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Trent Cheyney to Mr. Meredith (30 September 1962)

Trent Cheyney

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918 Quercus Ave. ✓

San Antonio 9, Texas

Sept. 30, 1962

9:30 P.M.

Answered 11/20/62 ✓

Dear Mr. Meredith,

By the time you read this letter, you will have been on the Mississippi campus for three or four days; consequently the total realization of your decision with its many ramifications must now be fully implanted upon your heart and conscience.

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that the decision you made is Right and Necessary if our society is to remain viable and democratic. Perhaps the term "necessary" is more important at the present moment than you might believe. There are many other people here in Texas, Mr. Meredith, besides myself, a caucasian English teacher in a San Antonio high school,

(2) Who are sincerely convinced that the type of action you took is the only kind which will effectively break the segregation pattern of the South.

The extent of your courage (ulcer included) is not lost upon intelligent people, and if the abuse you may now be suffering appears at times overwhelming, you must remember and constantly tell yourself that it is necessary and that you are not

alone. All over this great country of ours, Mr. Meredith, people of all races are praying for you. We are behind you. We believe in what you are doing, and although we may be grossly inarticulate and ineffective in conveying our hope and aspirations, you a 29 year old American are doing it for us, doing it in silence, loneliness perhaps even bitterness but still doing it.

The real challenge still lies ahead. You must not be forced

(3)

(5)

or intimidated to leave the campus even though you are subject to the most vicious pressures.

If you can make yourself stay at least for a few months you can consolidate your initial victory and inspire other deserving Americans to claim their birthright.

I realize, sir, that perhaps at this point you are ticking yourself what right does this guy have to tell me that I must stay on?

What does he know about me and the way I am being treated?

The answer, of course, is that I do not know you personally or from first-hand experience am familiar with the conduct ~~with~~ to which you are being subjected.

However, we are both brothers in the family of man, and we are both children of God. Therefore, I have a stake in you and in what you are doing.

I cannot send you money or worldly goods to aid the

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cause of integration. I can only
send you my thanks and
appreciation. And when the going
gets rough, the knowledge that
there are others, though miles away,
who are with you may help to
ease the burden.

I, too, am active in integration
activities and have received insulting
and even obscene letters from racists
crack pots; thus, it would not surprise
me if you received many such missives.

The writers of these types of letters
are intellectual cowards and their
statements are not worthy of your
attention.

I hope that you receive
many encouraging letters besides
mine. I also realize that you
are quite busy so please do not
feel that you must answer this
letter. Just remember that for
each person who sits down and
drops you a line there are hundreds
who would like to but ^{do} not get
around to it.

I sincerely believe Mr. Meredith,
that the people at large are with you.
Sincerely,
Strent Cheyney