in each class for minorities and Bakke believed that his denial was a result of this special program for minority applicants. Bakke argued that this was a violation of his rights under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment and the case made its way to the Supreme Court.

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[58] Collymore, interview with author.

The Supreme Court issued two rulings in the case. In the first, the Court held that the use of strict racial quotas violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibited discrimination based on race, color, or national origin. The second ruling held, however, that race could be used as one of many factors in establishing affirmative action programs. In this opinion, Justice Powell declared that this use of race was acceptable as long as it was motivated by a desire to attain the educational benefits of diversity.[59] In the dissent in the first opinion, Justices Brennan, White, Blackmun and Marshall asserted a remedial rationale when they argued: "Where there is a need to overcome the effects of past racially discriminatory or exclusionary practices engaged in by a federally funded institution, race conscious action is not only permitted but required to accomplish the remedial objectives of Title VI." [60] Even though it did allow for race as one factor, the *Bakke* decision provided cover for those questioned the legitimacy of the admission of African American students.

While the decade prior to the *Bakke* lawsuit being filed was characterized by large gains in black student enrollment, the next decade (1974-1984) did not see the same growth. The number of African American students remained relatively constant during this period. As the number of white students grew during this period, the proportion of

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[59] Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White*, 160.

[60] Tara J. Yosso, et al., "From Jim Crow to Affirmative Action and Back Again: A Critical Race Discussion of Racialized Rationales and Access to Higher Education," *Review of Research in Education* 28 (2004): 9.

African American students declined from 9.4 percent in 1976-78 to 8.8 percent in 1982-84.[61]

A few reasons have been advanced to account for this nationwide decline. Some historians point to the chilling effects of the *Bakke* decision. Even though the justices concluded that race can be used as one factor, most proponents of affirmative action saw it as a minor defeat. Others argued that *Bakke* was "a manifestation of a larger issue: the continued resistance of individuals and institutions to affirmative action components of Title VI compliance."[62] Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act specifically prohibited spending federal funds in higher education institutions that discriminated on the basis of race color or national origin. Furthermore, under Title VI the federal government granted colleges and universities the authority to take affirmative action in setting goals and timetables to remedy the racial discrimination found in U.S. society. Yet, there is strong evidence that the Nixon administration (1968-1976) adopted a policy of non-enforcement of desegregation laws and policies. In 1973, the NAACP responded by filing the first in a series of lawsuits that came to be known as the *Adams* cases. The *Adams* cases were designed to require the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW) to "institute enforcement proceedings in documented cases of noncompliance, conduct additional reviews, monitor compliance, and respond to state plan for higher education

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[61] Charles Teddlie and John Freeman, "Twentieth-Century Desegregation in U.S. Higher Education: A Review of Five Distinct Historical Eras," in *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. William A. Smith, Philip G. Altbach and Kofi Lomotey (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 83-85.

[62] Ibid., 83.

desegregation."[63] As a result, by the mid-1970s, ten states received letters from the DHEW which required them to submit desegregation plans under Title VI. Despite this increased by the DHEW, non-enforcement continued and the number of African American students enrolled in colleges declined throughout the 1970s.

Revisit Minority Enrollment in February 1979

In the wake of the *Bakke* decision, the Social Action Committee re-energized the campaign to increase minority student enrollment in February 1979. At the February 8 meeting, the committee inquired as to the status of the earlier 1972 resolution which asked the Office of Development to make a priority the funding of minority student support. Dr. Hal Leaman, a member of the committee, reported that the Office of Development "has not placed the solicitation of minority and/or disadvantaged student funding as a highest priority because they have not been directed to do so by top administration." This appeared to be a direct contradiction to the resolution passed in 1972. At this meeting, the committee also discussed the possibility of hiring a "member of a minority race" to be a full-time recruiter in the Admissions Office. Throughout the 1970s, all inquiries from high schools which served underrepresented students were sent to the Office of Social Action. The committee decided to invite Father Harry Erdlen, O.S.A., director of the Office of Admissions, to the next meeting.[64]

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[63] Ibid., 84.

[64] Mission and Social Justice Committee of the Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, February 8, 1979, VUA-1/3/1, box 01, folder 06, "University Senate, 1974-75," VUA.

On February 21, 1979, Fr. Erdlen attended the regularly-scheduled Social Action Committee meeting to discuss the recruitment of students from racial minority backgrounds. Fr. Erdlen remarked that his office "does not recruit any group per se, but that in an even-handed approach" Villanova has visited "every school within a 30-mile radius in the last year." Fr. Erdlen reported that Villanova had received only 140 applications from black students out of the 4500 applications for the 1979-1980 academic year. [65]

As a result of the meeting, the Social Action Committee worked on a report on the recruitment and retention of minority students. Prior to sending the document on to the Senate, the committee amended the report to reflect the latest enrollment figures. As part of their rationale for increasing black student enrollment at Villanova the committee reported that 11 percent of American college students were black in 1977 as compared to 1.6 percent of Villanova students. Based on this report, the Social Action Committee introduced a resolution to the University Senate on November 30, 1979, which stated: "Resolved: that the Villanova University Senate recommend to the Administration a policy of increased effort in recruiting and retaining minority students." The resolution passed in the University Senate by a vote of 28 in favor, 1 opposed and 2 abstentions.[66]

The University Senate was comprised of students, faculty, staff, and administration and, therefore, was the only body where the entire University community

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[65] Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, February 21, 1979, VUA-1/3, box 01, folder 06, "University Senate, 1974-75," VUA.

[66] Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, November 30, 1979, VUA-1/3, box 01, folder 11, "University Senate, 1979-80," VUA.

was represented. Therefore, the Senate resolutions were important symbolic statements and reflected the desires of the representative body. Yet, the fact that they were non-binding also constricted the ability to effect change through the passage of resolutions. When there was further inaction around this issue, this particular resolution and the resulting inaction would be referenced later as evidence of the lip service paid to the issue of minority recruitment and retention.

While the University Senate resolutions were seen as ineffective by the members of the Social Action Committee, they viewed the accreditation process which all colleges and universities must undergo as an opportunity to underscore the University's challenges in the area of minority student enrollment. Every ten years, Villanova University underwent an evaluation of their academic and co-curricular programs and services by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The assessment begins with a rigorous self-review and culminates with a team of outside administrators visiting the campus to investigate and issue a final report. A comparison of the 1970 and 1980 Middle States Self-Study reports demonstrated the progress, albeit slow and halting, Villanova made in ten years on the issue of black student recruitment and retention. The 1970 report hardly referenced black students at all. The 1980 Middle States Self-Study Report, on the other hand, acknowledged much of the work of the Social Action Committee and of the Office of Social Action conducted throughout the decade of the 1970s.

The section of the 1980 Middle States Self-Study pertaining to the Academic Advancement Program and the recruitment and retention of minority students served as an excellent summation of the University's performance in this area. It was not flattering.

Villanova reported that minorities comprised 3 percent of the student body in 1973, and only 2.5 percent five years later. Black students made up the largest group of minority students and their enrollment figures declined from 2.2 percent in 1973 to 1.6 percent in 1978. The Self-Study maintained that nationally the number of black students enrolled at colleges and universities was on the rise; therefore, Villanova was falling behind relative to other institutions.[67]

The Middle States Self-Study found plenty of faults with the efforts of the Admissions office to recruit black students. It declared that the Admissions office "has not actively attempted to recruit minority students at the undergraduate student level." Most of the requests for "Villanova representations at special recruiting functions are transferred to the Social Action office." The Self-Study argued that the attraction of a more "heterogeneous student body" would be consistent with the University's mission. The relevant portion of the University mission which was cited states: "Villanova attempts to enroll students with diverse social, geographic, economic and social backgrounds."[68]

The report indicated that the Social Action Committee felt that the recruitment of minority students to Villanova was important for two reasons. First, as a Catholic University, the self-study noted, Villanova should "seek to bring our benefits to more and more of the members of the disadvantaged groups of our society." Second, the committee argued that there was value in the type of learning that could be acquired by "contact with

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[67] Villanova University, Middle States Institutional Self-Study, February 1980, VUA-21, "Reports, Middle States Institutional Self-Study," Box 07, folder 04, VUA.

