

AUC Students To Celebrate The Movement They Led 40 Years Ago

By CYNTHIA POST
Staff Writer

The original leaders of the Atlanta University Center (AUC) student movement and current students at AUC schools will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the movement this weekend with a groundbreaking ceremony for a student movement marker and other special events.

"In 1960, Atlanta was totally

segregated," said Lonnie King, chairperson of the event and one of the founding members of the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights. "There was a great need for change because there were two unequal societies in Atlanta."

On March 9, 1960, the students of the AUC (then comprised of Atlanta University, Clark, Morehouse, Morris Brown, and Spelman Colleges and the

Interdenominational Theological Center) joined together and published "An Appeal for Human Rights."

This document, drafted by students on the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights (COAHR), proclaimed the students' intolerance for discrimination and racial segregation in Atlanta, citing the following areas: jobs, education,

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Students Movement

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housing, voting, law enforcement, and public accommodations.

The movement started with a few fed up students.

"I read about the sit-in in Greensboro in the *Atlanta Daily World* and thought we should do it here," said King. He discussed the idea while sitting at the lunch counter at Yates and Milton Drug Store with fellow students Julian Bond and Joseph Pierce. Bond, a former Georgia congressman, is chairman of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

"Lonnie showed me the newspaper and I said I thought it was great," said Bond. "He suggested that Joe and I try to recruit people around the counter."

King then traveled the city organizing young people and contacting the student leaders of the AUC schools. The idea was to band together and present a large, unified student challenge to the oppression.

Together Bond and other student leaders led AUC students in sit-ins at Atlanta's bus stations, cafeterias and the train station.

"I led students in a sit-in at the cafeteria in the basement at City Hall," said Bond, who added that 200 students participated in the sit-in there and 77 of them were arrested. Their parents waited for them to be released from jail at Paschal's Restaurant.

"After they were arrested, their parents would come and wait for their children. We would offer the parents a complimentary meal," said James Paschal who, along with his late brother Robert, operated the restaurant. They were also known to bail out those who couldn't afford the expense.

The Paschal brothers were strong supporters of the AUC students and the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King, Jr., Andrew Young, Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, Hosea Williams, and other civil rights leaders would meet at the restaurant to plan strategy meetings.

The commemoration will continue through Saturday and Sunday, April 1 and 2, including an ecumenical service at 11 a.m. at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Chapel at Morehouse College.

"I hope current AUC students will see what we did and become involved," said Bond.

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