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“A DREAM DEFERRED”: THE DESEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION
OF CLEMSON ATHLETICS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

by
Luke Allen Ekstrom
May 2020

Accepted by:
Dr. Rod Andrew, Committee Chair
Dr. Abel Bartley
Dr. Alan Grubb

ABSTRACT

Although Clemson University's first African-American student, Harvey Gantt, was admitted in 1963, the first African-American athlete did not sign with Clemson until 1969. This thesis assesses the years leading up to athletic desegregation at Clemson University, and explores the alleged barriers to the successful recruitment of African-American athletes at Clemson. While there were legitimate obstacles to signing African-American athletes, such as the academic standards of the Atlantic Coast Conference and the personal preference of African-Americans choosing to go elsewhere, I argue that these barriers alone were insufficient to preclude the signing of an African-American athlete. Despite the open opposition to the desegregation of Clemson University in 1962 and 1963, by 1968 the Clemson students, administrators, and alumni largely supported the recruitment of African-American athletes. This thesis utilizes the conceptual lens of "deep play", a concept described by anthropologist Clifford Geertz, to demonstrate how the commitment to gaining a competitive advantage in sports trumped the societal and political views of those who transitioned from overt resistance to Gantt to the definite endorsement of recruiting African-American athletes. Despite the popularity of athletics among the Clemson community, the historiography of Clemson athletics and desegregation is minimal, and my research is intended to create a foundation for future research into Clemson's own history of desegregation and integration within their athletic teams.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated first and foremost to the person whose support made all of this project possible, my wife Allyscha. Since before we even moved two thousand miles across the United States from Provo, Utah to Clemson, Allyscha has never stopped encouraging me in my graduate studies and thesis research. Additionally, I dedicate this work to my beloved daughter Emma, whose unwavering energy and brightness inspires me each and every day.

Furthermore, this thesis is respectfully dedicated to the pioneering student-athletes who broke down racial barriers within Clemson athletics.

I would also like to humbly thank the colleagues and professors who have aided me in my studies and research: Dr. Paul Anderson, Dr. Rod Andrew, Dr. Alan Grubb, Dr. Abel Bartley, and Dr. Pamela Mack.

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CHAPTER ONE

“A DREAM DEFERRED”: THE DESEGREGATION AND INTEGRATION OF CLEMSON ATHLETICS AND THE LANDSCAPE OF COLLEGE FOOTBALL HISTORIOGRAPHY

On the nights of March 25th and 26th, 1971, the following verse from Langston Hughes, “Harlem”, appeared on the front cover of the program of a theatre production at Clemson University:

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore-
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over-
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load,
Or does it,
Explode?¹

The performance (“A Dream Deferred: An Evening of Black Theatre”) was produced by the Student League for Black Identity and the Clemson Players. The stated purpose of the theatre night was to “capture the feeling and identity” of what it meant to be black, particularly at Clemson University.² The verse, “No Images” by William Cuney, was presented by Clemson student Craig Mobley as the third performance of the night:

She does not know
her beauty,
she thinks her brown body

¹ Student League for Black Identity, “A Dream Deferred: An Evening of Black Theatre” (Theatre Program, Clemson University Libraries, 1971).

² Ibid.

has no glory.

If she could dance
naked
under palm trees
and see her image in the river,
she would know.

But there are not palm trees
on the street,
and dish water gives back
no images.³

Mobley's reading of "No Images", and his general participation in the production was exceptional for two related reasons, as he was not only the lone African-American student-athlete to participate in the performance, but Mobley was also the first black athlete to be signed at Clemson University. In July 1969, Mobley rejected a prestigious appointment to the United States Military Academy to play basketball at Clemson University, formally breaking the color barrier within Clemson athletics.⁴ During the 1969 school year, Johnny Moon joined Clemson's track team on a scholarship, its first black member, and in 1970 Marion Reeves signed on to the football team as its first black player.⁵ Despite the quick succession in which these three young men joined athletic teams at Clemson University, the desegregation of Clemson's athletics was the product of a gradual, often precarious shift in institutional attitudes and policies, societal pressures, and individual beliefs that occurred in the six years following the desegregation of the

³ William Cuney, "No Images," Poetry Foundation, Accessed March 8, 2020; Student League for Black Identity, "A Dream Deferred: An Evening of Black Theatre" (Theatre Program, Clemson University Libraries, 1971).

⁴ "First Negro Athlete, Two Cage Giants Give Roberts Hope For Better Future," *The Tiger* vol. LXIII No. 1 (Clemson University, July 25, 1969), 10.

⁵ Charles H. Martin, *Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in Southern College Sports, 1890-1990* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 171.; "Citadel vs. Clemson (9/12/1970)." *Football Programs*, Sep. 12, 1970.

university at large in 1963. Yet, the struggles of African-American student-athletes at Clemson did not vanish in 1969 as color barriers faded, but rather continued in varied forms as the teams underwent the process of integration. The words of “Harlem” and “No Images” are indeed emblematic of both the individual and collective experiences of the first African-American athletes at Clemson University, for the long-deferred dream of desegregation was fulfilled, only to be succeeded by the vulnerabilities of integration.

Clemson’s Story in Context

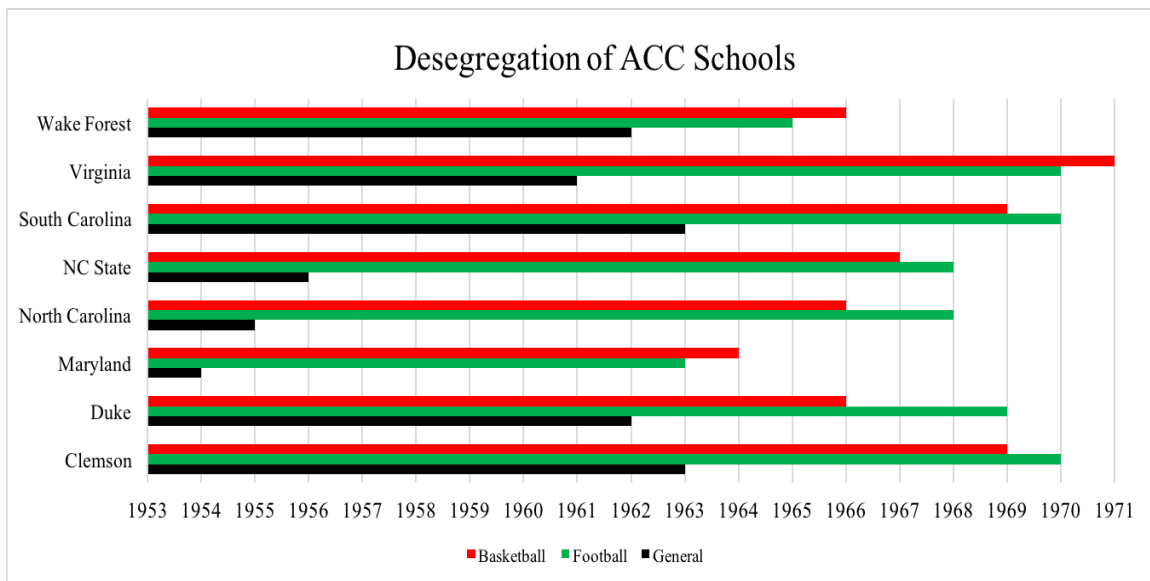


Figure 1.1: The Atlantic Coast Conference and individual timelines of desegregation.⁶

⁶ Graph created by author. The data for the schools other than Clemson comes from Charles H. Martin’s “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow in Southern College Sports: The Case of the Atlantic Coast Conference,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (July 1999): 253-284. While Martin mentions that the first African-American football player at Clemson joined the team in 1971, it should be noted that Marion Reeves joined the team as a freshman in 1970, though it was not until 1971 that Reeves could participate in varsity athletics.

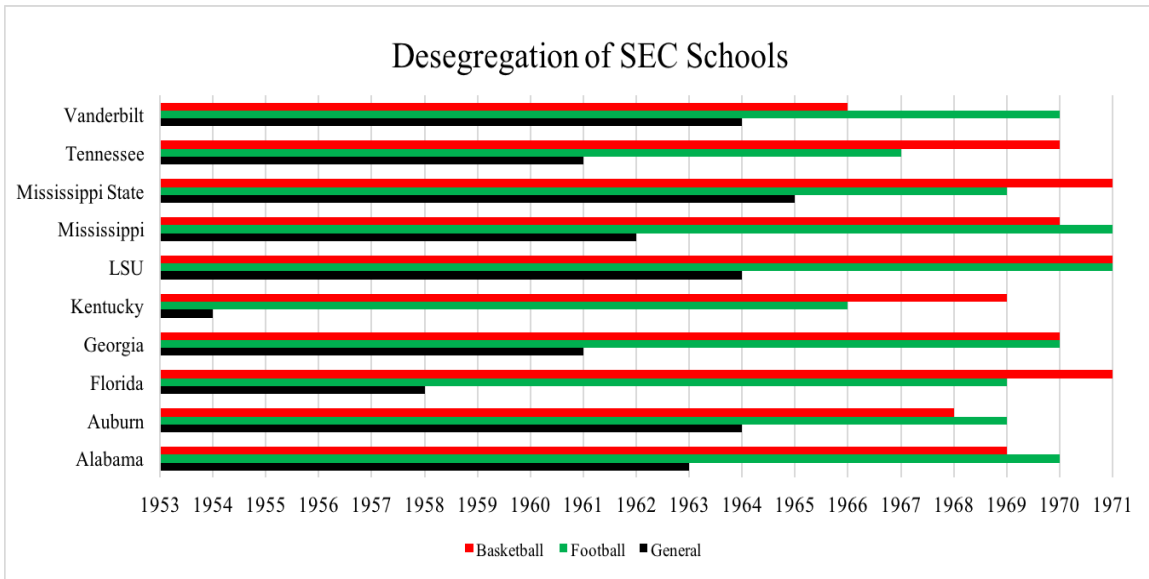


Figure 1.2: The Southeastern Conference and individual timelines of desegregation.⁷

⁷ Data compiled and graph created by author. “University of Alabama,” Wikipedia, accessed Feb. 11, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Alabama#Racial_integration; “Alabama Crimson Tide Men’s Basketball,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alabama_Crimson_Tide_men%27s_basketball; “Auburn University,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auburn_University; “Remember Henry Harris,” Al, https://www.al.com/sports/2013/10/remember_henry_harris_auburns.html; “UF honors 50 years since first black law grad as black law enrollment drops,” The Gainesville Sun, Oct. 11, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20150607112845/http://www.gainesville.com/article/20121011/ARTICLES/121019862>; “Williams has a special place in Gator history,” Ocala StarBanner, <https://www.ocala.com/article/LK/20061217/News/604248612/OS>; “University of Georgia,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Georgia; “Black History Month: UGA Timeline,” University of Georgia, <https://online.uga.edu/node/5346>; “University of Kentucky,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Kentucky; “Tom Payne (basketball),” Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Payne_\(basketball\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Payne_(basketball)); “Louisiana State University,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana_State_University; “Collis Temple,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collis_Temple; “University of Mississippi,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Mississippi; “Coolidge Ball,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coolidge_Ball; “Mississippi State University,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississippi_State_University; Jason A. Peterson, *Mississippi State University, The Press, and the Battle to Integrate College Basketball*, (Oxford, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 4; “Vanderbilt University,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vanderbilt_University; “Perry Wallace,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perry_Wallace; “First African American Student Gives Speech on Civil Rights,” UT Daily Beacon, Oct. 15, 2015, http://www.utdailybeacon.com/campus_news/first-african-american-ut-student-gives-speech-on-civil-rights/article_3feafdc4-efb4-11e9-8e76-eb072963c510.html; “Wilbert H. Cherry,” Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilbert_H._Cherry; “The Integration of Football in the Southeastern Conference,” Team Speed Kills, May 5, 2012, <https://www.teamspeedkills.com/2012/5/9/3008248/the-integration-of-football-in-the-southeastern-conference>.