[68] Ibid.

a heterogeneous student population."[69] Along with this, the report pointed out some of the challenges to implementing some of these measures. The report asserted that the "apparent failure of the Admissions Office to tap other markets must be balanced against the overhead costs in doing so." Furthermore, the Self-Study suggested that the "quest for a more heterogeneous student body must be balanced against the University's traditional character and mission."[70] These comments in this Self-Study reflected the tension on campus between those who wish to sacrifice resources to change the racial status and those who wish maintain the "University's traditional character." Clearly, there was some resistance to the implementation of measures to enhance the recruitment of minorities and these comments suggested that they were not just economic.

Beyond minority recruiting, the 1980 Middle States Self-Study also discussed the challenges minority students faced on a predominately white campus. The report argued that the problem of retaining black students began with recruitment. More black students were needed for support. The report conceded that the atmosphere on campus "may not be inviting to, or comfortable for, minority students." The report argued that the Office of Social Action helped ease the transition and that many students felt like the office served as their "home" and the staff as their "family." However, the general campus climate was believed to be one that was still unwelcoming to minority students. The report said that there was "reason to believe that the average White Villanovan thinks of the average minority students here in very stereotypical ways." As a way of alleviating this situation,

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[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid.

the report suggests "the chance of the stereotyping continuing would be much less if a larger number of minority students who are now going to college were enrolled and were in the mainstream of the student population." [71] The self-study acknowledged and confirmed the feelings of many black students – they were accepted into the University but did not feel included.

The University's Self-Study ended with some recommendations to improve minority student recruitment and retention efforts. First, it suggested that the administration should set a "definite goal for the doubling of the minority student population at Villanova within the next five years." The hiring of more minority faculty members and administrators should be a priority as well, the report argued. Among a host of other recommendations designed to increase the recruitment efforts, the Self-Study stated that the admissions office should hire a "black or other minority member" to specialize in recruiting minority students from "Philadelphia and other places."[72]

The Middle States evaluators also shared in the self-criticism of the University's efforts to recruit black students. The final report boldly declared: "the Villanova record on enrolling representatives of minority groups, particularly blacks, is not good especially considering the metropolitan area in which the University is located." The evaluators posited a theory as to why the University was not successful. The evaluators argued that "one reason for the deficiency in this area is the unfortunate identification of minority students as academically disadvantaged students." This mindset led the University to delegate all of its efforts in recruiting minority students to the Office for Social Action

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid.

and its AAP program. This concentration of these efforts, the report stated, "serves to reinforce this identity and prevents Villanova from successfully recruiting its proper share of the minority students who would meet the University's normal admissions requirements."[73]

The administrators in charge of the admissions effort appeared ignore the advice of the Middle States evaluators regarding the recruitment and enrollment of minority students. An article in the *Villanovan* which featured an interview with admissions office personnel added to the controversy surrounding minority recruitment. With regard to the low number of enrolled minority students, admissions director Fr. Erdlen said: "I don't see it as a problem." He added: "I don't think we will ever have a large percentage of minorities. Maybe we will go as high as three percent."[74] In attempting to explain the reason behind the low numbers, Erdlen offered that Villanova's "location is against us." He explained: "Look at an area with a heavy black population, like Northeast Philadelphia. Why should those students come here? It's a hassle for those students to get here, they have to traverse the city, public transportation isn't good, and they could go to institutions that are a lot cheaper like Temple or LaSalle." Compounding this assessment, Erdlen admitted that the University did not expend much effort in trying to rectify the situation. When asked by the *Villanovan* reporters if there were attempts to convince minority students to enroll, Erdlen said, "We go out there but not to any great extent?

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[73] Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, , Report to Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students of Villanova University, 1980, VUA-21, box 07, folder 06, Middle States Evaluation (Review), 1980, VUA.

[74] Vincent Hausmann and Marianne Lavelle, "Minority Statistics Viewed," *Villanovan*, 20 February 1981.

What would be the point of it? It's too much of a problem for them to get here."[75] Yet, contradictory statements on the efforts of the admissions office were expressed by the assistant director in the same article.

Father John O'Rourke, O.S.A., who was listed as recruiter for Villanova in the Philadelphia area, remarked that "we've covered all the schools in the city." Despite Father Erdlen's suggestion that this was not a problem, Father O'Rouke indicated that the admissions office was "looking for the answer to correct the thing." He added "It's embarrassing to see the numbers, but what can you do with personal choices and schools outbidding us?" Vice President of Academic Affairs James Cleary added his own analysis as to why it was difficult to recruit minority students to Villanova. In the same article, Cleary indicated that he saw it as a three-fold problem. First, he believed that the lack of scholarship money and financial aid available was a deterrent. Second, he believed that the Roman Catholic identity of Villanova proved to be a hindrance. Third, Cleary agreed with Erdlen's opinion that Villanova's location in the suburbs was a problem but thought it was more psychological than geographic. With regard to the city-suburb divide, Cleary asserted that "there is a physical and attitudinal distance as well." Cleary concluded that he believed Villanova tried to bridge that gap.[76]

This article further demonstrated the diminished influence of Catholic racial liberalism on Villanova's campus. It was obvious that there was no coherent plan or even agreement on the goals for minority recruitment within Villanova's administration, let alone within the admissions office itself. The statements from these administrators clearly

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid.

contradicted one another as in the case of whether a true effort was being made. Furthermore, these statements suggested a lack of willingness to fully embrace the notion that Villanova should have been expending resources to further the goal of increased minority recruitment and enrollment.

Black Students Respond

Black Villanova students responded. Stefan Roots, the president of the BSL, wrote a letter to the editors of the *Villanovan* in response to the article. Roots argued that the fact that "schools located in the mountains" of Pennsylvania had a higher number of black students than Villanova proved Erdlen's location argument was false. Roots also took exception to Cleary's comment about Villanova's efforts to bridge the gap between the city and the suburbs. The junior electrical engineer major from Chester, Pennsylvania, argued that the situation for black students on campus was one of "alienation." Roots noted that the few black students that enrolled each year were separated into different orientation groups. Furthermore, Roots argued that the Black Cultural Society (now re-named from the Black Student League) received a "useless budget." With these two statements as evidence, Roots concluded that Villanova's black students did not have a "way for blacks to welcome their own." Roots argued that the presence and friendship of other black students was necessary for the adjustment of black students on the predominately white campus.[77]

[77] Stefan Roots, "Minority Response," *Villanovan*, 20 March 1981; Stefan Roots, interview with author, digital recording, July 18, 2012.

Beyond just railing against the prevailing attitude of the administrators, Roots offered two solutions to increase minority recruitment. First, Roots suggested that administrators should have asked current black students for names of interested high school students. Second, Roots believed that the admissions office should have allowed a group of black students to recruit in the Philadelphia schools. Black students, according to Roots, knew the "attitudes of the students and could "relate to them in a more beneficial manner." As such, black students did not possess "the negative attitude" which Roots found in Villanova recruiters.[78]

Upset with the assertions in the article, Roots requested and was granted a meeting with University president Father Driscoll to discuss the issue. He described it as a brief meeting and remembers that Father Driscoll was not very receptive to his ideas on how to improve the situation. Roots felt that the administration's strategy was to simply wait out those few students who were vocal about the issue.[79]

As the enrollment of black students declined, there was an understandable decline in membership in the BSL, which was now newly-renamed Black Cultural Society. By the early 1980s, the Black Cultural Society was a shell of its former organizational self. The group was characterized as "weak" and was viewed as more of a "social organization" which was closely associated with the Academic Advancement Program. Furthermore, because the organization was so closely tied into the AAP program, there was also an understandable decline in strong student leadership. Roots explained that many of the AAP students had enormous pressures facing them with their academic work

[78] Roots, "Minority Response."

