

1999

## So Far: 60th Anniversary

North Carolina Central University School of Law

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*NEEL School of Law*

# *So Far*

"Sixty years  
of helping  
people learn  
to help  
others ..."

*60th Anniversary*





*North*

*Carolina*

*Central*

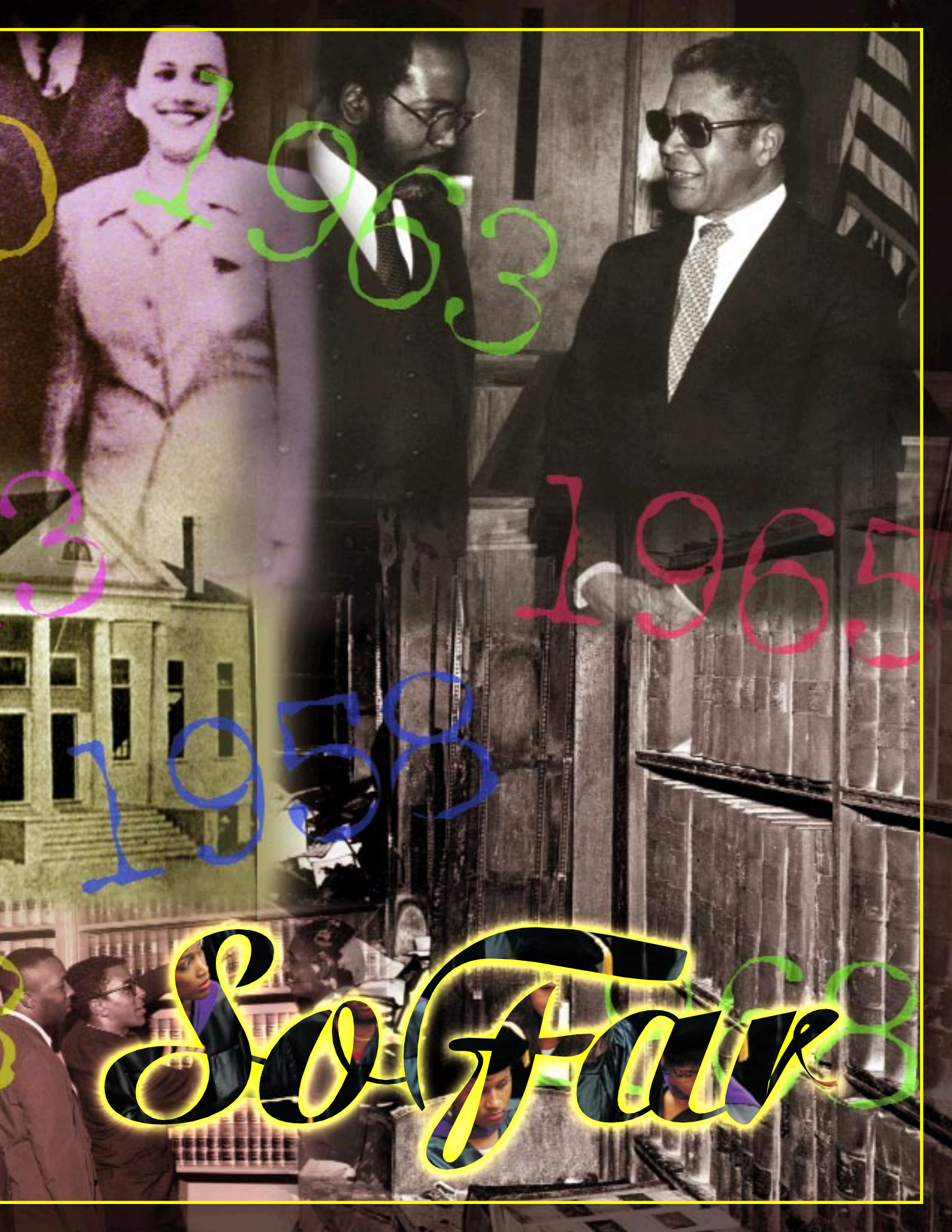
*University*

*School*

*of*

*Law*





1953

1953

1965

1958

SoFar





# “Sixty

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# years of helping people learn to help others”

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## A Decanal History "In Their Own Words"

By Janice L. Mills

In August 1998, I became the eleventh dean of the North Carolina Central University School of Law. I have benefited greatly from the struggles and triumphs of my predecessors: Maurice T. Van Hecke, Albert L. Turner, Daniel G. Sampson, LeMarquis DeJarmon, Harry E. Groves, Charles E. Daye, Thomas M. Ringer, Jr., Louis Westerfield, Mary E. Wright and Percy R. Luney, Jr. Each was a leader in his or her own right. Each, as a leader, was challenged to transform vision into reality.

Van Hecke was dean from 1939 until 1942 while serving simultaneously as dean of the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Law. Although our Law School was scheduled to open in 1939, its opening was postponed until the following year because of insufficient enrollment. As he recruited our first entering class, Van Hecke



Maurice T. Van Hecke (1939-1942)

North Carolina Collection, University of  
North Carolina Library at Chapel Hill

observed that "the insufficient attendance was largely due to the fact that it was possible to announce the School's establishment only a month before the opening of classes. Since then, consultations have been held with many individuals and groups interested in negro education. Their encouragement, the approval of the Board of Law Examiners and an early notice of the School's reopening cause us to believe that the student body next fall will be large enough to enable the School to continue with its development."

In 1942, the Law School's development continued when Turner became its first African-American and first full-time dean. He served for twenty-three years and established our

*"The insufficient attendance was largely due to the fact that it was possible to announce the School's establishment only a month before the opening of classes."*

Maurice T. Van Hecke





*Albert L. Turner (1942-1965)*

sense of community. In 1953, Turner wrote to alumni: “[w]e have thought about you many times as we go over in our recollection the students who have been here and the friendships that we have developed with them. In a discussion with the faculty recently it was proposed that we link our mutual recollections and sentiments into an Alumni Organization, which would be of mutual benefit to both the Law School and its graduates.”

Sampson served as dean from 1965 until 1969. Responding to efforts to close the Law School, he argued “it is not enough merely to say that qualified Blacks have the opportunity for admission to other Law Schools. The fact remains that they cannot gain admission in substantial numbers . . . More and more Law Schools are limiting their

enrollment to the top 5 or 10 percent of college graduating classes. Consequently, the student graduating in the lower-upper, or middle part of his class from any college is finding his source of obtaining a legal education diminishing. Because of this factor, North Carolina



*Daniel G. Sampson (1965-1969)*

College Law School is in a unique position of performing an invaluable service to worthy and deserving students as well as contributing to the general welfare of the State.”

In 1969, DeJarmon had to maintain our school, literally. After a disgruntled student started a fire in the Law School, then located in the Jones Building, DeJarmon made this



*LeMarquis DeJarmon (1969-1976)*

statement: “There is one experience I must share with you. One law student and his wife brought their little daughter with them when they came for the clean-up campaign. Their little daughter, probably between 2 1/2 and 3 years old, looked like a doll in her blue raincoat and matching blue rain hat. As her mother and father proceeded with ‘operation clean-up,’ this little angelic girl amused herself as long as she could. At last, she walked over, picked up a cloth, dampened it, pulled up a chair, stood on her tip-toes, with her little arms stretching far above her head, tried to reach the bottom of a smoke-stained window. I watched as she tried, but the bottom of that window persisted in exceeding her reach. It was a scene that I shall long remember. Watching this little girl, my thoughts went back



# Doctaw

to the ashes and charred remains of our library and to those great legal scholars of the ages who let their minds reach out beyond their times to establish the great principles of individual liberty that we, generations later, now enjoy. We, like them, must let our minds be bold and propose legal principles that will enhance the individual freedom, integrity, and human worth of this little girl and those who follow her, even though the fruition of these goals presently exceeds our reach.”

