

COMMITTEE ON APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, INC.

P.O. Box 110211  
Atlanta, GA 30311

November 6, 2000

Dr. Mary Ann Sumral  
1670 Harbin Road, SW  
Atlanta, Georgia 30311

Dear Mary Ann:

In the spring of 2000, many of us came to Atlanta to participate in the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Student Movement in Atlanta in 1960. During the reunion, we had the pleasure of interfacing with "ole comrades" who had participated in what has been described as the most significant movement for human and civil rights in the history of America, and possibly the world, due to the immense impact that it had on oppressed peoples everywhere. We reminisced, shared common battle stories, published an updated An Appeal for Human Rights, discussed our grandchildren and, in general, had a very good time. However, as we moved through the planned activities of the weekend, we became acutely aware that there was a paucity of present day students attending the activities. Moreover, when we, as well as the students, were queried by reporters from the local newspapers about their lack of participation, they allegedly related that they did not see the need to participate in the activities because they did not face the problems that we faced 40 years earlier. One clear implication of that response is that present day young African Americans are oblivious to the more subtle forms of racism which continue to plague this nation. This writer did not personally speak to anyone who had those feelings, but assuming that the information which has been reported is correct, there is a problem of immense proportion with regard to the future of African Americans in this country. Knowledge of one's history provides the foundation for building a prosperous and meaningful future.

Racial discrimination has not disappeared and, in many areas, is still very open and pervasive. Witness, for example, the profiling of African American men on the streets and highways of America. Many discriminatory actions have assumed various forms that may not be as visible as "Separate but Equal" accommodations. Though more insidious, they are still designed to continue the subjugation of people of African descent in this country. Moreover, the institutions in the Atlanta University Center that serve as the learning environment for future generations have not inculcated into their curriculum a focus on the contributions of its students to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, which provided the substance for the slogan that Atlanta was a city "Too busy to hate." The change in the racial climate in Atlanta set in motion the unprecedented economic expansion of the city over the past 40 years. Moreover, some of the most important leaders in the country's history were participants in the struggle of the 1960s in Atlanta. These facts need to be presented to students of today and tomorrow.



In a unanimous decision, it was determined in the spring that we should endeavor to address this problem by incorporating The Committee on Appeal for Human Rights and approach the Atlanta University Center presidents for permission to teach African American history to the freshman classes at the 4 undergraduate schools, beginning in the fall of 2001.

Teaching a course in history is just the first step in a long and gradual process designed to ameliorate some of the problems of apathy and indifference that we witnessed in the spring during the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We envision utilizing the latest teaching techniques and strategies to carry forward our message. Your participation in developing this program is needed.

Since the spring meeting, some of us have worked intermittently on this project and have put together a Constitution and by-laws and will file Articles of Incorporation for the Committee on Appeal for Human Rights prior to the meeting on November 18, 2000.

Enclosed is a summarized copy of minutes of meetings held since the spring for your review. Additionally, a copy of the Constitution and by-laws are also included. The ball is rolling, but it cannot go very far without your commitment and support. In order for this program to get off the ground, we need financial support of like-minded people who believe as we do that the Atlanta University Center students do not know their history, and that something should be done about it.

Note in the by-laws that the membership fee for a year is \$100.00. Please forward to Ann Border-Patterson, our Treasurer, the membership dues at 4507 Dudley Lane N. W., Atlanta, GA, 30327. Some of you can and will respond to this appeal for funds by contributing more than \$100.00. We encourage you to do so. The monies will be used for operational expenses and curriculum design.

We know that many of you are either retired and/or enjoying children and grandchildren. However, we call upon you one more time to take up "arms" and renew the fight for equality and opportunity for people of African descent living in this country. We can use our minds, our training, our experience, and our commitment, gained over the last 40 years to educate the present and future generations about their historical legacy, and imbue in them a sense of dedication to carry the torch for freedom and equal opportunity for African Americans into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Let it not be recorded that we were aware of the disconnect between this generation of students from their past, but failed to take any action to remedy the situation.

In August, the Atlanta Inquirer honored us on their 40th anniversary. It was a grand set of events that we all enjoyed. We again thank Mr. John Smith for his generosity and commitment to the cause of civil and human rights. At the dinner meeting, we reaffirmed our commitment to organize.



Our next meeting will be held on November 18, 2000, at the Kilgore Center on the campus of Morehouse College. It will begin at 2:00 p.m. Please come and share your ideas as we plan future strategies leading to our most noble goal.

Continuing the Struggle,

Lonnie C. King Jr.