[79] Roots, interview with author.

and outside jobs. Roots argued that he had one chance to prove himself academically and he believed that he had to remain focused on what he needed to do to graduate in four years.

To be sure, black students saw what they perceived as discrimination and injustice in the low numbers of black students on campus. Roots believed, however, that they were not in a position of strength to do anything about it. It was "pretty convincing to us that [the administrators] were set in their ways." Roots and the other black students had to "pick their battles." Collymore recognized the potential effectiveness of a strong student movement and encouraged the students to become more active. Roots remembers that Collymore gave him some of the old *Villanovan* clippings about the protests and sit-ins of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Roots had an appreciation for this activist past but clearly did not feel as though the Black Cultural Society was in a position to replicate this movement.

In the absence of a strong student movement, the Social Action Committee and Edward Collymore took the lead on the movement to increase the enrollment of minority students.[80] The Social Action Committee represented the last vestiges of Catholic racial liberalism on campus. Their continued fight for minority enrollment and affirmative programs represented one last fight for racial justice, when the issues were still couched in largely racial terms.

[80] Ibid.

Social Action Committee Continues Fight

In the wake of the Middle States report and the *Villanovan* article featuring Father Erdlen, the Social Action Committee kept the pressure on the administration. Clearly frustrated in their efforts to see any results from working with the admissions office, the Social Action Committee focused their efforts on convincing Villanova president Father Driscoll of the merits of adopting a strategy of increased minority enrollment.

In March 1981, an interoffice communication written to Father Driscoll by Social Action Committee chairperson, philosophy professor Joseph Betz, asked some provocative questions about Villanova's practices regarding minority student recruitment. Questioning whether Villanova undertook efforts to recruit community college graduates to campus, Betz asked if Villanova was doing enough to tap into this potential source of minority students. Citing a report which argued that that academic performance was a better predictor of college success than standardized tests, Betz asked if Villanova's admissions policy "acknowledges this." Recognizing that minority students who live on-campus are more likely to persist, Betz asked if Villanova's housing policy "take[s] this into consideration." Indeed, there was pressure on Father Driscoll to take action on this issue.[81]

In the fall 1981, Collymore visited Father Driscoll to discuss Villanova's progress on the recruitment of minority students. Citing the conclusions of the Middle States report, Collymore suggested that the existing Presidential Scholarship program – full

[81] Joseph Betz, memorandum to Father Driscoll, "My Reading of the Final Report of the Commission on the Education of Minorities," March 1, 1981, John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA 2/30, box 08, folder 12, "Correspondence Affirmative Action, 1980-1987," VUA.

scholarships available to the highest academic achievers - be expanded to include two scholarships for minority students. Collymore believed that the provision of scholarships to academically strong minority students, regardless of financial need, would help increase the enrollment of minority students. Furthermore, it would help erase the stereotype that all black students at Villanova were underprepared and in financial need. Collymore said Father Driscoll initially told him he would consider the request. Then, Collymore remembers that Driscoll, in an abrupt shift, agreed to the request and told him "we need to do this."[82] This quick change of heart seemingly demonstrated Father Driscoll's uneasiness over the issue. The Presidential scholarship program for minority students was announced by Collymore at the October 21 Social Action Committee meeting.[83] The acquisition of these scholarships represented a brief but fleeting victory in the struggle to increase the overall minority student enrollment.

In the spring of 1983, the Social Action Committee turned up the heat on the administration. While pleased with the decision to offer two scholarships to minority students, the Social Action Committee decided further action was necessary after two years of no resulting increase in minority enrollment. At a meeting on February 4, 1983, Dr. Angela Cerino, professor in the College of Commerce and Finance, suggested that the committee once again take up the issue of minority recruitment. After discussing some "improvement points" such as the utilization of minority alumni, the Social Action

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[82] Collymore, interview with author.

[83] Mission and Social Justice Committee of the Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, October 21, 1981, VUA-1/3/1, box 03, folder 12, "Minutes, University Senate, (Social Action Committee), 1979-1996," VUA.

Committee agreed to form a sub-committee to investigate the issue further.[84] Even those who were supportive of challenging the racial status quo on campus got bogged down in organizational procedures.

On March 16, Cerino presented data drawn from the *Chronicle of Higher Education* which stated that Villanova had, "with one exception, among comparable schools," the lowest enrollment of African American students. Collymore suggested that the committee update the 1979 report of the Social Action committee and re-send it to the University Senate. As indicated in the minutes, Cerino pointed out this would be the fourth attempt by the committee to use Senate resolutions to bring about an increase in minority enrollment. Collymore suggested this tactic partly as a result of a meeting he had with Father Driscoll in between the meetings of February 4 and March 16. Collymore reported that after "brief conversation" with the president and he believed that the committee should pursue the recommendation that a "minority person be in admissions to specifically recruit minority students." Cerino also reported that she attempted to meet with Father Erdlen, director of the Admissions Office, but that he was not available until April. The frustration appeared to be building within the committee as a result of the administration's inaction.[85]

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[84] Mission and Social Justice Committee of the Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, February 4, 1983, VUA-1/3/1, box 03, folder 12, "Minutes, University Senate, (Social Action Committee), 1979-1996," VUA.

[85] Mission and Social Justice Committee of the Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, March 16, 1983, VUA-1/3/1, box 03, folder 11, "Minutes, University Senate, (Social Action Committee), 1979-1996," VUA.

When the faculty and students returned for the fall 1983 semester, the Social Action Committee resumed its work with enthusiasm. The discussion at the October 24 meeting focused exclusively on increasing minority recruitment and enrollment. The committee reported that based on enrollment figures gathered from the registrar there were fewer minorities enrolled at Villanova in the fall 1983 than there were in 1979 when the last Senate resolution was passed. In the class that entered in fall 1980, 37 black students enrolled. This number fell to only 14 black students who entered in fall 1983. Clearly, the passage of a resolution with a general statement on increasing minority enrollment did not work.[86]

The committee decided that a more specific resolution which provided a solution – the addition of a minority recruiter – might produce the desired results. The resolution as drafted read: "That the Villanova University Senate recommends to the Administration a policy of increased effort in recruiting and retaining minority students [and] that this effort come in the form of hiring a minority individual to work in the Admissions office recruiting minority students, commencing in the 1984-1985 school year." The rationale for the resolution included an appeal to the University mission statement stating that it calls for a "diverse student body."[87] The Social Action Committee's resolution was introduced and passed by the full University Senate on November 23 with a vote of 24 in

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[86] "Report to the VPAA Office on the Religious, Ethnic and Geographic Background of Applicants, 1980-1989," Villanova University Undergraduate Admissions Office, in author's possession.

[87] Mission and Social Justice Committee of the Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, October 24, 1983, VUA-1/3/1, folder 03-11, "Minutes, University Senate, (Social Action Committee), 1979-1996," VUA.

favor, zero against and one abstention. As evidence of the strong feelings around the resolution, the minutes declared that there was a consensus to attach the rationale to the resolution when it was sent to the administration.