Groves was dean from 1976 until 1981. He oversaw our move into the Turner Building and was the guiding force behind the creation of the evening program. During our Fifth Decade, he observed that



Harry E. Groves (1976-1981)

*“It continues to educate more Black lawyers than all the other Law Schools in the State combined; and it does so in a well-integrated environment.”*

Harry E. Groves

“the School of Law of North Carolina Central University has a special mission and a unique challenge. The School was created, in the era of exclusion of Blacks from White institutions, to provide an opportunity within the State for Blacks to receive a legal education. It became not only the single institution within the

State for the production of Black lawyers, but was a leading educator of Black lawyers for the surrounding states, as well. Even with this institution, Black lawyers comprise only about two percent of the lawyers of the State. It continues to educate more Black lawyers than all the other Law Schools in the State combined; and it does so in a well-integrated environment.”

In 1981, Daye combined opportunity with excellence. He stated that “beyond providing an



Charles E. Daye (1981-1985)

opportunity, we must adapt our educational program to assure excellence in those who undertake it. Our school must have rigor in its professional content, but human compassion



in its process. It must be demanding in its requirements, but helping in its assurance to each student of the maximum chance. It must motivate and challenge, without destroying self-confidence. It must be hard in what it demands, but not hard-hearted in its approach. We must expect much, but offer much. We must build up confidence, in ourselves and in our students, that each of our graduates will go forth and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with law graduates from any school, anytime, anywhere. Our confidence must be well-founded. It must be based upon an educational program which fully justifies our confidence in all respects. I believe with all my heart that we can both provide opportunity and achieve excellence, and that we will. I know with all my intellect that we must; there is no acceptable alternative."

Ringer served as interim dean from 1985 until 1986. Responding to another effort to close our school, he observed, "I knew the future of the Law



*Thomas M. Ringer (1985-1986)*

School was in jeopardy. During that meeting, I did the best job I have ever done in stating the case for my client, the Law School."

In 1986, Westerfield became dean and served until 1990. During his tenure, he noted that "students receive a broad-based legal education at North Carolina Central University where diversity is treasured and freedom of expression is urged.



*Louis Westerfield (1986-1990)*

This is the reason that our graduates, both black and white, are on the cutting edge of change in our society . . . At a recent judicial banquet which served as the kick-off event for our Fiftieth Anniversary, we honored more than thirty of our graduates who are former or sitting judges . . . Rather than attempt to exhaust the list of names, let me instead point out that our . . . judges are dispersed throughout the state, and the list includes both blacks and whites, as well as males and females."

Wright served as interim in 1990 and became dean in 1991.



*Mary E. Wright (1990-1994)*

In 1992, she observed that "the importance of the Law School springs from its historical mission as an opportunity Law





School. The School opened its doors in 1939 to provide an opportunity for a legal education for African-Americans who, at that time, were excluded from the white Law Schools in the state. Many of those individuals subsequently used the legal skills they acquired at the Law School to assist poor, rural and African-American communities that would have gone unrepresented. The mission of the Law School is as vital today as it was in 1939, and the struggle to maintain its mission is ongoing.”

In 1994, Luney became dean and served until 1998. In a “Building On A Foundation” message he stated that “the North Carolina Central University School of Law continues to have one of the



Percy R. Luney, Jr. (1994-1998)

most diverse student bodies in the nation. Our faculty’s commitment to teaching and public service has not faltered . . . Our strength as a Law School is directly dependent on the success of our graduates. We must support each other economically and politically.”

My immediate vision for the Law School is quite simple: to raise our expectations of each other. As faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends, we need to continue to think about what we can do, positively and actively, to promote the Law School. It is



Janice L. Mills (1998-present)

truly a school of opportunity.

For sixty years, our school has

*“It is truly a school of opportunity. For sixty years, our school has surmounted incredible odds. It has a rich and brilliant history: one of racial segregation, adversity, triumph, transition, growth and development.”*

Janice L. Mills

surmounted incredible odds. It has a rich and brilliant history: one of racial segregation, adversity, triumph, transition, growth and development.





*The mission of the Law School is to provide a challenging and broad-based educational program designed to stimulate intellectual inquiry of the highest order, and to foster in each student a deep sense of professional responsibility and personal integrity so as to produce competent and socially responsible members of the legal profession.*





# So Far

*We have come so far in this journey . . . that has, so far, no ending point.*

The starting point is clearly 1939, when the North Carolina General Assembly authorized North Carolina College for Negroes - as North Carolina Central University was

then called - to establish a law school.

If, starting from that point, the history of NCCU Law School were charted like a map, we would see a road that curves and widens as it moves through the years. We could discern, from the surrounding landscape, the trails it has blazed through uncertain territories, surmounting obstacles and bridging divides

in steady forward progress.

And we would know, with each landmark year, that every foot along the road would find the pavement more firmly packed, more solidly established, more clearly directed toward a path of justice, equality and opportunity.

*This, so far, is where we stand - and where we now embark on the rest of our journey.*



# DOJOUR

When the North Carolina General Assembly enacted House Bill 18 on March 1, 1939, it paved the way for a new generation of African-American lawyers. The bill, authorizing a law school at North Carolina College for Negroes, was passed twenty-five years after Shaw University in Raleigh closed its law school in 1914, a move that left no in-state option for blacks to receive a formal education in law.

Coming on the heels of the Great Depression, the legislation was, in theory, a way to create a separate-but-equal option for blacks who wanted to become lawyers, without integrating the Law School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

As House Bill 18 authorized, the Board of Trustees established the North Carolina College for Negroes Law School and announced it would open in the fall of 1939. But, because the college had little time to organize and advertise the new Law School, only one student registered. The administration decided to postpone the opening for another year.

## H. B. 18

## CHAPTER 65

### AN ACT TO PROVIDE GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL COURSES FOR THE NEGROES OF NORTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS, the number of negroes in North Carolina desiring graduate and professional courses is increasing; and

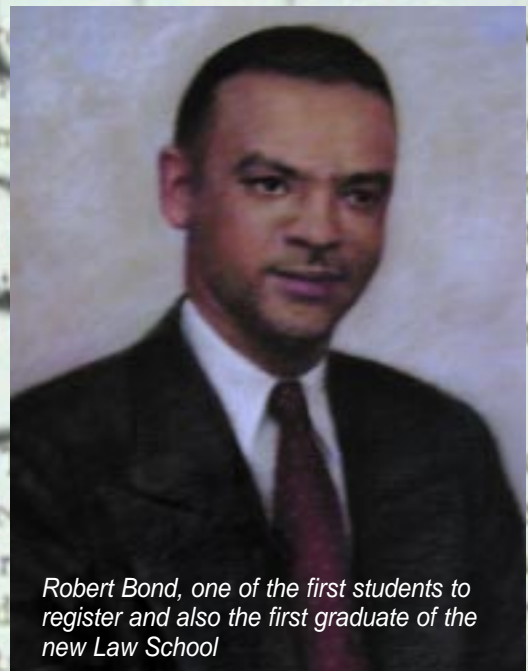
WHEREAS, it is the duty of the State of North Carolina to provide for such needs: Now, therefore

The General Assembly of North Carolina do enact:

SECTION 1. That the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina College for Negroes is hereby authorized and empowered to establish from time to time such graduate courses in the Arts field as the demand may warrant, and the funds of the North Carolina College for Negroes justify. That such courses so established must be standard.