The desegregation of Clemson University must first be understood as part of a broader process of universities desegregating throughout the South in the 1950s and 1960s. As for sports, major collegiate athletic teams in the South from the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) and the Southeastern Conference (SEC) desegregated within a single decade. Even the most conservative Southern universities included African-Americans on both their football and basketball teams by 1971 (see Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2). Within the ACC, Clemson University was among the last schools to sign African-American athletes, along with the University of South Carolina and the University of Virginia, and tied with the University of South Carolina as the last school to admit African-American students in general. In relation to the universities in the SEC, Clemson is much more similar in its timeline, sharing the same years as the University of Alabama and desegregating before at least four SEC schools. Overall, Clemson was known as the “most conservative school in the ACC,” which can be demonstrated by the fact that it was among the slowest in the ACC to desegregate in both general admission and athletic teams, but its timeline falls within the years that other major Southern schools desegregated, especially universities in the deep South.⁸

While it is critical to assess Clemson’s process of desegregation and integration within the broader context of Southern universities, the nuances and peculiarities of Clemson’s story of desegregation ultimately provide the richest historical content. The admission of Harvey Gantt in 1963, years of various groups arguing for the recruitment

⁸ Charles H. Martin, “The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow in Southern College Sports: The Case of the Atlantic Coast Conference,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (July 1999): 272.

of African-American athletes, Clemson's struggles with the ACC's academic standards, the signing of Craig Mobley and other individual African-American athletes, the formation of the Student League for Black Identity, and the rapid integration of the athletic teams after 1970 each represent significant developments in the history of Clemson University, the experiences of both African-American and white students at Clemson, and the incredible transformation of Clemson's athletics within just ten years. By focusing on the specific circumstances faced by Clemson students, community members, and leadership in this thesis, both the local story of Clemson and the broader story of desegregation and life in Southern universities are enriched.

A Case for Sports in Civil Rights History

When compared with the major victories of the Civil Rights Movement, such as the right to vote, the ability to attend an educational institution, or serve in the armed forces, having the right to compete on an athletic team may seem insignificant. At the end of the day, it is important to acknowledge that sports are forms of entertainment and leisure. Yet, in the context of equality, it is arguably just as important for a person to have the right to play and spend their leisure time how they wish as it is for them to be able to vote. Additionally, both team and individual sports have an inherent equality in the form of competition and membership on a team. While the actions of teammates, coaches, or officials certainly can taint the equality of sports, the fundamental action of an African-American putting on the same uniform as a white teammate and competing in the same contest serves to equalize and create solidarity. Therefore, the ability for African-

Americans to compete on the same stage, as members of the same sports teams as their white classmates represents a critical component of equality.

In the context of Clemson University, sports dominated the economic and cultural landscape of the university, even in the 1960s. IPTAY, the primary organization for funding Clemson's athletic department, raised over 1.5 million dollars between 1960-1969, and \$342,601.55 in 1970, a sum of nearly two million dollars in one decade, all donated to IPTAY from its members, whose membership fluctuated between eight and ten thousand in that time period.⁹ Moreover, sporting events represented the lifeblood of the community, not just for students and Clemson staff, but for fans who flocked to Clemson in the fall to see Clemson football games. As such, for African-American students to put on the Clemson Tiger uniform represented a monumental development, as they became a representative of Clemson's foremost institution, its athletic teams. The triumph of Harvey Gantt in 1963 should rightly be recognized for its significance, for without the overall desegregation of Clemson University, the desegregation of athletic teams would not have been possible; yet the inclusion of African-Americans on Clemson's sports teams, their greatest tradition, should be treated as an equally significant development in the history of Clemson University and civil rights.

Desegregation versus Integration

While the terms desegregation and integration are often utilized interchangeably, in my thesis I attempt to treat the two terms as distinct from each other and emphasize the

⁹ Clemson IPTAY Club – Contributions. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 19, Folder 14.

differences in order to demonstrate how singular events of desegregation fit into larger processes of integration.¹⁰ The distinction between desegregation and integration is not my own unique creation, but I argue that pointedly analyzing historical developments within race relations and civil rights movements through two particular lenses, desegregation and integration, aids in understanding the drawn-out conflict that African-Americans experienced before and after institutional barriers were lifted.¹¹

In the context of my thesis, the term desegregation refers specifically to an event and integration represents a process. Therefore, desegregation occurs when restrictive, often outright repressive laws or policies which target and exclude a specific group of people are repealed or abolished. While it may take generations for the legal process to unfold, in a legal sense, desegregation takes place once laws go into effect, as in the case of Harvey Gantt in 1963, when Clemson University desegregated under a federal court injunction, which forced the administration to admit Gantt.¹² Integration, however, is not simply the removal of barriers or the increase of rights. In my thesis, integration represents the process of individuals, institutions, and communities learning to treat historically mistreated and disadvantaged groups of people as equal members of a

¹⁰ See Lane Demas's *Integrating the Gridiron: Black Civil Rights and American College Football* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2011) as an example of the term integration used to mean both the event of desegregating the athletic teams and the drawn-out controversies and struggles after African-Americans joined college football teams.

¹¹ Clemson University professor emeritus Dr. Henry Lewis Suggs similarly distinguished between desegregation and integration, "Incidentally, desegregation is using the law as an instrument of social change. Integration is the acceptance of desegregation, a beloved community, and a colorblind society" in "Harvey Gantt and the Desegregation of Clemson University, 1960-1963," in Skip Eisiminger (ed.), *Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson*, (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Digital Press, 2003), 17.

¹² Board of Trustees, Clemson University, "January 24, 1963 Clemson Trustees Minutes" (1963). *Minutes*. 298. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

community. Integration is forging respect and transforming cultural and personal belief systems in order to embrace diversity, and therefore acknowledge the wrongdoings of the past with the hope of building a future with less conflict.

A concrete example of how this thesis distinguishes between desegregation and integration is the story of how Clemson's football team underwent a tremendous shift between 1969 and 1973. The athletic desegregation took place specifically in 1969 for Clemson basketball and 1970 for Clemson football, which was a product of both the general desegregation of Clemson University in 1963, and the subsequent integration of the university as more African-American students attended Clemson each year. The integration of the football team, therefore, began in 1970 as Marion Reeves joined the team. Within two years, Reeves was joined by four additional African-Americans on the football team, Willie Anderson, Jay Washington, David Thomas, and Leon Fabers; each of these players were starters and members of a preseason watch list of exceptional players in the ACC, "Pollock's Pigskin Preview".¹³ In only the second season in which African-Americans played on Clemson's football team, five of the twenty-two starting players on the team were African-American, which represents how rapidly the numerical integration of the team took place.

Yet, more importantly, the story of Clemson's football team and integration is not just a game of numbers, but rather the much more difficult, perhaps indefinite challenge of accepting African-American players and treating them as equals by coaches,

¹³ Pollock's Pigskin Preview 1972. Athletic Department Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 40, Box 40, Folder 17.

teammates, and fans, which proved to be a challenge that persisted. The organization of my thesis thus delineates the years from Harvey Gantt in 1963 to Craig Mobley in 1969 as the groundwork for desegregation, and the years following as the time of integration within Clemson University athletics.

College Football and Historiography

As a narrative centered on football, Clemson's story of desegregation and integration must be placed within the historiographical context of sports history. The history of sports extends back as far as humans have recorded information about themselves.¹⁴ One significant example of early sports history is Joseph Strutt's *Sports and Pastimes of the People of England*, first published in 1801, which provided detailed descriptions of English sport in the Middle Ages.¹⁵ Strutt went into an incredible level of detail in describing sports and games from different social strata, but mostly the nobility, whose activities ranged from hawking and archery to jousts and bowling.¹⁶ Until the 1980s, the history of sport primarily focused on descriptive, largely uncritical accounts like Strutt's, depicting who played which sports, and when. Broader societal, cultural, or social implications within sports were largely ignored until the mid-1970s, when social theories began to be utilized in the context of sports history.

¹⁴ For an excellent description of the history of sports history, see Nancy L. Struna's "Social History and Sport" in Jay Coakley and Eric Dunning (eds), *Handbook of Sports Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 187-203.

¹⁵ Joseph Strutt, *The Sports and Pastimes of the People of England: From the Earliest Period, Including the Rural and Domestic Recreation, May Games, Mummeries, Pageants, Processions and Pompous Spectacles, Illustrated by Reproductions from Ancient Paintings in Which are Represented Most of the Popular Diversion* (London: Methuen & Co., 1801).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, xiv.

Furthermore, in the 1970s a handful of scholars began approaching sports history from the “bottom up” and a using social lens. James Walvin’s *The People’s Game* in 1975 is one of the foundational works in the social history of sports, which focused on broader social changes that made soccer so attractive, particularly among working class people in England.¹⁷ Tony Mason’s *Association Football and English Society* in 1980 was another defining work in social and sports history, which explored soccer in a broad cultural and social perspective and focused on the various class implications of soccer.¹⁸

In the 1980s, sports history expanded tremendously into a broad array of social and cultural topics. A number of scholars began to examine the different social relations involved in sports, and the significance of them. Sports carried deep class divisions, racial tensions as well as deliberate segregation in many cases, and a broader cultural role beyond competition and exercise. Historians began speaking of sport as an arena for national identity to develop, including nationalist independence movements. Feminist scholars examined the role of women in sports, often adopting post-structuralist methods. The study of sports history became increasingly interdisciplinary in the 1980s, particularly with sociologists and anthropologists. Essentially, sports history in the 1980s opened up to include scholars looking at sport from every thematic angle of the decade. One example of these shifts is longtime Clemson University professor Joseph Arbena’s *Sport and Society in Latin America* in 1988, which focused on the rise of mass culture through sports in Latin American nations, and showed how closely linked sports were to

¹⁷ James Walvin, *The People’s Game: A Social History of British Football* (Bristol: Allen Lane, 1975).

¹⁸ Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Brighton: Harvest, 1980).

certain cultural phenomena, such as baseball's ties to socialism in southern Mexico, and was intended to show how sports can be used to study historical and social processes.¹⁹

Since the 1990s, sports history has expanded in its focus along with history in general. One of the biggest trends in the last two decades of sports history is the inclusion of agency for people that were traditionally treated as objects acted upon by many historians. New histories of sport have shown how women, colonized peoples, and minority groups did not just accept whatever role was thrust upon them, but rather acted in ways to embrace different sports as their own, resist, and even change the game themselves. Peter Alegi's *African Soccerescapes* from 2010 is emblematic of this shift in the history of sports, as he showed how Africans embraced soccer when it was introduced by different European colonial powers, and they did not just accept the game, but shaped it in a distinctly African way.²⁰ Traditionally, British historians played a leading role in the history of sport, but since the 1980s and especially the 1990s, scholars from around the globe have steadily increased in their role in sports history, including Americans studying college football.