The Social Action Committee was hopeful that the passage of another resolution would surely yield some results. Yet, the inaction and lack of progress on the issue again frustrated the members of the committee and Collymore. In November 1984, the *Villanovan* conducted a wide-ranging interview with Collymore and the issue of minority enrollment was raised. In answering a question of whether Villanova had a plan to increase minority recruitment, Collymore declared: "I would say Fr. Driscoll is aware of the situation and would like to help. As far as specific plans, I could not say. You would have to get that information from Admissions." When asked about the November 1983 Senate resolution, Collymore responded: "As far as what happened to the motion, I don't know. We can make a motion, it can be passed, but unless someone is given the responsibility of implementing it, it probably dies on the vine."[88]

Accompanying the interview with Collymore was a story which presented the enrollment data on minority students. What it showed was that minority enrollment "has stayed below the three percent mark for the past two years, according to statistics released by the Registrar's Office." In the fall 1984, minority enrollment was reported to be 2.03 percent, or 160 students out of 6,412 full-time undergraduate students according

[88] "Interview with Collymore," *Villanovan*, 2 November 1984.

to assistant registrar Cathy Connor. These figures were down from 3.9 percent in fall 1982 and 4.9 percent in fall 1981.[89]

The passage of another resolution in favor of increased minority student recruitment demonstrated, once again, the public commitment to integration. Yet, the inaction by the administration illustrated the limits to this commitment. The failure to act on these resolutions in any meaningful way frustrated and radicalized the members of the Social Action Committee. These frustrations boiled over to the related issue of the failure of the University's affirmative action programs for faculty and staff.

Frustration Over Affirmative Action – October 1983

Beyond accusations that Villanova was not doing enough with regard to affirmative action in their hiring, there were also charges of outright discrimination leveled against the University. On March 2, 1983, Father Driscoll received a letter from O.G. Christian, the president of the West Philadelphia branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.), to make him aware of complaints of discrimination in Villanova's hiring practices. Christian wrote that he "received complaints regarding the lack of employment of Blacks primarily in the security department." Furthermore, Christian claimed that the group also had "claims that persons are being discriminated against because of age throughout the University regarding employment." Christian requested that the president send to him a breakdown of all "the number of Blacks in each department and the oldest employee in each department."

[89] "Minority Enrollment Decreases," *Villanovan*, 2 November 1984.

There is no evidence in the files of either Villanova or the West Philadelphia branch of the N.A.A.C.P. that Driscoll responded to the letter.[90]

In October 1983, Collymore wrote two memos to the University president Father Driscoll sharply critical of the University's affirmative action efforts. The first memo, dated on October 12, 1983, detailed the lack of progress made by the University in hiring women and minorities since 1976. Collymore provided a chart which showed that the University experienced no net increase in the number of black faculty members from 1976 to 1981. The overall number of faculty members of color – including, Asian, Hispanic and Native American - increased from 14 to 19 during this same time period. The number of faculty members overall increased from 366 in 1976 to 397 in 1981. On the administrative and staff side, the number of Villanova staff members of color increased slightly from 12 in 1976 to 14 in 1983. [91]

After providing the data, Collymore then turned towards an analysis of the cause of this failure. He argued that the lack of progress rested with those who had the responsibility to carry out the policy at the ground level. In the first paragraph of the memo, Collymore praised the effort of Father Driscoll and the Vice President Lawrence Gallen, O.S.A., for their overall support of the effort. Collymore argued, however, that

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[90] O.G. Christian, letter to Father Driscoll, March 2, 1983, VUA-2/30 John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, box 08, folder 12 , "Correspondence/Affirmative Action," VUA. A review of the West Philadelphia N.A.A.C.P. records located in the Urban Archives at Temple University indicates that the branch had a very active committee entitled "Labor and Industry." The chair of this committee sent several letters such as this to employers on a monthly basis.

[91] Edward Collymore to Father Driscoll, "Affirmative Action Plan," October 12, 1983, John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA-2/30 "Correspondence/Affirmative Action," box 08, folder 12, VUA.

the "commitment to affirmative action has not found its way down from the top." He also claimed that to those who are charged with implementing affirmative action (including the department chairs) treated the policy as "a joke." Collymore indicated that getting the department chairs to buy into affirmative action was a "most trying thing."[92] In his role as the Director of Social Action and affirmative action officer, Collymore often confronted academic department chairs about their hiring practices. In his memo to Driscoll, he indicated that "I did not know" or "I forgot" were the most common responses he received from non-compliant hiring managers. [93]

The follow-up memo dated October 19, 1983, provided evidence of the intransigence of the department chairs in complying with the affirmative action policy. Collymore pointed out that an article in the October edition of the University's "News Bulletin" listed 55 new faculty members hired for the fall 1983 semester. For his analysis, Collymore eliminated seven professors from the list because they were in the Law School or the ROTC program. The 48 faculty members remaining were hired by 24 separate academic departments. Of the 24 departments who hired faculty in the fall of 1983, Collymore received affirmative action forms from only 13 departments. Clearly,

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[92] Collymore, interview with author.

[93] Edward Collymore to Father Driscoll, "Affirmative Action Plan," October 12, 1983, John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA-2/30 "Correspondence/Affirmative Action," box 08, folder 12, VUA.

affirmative action policies were not being adhered to by the department chairs and there was no accountability for those who did not comply.[94]

In his analysis of the data, Collymore also pointed out a potential injustice in how qualifications were used to eliminate certain categories of applicants. Collymore noted that only 32 of the 48 faculty members listed in the article had terminal degrees. Collymore wrote to the president: "I only point this out to you because over the years I have seen minorities and women eliminated because they do not have a doctorate while some individuals (other than minorities or women) are hired without doctorates."[95]

Though light on the specifics, Collymore provided some possible solutions to the problems. He suggested that the administration "delegate some of the affirmative action responsibility to those at a lower level and to hold them responsible for its success or failure." By "lower level" Collymore meant the hiring managers or the chairs themselves. His second solution was to "withhold the hiring of a non-minority or male until women and minorities" were included in a "bona fide search" process. If discrimination was found in any circumstances, Collymore argued that the termination of the offending employee should be considered.[96]

Collymore's final plea in the October 12 memo demonstrated the frustration he felt about the lack of progress on this issue. In his 1982-1983 annual report, Collymore addressed the concerns he had about the failure of the University's affirmative action

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[94] Edward Collymore to Father Driscoll, "Affirmative Action Plan," October 19, 1983, John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA-2/30 "Correspondence/Affirmative Action," box 08, folder 12, VUA.

[95] Ibid.

[96] Ibid.

program to produce results in increased hiring of minorities. Father Driscoll suggested Collymore meet with the University's vice presidents to discuss what action should be taken. To this suggestion, Collymore wrote: "I have mixed emotions. Too often, I have heard promises made. However, after the talking the action never really follows. Without any recourse, it becomes a vicious circle."[97] For Collymore, the president's suggestion to meet with vice presidents was consistent with the pattern of inaction by the administration on matters of racial inclusion.

The struggle to implement an effective affirmative action program at Villanova illustrated the lip service paid to important matters of justice and discrimination. When pushed by legislative demands, Villanova complied with the law. Absent these demands, the University often chose to do nothing. The affirmative action issue illustrated how resistance was carried out at the managerial level. Despite the public pronouncements that the University was committed to the idea of affirmative action, change was difficult to realize in the area of the recruitment of minority faculty and staff. Most academic department chairs simply refused to comply with the required policy and procedures. Furthermore, notwithstanding the private reassurances given to Collymore, University president Father Driscoll seemed unwilling to directly challenge those who defied the school's regulations. This reluctance to enforce these regulations provided sustenance to those who philosophically opposed affirmative action program. The concurrent struggle

[97] Edward Collymore to Father Driscoll, "Affirmative Action Plan," October 12, 1983, John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA-2/30 "Correspondence/Affirmative Action," box 08, folder 12, VUA.

to increase the recruitment and retention of minority students faced similar obstacles and resistance.

The Battle for a Minority Recruiter

As a result of their frustration over the administration's inaction, on December 4, 1984, the Social Action Committee of the University Senate dedicated its meeting to strategizing how to finally move the administration towards action. The committee decided a meeting between the group's members and University president Father Driscoll would be the best course of action. An invitation to Father Driscoll would be extended with the following agenda items:

> 1. Concern of minority population attending Villanova University
> 2. Resolutions passed by the University Senate concerning recruiting and retaining minority students
> 3. Hiring of Minority Administrators, Teachers and Admissions Office Personnel[98]

The committee also decided that some additional publicity would help lay the groundwork. Social Action Committee student member Robert Jordan also served as assistant news editor of the *Villanovan*. He agreed to write an article in the first issue of the spring 1985 semester in order to raise awareness of this issue.