SEC. 2. The Board of Trustees for Negroes is authorized to make arrangements for the establishment of Law, Pharmacy, and other professional institutions whenever the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina College for Negroes may deem it as the need for the same will justify.

And the Board of Trustees of the North Carolina College at Greensboro is authorized to provide courses in agriculture, home economics, and other suitable departments



Robert Bond, one of the first students to register and also the first graduate of the new Law School

Payment of extra expense of attending graduate and professional schools outside State

SEC. 3. In the event there are negroes resident in this State who are properly qualified who can certify that they have been admitted to any reputable graduate or professional college

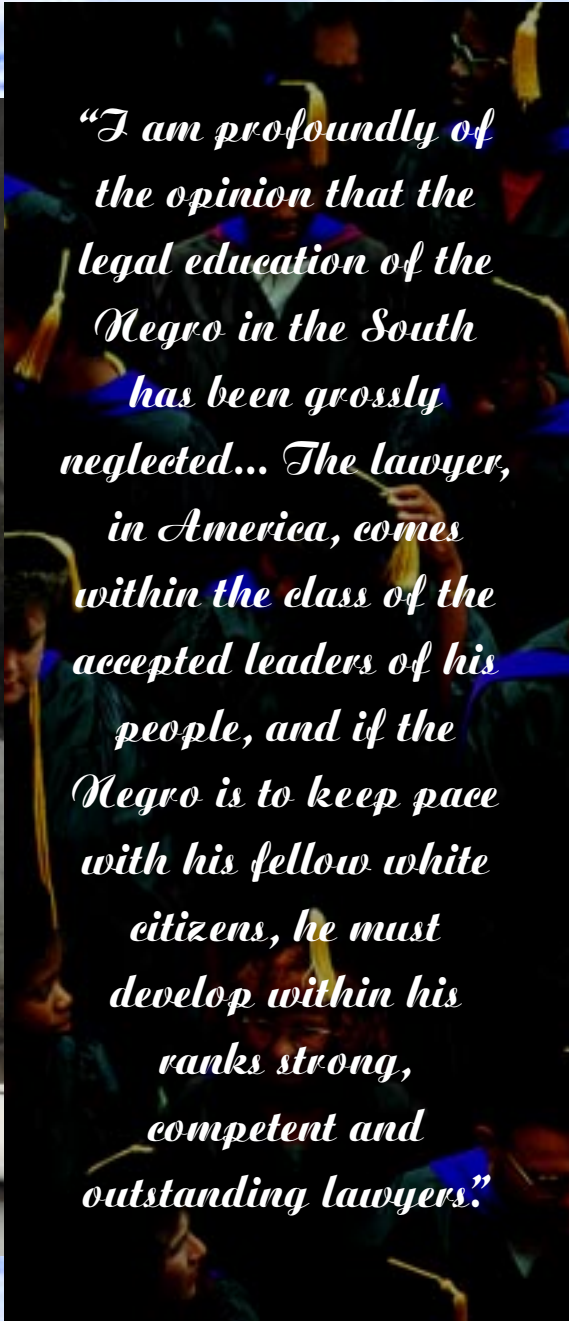




## *In the meantime,*

Law School Dean Maurice T. Van Hecke - who was also dean of UNC's Law School - solicited advice and opinions about the school's curriculum from black attorneys and others.

In December 1939, Durham Attorney C. Jerry Gates thanked Van Hecke for mailing him a copy of the Law School's bulletin. He also wrote,



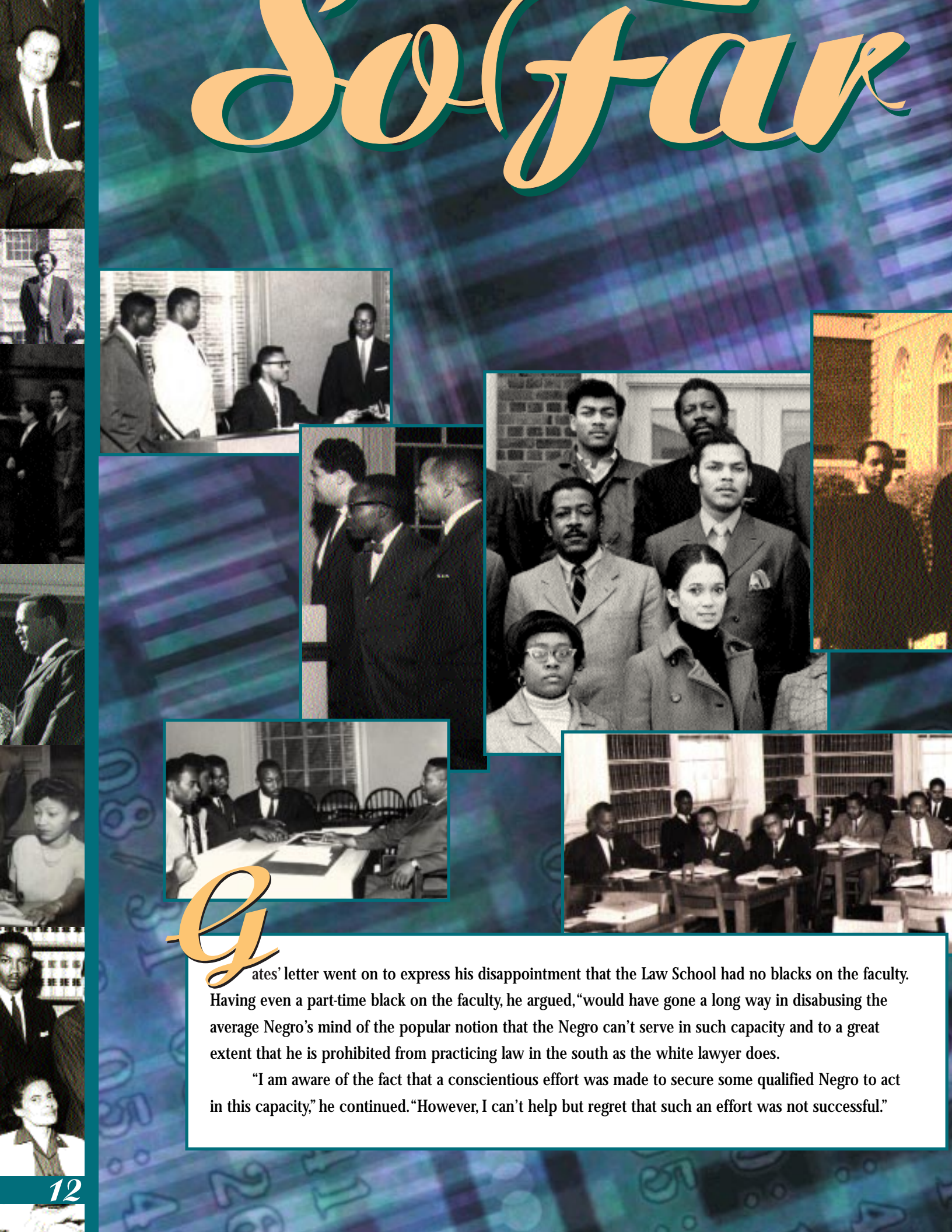
*"I am profoundly of the opinion that the legal education of the Negro in the South has been grossly neglected... The lawyer, in America, comes within the class of the accepted leaders of his people, and if the Negro is to keep pace with his fellow white citizens, he must develop within his ranks strong, competent and outstanding lawyers."*



*...that the hardihood of one man, ad embraced within the short compass of teacher yet by a foundation for broad & undisciplined, for many over a people fostered & fixed in print*



# So far



*G*

ates' letter went on to express his disappointment that the Law School had no blacks on the faculty. Having even a part-time black on the faculty, he argued, "would have gone a long way in disabusing the average Negro's mind of the popular notion that the Negro can't serve in such capacity and to a great extent that he is prohibited from practicing law in the south as the white lawyer does.

