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Samuel Hamilton Wiley to Mr. Meredith (4 October 1951)

Samuel Hamilton Wiley

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Lagos, Portugal,
October 4, 1951.

Answered 11/29/62

Mr. James Meredith,
University of Mississippi,
Oxford, Mississippi.

Dear Mr. Meredith:

I read yesterday in the Lisbon newspaper "Diario De Noticias", that the Alumni of Portuguese Overseas Students had offered you a scholarship in any Portuguese University you preferred to frequent.

Having lived in Portugal nearly 20 years at various times, nearly 10 years of which was as Consul in Oporto and later Consul General in Lisbon, I feel that I know the Portuguese character intimately. I wish to assure you that this offer was not made in any attempt to obtain publicity or to show up the disgraceful race enmity shown in your and other cases, but was done from pure kindness of heart. The Portuguese are the most hospitable, the kindest and most considerate people I have ever lived among. They have not and never have had any racial discrimination. It just isn't in their nature. A man is judged solely by his character and actions and not by his race or color.

If you should ever feel too deeply the race hatred shown by your fellow students and accept the offer from Portugal, I can assure you that you will be treated with sincere friendship as an honored guest.

You don't need to reply to this letter, but if you did want to, my address for several months will be Apt. 105 Park View Apartments, Raleigh, N.C. since I am leaving tomorrow morning, for a visit of 3 days to Fatima, and then by TWA on the 19th for North Carolina.

I congratulate on your dignified and courageous behavior. You said that your insistence in registering at The University of Mississippi was done more for the United States than for yourself. In my opinion you were too modest, it was done also for your race all over the world and for the world, since there can never be peace until racial discrimination has completely disappeared.

Very truly yours

Samuel Hamilton Wiley
Samuel Hamilton Wiley,
American Foreign Service Officer, Retired.