On January 25, 1985, Jordan's article and an accompanying editorial appeared in the *Villanovan*. The article presented the admissions office with an opportunity to explain the lack of progress on the recruitment of minorities. Father Harry Erdlen, dean of

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[98] Mission and Social Justice Committee of the Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, December 4, 1984, VUA-1/3/1, box 03, folder 11, "Minutes, University Senate, (Social Action Committee), 1979-1996," VUA.

admissions, argued that Villanova did all it can to attract minority students but many of those qualified chose to attend "more local colleges or receive better scholarships" from other universities." Erdlen stated that four full scholarships were available to minority students who met certain criteria but only two were accepted during the 1984-1985 academic year. Father Frank Nash, O.S.A., the assistant dean of admissions, declared that Villanova was "between a rock and a hard place" with regard to minority student enrollment. Nash theorized that "minority students are attracted to colleges with sizable numbers of minority faculty, which Villanova doesn't have" and also because the University's academic standards were "rising faster than the average minority student's test scores."[99]

In his article, Jordan suggested that the Social Action Committee had fulfilled its mission by raising awareness of the issue. He traced the history of the two Senate resolutions, yet declared that there was no progress on increasing minority student enrollment. Not identifying himself as a member of the committee, Jordan quoted Collymore to explain where the issue stood from the committee's perspective. According to Collymore, Jordan declared, "The committee is still trying to get some positive action on these resolutions already passed by the Senate. In the general opinion of the committee, nothing has really happened, even after the resolution was approved twice."[100]

In the editorial, the *Villanovan* tried to be helpful but displayed an ignorance of the categories of "minorities" when it declared that 2.5 percent to 3 percent of the total

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[99] Robert M. Jordan, "Minority Rate Remains Low," *Villanovan*, 25 January 1985.

[100] Ibid.

student body was “black, Asian, Islamic or Hispanic.” While Islamic students were certainly a minority at Villanova, the writer and editors of the *Villanovan* confused religious minorities with racial minorities.

Despite this misstep, the accompanying editorial took a strong stand in favor of increased enrollment of minority students. “Villanova,” it said, “blatantly lags far behind, and it is time for a real effort to change.” The editors refuted Father Nash’s claim by stating that Villanova was “simply not looking in the right places for minorities who can meet their requirements.” The *Villanovan* editors suggested that minority students from two Philadelphia high schools with outstanding national reputations – Girls’ High and Central High – were not being actively recruited by Villanova. The editors ended by stating that “Villanova cannot afford to put this problem on the back burner as it has in the past.. Let’s stop talking about it; let’s do something about it.”[101]

On February 4, 1985, a meeting between members of the Social Action Committee and Father Driscoll finally produced the results desired by the committee. According to the minutes, the meeting was a productive exchange between a receptive Father Driscoll and the concerned members of the committee. After being presented with the information that there was no progress on the recruitment of minority students, Father Driscoll “acknowledged” the concerns and, according to the minutes, “added that he too had similar concerns and wanted to take concrete measures to do something about it now.” Though he agreed with the general assessment that there was a problem to be resolved, Father Driscoll stopped short of setting concrete goals for minority enrollment.

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[101] “Minority Limit?” *Villanovan*, 25 January 1985.

The committee suggested that the University strive to enroll "anywhere from 5% to 15%." To this proposal, however, Father Driscoll responded that he "felt that it would be better to just make a commitment to improve notably our percentage of minority students."[102]

The hiring of a minority recruiter was also discussed at the meeting and, after years of lobbying by the committee, Father Driscoll finally committed to the idea. Father Driscoll cited the lack of office space as the main impediment to the creation of a new position. The minutes reflect, however, that Father Driscoll said that "he intended to make a place for one." After the agreement was reached, a discussion followed which included specific details on the role of the minority recruiter. This suggests that the decision to hire the recruiter was confirmed at this meeting. After years of frustration and two University Senate resolutions which failed to produce any discernible action, the committee was finally successful in its campaign to secure a position for a minority recruiter.[103]

As a result, Denise Houser was hired as an admissions counselor and began work at Villanova in September 1985. Houser earned a master's degree at St. Joseph's University and was working as an admissions counselor at the Watterson School of Business and Technology in Philadelphia before being hired at Villanova. In a *Villanovan* article that announced her arrival on campus, Houser discussed her goals. She vowed to

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[102] "Summary of the Meeting on February 4, 1985 between Members of the Social Action Committee of the Senate and Fr. Driscolll," John M Driscoll, O.S.A. (1975-1988), Administrative, VUA-2/30 box 56, folder 12, "Correspondence, Social Action Programs, 1975-1988," VUA.

[103] Ibid.

reach out to Philadelphia schools and developed promotional material that illustrated the University's commitment to minority students. Sounding an optimistic tone, Houser declared: "Villanova is a fine institution but with a fuller diversity of students and student backgrounds, we can be even better." [104] In November 1985, Houser submitted a report to the Social Action Committee which detailed her plans in greater detail. Her goals were consistent with the ones she mentioned to the *Villanovan*. The report also included many specific details concerning actions already taken or planned to enhance Villanova's outreach to prospective minority applicants.

To some, though, it might have been too little, too late. The reputation of Villanova as "Vanillanova" was already firmly engrained in the minds of many potential students. The members of the Social Action Committee who were at the meeting with Fr. Driscoll expressed this sentiment. When discussing the low numbers of minority faculty members and students, the committee suggested this fact might be "attributed in part to Villanova's public image." The minutes showed that "several examples of Villanova's image, as 'all white male'" were provided by the meeting participants and then discussed.[105] Father Driscoll responded that the University had a public relations firm on retainer and that he would discuss the enhancement of Villanova's image with the firm.[106]

There was further evidence that Father Driscoll still did not have a firm grasp on the significance of the issues facing minority student recruitment and retention. His address to the University Senate on November 22, 1985, presented an opportunity to

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[104] Robert Jordan, "Recruiter Aims for Integration," *Villanovan*, 20 September 1985.

[105]Ibid.

[106]Ibid.

recognize the significant move of hiring an admissions professional to recruit minority students. Yet, it was an address which was riddled with comments which were unsatisfying to those who desired a bold, clear vision statement on the future of minority recruitment at Villanova. On attracting minority students, Driscoll stated: "I assure you that here again we are doing what we can. For some reason, it is difficult for Villanova to attract minority students." There is no evidence that the administration undertook any kind of serious effort to determine why it was difficult to attract minority students. In this speech to the University Senate, Father Driscoll did not address the root causes of this difficulty. In fact, Father Driscoll's remarks to the University Senate demonstrate that he lacked a basic understanding of what groups constituted a "minority." Father Driscoll awkwardly declared:

> We are, as a university, given our Mission Statement and our value-laden educational philosophy, committed to recognizing the need of our fellow man particularly those who are classified, if you will, those who fall into this very arbitrary category of minority groups, of doing what we can for them… The minority picture by the way and I say this not in any kind of offhand way, in our nation is changing. The black minority is certainly not the only minority group to be considered… the minority groups who in one way are constituted by the various European ethnic groups but also the ever growing number of Hispanics and Asians who are becoming a highly important part of the culture of our American population, and here again, in our commitment to the support of these groups, we shall take this into account."[107]

Despite this, the hiring of a minority recruiter marked a significant breakthrough. This was the first acknowledgement by the administration of the University that someone

[107] Villanova University Senate, Meeting Minutes, November 22, 1985, VUA-1/3, box 02, folder 02, "Minutes, University Senate, 1985-1986," VUA.

outside of the Office of Social Action was responsible for the recruitment of minority students. It was an attempt, albeit seemingly forced upon the president, to confront the stereotype that all of the minority students, and in particular black students, who attended Villanova were on scholarship or were a part of the AAP program. There was no grand statement by the administration of the value or the need for the minority recruiter position. This did not mark the start of a new era of race relations at Villanova. Yet, it was the culmination of a long struggle which began with the student movement in the late 1960s, which organized itself around the desire for more black students on Villanova's campus. There was finally recognition that the enrollment of minority students, and black students in particular, was important and significant enough to warrant a full-time staff position.