"I am aware of the fact that a conscientious effort was made to secure some qualified Negro to act in this capacity," he continued. "However, I can't help but regret that such an effort was not successful."





*A*

Also in December 1939, Winston-Salem attorney W. Avery Jones wrote Van Hecke that the curriculum outlined in the bulletin “meets with my approval in every way.

“There is one suggestion that I should like to make relative to the colored Law School,” he continued. “In view of the fact that there are so few law offices into which the graduates may enter and gain practical experience after graduation and admission to the Bar, it is very necessary that these students be given as much practical training in the Law School as possible. It is one thing to know the principles of law involved and what ought to be done; but, an entirely different thing to know how to do it. I, therefore, suggest that the students be given practical training in drawing all kinds of papers so that they will be somewhat self reliant when they enter the field.”



1940 1941 1942 1943 1944 1945 1946

# The Early Years

When the Law School opened in September 1940, Lewiston native Robert Bond was joined by four other students, who were selected from a pool of fifteen applicants from states ranging from Texas to Maryland. By the time Bond became the Law School's first graduate in 1943, total enrollment was only six.

The Law School occupied part of the Administration Building's top floor, until it moved to Avery Auditorium in 1950. In-state tuition that first semester was \$50. Out-of-state tuition was \$62.50. Room-and-board charges were \$20 per month, and student casebooks cost approximately \$30 per year. Tuition for in-state students did not increase until 1946, when it rose to \$75 a semester.

A first-year course of study was offered during the 1940-41 year, including civil procedure, contracts, torts, real property and agency. Second-year and third-year courses were added in 1941 and 1942.



To gain attention and support to desegregate the University of North Carolina, students and civil rights advocates staged a protest march from Durham to Chapel Hill.



The Law School occupied the top left floor of Administration Building from 1941-1949.





# So Far

The first-year curriculum duplicated what law school students studied at the all-white law school in nearby Chapel Hill. Not only did the two law schools share Van Hecke as dean, they also shared several professors and a law librarian. Other law professors during those formative years came from Duke University. In 1941, three full-time black instructors were added to the faculty. Among them was Albert L. Turner, who was dean of the Law School from 1942 to 1965.

Enrollment continued to be relatively low during World War II, when more than one million African-Americans served in the Armed Forces. Night classes were offered for local businessmen, attracting prominent Durham blacks such as John Wheeler and J.J. Sansom, Jr., both of whom later served as president of the largest black-controlled bank in the South, Durham's Mechanics and Farmers Bank.





# Growing Pains

*The War years also brought another change to the Law School: the addition of women students.*

For the 1944-45 term, two women, Ruth Norman and Ruth Taylor, enrolled in the Law School, boosting enrollment to seven. The next year, of the thirteen students enrolled, four were women. Three of the four, Catherine Johnson, Marcia McDonald and Ruth Norman, graduated in 1948, and were the only students to graduate that year. After they graduated, no women attended Law School at the North Carolina College at Durham (as the college was called from 1947-1969) until the 1952-53 year, when Anne Duncan enrolled. Anne Duncan later became Librarian at the Law School and served as a member of the school's admissions committee.



Ruth Caldwell and Marcia McDonald



1949 Picketing  
in Raleigh



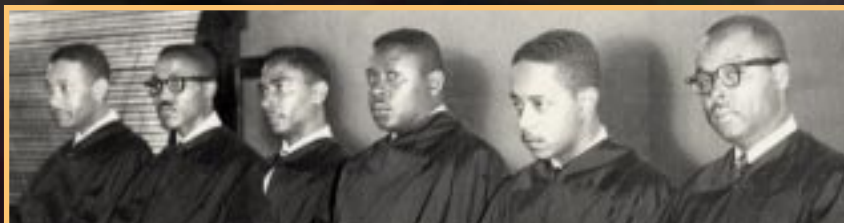
Enrollment rose slightly after the war, with twenty-four students in 1946-47, twenty-six students in 1947-48 and thirty in 1948-49. Despite increasing admissions, the Law School struggled financially in the early years. By 1949, it was poorly equipped and barely making ends meet. Students toured the state in an appeal to officials to upgrade the school. When those efforts failed, students picketed the State Capitol, carrying signs urging state officials to increase support for the school.



# Welcoming Diversity

During the 1940s, '50s and '60s, enrollment dipped and rebounded several times, with the Law School graduating a handful of students every year. The Law School admitted its first white students in 1965. By 1972, the school's student diversity had become a topic of newspaper articles. In 1971-72, the Law School had 266 students, including forty women, four Native-Americans, two Africans, one Asian and one West-Indian. They came from twenty-one states, Washington, D.C., Liberia, the West Indies, China and Sierra Leone.

In the late 1960s, the North Carolina Board of Higher Education recommended phasing out the Law School by June 1974. The Board argued that it made economic sense to phase out the Law School if black enrollment at UNC's Law School could be increased to match that at NCCU.



*Class of 1958*



*Second year students*



*Class of 1971*



ity



Four students, from one of the largest freshman classes in the 1960's at the North Carolina College School of Law, chatted with one of their instructors on the college's campus in Durham. From left to right: Evan D. Goodman, Henry Frye, professor of law, Jay F. Hanley, Joseph C. Adornato, and Charlie Alston. Eighteen freshmen were enrolled for the 1965-66 academic year at the Law School.

The Law School's supporters were outraged by the proposal. Alumni and others launched a campaign to halt it. Legal organizations drafted resolutions condemning it. The George H. White Bar Association, whose president, William G. Pearson, graduated from the Law School in 1954, passed such a resolution in February 1967. Among other things, the resolution pointed out that:

The North Carolina College School of Law produced "an overwhelming majority of the lawyers who have been most active in providing the expertise required to bring about the social changes now existing for

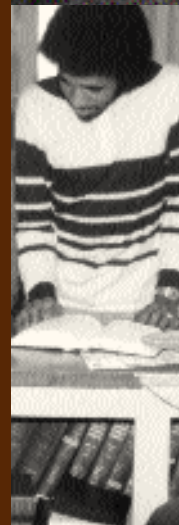
the poor of the State, a substantial number of whom are Negroes . . ."

There was "an alarming shortage of Negro lawyers in the State of North Carolina as indicated by the fact that there are approximately 4,500 lawyers in the state of which only eighty-six are Negroes . . ."

There was approximately one white lawyer for every 768 white residents and one black lawyer for every 16,910 black residents, "or in other words, there are 44.5 lawyers for every county in the State in contrast to only one Negro lawyer for every one and two-fifth counties in the State . . ."

The resolution went on to point out that the North Carolina College Law School "serves the entire citizenry of the State of North Carolina . . . as is evidenced by the fact that the North Carolina College School of Law is the most integrated Law School, faculty and student body in the State . . ." with growing enrollment.