In spite of its undeniable popularity in the United States, college football scarcely earned any scholarly consideration until the publishing of foundational monographs in the mid-1990s. Economics professor James P. Quirk and sports historian Roberta Park

¹⁹ Joseph Arbena (ed.), *Sport and Society in Latin America: Diffusion, Dependency, and the Rise of Mass Culture* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988). In addition to his work on sports history, Dr. Alan Grubb, longtime Clemson History faculty member described a sports and society conference that Dr. Arbena organized with the athletic department in the 1970s, in the early years when sports history was gaining legitimacy within academic history (Dr. Alan Grubb, personal conversation with author, April 2, 2020).

²⁰ Peter Alegi, *African Soccerescapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010).

published interesting scholarship on college football in the 1980s.²¹ By the time the works of James Mennell, Ronald A. Smith, Murray Sperber, Michael Oriard, and Robin Lester appeared in the 1990s, the scholarship on American college football had decisively entered the realm of cultural history.²²

In the late 1990s and 2000s, the historiography of college football exploded, as several works began to be published on the history of college football every year. Yet, regarding the relation of race and college football, Lane Demas's *Integrating the Gridiron: Black Civil Rights and American College Football* in 2011 represented the only scholarly monograph devoted to integration in college football.²³ Demas asserts that the controversies that desegregating football created at various points in the 20th Century were instrumental in shaping public debates during the civil rights movement. Demas's central argument is to place the history of college football firmly within the broader

²¹ James Quirk, *Minnesota Football: The Golden Years, 1932-1941*. (Privately Published, 1984). For another example of early descriptive football history, see Ivan Kaye's *Good Clean Violence: A History of College Football* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1973); Roberta Park, "From Football to Rugby – and Back, 1906-1919: The University of California – Stanford University Response to the 'Football Crisis of 1905'," *Journal of Sport History* 11, no. 3 (Winter 1984): 5-40. For an early but less scholarly treatment of college football, see Tom Perrin, *Football: A College History* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1987) and Jim Sumner, "The North Carolina Intercollegiate Foot-Ball Association: The Beginnings of College Football in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 65, no. 3 (July 1988): 263-286.

²² James Mennell's "The Service Football Program of World War I: Its Impact on the Popularity of the Game." *Journal of Sport History* 16, no. 3 (Winter 1989): 248 represented one of the first analytical histories of college football; Ronald Smith, "Researching Archives and College Football History," *Journal of Sport History* 17, no. 1 (1990): 125-130. Smith's article delineated numerous potential avenues of research into college football, and highlighted the extreme openness of research possibilities available to historians of college football; Murray Sperber's *Shake Down the Thunder: The Creation of Notre Dame Football* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993) was among the first large-scale cultural histories of college football, in which he focused on the rise of commercialized college athletics at Notre Dame by studying private correspondences of coach Knute Rockne; Michael Oriard's *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993) and Robin Lester's *Stagg's University: The Rise, Decline, and Fall of Big-Time Football at Chicago* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995) together form the two most foundational monographs on the history of college football and its place in cultural history.

²³ Demas, *Integrating the Gridiron*.

history of civil rights, and that the lack of recognizable “heroes” in the integration of college football and its piecemeal, sporadic nature have contributed to the lack of connection between college football and civil rights in historical research.²⁴ While a flurry of historical research in the 2000s focused on football and brought it more concretely into the realm of cultural history, the historiography of college football is ultimately comprised of various pockets of independent focused studies.

In relation to my thesis research, Charles Martin’s *Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in Southern College Sports, 1890-1990* examines the effects of race-related policies in universities around the United States, including Clemson University’s basketball team. In relation to Clemson, Martin argues that strict academic standards in the ACC increased the barriers for black high school students to be recruited, and that the public nature of the Harvey Gantt case and Clemson’s resistance to desegregation turned off many African-American recruits and their families.²⁵ Furthermore, Martin contends that because basketball took a definite backseat to football at Clemson, basketball coaches felt freer to base their decisions solely on the ability of African-American players to improve their team. Martin’s work is among the only monographs to specifically address the desegregation of athletics at Clemson University, and while it adds a basic argument to build upon in relation to recruiting African-

²⁴ Ibid., 20.

²⁵ Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*; See also Barry Jacobs, *Across the Line: Profiles in Basketball Courage: Tales of the First Black Players in the ACC and SEC* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2008). Martin asserts that the 800 SAT score requirement prevented many black players from coming to Clemson and other ACC schools.

American athletes, its scope is much broader than Clemson and focuses primarily on basketball.

While the success of Clemson sports, especially football, has sparked tremendous sports journalism of its teams since the late 20th Century, scholarly historical examinations of Clemson's football team are largely nonexistent. Outside of the rivalry between Clemson and the University of South Carolina, published books primarily focus on general descriptive histories of Clemson football and do not broach social issues.²⁶ The study of the desegregation of Clemson's football team is essentially unexplored in published works, and the key purpose my thesis is to create a foundation for future research regarding Clemson's own, unique story of desegregation and integration in their football team.

Popular arguments regarding the desegregation of Clemson's football team have surfaced, and specifically revolve around the retirement of longtime football coach Frank Howard in 1969, who purportedly refused to recruit African-American players. Yet, Frank Howard remained with Clemson in the role of athletic director in 1970, and documents suggest that Clemson actively recruited African-American players as far back as 1964.²⁷ Additionally, former players have asserted in interviews that Coach Howard would gladly have recruited black players, such as George Webster in 1963, an exceptional athlete from Anderson who ultimately attended Michigan State University

²⁶ See Travis Haney's *Classic Clashes of the Carolina-Clemson Football Rivalry: A State of Disunion* (Charleston: History Press, 2011) and John Griffin's *Carolina vs Clemson, Clemson vs. Carolina: A Century of Unparalleled Rivalry in College Football* (Columbia: Summerhouse Press, 1998) for histories of the Clemson – South Carolina rivalry.

²⁷ Clemson University, "The Chronicle Interviews Hootie Ingram," *Clemson Chronicle* vol. XI no. 1 (fall 1970), 21.

and played professionally in the American Football League. Howard reportedly claimed that if he had signed Webster in 1963, the Clemson community would have “rode [him] out of town on a rail.”²⁸ A variety of sources, therefore, suggest that the process of desegregating Clemson football extends beyond the scope of Frank Howard and his personal feelings toward African-American players, and that the process of integration involves much more than the personal actions of one man.²⁹

While several historians have researched the history of Harvey Gantt and the desegregation of Clemson University, my thesis builds on this research as the first dedicated examination of the desegregation and integration of Clemson University’s football team, and its athletic teams as a whole.³⁰ Demas’s *Integrating the Gridiron* represents a strong foundation for the topic generally, but is more focused on telling the story and discussing the context of different controversies across the twentieth century,

²⁸ Travis Sawchick, “Clemson’s First Black Football Player Has Spent Lifetime Laying Foundations,” *Independent Mail* (Nov. 10, 2010).

²⁹ On another occasion, Coach Howard claimed in a 1992 article (“Festering Tensions: Black Players Say They Encounter Racial Barriers,” *Spartanburg Herald-Journal*, Nov. 29, 1992) that pressure from the Clemson community inhibited the recruitment of African-American players, and that people would have “raised hell” if he had played an African-American player.

³⁰ In 2003, *Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt’s Admission to Clemson*, edited by Skip Eisiminger (Clemson, SC: Clemson University Digital Press, 2003), explored the story of Harvey Gantt in the fortieth anniversary of Gantt’s admission. Included in this work was Dr. Henry Lewis Sugg’s foundational article, “Harvey Gantt and the Desegregation of Clemson University, 1960-1963,” in which he outlined the legal processes that led up to the admission of Gantt and the developments that facilitated its peaceful completion. Dr. Suggs argues that President Edwards was the key architect specifically behind the peaceful desegregation of Clemson University. Similarly, in 2004, Dr. Orville Vernon Burton penned an essay, “Dining with Harvey Gantt: Myth and Realities of ‘Integration with Dignity,’” within the biography of Matthew J. Perry, South Carolina’s first African-American District Court judge who also served as Harvey Gantt’s attorney in the case against Clemson (William Lewis Burke (ed.), *Matthew J. Perry: The Man, His Times, and His Legacy* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 183-220). Burton’s essay examines the widely advertised notion of “integration with dignity” and shows that although it was non-violent, there were still incidents with white students who refused to treat with Gantt and were openly hostile in some cases. In 2017, a documentary by South Carolina Educational Television, *The Education of Harvey Gantt*, directed by Betsy Newman (2017; Columbia, SC: SCETV), included interviews with Harvey Gantt and historians Dr. Orville Vernon Burton and Dr. Bobby Donaldson regarding Gantt’s background and the civil rights developments leading up to 1963.

rather than more abstract cultural analysis and examples of desegregation that occurred without national or regional controversy. Martin's *Benching Jim Crow* touches on critical aspects of Clemson's story, as the ACC's academic standards were particularly relevant in Clemson's desegregation of athletics, which will be explored in far greater depth in my thesis. Martin is correct in asserting that the ACC's 800 SAT score requirement was a barrier, but he does not demonstrate this with any great level of detail or evidence, and he does not mention the possibility for universities to use summer school to circumvent the rule and aid students in reaching academic eligibility.

Despite the years that passed between the admittance of Harvey Gantt in 1963 and the signing of Craig Mobley on the basketball team in 1969, the desegregation of Clemson University's athletic teams faced genuine barriers, but ultimately was supported by the Clemson community, students, and administration at large. Clemson coaches grappled with the difficulty of recruiting African-American students who qualified academically per the requirements of the ACC, which Clemson officials openly considered to be discriminatory, and who also had genuine interest in attending Clemson University. Yet, the barriers cited by Clemson were not insurmountable, and the admittance of African-American athletes at other ACC schools coupled with opportunities to help students become academically eligible meant that Clemson's leaders were not expending the necessary resources and effort to sincerely recruit African-American athletes.

The signing of Craig Mobley along with Marion Reeves sparked a dramatic shift that would occur as the athletic teams integrated, especially the football team, and dozens

of African-American athletes signed at Clemson within five years. Yet, the juxtaposition of 1963 and 1970 revealed the ultimate motivator in the hearts of Clemson leadership. While Harvey Gantt's admittance required a federal court injunction in 1963, within ten years, Clemson coaches and supporters of athletics endeavored to recruit the greatest African-American high school athletes and junior college transfers to come to Clemson. This dramatic shift in attitude towards African-American students coming to Clemson illustrated the cornerstone of sports culture at Clemson, which is that success in athletic competitions, football in particular, trumped societal and political opinions. At its heart, the desegregation and integration of Clemson football illustrated the paradox of sports, as the outward irrationality of foregoing racial prejudices in favor of any action which may contribute to winning embodies the cultural framework of the dedicated sports fan.