The University ensured that the accomplishment was noted prominently in the 1985-1986 Middle States Periodic Review report. Under the section detailing Villanova's efforts to recruit minority students, the report described the Academic Advancement Program, the Presidential Scholarship Program, and the hiring of a "black woman full-time" with the "specific charge of the recruitment of Black and Hispanic students to the University."[108] This three-pronged approach to the recruitment of minority students now provided Villanova with the framework, albeit a bare-bones one, to experience positive results in the area of minority recruitment.

[108] Villanova University, Middle States Periodic Review Report, April 1, 1986, VUA-21, box 07, folder 07, Middle States Evaluation (Periodic Review), 1985, VUA.

EPILOGUE
"WE WILL NOT BE KNOWN AS VANILLA-NOVA"

On April 1, 1985, in an epic David versus Goliath matchup, the Villanova Wildcats upset the Georgetown Hoyas to win the NCAA Men's Basketball National Championship in Lexington, Kentucky. The game remains the second most-watched basketball game – college or professional - of all time. Philadelphia sportswriter Frank Fitzpatrick argues that the game was "must watch TV" because of its "fascinating racial framework." Even though the rosters of both teams were comprised of mostly African American players, the two teams were perceived differently across the nation. As Fitzpatrick describes, the game pitted "big, bad, and black Georgetown versus Villanova, or 'Vanilla-nova.'"[1] Throughout the 1980s, John Thompson, the African American coach of the Georgetown Hoyas, employed an "us-against-them" attitude that often took on racial overtones.[2] In the era of Ronald Reagan's conservative social policies, Fitzpatrick contends that this game provided evidence that "race remained close to the nation's soul."[3] Indeed, race was still prominent in the minds of many Villanovans.

In the same year, Villanova hired their first admissions officer who was dedicated solely to recruiting minority students. The fight over efforts to recruit students of color

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[1] Fitzpatrick, Frank, *The Perfect Game: How Villanova's Shocking 1985 Upset of Mighty Georgetown Changed the Landscape of College Hoops Forever*, (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2013), 17.

[2] Thompson often had good reason to employ this philosophy. Georgetown's Patrick Ewing, an African American, was the frequent target of racial abuse from opposing fans. Fitzpatrick describes an incident which took place in a game against Villanova during Ewing's sophomore season in 1982-1983. At the Palestra in Philadelphia, a Villanova fan rolled out a sign which read "EWING THE APE." As the banner was being unfurled, another Villanova fan threw a banana on to the court as Ewing was being announced before the game.

[3] Fitzpatrick, *The Perfect Game*, 14.

demonstrated that, by the mid-1980s, the “diversity” movement - inspired by the Supreme Court’s decision in *Bakke* and being championed on many campuses - had not yet reached Villanova. In arguing for a minority recruiter to recruit minority students, the Villanova struggle over matters of diversity and inclusion was still largely couched in racial terms.

By 1988, however, Villanova was fully engaged in internal conversations around diversity. This epilogue argues that, in the end, as the diversity movement gathered steam, Catholic racial liberalism was replaced fully by the ideology of diversity. The embrace of the diversity ideal signified the downfall of Catholic racial liberalism. Villanova was unsuccessful in balancing the competing demands of the adherence to the liberal ideology of integration and the resistance to changing the campus culture which was necessary to accommodate achieve this goal. In the process, larger conversations about racism and racial discrimination were eclipsed by the new paradigm of diversity. While the administration largely ignored matters of race in favor of the abstract notion of diversity, black Villanova students continued to confront issues of racism on campus. Furthermore, research demonstrated that black Villanova students continued to express significantly less satisfaction with their campus experience than white Villanova students. In the end, meaningful integration proved elusive as African American students at Villanova believed themselves to be accepted on campus but not fully included.

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Committee on Diversity in Admissions

In 1984, Villanova president Father John Driscoll commissioned a Program Evaluation Committee (PEC) that was charged with assessing all of the University’s

academic and non-academic programs. The PEC report was designed to lay the foundation for a new strategic plan for the University. The committee completed its work in 1988 and produced a six-volume report. The PEC recommended the University investigate ways to improve the diversity of the student body.[4]

As the PEC report was nearing completion in 1988, Father Edmund Dobbin, O.S.A., became Villanova's thirty-first president when Father Driscoll stepped down after the second-longest presidency in Villanova's history. Dobbin had spent seventeen years teaching theology at the Washington Theological Union and returned to Villanova in 1987 as the assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.[5]

Dobbin took over a growing campus that was still largely white, increasingly upper-middle class, and from the surrounding tri-state (Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey) region. In 1988, as a result of the growing economy and the impact of the NCAA basketball championship, the University received a record number of applications - 9,677 for approximately 1800 spots. At the same time, 90 percent of Villanova students identified themselves as being white and European. Approximately 75 percent of student reported that their parents earned more than $50,000, with 25 percent reporting an annual family income of over $100,000. With the increase in household income, the political leanings of Villanova students seemed to shift from liberal to conservative. Historian David Contosta indicated that, in 1964, Villanova students favored Democrat Lyndon B. Johnson to Republican Barry Goldwater by a margin of 63 percent to 37 percent. By 1988, however, the *Villanovan*'s presidential poll showed that Villanova students heavily

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[4] Contosta, *Villanova, 1842-1992*, 262.

[5] Ibid., 260.

favored Republican George H.W. Bush (55 percent) over Democrat Michael Dukakis (21 percent).[6] Indeed, the campus was becoming more conservative.

In response to the recommendation of the PEC, Dobbin formed an admissions policy committee to make recommendations to "increase diversity without sacrificing academic standards."[7] The admissions policy committee's report clearly signaled the shift to the emergent paradigm of diversity. The report's introduction quotes the University's mission statement which speaks to "enrolling students with diverse social, geographic, economic, and educational backgrounds." Furthermore, the report declares that diversity "broadens the educational experience." Quoting higher education author and researcher Ernest Boyer, the report's authors suggest that "diversity protects against the intellectual and social isolation which reduces the effectiveness of the college experience and limits the vision of the student."[8]

The report delineates target goals for each of the following categories of diversity (in order of how they appear in the report): religious, gender, geographic, ethnic, economic and residential status (defined by whether a student lives on campus or is a commuter). Under religious diversity, the report argued that that the recruitment of a predominately Catholic student population was "essential to maintaining the Catholic

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[6] Contosta, Villanova 1842-1992, 244-245.

[7] Sinead Quinn, "Committee Looks at Student Diversity," *Villanovan*, 6 October 1989.

[8] "Final Report," Villanova University Admissions Policy Subcommittee on Undergraduate Diversity, September 1, 1989, in author's possession.

character of the institution. Therefore, the committee recommended that Villanova maintain "an incoming freshman class which is no less than 85% Catholic."[9]

The report's section on ethnic diversity suggested that, among their Catholic peer institutions, Villanova compared "favorably only to Fairfield University, Providence University, and the University of Scranton," as each reported a "three to four percent representation." The report delineated the following goals for each category: 5.5 percent for "Black Americans," 5 percent for "Oriental Americans," 4 percent for "Hispanic Americans," and 2.5 percent for "Other Ethnic." The committee recommended an aggressive overall goal for the recruitment of minority students when it stated that the incoming class for the 1995-1996 class should be "17% ethnic."[10] The report's authors clearly went out of their way to avoid using the term race, instead preferring the term "ethnic."