Dean Daniel Sampson responded to the controversy by issuing what became known as "The Sampson Report," which documented the negative impact such a move would have on the black community. Another response made during Sampson's tenure was to increase white enrollment at the school.



So Fair






# Points of Victory

In 1950, the American Bar Association accredited the Law School, a victory for the school's students, administrators and other supporters. However, despite the coveted seal of approval from the ABA, even the school's top students were denied equal access to other state-supported law schools. In 1950, Harold Epps, one of the Law School's law review students, challenged this practice. He and several other law students from the North Carolina College at Durham filed a lawsuit seeking admission to the University of North Carolina School of Law. He was represented by Conrad Pearson, a well-known civil rights attorney in Durham, and Thurgood Marshall, who in 1967 was sworn in as the first African-American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

Initially, a federal district court denied admission to UNC Law School for Epps and the other plaintiffs, arguing that "the best interests of the plaintiffs will be served by denying the relief sought." The decision was reversed by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in *McKissick v. Carmichael*, prompting Floyd McKissick and





five other black law students to enroll at UNC's law school during the summer of 1950. The victory was significant, creating one of the first times in the state's history that black and white students attended a state-supported school together. Two of the African-American law students who attended law school classes at UNC, Floyd McKissick and James Lassiter, later returned to North Carolina College Law School, where they graduated in 1951. McKissick went on to become National Executive Director of the Congress of Racial Equality.

The Epps and McKissick lawsuits provided an ironic backdrop to what became one of North Carolina College's proudest moments. During the 1963-64 academic year, North Carolina College Law School beat UNC in a regional moot court competition with sixteen teams competing. The North Carolina College team, led by Maynard Jackson, who went on to become mayor of Atlanta, also beat teams from Duke and the University of South Carolina before suffering a controversial loss to the University of Virginia. More than twenty-years later, Jackson recalled the event during an interview with a newspaper reporter.

"That showed me right there that this little bitty black law school can produce a level of legal education and preparation on a par with any Law School in the nation," Jackson told the reporter.



# 1939

**March 1, 1939:** The North Carolina General Assembly enacts House Bill 18, authorizing a law school at North Carolina College for Negroes.



**September 1939:** North Carolina College for Negroes Law School is scheduled to open, but only one student registers for the fall session. The administration decides to postpone the opening for another year. Maurice Van Hecke, dean of the University of North Carolina Law School, is dean.

# 1944

**2<sup>nd</sup> World War:**

Enrollment during the war years is low, prompting the Law School to offer night classes for local businessmen. The school also enrolls its first women students during the 1944-45 term.



**September 1940:** The North Carolina College for Negroes Law School opens in part of the Administration Building's top floor. Robert Bond and four other students, selected from a pool of fifteen applicants, constitute the first law school class. In-state tuition that first semester was \$50.

# 1947

**1947:** The North Carolina General Assembly changes the college's name to North Carolina College at Durham.



# 1941

**1941:** Three full-time African-American instructors are added to the faculty, which until then had been made up of professors from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Law School. Other professors during the formative years came from Duke University Law School.

# 1949

**1949:** Financial struggles prompt students to tour the state in an appeal to officials to upgrade the school.



# 1942

**1942:** Albert L. Turner becomes the first African-American dean of the Law School.

**1950:** The American Bar Association accredits the Law School. Harold Epps, a law review student from the Law School, and several other students from the law school file a lawsuit seeking admission to the University of North Carolina School of Law. Epps is represented by Conrad Pearson, a well-known civil rights attorney in Durham, and Thurgood Marshall, who in 1967 becomes the first African-American justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

# 1943

**1943:** Robert Bond becomes the Law School's first graduate.



# 1950

**1950:** A decision by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in *McKissick vs. Carmichael* prompts six African-American law students - including Law School student Floyd McKissick - to enroll at UNC's law school during the summer. The victory represents one of the first times in the state's history that black and white students attended a state-supported school together.



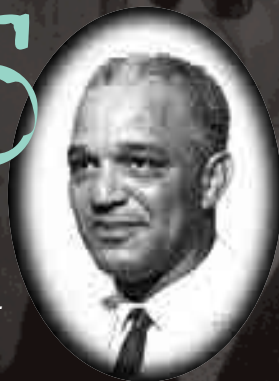
# North Carolina Central University

1951

**1951:** Robert Glass graduates and later becomes the first African-American Assistant United States Attorney in Connecticut.

1965

**1965:** North Carolina College Law School admits its first white students. Daniel G. Sampson is named dean.



1969

**1969:** UNC has only one African-American enrolled at its law school at this time, compared to 74 at NCCU. NCCU also has 1 whites enrolled in the Law School.

1958

**1958:** 1958: Sammie Chess Jr. graduates and later becomes the first African-American Special Superior Court Judge in North Carolina.



1963

**1964:** The moot court team from North Carolina College Law School beats teams from the University of North Carolina, Wake University and the University of South Carolina in a regional moot court competition before suffering a controversial loss to the University of Virginia.



1967

**1967:** Clifton Johnson graduates and later becomes North Carolina's first African-American Assistant State Prosecutor, first African-American Chief District Court Judge and the first NCCU Law School alumnus to serve on the North Carolina Court of Appeals.



1964



**1964:** H.M. "Mickey" Michaux Jr. graduates and later is the first African-American in the 20th Century to serve as a United States Attorney in the south.

**1969:** The college changes its name to North Carolina Central University.

1968

**1968:** The North Carolina Board of Higher Education recommends phasing out the Law School by 1974 if African-American enrollment at UNC's law school can be increased to match that at NCCU.

**1969:** Daniel Sampson is named dean. He is known as "The Sam" and his impact phasing out the Law School and the African-American community's disgruntled feelings over the building, de...



# University School of Law

1959



4 school.

**1972:** North Carolina Central University joins with the branches of The Consolidated University of North Carolina.

**1972:** Student diversity at the Law School becomes a topic of newspaper articles. Among the school's 266 students are forty women, four Native Americans, two Africans, one Asian and one West Indian.

1972



# Law

1974

**1974:** The media report that fewer than one-quarter of the schools' graduates pass the North Carolina Bar Examination on their first try, and the Law School rallies to improve examination scores.

**1983:** Taking the NC Bar Exam for the first time, 79 percent of graduates pass.



a city.

Simpson is... issues what becomes the Simpson Report," documenting the negative impact the law school would have on the African-American community. Adding to the Law School's difficulties, a former student sets a fire in the Law School library, destroying library books valued at \$500,000.



1975

**1975:** The North Carolina General Assembly appropriates \$2.5 million for a new Law School building and increases the school's operating budget.



1976

**1976:** Harry E. Groves becomes Law School dean.



1976



aw

1981

1990

1996

**1981:** Charles E. ... becomes Law School dean.



**1990:** Mary E. Wright becomes the Law School's first woman dean.



**1996:** The Law School opens its new Model Law Clinic. The school also introduces a program enabling students to receive their juris doctor and masters of business administration degrees in four years.

1993

**1993:** Law professors Grady Jessup and Tom Ringer help revive the Trial Advocacy Board.



1997

**1997:** The RJR Nabisco Endowed Chair in Business and Law was established.

**1981:** NCCU Law School opens the first evening law school in the state.

1994

**1994:** Percy R. Luney, Jr. becomes Law School dean.



1998

**1998:** Janice L. Mills becomes Law School dean.



1983

... the percentage of NCCU graduates ... North Carolina State Bar examination ... time and passing reaches 82 ... compared to a statewide passing rate ...