CHAPTER TWO

FROM HARVEY GANTT TO CRAIG MOBLEY: THE PATHWAY TO ATHLETIC DESEGREGATION, 1963-1968

On January 24th, 1963, the Clemson University Board of Trustees congregated in the Wade Hampton Hotel in Columbia to discuss the admission of Harvey Gantt. Despite exhausting “all legal remedies immediately available” to reverse a federal injunction ordering Clemson to admit Harvey Gantt, the Board members found themselves unable to prevent nor postpone the formal desegregation of Clemson University.³¹ The court order explicitly stated that “the action was brought by the plaintiff [Gantt] not only for his own benefit but on behalf of other negro citizens of South Carolina similarly situated,” and that “it is further ordered, that the defendants [Clemson University and the Board of Trustees] be enjoined and restrained from discriminating against the plaintiff or any other qualified negro applicant similarly situated seeking admission to the Clemson Agricultural College . . . solely because of his race.”³² Left with no choice, the Board unanimously agreed to completely and with good faith comply with the injunction to admit Harvey Gantt without discrimination, but retained the possibility that the order could be “lawfully modified or rescinded” in the future.³³

On May 12th, 1967, just over four years after Gantt formally ended segregation at Clemson University, President Robert C. Edwards penned a letter to Walter T. Cox, Vice

³¹ Board of Trustees, Clemson University, “Clemson Trustees Minutes, 1963 January 24”. *Minutes* 298 (1963). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

President of Student Affairs. Regarding the question of African-American athletes coming to Clemson, Edwards wrote:

I am aware that we have investigated a significant number of prospective student athletes who are members of the Negro race, but the fact remains that we have thus far been unsuccessful in recruiting one. As we look ahead to the recruiting of athletes for the 1968-1969 academic year, *I consider it to be imperative that we expand our efforts in seeking out and attempting to recruit outstanding Negro students* who have the potential to compete successfully on the various athletic teams representing Clemson University . . . I would, therefore, appreciate your giving this matter your personal attention and *taking whatever steps [are] necessary* to see that satisfactory program is implemented by the Athletic Department [emphasis added].³⁴

Edwards's letter demonstrates the critical shifts in the Clemson leadership's stance on African-American students that took place in a short span of four years at Clemson University. The 1967 letter is further significant because Edwards and Cox actually attended the Board of Trustees meeting in January 1963, and their involvement reflects both collective and individual transformations in Clemson's administration.³⁵ Rather than seeking all legal remedies to prevent Clemson's athletic teams from desegregating as the Board of Trustees had done for the university in 1962 and 1963, President Edwards requested the implementation of any action necessary to recruiting and signing African-American athletes.³⁶ Whereas the Board of Trustees had reacted to Gantt and the lawsuit, President Edwards actively called for the recruitment of African-American students.

Notwithstanding President Edwards's insistence that Clemson University increase its recruiting efforts of African-American athletes in 1967, it was not until the 1969-1970

³⁴ May 12, 1967 Letter from Robert C. Edwards to Walter T. Cox. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 9.

³⁵ Board of Trustees, Clemson University, "Clemson Trustees Minutes, 1963 January 24". *Minutes* 298 (1963). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

³⁶ May 12, 1967 Letter from Robert C. Edwards to Walter T. Cox. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 9.

school year that Craig Mobley officially joined the basketball team and formally desegregated Clemson athletics. The six years between Gantt's admission and Mobley's signing encompassed dramatic, yet necessary transformations in the racial struggle within Clemson University and its broader community. Moreover, in this short timeframe the leaders of Clemson and the African-American students succeeded in overcoming a number of barriers. Some of the challenges proved to be legitimate, such as the academic requirements of the ACC and the difficulty garnering interest in Clemson University among African-American recruits, while other barriers were ultimately rationalizations and excuses. Yet, the sustained efforts of President Edwards over several years and the open tackling of racial issues at Clemson in 1968 culminated in the signing of Mobley, formally beginning the critical process of integrating Clemson athletics.

Reactions to Gantt and the State of Clemson Football

From the outset, Harvey Gantt's efforts to attend Clemson University sparked a spectrum of reaction from Clemson students, administration, and alumni. While Gantt had made numerous efforts to apply to Clemson's architectural program beginning in 1960, attorney Matthew J. Perry formally initiated Gantt's lawsuit against Clemson and the Board of Trustees in July, 1962.³⁷ It seemed in December that Gantt may lose the case as Judge Wyche of the United States District Court for the Western District of South Carolina ruled in the Board's favor on December 21st.³⁸ Clemson's central argument against Gantt was that he had never actually finished his application to Clemson

³⁷ Suggs, "Harvey Gantt and the Desegregation of Clemson University, 1960-1963" in "Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Gantt's Admission to Clemson," 22.

³⁸ Board of Trustees, Clemson University, "Clemson Trustees Minutes, 1963 January 24". *Minutes* 298 (1963). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

University, and Clemson attorneys argued that this was the reason he was not allowed to be admitted.³⁹ Gantt and his attorneys appealed the decision on December 26th, and on January 16th, 1963, United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Judicial Circuit reversed Judge Wyche's order and required that he issue an injunction ordering Gantt be admitted at Clemson.⁴⁰

The most common reaction among the Clemson community to Gantt's case and admission was that he wanted fame and the personal gain of being in the public spotlight. Despite the fact that Gantt explicitly stated, "I feel I will have helped in opening the door for other Negro boys and girls to better educational opportunities in South Carolina," one student wrote, "his motivations for submitting himself as a guinea pig in the integration battle have not . . . been clearly established. There is the possibility that he is sacrificing himself for fame (or infamy depending on your interpretation), for money, or for many other unsavory reasons."⁴¹ A Clemson alumnus added, "It is obvious from the manner in which Gantt handled his application that he enters the college seeking publicity rather than an education."⁴² No matter what Gantt said his intentions were, many within Clemson could only see his actions as self-serving. Yet, Gantt's admission into Clemson fulfilled his main stated goal, as the court injunction forced Clemson into the precedence

³⁹ Zalin B. Grant, "Harvey Gantt Creates Aura of Inevitability," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), Sep. 21, 1962. Dr. Burton argues in "Dining with Harvey Gantt: Myth and Realities of 'Integration with Dignity'" that this was Clemson's only argument against desegregation and a tactic of deflecting the racial aspect of Gantt's initial rejection.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Zalin B. Grant, "Harvey Gantt Creates Aura of Inevitability," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), Sep. 21, 1962.

⁴² Letter from Concerned Clemson Alumni January 24, 1963. Robert C. Edwards Papers. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 11, Box 15.

of accepting African-American students, which the legal battles Gantt waged made possible.

In addition to those who could only see Gantt's actions as a move for personal gain, individual Clemson alumni blatantly attacked Gantt and desegregation in general. In a letter addressed to male Clemson students, a group of fifteen Clemson alumni who labeled themselves "Concerned Clemson Alumni" claimed that "integration is COMMUNISM IN ACTION and is one of the most potent weapons being used in the Red 'cold war' to take over America."⁴³ Besides conspiratorial claims about racial integration and communism, this group went one step further and advocated inhumane and extremely discriminatory action against Gantt, "should unconstitutional federal force finally thrust a negro student in your midst, we urge you to leave him alone; don't notice him; ostracize him and all those who associate with him. Do not resort to violence, for that is what the commies want. Help Clemson remain true to her tradition."⁴⁴ Two months after the first letter, a different set of twelve Concerned Clemson Alumni expressed a similar, but more direct sentiment, "students should ignore him [Gantt], avoid conversing with him and sitting next to him, should offer him no assistance and should ostracize both him and any student who may offer him association in any respect. *He should be treated with the cold, silent contempt he has earned [emphasis added].*"⁴⁵ These responses reflected the extreme margins of the Clemson community, however, and

⁴³ Letter from Concerned Clemson Alumni November 30, 1962. Robert C. Edwards Papers. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 11, Box 16.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Letter from Concerned Clemson Alumni January 24, 1963. Robert C. Edwards Papers. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 11, Box 15.

while the aggregate stance was against the desegregation of the university, the most common sentiment was that Clemson should follow the orders of the court, and peacefully, in order to avoid escalating the issue by waging a war against the government and judicial system.⁴⁶

The admittance of Harvey Gantt in January, 1963, began the slow-moving process of integration at Clemson University and while a large part of the Clemson community pushed back against the desegregation of the university, in the end Gantt attended classes without rioting or major incident. Gantt himself recalled:

the laws have been passed, it's up to the individual now . . . we're over the hurdle of segregation, now integration is a personal thing . . . [it] was a pleasant experience [at Clemson University], good times in the architecture department, a damn good education. There were nice guys, bad guys, and a general pattern of tolerance . . . there was a progressive lessening of feeling against me. After a while I felt fairly neutral, and by the end of my two and a half years I felt I was accepted.⁴⁷

Although this represented the first major milestone in racial inclusion at Clemson University and provided the foundation for athletic desegregation, it only took place due to a federal court order and reactions to Gantt illuminated the deep racial issues at play in Clemson. Therefore, great leaps needed to be made before the serious recruitment of African-American athletes could gain any serious traction.

The State of Clemson Football in the 1960s

Entering the 1960s, Clemson football looked to build on a nine-win season in 1959, in which they were ranked as high as fifth in the nation by the Associated Press and ended the season with a bowl game victory against Texas Christian University in the first

⁴⁶ Zalin B. Grant, "Harvey Gantt Creates Aura of Inevitability," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), Sep. 21, 1962.

⁴⁷ Ernie Stallworth, "Gantt Says Laws Are Passed – Now It's A 'Personal Thing'," (1967) in Robert C. Edwards President Records. Clemson University Special Collections Series 12, Folder 385.

Bluebonnet Bowl.⁴⁸ The Clemson football team began the 1960 season ranked ninth in the nation, but after losing to Maryland on October 15th Clemson fell out of the top 25 associated press rankings, and remained unranked for seventeen consecutive years until October 17th, 1977.⁴⁹ The 1960s subsequently proved to be the least successful decade in the history of Clemson's football team, and all in all the team finished the decade with an equal amount of wins (50) as ties (2) and losses (48) and zero bowl game appearances.⁵⁰ The mediocre state of Clemson football during the decade of desegregation and integration at the university provides a critical backdrop for assessing how the various entities acted in relation to the recruitment of African-American athletes. The 1960s not only included major institutional changes at Clemson and society at large, but also transpired in the context of fans, students, university officials, and coaches desperate to find ways to win more football games, and therefore much more willing to embrace change.

In the second half of the 1960s, fans of Clemson University began to call for specific changes, including the retirement of Coach Frank Howard, who remained Clemson's head football coach from 1940-1969. A group of fans from Cayce, South Carolina wrote to Coach Howard in October, 1968, criticizing the archaic style of football that Howard orchestrated and his "antique coaching staff," and calling for a "progressive coach."⁵¹ In the letter to Coach Howard, the fans further claimed that, "we

⁴⁸ "Clemson Tigers School History," Sports Reference, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/clemson/index.html>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Letter from Cayce, South Carolina fans to Frank Howard, October 7, 1968. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 1, Folder 4.

are not the only ones that are unhappy, why don't you sit in the . . . some Saturday and see what other people think about you and your coaching staff, you might want to catch the next plane or train to Alabama. So HANG – EM – UP – FRANK – next year.”⁵² The fans from Cayce were not alone, as Coach Howard and President Edwards received dozens of letters between 1965 and 1969 complaining about the state of the football team and demanding new, fresh changes.⁵³ Furthermore, the state of Clemson's football recruiting deteriorated throughout the decade, to the point that Clemson football missed out on nearly all of the top athletes within its home state of South Carolina.⁵⁴ Overall the Clemson football community remained enthusiastic and supportive of the team, but there was a near-universal attitude by the late 1960s that changes needed to be made by the late 1960s to improve every aspect of the team from coaching to recruiting.