The turn away from a racial justice model in admissions towards a model of diversity was confirmed by sentiments expressed by the committee's chairperson in an interview with the *Villanovan.* Christopher Janosik asserted that the committee was "essentially responding to the often-raised question about the homogenous nature of the student body." "That is somewhat true," Janosik admitted, as the University recruited "heavily from six states and the average economic income is toward the upper-middle

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[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[range].”[11] Furthermore, the *Villanovan* writes, the diversity committee will focus on the goal to achieve enrollment targets that include students from a wider geographical area.

Racism Still Alive – The Dickson Incident

As the administration was in the midst of fully embracing the ideals of diversity, black Villanova students were still struggling with issues of racism on campus. An incident in February 1990 demonstrated the continued salience of race on Villanova’s campus. It further demonstrated that the liberal consensus on race was fractured beyond repair.

An African American student named Troy Dickson left a campus dining hall with a pear in his hand when he was stopped by a student “meal checker.” The meal checker told Dickson that removing food from the dining hall was against Villanova policy and asked him to return the fruit. Dickson returned the fruit and the two students exchanged heat words when Dickson attempted to leave for the second time. A Villanova Public Safety officer arrived on to the scene and inquired as to what was taking place. Believing he did nothing wrong, Dickson walked away from the scene and towards his residence hall. The meal checker accused Dickson of trying to sneak into the dining hall without a card and Public Safety pursued Dickson to confront him about the incident. Feeling unjustly accused, Dickson refused to identify himself or to produce his student ID card. Villanova Public Safety called Radnor Police to the scene to assist. The details then became murky. Dickson indicated that he tried to introduce himself but the policeman refused to shake his hand. The officer denied that Dickson tried to introduce himself.

[11] Sinead Quinn, “Committee Looks at Student Diversity,” *Villanovan*, 6 October 1989.

After the alleged snub by the officer, Dickson claimed he said to himself, “that is bullshit” and turned to walk into his residence hall. When Dickson turned to leave, the officer grabbed his wrists and tried to place him under arrest. The officer then accused Dickson of resisting arrest and argued that he had to use force – including a head-butt and a kick - to subdue Dickson.[12]

The Dickson incident and its aftermath set off a firestorm of controversy. The Black Cultural Society (BCS) and the Student Committee Against Apartheid and Racism (S.C.A.A.R.) denounced the incident and, two days later, they gathered in the center of campus to protest.[13] The reactions to these events illustrated the depths to which the campus was still divided along racial lines. White students expressed outrage that the incident would be viewed in racial terms. Black Villanova students and their allies were outraged that white students could not or refused to see the racism in the incident. The discourse became ugly and downright nasty. In the end, all parties agreed that campus race relations were badly fractured.

White Villanovans came to the defense of the meal checkers by claiming that race was not an issue. Jaime Aul, a white student who was not present during the incident, argued in a letter to the editor that “threats and profanities were first issued toward mealcheckers — other Villanova students who were simply trying to do their jobs.” Aul argued with certainty that “racism was not and should not have been a factor” in the

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[12] Matthew Brennan and Maria Lovett, “Student Arrested: Investigation Begins,” *Villanovan*, 26 January 1990.

[13] Matthew Brennan and Maria Lovett, “Students Rally,” *Villanovan*, 26 January 1990.

situation.[14] In the same edition of the *Villanovan*, Andrew Lapierre, a white senior, wrote that he was "sick and tired of the irresponsible people who at every turn declare that Villanova is pack of racists." "Calling people racists and bigots is as derogatory as ethnic and racial slurs," Lapierre suggested.[15]

Despite her argument that race was not a factor in this particular incident, Aul admitted that racism existed on campus. "I will not begin to try to argue that racism is not an issue at Villanova," Aul conceded. Furthermore, she agreed that "no one will claim that Villanova is a racially integrated campus." Aul believed, however, that the blame for this situation resided squarely on the shoulders of black Villanova students. Arguing that "many blacks have a great tendency to isolate themselves," Aul observed that black Villanova students "live, eat, study and socialize among themselves." In addition, Aul suggested that they join exclusive fraternities and sororities that discriminate based on race in their membership.[16]

Black Villanova students reacted strongly and swiftly to these attacks. BCS member Sonya Smith addressed Aul's charge of isolationism by stating that "when a group of [white] sorority sisters sit together, they are not charged with isolationism." To Smith, the "differentiating factor" was not the actions themselves but "the color of those performing the actions." In terms of integration, Smith argued that minorities at Villanova are "forced to integrate themselves" into the white campus culture but did not

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[14] Jamie Aul, **"**SCAAR, BCS Cry Racism Too Soon This Time," *Villanovan***,** 2 February 1990.

[15] Andew Lapierre, "Accusations Unfounded," *Villanovan,* 2 February 1990.

[16] **"**SCAAR, BCS Cry Racism Too Soon This Time."

see much support from white students.[17] Cynthia Glover, president of the BCS, argued that it is "a natural, human desire which draws similar persons to each other." "Cultural relatives have an inherent propensity to unite," Glover contended, "in support of each other's shared struggles and hardships." Echoing the defense of the Black Power movement from an earlier generation of black Villanova students, Glover concluded her letter by arguing that "Pro-black is not equivalent to anti-white."[18]

To be sure, some white Villanovans still demonstrated their Catholic racial liberalism in their reaction to the incident. Steve Smith of S.C.A.A.R. declared that "action needs to be taken to increase cultural understanding by all parts of the Villanova community." "If the Villanova community would try hard to understand the pressures and isolation felt by minority students," Smith argued, "then judgments as to when to 'cry racism' would be more clear." In a *Villanovan* editorial, the students asked "does racism exist here at a seemingly quiet university like Villanova? The answer is yes." To combat this racism, the editors believed that "members of the Villanova community, both black and white, need to become more sensitive to the issues." Finally, the editors declared that "with a concerted and thoughtful effort, this campus could one day rid itself of the stigma of 'Vanillanova.'" Some white Villanova students still clung to the ideals of integrationism.

In the end, though, this incident demonstrated that, by the 1990s, the campus was not integrated. A gap still existed between the rhetoric of inclusion and diversity

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[17] Sonya Smith, untitled letter to the editor, *Villanovan*, 9 February 1990.

[18] Cynthia Glover, "Black Cultural Society Responds to Charges," *Villanovan*, 9 February 1990.

professed by the administration and the lived experience of black Villanova students. Not only were there strained relations between many white students and black students, there was also a clear disconnect between black students and the administration, including African American administrators. The fallout between black students and black administrators occurred over the issue of who could speak on behalf of the black Villanova students.

In a February 1990 interview, Vicki Mouzon, admissions counselor and minority recruiter, told the *Villanovan* that minority students here were generally content with the University and there did not seem to be any serious problems regarding white student attitudes toward minorities. "It is tough for a minority student to come into a predominantly white Catholic environment," Mouzon declared, "but I always encourage them by highlighting the many positive aspects of the University." [19] Mouzon made these statements in the midst of the controversy over the Dickson incident. Black Villanova students took exception to her remarks.

BCS president Cynthia Glover indicated that she and other BCS members were upset by Mouzon's statement that black Villanova students were "content." Glover told the *Villanovan* that this gave the false impression that minority students are "apathetic or are accepting of the situation." "She [Mouzon] doesn't represent, in my opinion, the

[19] Jennifer Lundgren, "Minority Students Are Content Says Minority Recruiter," *Villanovan*, 9 February 1990.

minorities here," said Glover. Glover argued that Mouzon created negative feelings among the students as she attempted to speak for some students whom she had not met.[20]

Commuter Scholarship Program

In March 1990, as the dust settled on the racial chaos caused by Dickson incident, another dispute was sparked by a controversial scholarship program for black students. In 1989, the University implemented a program where it would award up to 25 total tuition-only scholarships. [21] Recipients of the scholarship would be required to maintain an off-campus residence in order to remain eligible for the funds. These scholarships were designed to increase the enrollment of minority students on campus; however, the controversy surrounding the program demonstrated the limits of how far Villanova was willing to go in its integrationist efforts. Furthermore, the reaction to the program further illustrated the disconnect between the black Villanova students and those who professed to work on their behalf.