1985

**1985:** Thomas M. Ringer becomes Law School dean.

**1995:** National Jurist magazine names NCCU Law School the Best Law School for Women.

1995

**1995:** The Law School establishes the Charles Hamilton Houston Chair, representing the single largest private gift ever made to the school. Businessman Franklin R. Anderson and his wife, former NCCU Law School faculty member Susie R. Powell, donated \$667,000 to augment \$333,000 from the state legislature to provide the \$1 million needed for the chair.



1999

**1999:** North Carolina Central University School of Law celebrates its 60th Anniversary.

1986

**1986:** Louis Mesterfield becomes Law School dean.





# Do It Yourself





# The Fire



*Adding to the school's difficulties, in 1969 a disgruntled former student set a fire in the Law School building, destroying library books valued at \$500,000. Students and staff rallied to clean up the damage and hold a fund drive to replace the destroyed books. Unfortunately, some of the books had been out of print for more than one hundred years, and were irreplaceable.*





# Rebounding

Enrollment and the number of graduates jumped dramatically in the early 1970s, from eighteen in 1971 to 110 in 1976. Among the students to graduate during this time were three Native-Americans - the first members of the Lumbee tribe to earn their law degrees. At one time, North Carolina College Law School had the highest number of Native-Americans enrolled in the Southeast.

One of the reasons for the Law School's rapidly growing enrollment was the Board of Education's 1968 decree for UNC to attract as many black law students as North Carolina College was graduating. By admitting more students, North Carolina College was making it more difficult for UNC to meet the mandate. In 1969, UNC had only one black in its law school, compared to seventy-four

enrolled at North Carolina College Law School. There were also fourteen white students enrolled at the Law School in 1969.

Increasing the number of Law School students at North Carolina College, which changed its name to North Carolina Central University in 1969, also decreased the per-student cost to operate the school, helping to improve the chances that the Law School would remain open.





The Law School's outlook was improved in other ways. For example:

- The United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare determined in 1970 that "vestiges of segregation persisted in the state's post-secondary schools" and ordered

state university system placed black institutions in a better lobbying position for increased state funding.

- Alumni demonstrated their support for the school by reaching deep into their pockets. In 1973, Frank Ballance and John Harmon contributed

improvement plan for the school after questioning the adequacy of the Law School's facilities and general resources.

- In 1975, the North Carolina General Assembly appropriated \$2.5 million to pay for a new Law School building and increase the school's operating



*Third year students 1968-1969*

North Carolina to submit a remedial plan to bring its higher education system into compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

- The 1972 consolidation of the

\$10,000 - the first major alumni donation to the Law School.

Their contribution established the Albert L. Turner Scholarship.

- In 1974, the American Bar Association mandated an

budget. The new building, dedicated in 1980, was named after the Law School's first African-American dean, Albert L. Turner.



# Addressing Concerns

Although the Law School's outlook improved during the 1970s, the school faced criticism for not better preparing its graduates for the state bar examination. Criticism peaked in 1974, when the press reported that fewer than one-quarter of the school's graduates passed the state bar exam on their first try.

"The school was never adequately funded," State Rep. Henry Ward Oxendine said in 1974, responding to the criticism. Oxendine was one of the first Native-Americans to graduate from law school in North Carolina when he finished NCCU in 1973.

Media reports in 1974 offered explanations for the low passing rate, including comparisons between financial support for UNC and NCCU Law Schools. In 1974, the Associated Press reported that:

- UNC received more money per law student than NCCU — \$1,250 per student at the much-larger UNC, compared to \$917 per student at NCCU.

- The student-faculty ratio at the time was twenty-three-to-one at UNC, compared to thirty-three-to-one at NCCU.

- UNC's law library contained some 150,000 volumes, compared to NCCU's 42,368.
- Average faculty salary at UNC was \$7,442 more than the average Law School salary at NCCU, according to NCCU Law School Dean LeMarquis DeJarmon.

The Law School rallied to improve examination scores. The school secured additional state funds, retained a consultant, hired more faculty members and made other improvements to address the problems. Passing rates for the state bar began to improve. In 1983, the percentage of NCCU graduates taking the North Carolina State Bar Examination for the first time and passing reached eighty-two percent, compared to a statewide passing rate of seventy-nine percent.





# So far



*“The school was never adequately funded.”*

State Rep. Henry Ward Oxendine



# A Worthy Challenge

In 1979, Groves made an historic proposal to the trustees: offering an evening law school - the first and only in the state. As construction for the Albert L. Turner building was nearly complete, Groves unveiled his plans at a Board of Trustees meeting, explaining that the proposed school would give working people more flexibility. The evening program opened in 1981 and, until the mid-1990s, was the only evening program between Washington, D.C., and Atlanta. It is still the only evening program in North Carolina.

When the Law School celebrated its 40th anniversary in 1979, Groves wrote a statement about the school's unique history, particularly against the backdrop of integration at the state's other law schools.





CENTRAL UNIVER

LAW



“Integration of the other institutions has by no means lessened the basic mission of this Law School, to provide a door for a greater number of Blacks into this profession, a profession which has the further vital social role of producing many of the political leaders so important to the continued advancement of this society. Whites, too, find that this environment provides a special opportunity to interact with people in a world not all of whose majorities happen to mirror their own likeness,” he wrote.

“The unique challenge of this institution,” Groves continued, “is not merely to keep open a wider door of opportunity to persons from educational backgrounds which have frequently failed to make their admissions criteria competitive at other schools, but to cause such students to raise the level of their competence and performance so that they enter the profession not disadvantaged in comparison with graduates of other institutions. It is not a small challenge. It is a worthy one.”

challenge. It is a worthy one.”

SOUTHERN



# A New Era

After Groves resigned in 1981, the Law School continued to make great strides under the leadership of deans Charles E. Daye (1981-1985), Thomas M. Ringer (1985-1986), Louis Westerfield (1986-1990), Mary E. Wright (1990-1994) and Percy R. Luney, Jr. (1994-1998). For example:

- In 1993, Law School professors Grady Jessup and Tom Ringer helped revive the Trial Advocacy Board, which had been dormant since 1986. The board has since gained regional and national recognition for its excellence in trial advocacy.

- In 1995, National Jurist magazine named NCCU Law School the Best Law School for Women because of its high percentage of women students, faculty and administrators.

- Also in 1995, the Law School established the Charles Hamilton Houston Chair, representing the single largest private gift ever made to the Law School. Businessman Franklin R. Anderson and his wife, former NCCU Law School faculty member Susie R. Powell, donated \$667,000 to augment \$333,000 from the state legislature to provide the \$1 million needed for the chair, named for the former NAACP lawyer and civil rights activist.





The chair is intended for a professor with a distinguished record of teaching, research and publications, and public service in the areas of constitutional and civil rights law. The first person to hold the chair was Professor Robert Belton of Vanderbilt University. Professor Jerome Culp of Duke University held the position during the 1998-99 academic year.

- The Law School opened its new Model Law Clinic in 1996 to house its clinical program. The clinical programs provide an opportunity for students to gain practical experience while helping people in the community resolve real-life problems. Experienced attorneys supervise the students in the clinic, which includes the Criminal Litigation Clinic, the Civil Litigation Clinic and the Family Law Clinic.

- The Law School houses the nationally recognized Land Loss Prevention Project, a non-profit organization that helps landholders with limited resources preserve their lands and livelihoods.

- In 1996, the Law School introduced a program enabling students to receive the juris doctor and masters of business

administration degrees in four years, rather than the usual five. The joint degree program prepares students for career opportunities in law and business.