In addition to the on-field struggles, Clemson football, and by extension the entire athletic department and IPTAY, experienced a financial crisis beginning in 1965. On June 22nd, 1965, Walter Cox sent a detailed financial report to Frank Howard, in which he outlined the immense debt of the athletic department. In addition to an overdraft of \$85,000 in the athletic department, Cox warned Howard that approximately \$300,000 would be needed to fund the grant-in-aid for the following year, 1965-1966, but the normal expected annual income for grant-in-aid was only \$200,000, and the university

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Numerous letters can be found among series 12, 26, and 40 in the Clemson University Special Collections. One such letter to President Edwards from December 2, 1969 lamented “an atmosphere of dissatisfaction” among Clemson fans (Series 12, Folder 40).

⁵⁴ Complaints to Athletic Department, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections. Series 12, Folder 40.

had no means to cover the athletic department's deficit.⁵⁵ The enormous financial bind of the Clemson athletic department meant that the scholarship money for other sports besides football needed to be curtailed, and that the football team, whose income supported the entire athletic programs, needed to be kept strong in order to maximize revenue.⁵⁶ Yet, budget cuts across the athletic department to travel, telephone calls, and supplies reduced the resources available for recruiting the best athletes.⁵⁷ Further deep research into the connection between the athletic department's budget and the quality of recruits Clemson's football team signed is necessary to pinpoint a definitive connection, but the timing of the budget crisis suggests that the struggles of Clemson football on the field and with recruiting in the 1960s, particularly in the latter half of the decade, is interdependently related to its financial struggles. Clemson's football team needed to perform better in order to increase revenue, and the team required a solid financial backing in order to improve; nevertheless, IPTAY offered a remedy for this financial bind Clemson football was in.

In 1965, the leadership of IPTAY voted unanimously in favor of a new Gold Card membership tier as part of IPTAY's fundraising efforts. The Gold Card cost \$100 rather than the original \$10 one could pay for a base membership, and IPTAY's leaders believed that it would substantially increase revenue over time as more members

⁵⁵ Letter from Walter T. Cox to Frank Howard, June 22, 1965. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 1, Folder 4. The issue of high costs for grant-in-aid for athletes continued to increase, and by the 1970-1971 school year the combined scholarship money for athletes was \$454,000, with football alone paying \$302,000 in grant-in-aid (Clemson University Self Study Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics, 1971-1972. Athletic Department Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 40, Box 66, Folder 10).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

upgraded to the Gold Card.⁵⁸ Although the officers and directors of IPTAY all voted in favor this change, there were regular members of IPTAY who viewed the Gold Card as an “undemocratic” change that would create an elite, wealthier stratum within IPTAY.⁵⁹ Notwithstanding individual members of IPTAY who viewed the Gold Card unfavorably, the new membership level went into place in 1966, and in the first year 429 Gold Cards were sold.⁶⁰ IPTAY saw contributions and membership increase each year from 1966 to 1969, increasing from \$108,347 in 1965 to \$139,275 in 1966, \$192,488 in 1967, and \$225,332 in 1968; overall membership of IPTAY increased from 8,462 donors in 1965 to 10,318 donors in 1968.⁶¹ The 108% increase of IPTAY revenue within three years of the Gold Card membership launching demonstrates the level of commitment and enthusiasm by Clemson fans towards Clemson football and other athletics.

While Clemson’s football team was mediocre and faced a great financial crisis in the mid-to-late 1960s, there was a high level of hope associated with the team. The huge increase in IPTAY donations after 1965 illustrates how invested the Clemson community was in the success of the football team. In relation to the desegregation of the Clemson athletic teams, most specifically football, the fans and alumni yearned for change and freshness in the program, and were by and large willing to embrace any change that could improve the team. This does not mean that the community as a whole was calling for the

⁵⁸ Letter from William H. Mills to IPTAY President Woodrow H. Taylor, Dec. 7, 1965. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 1, Folder 4.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Clemson IPTAY Club – Contributions. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 19, Folder 14.

⁶¹ Ibid. In 1970, IPTAY raised over \$342,000. Additionally, a tiered system developed by 1970 with the Gold Cards, in which various levels, \$100, \$250, \$500, and \$1000 awarded different privileges.

recruitment of African-American players for the football team, but certainly by 1968 every significant group at Clemson University from students, coaches, and university administrators to IPTAY, had members who urged Clemson to not just recruit, but sign African-Americans to the team.

Barriers to Athletic Desegregation

Although Clemson coaches began to recruit African-American athletes shortly after the admittance of Harvey Gantt, over five years later the recruiting efforts remained fruitless. In the years after 1966, various individuals put forth arguments as to why Clemson's coaches were unsuccessful in recruiting African-Americans. The arguments typically centered on the 800 minimum SAT score policy of the ACC and the 1.6 minimum first year college GPA predictor policy of the NCAA as the main barrier, though others argued that there were not enough African-American athletes in South Carolina to recruit, that there was a lack of interest to attend Clemson steered African-Americans to other universities, and that African-Americans could not receive scholarship funding, which pushed players to different conferences. As a whole, these arguments contained varying levels of legitimacy in explaining why African-American athletes were not joining Clemson's teams, but the notion that tangible, concrete barriers existed is not accurate in any case. Ultimately, however difficult it may have been to find an African-American who wanted to attend Clemson University and who was qualified academically per the ACC and NCAA eligibility requirements, it was doable from the moment Judge Wyche issued the injunction to admit Harvey Gantt.

800 SAT Requirement

Among all of the issues raised in the recruitment of African-Americans, no barrier received more discussion than the minimum 800 SAT score policy in the ACC. In any discussion on the recruitment of African-American athletes, those explaining why Clemson's athletic teams remained segregated referenced this rule. The minimum SAT requirement was originally adopted in May, 1960 as a 750 minimum score by the ACC with the intention of keeping the academic integrity of the schools consistent with the types of student-athletes that attended ACC schools.⁶² Considering the high academic standards and competitive admissions of many schools within the ACC, such as Duke University, the University of Virginia, University of North Carolina, and Wake Forest University, ACC officials and university representatives intended for the presence of such a rule to maintain similar academic standards among athletes. Four years after the initial 750 minimum SAT requirement, the ACC amended the rule in May, 1964 to raise the minimum SAT score to 800.⁶³ From its inception, Coach Frank Howard and President Robert C. Edwards opposed the 800 rule, as it not only hindered the recruitment of African-American athletes, but all potential student athletes.⁶⁴ Furthermore, until 1970, the 800 SAT minimum rule also applied to junior college transfers in addition to high school seniors, and if a junior college student did not score 800 or higher on the SAT before they attended junior college, they were not eligible to transfer to ACC athletic

⁶² ACC 800 Requirement. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Frank Howard. Robert C. Edwards President Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 14.

teams.⁶⁵ Although the 800 minimum SAT rule in the ACC appears to have a simple path to overcome the barrier, the test score data from the 1960s demonstrates the surprisingly high volume of students that were unable to score above 800 on the SAT.

STATE SUMMARY, NEGRO										1965		
Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of												
South Carolina High School Students												
CLASS SIZE		9571										
HIGH	1190	MEDIAN				589	LOW			400		
SCORE	1ST	QUARTILES			TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT	PROJECTED TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT		
		2ND	3RD	4TH								
1550	1599	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1500	1549	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1450	1499	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1400	1449	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1350	1399	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1300	1349	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1250	1299	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1200	1249	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1150	1199	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	2	0.0	0.0	
1100	1149	2	0	0	0	2	0.1	0.1	3	0.0	0.0	
1050	1099	9	0	0	0	9	0.4	0.5	15	0.1	0.2	
1000	1049	8	0	0	0	8	0.3	0.8	14	0.1	0.3	
950	999	14	1	0	0	15	0.6	1.4	27	0.3	0.6	
900	949	20	3	0	0	23	0.9	2.4	45	0.5	1.1	
850	899	32	4	0	1	38	1.6	4.0	90	0.9	2.0	
800	849	56	8	0	1	65	2.7	6.6	144	1.5	3.5	
750	799	96	10	3	1	110	4.5	11.2	248	2.6	6.1	93.4% scored below 800
700	749	147	22	4	3	176	7.2	18.4	427	4.5	10.6	
650	699	200	50	9	6	265	10.9	29.3	727	7.6	18.2	
600	649	255	120	19	4	398	16.4	45.7	1136	11.9	30.1	
550	599	265	136	54	23	478	19.7	65.4	1924	20.1	50.2	
500	549	200	178	70	41	489	20.1	85.5	2475	25.8	76.0	
450	499	88	99	67	30	284	11.7	97.2	1752	18.3	94.3	
400	449	14	22	18	13	67	2.8	100.0	534	5.6	99.9	
TOTALS		1408	653	244	123	2428			9571			
PCT TAKING		58.8	27.3	10.2	5.1	25.4						

Figure 2.1: Table showing SAT scores for African-American high school students in South Carolina, 1965.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ 800 SAT Rule Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 14.

⁶⁶ Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1965 Negro. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students											
CLASS SIZE		20694									
HIGH	1534	MEDIAN				875	LOW				431
SCORE	1ST	QUARTILES			4TH	TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT	PROJECTED TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT
		2ND	3RD								
1550-1599	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	
1500-1549	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0	
1450-1499	12	0	0	0	12	0.1	0.1	15	0.1	0.1	
1400-1449	23	0	0	0	23	0.2	0.3	29	0.1	0.2	
1350-1399	38	6	0	0	44	0.4	0.7	59	0.3	0.5	
1300-1349	83	7	2	0	92	0.9	1.6	123	0.6	1.1	
1250-1299	132	16	6	0	154	1.4	3.1	210	1.0	2.1	
1200-1249	187	31	7	3	228	2.1	5.2	320	1.5	3.7	
1150-1199	296	68	18	4	326	3.1	8.3	474	2.3	5.9	
1100-1149	306	93	43	5	447	4.2	12.5	669	3.2	9.2	
1050-1099	390	139	68	12	609	5.7	18.3	941	4.5	13.7	
1000-1049	422	189	79	26	716	6.8	25.0	1148	5.5	19.3	
950-999	507	263	134	47	951	9.0	34.0	1596	7.7	27.0	
900-949	476	360	196	87	1119	10.6	44.6	2027	9.8	36.8	
850-899	403	422	252	117	1194	11.3	55.8	2291	11.1	47.8	
800-849	358	484	315	151	1308	12.3	68.2	2624	12.7	60.5	
750-799	203	429	294	164	1090	10.3	78.5	2337	11.3	71.8	
700-749	139	252	267	160	838	7.9	86.4	1962	9.5	81.3	
650-699	73	186	228	199	686	6.5	92.9	1722	8.5	89.8	
600-649	28	102	149	133	412	3.9	96.8	1099	5.3	95.1	
550-599	13	47	69	83	212	2.0	98.8	595	2.9	98.0	
500-549	5	16	31	47	99	0.9	99.7	297	1.4	99.4	
450-499	0	6	5	17	28	0.3	100.0	91	0.4	99.8	
400-449	1	0	0	2	3	0.0	100.0	9	0.0	99.9	
TOTALS	4036	3116	2163	1277	10592			20694			
PCT TAKING	78.0	60.2	41.8	24.7	51.2						