While lauding the goal of increasing minority enrollment, BCS students expressed concerns about the University's motivations behind the program. BCS president Cynthia Glover argued that the admissions office was only addressing "half the problem." Glover indicated that the commuter scholarship program would "get the minority students in" but

[20] Sinead Quinn, "University's Efforts to Enroll Minorities Assessed," *Villanovan*, 30 March 1990.

[21] Ibid.

argued that the students would not be "properly integrated." Glover said that it was an easy way to "rationalize that the University is doing something for black students."[22]

In describing the rationale for the commuter-based program, Mouzon indicated that the reason for this policy was the limited availability of on-campus housing. In addressing the criticisms raised by current black Villanova students. Mouzon said that she did not feel that this policy would interfere with the ability of the commuting students to integrate into Villanova's campus.[23]

The commuter scholarship program revealed the tension between black students who felt that Villanova was insincere about their efforts to integrate them and University administrators that were attempting to increase their diversity numbers. They viewed the scholarship program for minority commuter students as an indication that true integration was not a goal or high priority for Villanova. Clearly, black Villanova students felt that their presence was tolerated on campus but they did not feel integrated into campus life.

Progress in Enrollment, Not in Racial Climate

By 1995, the environment for African Americans in higher education for African Americans across the nation appeared to become increasingly hostile. At this time, state institutions across the country experienced an assault on the use of affirmative action in admissions. In 1995, the California Board of Regents approved a ban on affirmative action in admissions. California voters followed this up by passing Proposition 209 in 1996. This legislation effectively banned affirmative action in public hiring, contracting

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

and education. In 1996, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in *Hopwood v. Texas* upheld the charge that affirmative action was "racism in reverse."[24]

At Villanova, the student embrace of diversity was on full display. In April 1995, the *Villanovan e*ditors declared, "diversity is a popular issue here at the University." By diversity, they were not simply talking about racial diversity. Indeed, the editors argued:

> …we must remember that diversity is not only skin deep. It does not only pertain to the color of one's skin, it is the differences within people that we should concentrate on. Diversity is found within the religious, economic and cultural differences of people. It can also be defined as holding a different view of the world. We must look into the characters of our peers to realize that diversity does exist in various forms all over campus.[25]

As the diversity movement gathered steam, the percentage of minority students enrolled at the University in 1995 reached historic lows. Villanova was 91 percent white and only 2 percent African American. Clearly, efforts to recruit and retain minority students were failing.

As a result, a "multi-faceted recruiting plan" was launched which included the following enhancements: increased travel to urban high schools, special mailings and telethons directed to minority students, increased funding for financial aid, and the creation of a multicultural student advisory board to assist with the evaluation and implementation of the recruiting efforts.[26] These University initiatives, combined with

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[24] James A. Anderson,"Race in Higher Education." In *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, edited by William A., Smith Philip G. Altbach, and Kofi Lomotey, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 16.

[25] "More than Skin Deep," *Villanovan*, 21 April 1995.

favorable demographics, helped reverse the trend of declining African American enrollment at Villanova.

By 2000, Villanova's efforts finally appeared to pay off. Villanova's 2000 Middle States Self-Study proudly noted an increase in diversity among the student body. Multicultural students in the first-year class rose from 8.3 percent in 1995 to 15.9 percent in 1999 and 13 percent in 2000. The report also declared that since the last Middle States evaluation in 1990, enrolled minority first-year students increased by nearly 79 percent (112 in 1990; 200 in 2000). Indeed, the overall non-white student body increased from 8.4 percent in 1995 to 13.3 percent in 2000.[27]

The rise in enrollment throughout the 1990s was remarkable but not unexpected. From 1986 to 1996, the college enrollment of African Americans increased nationwide by 38.6 percent, Asian Americans by 83.8 percent and Latinos by 86.4 percent. In 1996, African Americans made up 12.5 percent of the US population and 11 percent of all college students. Higher education researchers Charles Teddlie and John Freeman argue that the increase was primarily "fueled by an increase in the number of African American high school graduates during this period."[28]

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[26] "Villanova University: Transforming Hearts and Minds, Institutional Self-Study, prepared for Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools," Villanova University, March 2001, in author's possession.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Charles Teddlie and John Freeman. "Twentieth-Century Desegregation in U.S. Higher Education: A Review of Five Distinct Historical Eras," in *The Racial Crisis in American Higher Education: Continuing Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, edited by William A. Smith, Philip G. Altbach and Kofi Lomotey, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002), 91.

Despite the increase in numbers of African American and other minority students, the campus remained desegregated not integrated. Satisfaction data taken from an annual survey given to seniors revealed that black Villanova students experienced life differently than other racial groups. According to the 2005 Senior Survey, 53 percent of seniors who identify as Black/African American were satisfied or very satisfied with the sense of community on campus. This percentage is significantly lower than other racial groups of students in the same survey. For instance, 77 percent of White seniors, 73 percent of Hispanic/Latino seniors, and 74 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander seniors were satisfied or very satisfied with the sense of community on campus.[29]

Beyond the survey numbers, qualitative data generated by the students themselves suggest that the integration project at Villanova is still incomplete. Each year at Villanova, a group of students conducts a powerful performance on issues of diversity during the orientation program for freshmen students. These students, mostly students of color, gather together and share their own experiences. The stories that they tell focus on campus incidents of racism, bias, discrimination, sexism and other assaults on social identities such as ability and sexual orientation. The student-actors collect these stories and form them into a script for the performance. Unfortunately, since the inception of the program in the late 1990s, these students have not lacked for material.

[29] "Villanova Institutional Self-Study," Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, March 2011, in author's possession.

Conclusion

In September 2006, Father Peter M. Donohue, O.S.A., addressed the theme of campus diversity on the occasion of his inauguration as Villanova University's thirty-second president. Echoing the turn towards the diversity model, Father Donohue boldly exclaimed, "We need to herald a diverse community of race, class, and geography. We need to welcome people of different faiths, orientations, and experiences." Then, in a rare public acknowledgement of the nickname that has haunted Villanova throughout its history, Donohue cried, "We need to stop referring to ourselves as 'Vanilla-nova.'"[30] This study demonstrated how the term "Vanilla-nova" was historically constructed. Despite Father Donohue's challenge for Villanova to become a more inclusive community, integration for black Villanova students has remained elusive.

In its embrace of diversity as its operating principle, Villanova moved away from the integration of African American students as a goal. In doing so, Villanova mistakenly believed that the primary goal of Catholic racial liberals – integration - had already been accomplished. Clearly, as the evidence from black Villanova students suggests, desegregation did not equate to integration.

The way in which we describe and find meaning in the struggle for integration on Villanova's campus has significant implications for race relations today. This study suggests that the focus on the liberal goal of integration on Villanova's campus has obscured the real problems of race and inclusion which were raised by black students and which are largely still unanswered. The history of the struggle to integrate was not a

[30] "University Celebrates Presidential Inauguration," *Villanovan*, 14 September 2006.

whiggish history; it was full of starts, stops and missteps. The Villanova story illustrates just how difficult the vexed process of integration can be in modern American society.

Yet, this study provides hope. The hidden history of the desegregation of Villanova can become a powerful weapon in the hands of those who seek to make Catholic universities more welcoming and just places. Indeed, only a university that understands and acknowledges its past can move forward. Today, this is as important in Catholic higher education as it is in American society.

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