- The RJR Nabisco Endowed Chair in Business and Law was established in 1997. It is a joint appointment between the two schools. The professor focuses on teaching, research and scholarship in the areas of international business transactions, international trade and comparative law.





# 'Let Our Minds Be Bold'

Dean Janice Mills was named interim dean of the Law School in August 1998, on the eve of orientation for incoming classes. The following spring, she was officially offered the position full-time.

At the beginning of the 1999-2000 year, Dean Mills welcomed 113 new students, bringing the total enrollment to 362. Of those 113 students, 45% are African-American, 39% are white, 11% are Mexican-American or Hispanic, 4% are Asian-American, 1% are Native-American and 59% are women.

Clearly, NCCU Law School is continuing the tradition of diversity that has set it apart from its peers and enabled it to play such a valuable role in the history - and future - of lawyers in North Carolina and beyond. The school's diversity is not limited to race, gender or country of origin. It also includes age and socio-economic background.

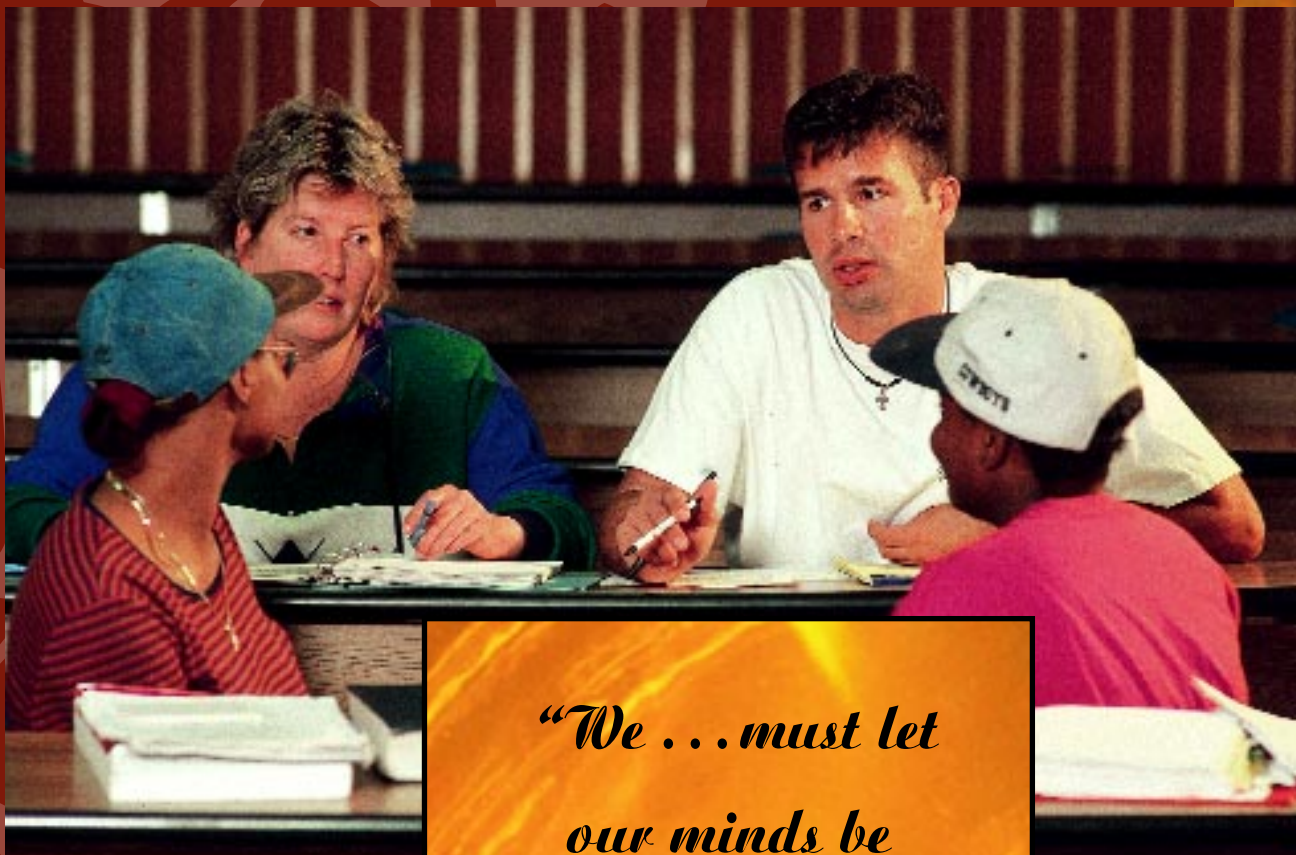
As the Law School crosses into the new millennium and embarks on its seventh decade, Dean Mills will be building on the foundations laid by her predecessors, including LeMarquis DeJarmon, who once said, "[w]e . . . must let our minds be bold and propose legal principles that will enhance . . . individual freedom, integrity, and human worth."



Dean Janice Mills







*“We . . . must let  
our minds be  
bold and propose  
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freedom,  
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human worth.”*

LeMarquis DeJarmon



# “Notable” Graduates

By national standards, North Carolina Central University Law School is considered a small law school, yet it has produced more African-American graduates than North Carolina’s other law schools. Quite a few of these graduates - as well as graduates of other races - have gone on to earn widespread recognition.

Among them are:

- Robert Glass, who graduated in 1951 and later became the first African-American assistant United States attorney in Connecticut. He also served as a juvenile court judge, superior court judge and an administrative law judge. In 1987, he became the first NCCU alumnus to sit on a state supreme court when he was appointed associate justice on the Connecticut Supreme Court. He was also the first African-American justice to sit on the Connecticut Supreme Court.

- Floyd McKissick, who graduated in 1951 and went on to become National Executive Director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). In 1972, he launched Soul City, the first new town sponsored primarily by African-American enterprise.

- Sammie Chess Jr., who graduated in 1958 and became the first African-American special superior court judge in North Carolina.

- Clarence C. “Buddy” Malone, who graduated in 1959 and started the first African-American law firm in Durham. His office became a training ground for many young lawyers graduating from NCCU.



# So



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*Fair*



# So far

• H.M. "Mickey" Michaux, Jr., who graduated in 1964 and was the first African-American in the 20th Century to serve as a United States attorney in the South.

• Maynard Jackson, who graduated in 1963 and became the first African-American mayor of Atlanta in 1974. At age thirty-five, he became the youngest person to be elected to the post.