Figure 2.2: Table showing SAT scores for white high school students in South Carolina, 1965.⁶⁷

In a study of SAT scores in 1965 and 1966 from high school students in the state of South Carolina, it demonstrated that African-American students were at a major disadvantage because of fewer educational opportunities and lower academic standards at predominantly African-American schools in South Carolina.⁶⁸ In 1965, 51.2% of eligible white high school students in South Carolina took the SAT, with a median SAT score of 875, and only 31.8% of all test takers scored below 800 (see Figure 2.2).⁶⁹ In the same timeframe in 1965, only 25.4% of eligible African-American high school students in South Carolina even took the SAT, and the median score was 589, with 93.4% of test

⁶⁷ Scholastic Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1965 White. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

⁶⁸ In SCETV's documentary *The Education Harvey Gantt*, Dr. Burton noted that white students received 50% more spending than African-American students in 1960, one of the few years for which data was available.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

takers scoring below 800 (see Figure 2.1).⁷⁰ Mathematically, in 1965 34.9% of all white high school students in South Carolina could have qualified academically in the ACC, where only 1.67% of all African-American high school students in South Carolina were academically eligible. In 1966, the test results were similar, as 46.0% of white high school students in South Carolina took the SAT, with a median of 876 and 32.5% scoring below 800 (see Figure 2.4).⁷¹ The African-American students in 1966 scored a median of 574, with 92.4% scoring below 800 and 26.5% of students taking the test (see Figure 2.3).⁷² In one sense, the claim that the 800 minimum rule in the ACC prevented the signing of African-American players certainly carried an irrefutable element of truth, because roughly two out of every one-hundred African-American students qualified academically for athletics in the ACC.

⁷⁰ Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1965 Negro. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

⁷¹ Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1966 White. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

⁷² Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1966 Negro. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

STATE SUMMARY, NEGRO										1966		
Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of												
South Carolina High School Students												
CLASS SIZE 10337												
HIGH 1339		MEDIAN 574			LOW 400							
SCORE	1ST	QUARTILES			TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT	PROJECTED TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT		
		2ND	3RD	4TH								
1550 1599	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0		
1500 1549	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0		
1450 1499	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0		
1400 1449	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0		
1350 1399	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0		
1300 1349	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0		
1250 1299	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0		
1200 1249	3	0	0	0	3	0.1	0.1	3	0.1	0.1		
1150 1199	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.2	4	0.2	0.4		
1100 1149	5	1	0	0	6	0.2	0.4	12	0.1	0.2		
1050 1099	11	0	0	0	11	0.4	0.8	16	0.1	0.3		
1000 1049	17	0	0	0	17	0.6	1.4	25	0.2	0.6		
950 999	10	1	1	0	12	0.4	1.9	29	0.3	0.8		
900 949	27	1	1	0	29	1.1	2.9	54	0.5	1.4		
850 899	56	2	0	0	58	2.1	5.0	91	0.9	2.2		
800 849	64	4	2	0	70	2.6	7.6	131	1.3	3.5		
750 799	96	6	1	1	104	3.8	11.4	202	2.0	5.5		
700 749	149	22	3	0	174	6.3	17.8	340	3.3	8.8		
650 699	198	44	8	4	254	9.3	27.0	657	6.3	15.1		
600 649	277	59	23	1	360	13.2	40.2	908	8.8	23.9		
550 599	345	118	49	10	522	19.1	59.3	1745	16.9	40.8		
500 549	314	182	69	25	590	21.6	80.8	2553	25.7	55.5		
450 499	150	135	77	38	400	14.6	95.5	2532	24.5	90.0		
400 449	33	45	25	21	124	4.5	100.0	1028	9.9	99.9		
TOTALS		1757	620	259	100						10337	
PCT TAKING		68.0	24.0	10.0	3.9							26.5

Figure 2.3: Table showing SAT scores for African-American high school students in South Carolina, 1966.⁷³

STATE SUMMARY, WHITE										1966		
Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of												
South Carolina High School Students												
CLASS SIZE 21601												
HIGH 1554		MEDIAN 876			LOW 404							
SCORE	1ST	QUARTILES			TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT	PROJECTED TOTAL	PCT	CUM PCT		
		2ND	3RD	4TH								
1550 1599	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	1	0.0	0.0		
1500 1549	2	0	0	0	2	0.0	0.0	3	0.0	0.0		
1450 1499	12	0	0	0	12	0.1	0.1	16	0.1	0.1		
1400 1449	25	2	0	0	27	0.3	0.4	37	0.2	0.3		
1350 1399	50	2	0	0	52	0.5	0.9	70	0.3	0.6		
1300 1349	71	3	1	0	75	0.7	1.7	102	0.5	1.1		
1250 1299	128	11	1	1	141	1.4	3.1	197	0.9	2.0		
1200 1249	140	30	7	0	177	1.8	4.9	259	1.2	3.2		
1150 1199	249	37	7	0	293	2.9	7.8	416	1.9	5.1		
1100 1149	316	86	25	9	436	4.4	12.2	694	3.2	8.3		
1050 1099	361	126	43	15	545	5.5	17.7	910	4.2	12.5		
1000 1049	431	198	62	25	716	7.2	24.9	1242	5.7	18.3		
950 999	454	270	115	35	874	8.8	33.7	1608	7.4	25.7		
900 949	499	345	152	69	1065	10.7	44.5	2095	9.7	35.4		
850 899	447	393	234	80	1154	11.6	56.1	2405	11.1	46.5		
800 849	345	400	276	109	1130	11.2	67.5	2560	11.8	58.4		
750 799	243	341	276	124	986	9.9	77.4	2405	11.1	69.5		
700 749	158	290	242	138	828	8.3	85.7	2175	10.1	79.6		
650 699	76	192	190	126	584	5.9	91.6	1676	7.7	87.4		
600 649	39	123	148	121	431	4.3	96.0	1355	6.3	93.6		
550 599	19	60	85	79	243	2.4	98.4	806	3.7	97.4		
500 549	10	30	35	42	117	1.2	99.6	397	1.8	99.2		
450 499	5	7	12	9	33	0.3	99.9	102	0.5	99.7		
400 449	3	0	2	3	8	0.1	100.0	26	0.1	99.8		
TOTALS		4084	2946	1915	985						21601	
PCT TAKING		75.6	54.5	35.5	18.2							46.0

Figure 2.4: Table showing SAT scores for white high school students in South Carolina, 1966.⁷⁴

⁷³ Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1966 Negro. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

⁷⁴ Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1966 White. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

Furthermore, a separate study of SAT scores from 1965-1967 demonstrated how much inequality of opportunity existed between major public universities and African-American Colleges such as South Carolina State University. The study included the test scores of high school seniors in Horry County, South Carolina, freshmen at the University of South Carolina, and freshmen at a South Carolina African-American College, and graphed the distribution of SAT scores. The graph shows that only 3.5% of African-American high school seniors in Horry County scored 800 or above and only 16% of a sample of freshmen at an African-American college in South Carolina scored 800 or above (see Figure 2.5).⁷⁵ By contrast, roughly 90% of freshmen at the University

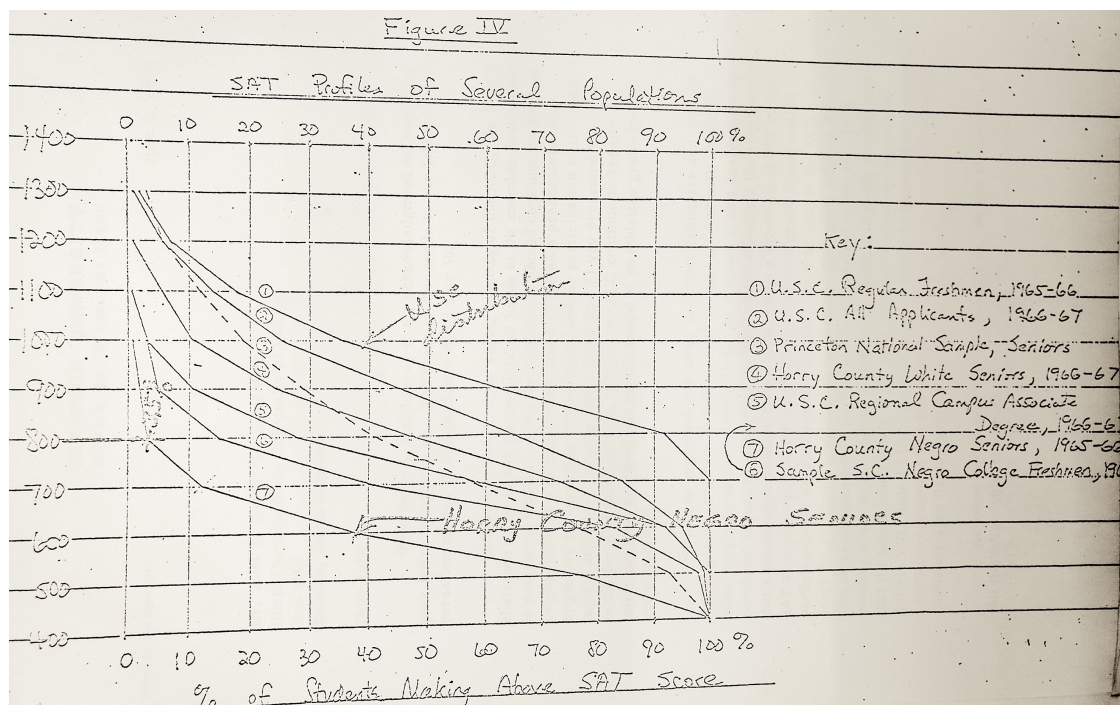


Figure 2.5: Graph of SAT score distribution for seven groups of students, including high school seniors and college freshmen.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ SAT Profiles of Several Populations. Athletic Department Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 40, Box 58, Folder 11.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

of South Carolina scored 800 or above on the SAT, with a median score of approximately 940.⁷⁷ This particular graph clearly shows the chasm of educational opportunity between white students and African-American students in South Carolina at both the high school and college level. President Edwards explicitly labeled the ACC's 800 SAT rule as "de facto discrimination," and was joined by President Thomas F. Jones of the University of South Carolina, who stated that there were "racist overtones" to the ACC's academic requirements.⁷⁸

Indeed, the enormous discrepancy in SAT test scores between white and African-American students in the state of South Carolina reflected the need for alternative academic criteria for athletic eligibility. The College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) released a lengthy statement in which the chairman acknowledged that there was an inherent disadvantage for minority students with the SAT, because the high fees preclude testing and/or multiple tries, minority students have far less access to test preparation materials, and generally have a disadvantage in the quality of learning and educational standards.⁷⁹ Additionally, the chairman of the CEEB urged university admissions staff and administrators to look beyond the test scores when evaluating minority students:

whereas the literal interpretation of test scores tends to discriminate against the minority/low-income students with potential for achievement . . . Be it resolved that the [SAT] and Achievement Tests be used by colleges and universities in the processing of

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Letter from Robert C. Edwards to Dewey Dodds. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 23; ACC 1967. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 19.

⁷⁹ College Entrance Examination Board Memorandum, November 14, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 21.

minority/low-income students only after admissions decisions are made and then be used for research and diagnostic purposes only.⁸⁰

Yet, others claimed that the ACC's 800 rule had nothing to do with race, such as a study by North Carolina State University in response to requests to remove the 800 rule from the ACC's eligibility requirements. NC State's report alleged that claims of racism in the 800 rule were "refuted by research;" however, the report makes no reference to what specific research it is referring to and what exactly was refuted.⁸¹ While it is true that the ACC's 800 SAT rule was not explicitly targeted toward African-American students, the effects of it certainly discriminated against them by the nature of the SAT and the educational inequalities along racial lines.

The ACC's 800 SAT rule undeniably served as a major obstacle for the signing of African-American athletes at Clemson University, but it remains true that other universities in the ACC succeeded in recruiting and signing African-Americans that were academically eligible in spite of the 800 rule and up to six years prior to the signing of Craig Mobley (see Figure 1.1). In 1965, Wake Forest University signed its first African-American football player and its first African-American basketball player in 1966.⁸² Wake Forest University is just over 200 miles away from Clemson University, and therefore the geographical opportunities for recruiting were only slightly different, and yet Wake Forest's athletics desegregated four years prior to Clemson's, which suggests how the 800 rule was not insurmountable for Clemson University. Moreover, there is

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ North Carolina State University Report on ACC 800 Requirement. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

⁸² Charles H. Martin, "The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow in Southern College Sports: The Case of the Atlantic Coast Conference," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (July 1999): 253-284.

evidence that a team could enroll a prospective athlete in summer school, and provide that student opportunity to improve their SAT score and potentially qualify academically, which theoretically provided universities with the means to assist an African-American student with their SAT.⁸³ Although the details are unclear, multiple sources alleged that an African-American signed with the Clemson football team before 1968, but was unable to score high enough on the SAT to qualify academically, which, if the sources are accurate, reflects the challenge that the 800 rule created for all parties involved.⁸⁴ Overall, the ACC's 800 rule put both African-American students and Clemson University in a difficult position during recruiting, as a score of 800 on the SAT precluded nearly all of the African-American students in South Carolina from ACC athletic eligibility, but it still did not altogether prevent an eligible African-American from signing at Clemson if the interest was genuine.

Miscellaneous Barriers

On February 16th, 1968, Sam Copeland, the sports editor for *The Tiger* penned an editorial on the recruitment of African-American athletes to Clemson, in which he claimed, "There are less Negro athletes in the state, and therefore, a lot less from which to make a selection."⁸⁵ The state of South Carolina, however, included one of the highest population densities of African-Americans in the entire United States in 1970, and contained several counties with an African-American population of greater than 50%. A geographic distribution of the hometown of every Varsity football player on Clemson

⁸³ Pat Zier, "Negroes Ignored," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), June 27, 1968.

⁸⁴ Sam Copeland, "Trailing the Tiger," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), February 16, 1968.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

University between 1970 and 1974, on a background map layer depicting the population density of African-Americans refutes the accuracy of Copeland's claim (see Figure 2.6). The map in Figure 2.6 clearly illustrates the high amount of African-Americans, and therefore potentially high-school-aged athletes, spread around the main areas that Clemson recruited in the 1960s and 1970s, including instances of a white player recruited from a county with an African-American population of greater than 50%. It is far more likely that Clemson's lack of African-American recruits in South Carolina stems from the locations and schools Clemson's coaches recruited from, as the state unquestionably included enough African-Americans to recruit.

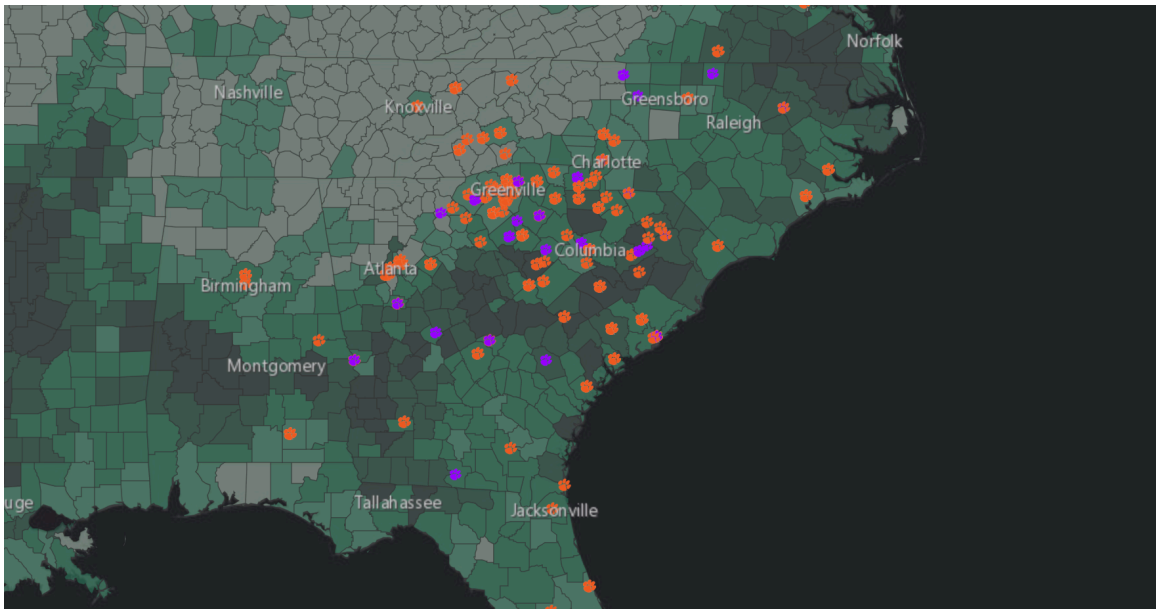


Figure 2.6: Map of Clemson football players' hometowns from 1970-1974. Map background layer shows the density of African-Americans in each county, with the darkest green representing a population density of 50% or greater. Purple icons denote an African-American player and orange icons a white player.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Map created by author using ArcGIS Online. Data compiled from football game programs: "Citadel vs Clemson (9/12/1970)". *Football Programs* 87 (1970). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/fball_prgms/87; "Kentucky vs Clemson (9/11/1971)". *Football Programs* 94 (1971). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/fball_prgms/94; "Citadel vs Clemson (9/9/1972)". *Football Programs* 99 (1972). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/fball_prgms/99; "Citadel vs Clemson (9/8/1973)". *Football*

Another argument that different writers circulated in the late 1960s in defense of Clemson University's athletic teams remaining segregated was the inability for African-American students to receive financial aid and scholarships.⁸⁷ In direct refutation of this claim that African-Americans could not receive financial aid, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, along with the US Office of Education prohibited any form of discrimination in admissions, financial aid, and university education on the basis of race.⁸⁸ Furthermore, Clemson University operated under a federal court injunction from Judge Wyche in 1963, and any level of blatant discrimination, such as denying financial aid to an African-American student or athlete solely on the basis of race would have represented a direct affront to this injunction. In addition to the federal laws that Clemson operated under, particularly as a state institution, there was no mention whatsoever in the Constitution and Bylaws of the Atlantic Coast Conference regarding African-Americans or any racial distinction, and certainly no policy in the NCAA that prohibited financial aid for African-Americans.⁸⁹ Either the individuals making the claim that African-Americans were unable to receive financial aid were misinformed, or referring to a specific, unspecified case, as the ability to receive grant-in-aid for African-American

Programs 104 (1973). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/fball_prgms/104; "Georgia Tech vs Clemson (9/28/1974)". *Football Programs* 110 (1974). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/fball_prgms/110.

⁸⁷ Chuck Whitney, "Integration and Things," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), February 16, 1968.

⁸⁸ Athletic Affairs. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 9.

⁸⁹ ACC Constitution and Bylaws, 1967. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 14.

athletes was made possible in a legal sense the moment Judge Wyche issued the injunction in January, 1963, and represented no real barrier to recruiting.⁹⁰

African-American Choice

In addition to the 800 SAT rule, commentators frequently argued that African-American athletes could have signed with Clemson, but chose to go elsewhere. This argument of choice was alluded to in nearly any discussion of why Clemson's athletics remained segregated. Whereas the 800 rule was a legitimate barrier, but not an insurmountable obstacle, the ability for an athlete to choose to attend Clemson or not likely represented the most challenging barrier for Clemson coaches to overcome. As briefly mentioned previously, Charles H. Martin argues that the public, and often vitriolic debate surrounding the admission of Harvey Gantt and Clemson's open resistance to desegregation turned away many African-American recruits and their families away from Clemson.⁹¹ Quantifying and measuring the effect that the struggle for desegregation had on individuals and families may not be possible, but it most certainly remained in the consciousness of the community, and any African-American athlete or general student considering attending Clemson University in the mid-to-late 1960s must have understood that racial struggles were a possibility. What can be shown is that numerous sources indicate that Clemson's coaches expressed interest and recruited a number of African-Americans prior to 1969, but in almost all cases the athletes chose to attend a different university.⁹²

⁹⁰ Board of Trustees, Clemson University, "Clemson Trustees Minutes, 1963 January 24". *Minutes* 298 (1963). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

⁹¹ Martin, *Benching Jim Crow*.

⁹² "Interview with Hootie Ingram," *Clemson Chronicle* vol. XI no. 1 (Clemson, SC), fall 1970.

According to two African-American star football players interviewed in 1968, Claude Humphrey and John Eason, it often proved to be far better for an African-American athlete to choose to attend an African-American college.⁹³ Humphrey and Eason claimed to base their observations about the state of African-Americans and football in the South on personal experience and discussions with other African-American athletes from schools throughout the South. In the interview, Eason stated:

if you're a Negro, you have to be a super player before the white schools down here are interested . . . they want somebody with above average grades and ability . . . of course, it's not always the school's fault, it would be pretty tough for a Negro to accept a scholarship to any of the South's major schools. You'd be on pins and needles all the time. You'd have to be careful in practice, and there'd be a lot of pressure on you. Say you had two or three good days in a row, and then had a bad one. If you were white, it wouldn't matter, but with a Negro they might demote you.⁹⁴

Eason's observations in the interview reflect one of the main challenges that African-American athletes faced while deciding which schools to attend, even if a previously-segregated school offered them a scholarship – the potential for unjust treatment at school and on the playing field was much higher due to the entrenched racial inequalities. Eason and Humphrey both agreed that most African-American players chose to sign with African-American colleges because they believed they would receive individual attention by coaches and in relation with their studies, as athletes received personal interest in their educational pursuits at African-American colleges.⁹⁵ While the observations of Humphrey and Eason represent just two individual viewpoints, they present an extremely valuable and rare firsthand description of the African-American athletes' experiences in

⁹³ Pat Zier, "Negroes Ignored," *Atlanta Constitution* (Atlanta, GA), June 27, 1968.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

the 1960s around the time of athletic desegregation across the South. Despite all of the numerous challenges associated with desegregation and integration, perhaps the greatest and most important outcome was the freedom for African-Americans to choose; in the case of Clemson University and its athletic teams, perhaps it was a barrier for desegregating the football team that African-American athletes simply chose to go elsewhere, and yet it still was ultimately a victory for the individuals who had the freedom to decide to *not* attend Clemson University.