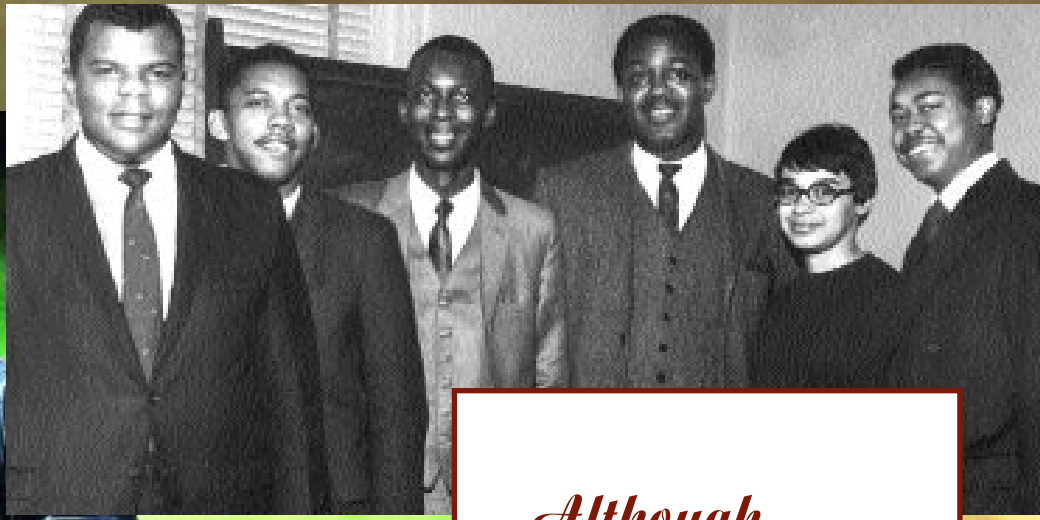
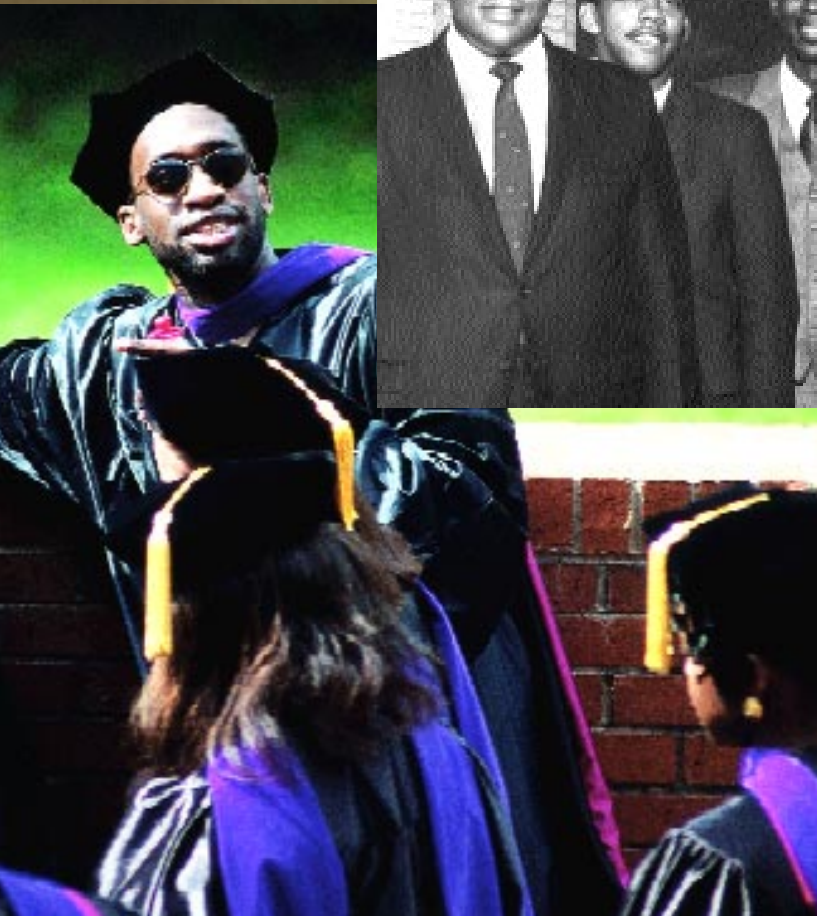
• Clifton Johnson, who graduated in 1967 and became the first African-American assistant state prosecutor in North Carolina. He also became North Carolina's first African-American resident superior court judge, first African-American chief district court judge, and the first NCCU Law School alumnus to serve on the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

• Michael F. Easley, who graduated in 1976, became the first NCCU Law School alumnus to serve as attorney general for the State of North Carolina.

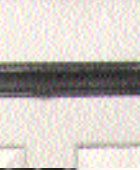
• Eleanor G. Kinnaird, who graduated in 1992, was elected as a senator to the North Carolina General Assembly in 1996.







*Although the names of these graduates are more easily recognized than the names of the other 2,000-plus students who have graduated from NCCU Law School, the contributions of these other students are no less commendable.*





As we venture into the 21st Century, we will continue to heed DeJarmon's call for boldness, carrying on the tradition of measured risk-taking that has marked the Law School's history.

We will continue to take promising students - even those who do not fit the traditional law school mold - and we will strive to encourage, guide and inspire them.

We will continue to celebrate diversity and challenge bright minds.

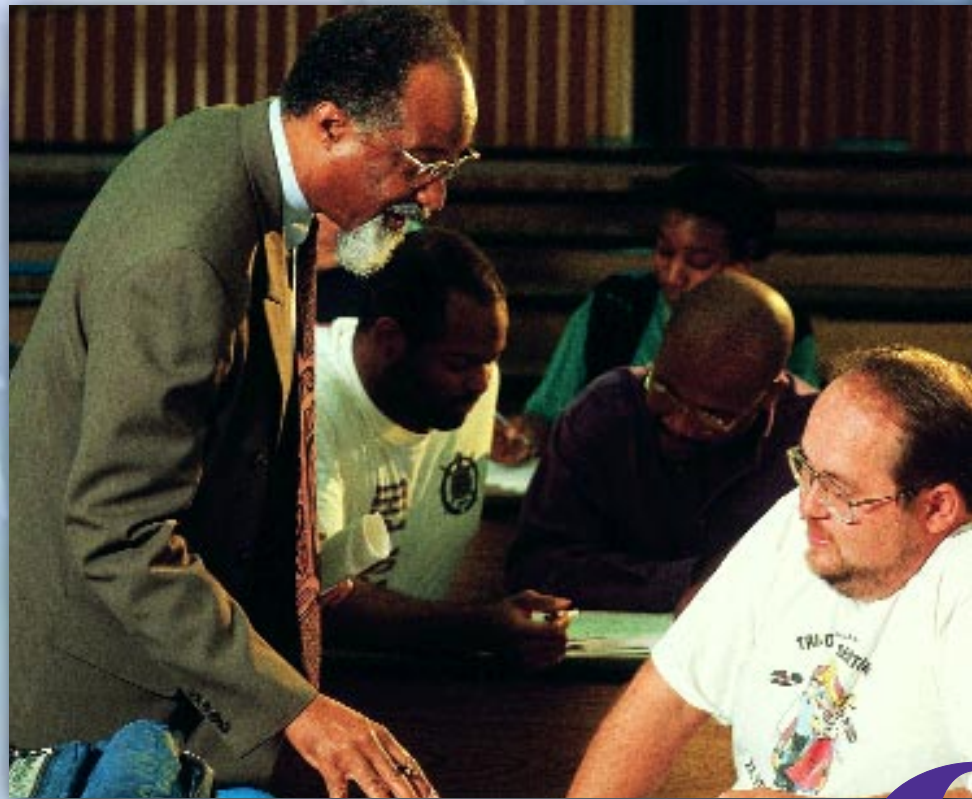
We will continue to nurture the seeds of public service that have been sown already in so many of our students, and provoke them to make the world a better place.

Most important, however, we will continue to prepare lawyers to navigate confidently through our legal system, to promote fairness and justice, to serve their clients and communities well, and to foster change when legal systems and processes interfere with the search for the truth.

We will, because we must. Too much is hanging in the balance.

This, so far, is our legacy.

# *Moving Boldly Onward*







*We will,  
because we  
must. Too  
much is  
hanging in  
the balance.*

*This, so  
far, is our  
legacy.*

*So Far*





# Southern









# SOTFAIR

*"Sixty years  
of helping  
people learn  
to help  
others."*



*North Carolina Central University  
School of Law*

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