President Edwards

From the prolonged legal battle that culminated in Gantt's admission to Clemson to the signing of Craig Mobley and Marion Reeves, President Robert C. Edwards promoted respect, equality, and calmness in a time of significant changes at Clemson University between 1963 and 1970. Additionally, President Edwards battled for years to remove barriers for African-Americans, all the while keeping the Clemson alumni and public informed and heard on essentially every issue that arose. In the context of the desegregation of Clemson's athletic teams, President Edwards continually called out the ACC's 800 rule as discriminatory, and worked ceaselessly to have it removed.⁹⁶ Furthermore, President Edwards directed numerous efforts to recruit more African-American students and athletes, especially after 1967, when he called for the Athletic Council to devote significant efforts to sign African-Americans to Clemson's athletic

⁹⁶ 800 Rule Requirement. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 23.

teams and requested that Walter Cox pursue any necessary means to facilitate the recruitment of African-American athletes.⁹⁷

While President Edwards focused on ending discrimination, he also was committed to developing quality athletic teams within the parameters of the NCAA and ACC. In an address to the College Sports Information Directors of America in Chicago on August 4th, 1966, President Edwards advocated for a universal academic standard for the NCAA, the 1.6 rule, and also touched on the importance of compliance with NCAA regulations:

As to recruiting, we all know what the pressures are in this field, and we must be constantly alert to maintain fair practices . . . public pressures for winning at all costs play their part in such practices – and must be resisted . . . If we are not careful we will lose the support of the public on which we depend for our existence . . . I believe we have a duty to see that our athletic programs are sound educationally as well as financially. If we don't do that, we might as well go ahead and become farm clubs for the NFL and the AFL and be done with it. College sports are too good and too important to let that happen.⁹⁸

In the spirit of compliance, President Edwards's struggles with the ACC primarily revolved around removing the 800 rule and following the NCAA's 1.6 predicted first year grade point average policy after 1965, which Edwards believed was much more fair to African-Americans because it could utilize class rank and GPA to offset lower SAT scores.⁹⁹ It should be noted that President Edwards wrote to James H. Weaver, commissioner of the ACC, that he believed the different emphasis between African-American and white athletes was a double standard, and that “there is no question that the

⁹⁷ April 11th Athletic Council Meeting, 1967. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 9.

⁹⁸ Statement from Robert C. Edwards to College Sports Information Directors of America, August 4, 1966. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 18, Folder 1.

⁹⁹ ACC 800 Requirement. Athletic Council Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 26, Box 18, Folder 1.

Negro athlete is not as well prepared academically as are his teammates who have had better opportunities to prepare for college.”¹⁰⁰ Edwards still believed African-Americans had the same level of academic and creative potential, but that the system in place with the SAT discriminated against them because of the disparate educational standards between white students and African-American students.¹⁰¹

Minimum combinations of SAT total scores and high school GPA required to predict 1.600 first year college GPA.

SAT	HSA!	SAT	HSA	SAT	HSA	SAT	HSA	SAT	HSA	SAT	HSA	SAT	HSA	SAT	HSA	
1419	.48	1292	.90	1162	1.32	1035	1.74	909	2.16	788	2.56	664	2.97	538	3.39	
1416	.49	1289	.91	1159	1.33	1032	1.75	906	2.17	786	2.57	662	2.98	535	3.40	
1413	.50	1285	.92	1156	1.34	1030	1.76	903	2.18	783	2.58	659	2.99	532	3.41	
1409	.51	1282	.93	1154	1.35	1027	1.77	900	2.19	780	2.59	656	3.00	529	3.42	
1406	.52	1279	.94	1151	1.36	1024	1.78	897	2.20	777	2.60	653	3.01	526	3.43	
1403	.53	1276	.95	1148	1.37	1021	1.79	894	2.21	774	2.61	650	3.02	523	3.44	
1400	.54	1273	.96	1145	1.38	1018	1.80	891	2.22	771	2.62	647	3.03	520	3.45	
1397	.55	1270	.97	1142	1.39	1015	1.81	888	2.23	768	2.63	644	3.04	517	3.46	
1393	.56	1266	.98	1139	1.40	1012	1.82	885	2.24	765	2.64	641	3.05	514	3.47	
1390	.57	1263	.99	1136	1.41	1009	1.83	882	2.25	762	2.65	638	3.06	511	3.48	
1387	.58	1260	1.00	1133	1.42	1006	1.84	879	2.26	759	2.66	635	3.07	508	3.49	
1384	.59	1257	1.01	1130	1.43	1003	1.85	876	2.27	756	2.67	632	3.08	505	3.50	
1377	.61	1251	1.03	1124	1.45	1000	1.86	873	2.28	753	2.68	629	3.09	501	3.51	
1374	.62	1248	1.04	1121	1.46	997	1.87	870	2.29	749	2.69	625	3.10	498	3.52	
1371	.63	1245	1.05	1118	1.47	994	1.88	868	2.30	746	2.70	622	3.11	495	3.53	
1368	.64	1242	1.06	1116	1.48	992	1.89	865	2.31	743	2.71	619	3.12	492	3.54	
1365	.65	1239	1.07	1113	1.49	989	1.90	862	2.32	740	2.72	616	3.13	489	3.55	
1362	.66	1236	1.08	1110	1.50	986	1.91	859	2.33	737	2.73	613	3.14	485	3.56	
1360	.67	1233	1.09	1107	1.51	980	1.92	856	2.34	733	2.74	609	3.15	482	3.57	
1357	.68	1230	1.10	1104	1.52	977	1.94	853	2.35	730	2.75	606	3.16	479	3.58	
1354	.69	1227	1.11	1101	1.53	974	1.95	850	2.36	727	2.76	603	3.17	476	3.59	
1351	.70	1224	1.12	1098	1.54	971	1.96	847	2.37	724	2.77	600	3.18	473	3.60	
1348	.71	1221	1.13	1095	1.55	968	1.97	844	2.38	721	2.78	597	3.19	470	3.61	
1345	.72	1218	1.14	1092	1.56	965	1.98	841	2.39	717	2.79	594	3.20	467	3.62	
1342	.73	1215	1.15	1089	1.57	962	1.99	839	2.40	714	2.80	591	3.21	464	3.63	
1339	.74	1212	1.16	1086	1.58	959	2.00	835	2.41	711	2.81	588	3.22	461	3.64	
1336	.75	1209	1.17	1083	1.59	955	2.01	831	2.42	708	2.82	585	3.23	458	3.65	
1333	.76	1206	1.18	1079	1.60	952	2.02	828	2.43	705	2.83	582	3.24	456	3.66	
1330	.77	1202	1.19	1076	1.61	949	2.03	825	2.44	702	2.84	579	3.25	453	3.67	
1327	.78	1199	1.20	1073	1.62	946	2.04	822	2.45	700	2.85	576	3.26	450	3.68	
1324	.79	1196	1.21	1070	1.63	943	2.05	819	2.46	697	2.86	573	3.27	447	3.69	
1322	.80	1193	1.22	1067	1.64	939	2.06	815	2.47	694	2.87	570	3.28	444	3.70	
1319	.81	1190	1.23	1063	1.65	936	2.07	812	2.48	691	2.88	567	3.29	441	3.71	
1316	.82	1186	1.24	1060	1.66	933	2.08	809	2.49	688	2.89	564	3.30	438	3.72	
1313	.83	1183	1.25	1057	1.67	930	2.09	806	2.50	685	2.90	561	3.31	435	3.73	
1310	.84	1180	1.26	1054	1.68	927	2.10	803	2.51	682	2.91	558	3.32	432	3.74	
1307	.85	1177	1.27	1051	1.69	924	2.11	800	2.52	679	2.92	555	3.33	429	3.75	
1304	.86	1174	1.28	1047	1.70	921	2.12	797	2.53	676	2.93	552	3.34	426	3.76	
1301	.87	1171	1.29	1044	1.71	918	2.13	794	2.54	673	2.94	549	3.35	423	3.77	
1298	.88	1168	1.30	1041	1.72	915	2.14	791	2.55	670	2.95	546	3.36	419	3.78	
1295	.89	1165	1.31	1038	1.73	912	2.15	788	2.56	667	2.96	543	3.37	416	3.79	
															413	3.80

Figure 2.7: Example chart from the Southeastern Conference demonstrating the necessary combinations of SAT score and high school GPA required to predict a 1.6 first year college GPA.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Letter from Robert C. Edwards to James H. Weaver, July 2, 1968. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Southeastern Conference GPA – SAT 1.6 Prediction Table. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 21.

SAT TABLE I
 Minimum Combinations of SAT-Total Score and Rank
 In High School Graduating Class Required to Pre-
 dict 1.600 First Year College Grade Point Average

SAT— Total Score	High School Rank	SAT— Total Score	High School Rank
400-475	Cannot qualify	813-819	50
476-482	100	820-826	49
483-488	99	827-832	48
489-495	98	833-839	47
469-502	97	840-846	46
503-509	96	847-853	45
510-515	95	854-859	44
516-522	94	860-866	43
523-529	93	867-873	42
530-536	92	874-880	41
537-542	91	881-886	40
543-549	90	887-893	39
550-556	89	894-900	38
557-563	88	901-907	37
564-569	87	908-913	36
570-576	86	914-920	35
577-583	85	921-927	34
584-589	84	928-934	33
590-596	83	935-940	32
597-603	82	941-947	31
604-610	81	948-954	30
611-616	80	955-961	29
617-623	79	962-967	28
624-630	78	968-974	27
631-637	77	975-981	26
638-643	76	982-988	25
644-650	75	989-994	24
651-657	74	995-1001	23
658-664	73	1002-1008	22
665-670	72	1009-1015	21
671-677	71	1016-1021	20
678-684	70	1022-1028	19
685-691	69	1029-1035	18
692-697	68	1036-1042	17
698-704	67	1043-1048	16
705-711	66	1049-1055	15
712-718	65	1056-1062	14
719-724	64	1063-1069	13
725-731	63	1070-1075	12
732-738	62	1076-1082	11
739-745	61	1083-1089	10
746-751	60	1090-1096	9
752-758	59	1097-1102	8
765-765	58	1103-1109	7
766-772	57	1110-1116	6
773-778	56	1117-1123	5
779-785	55	1124-1129	4
786-792	54	1130-1136	3
793-799	53	1137-1143	2
800-805	52	1144-1150	1
806-812	51	1151-1600	0

Figure 2.8: Table showing the minimum combinations of SAT score and high school class rank required to predict a 1.6 first year college GPA.¹⁰³

The NCAA policy of a 1.6 predicted first year grade point average, which President Edwards advocated for, used a weighted system that supposedly determined the level of academic success a college freshman would achieve. In place of the 800 SAT minimum score, President Edwards believed that the 1.6 rule would prove significantly more fair for African-American athletes trying to meet eligibility standards, as a lower

¹⁰³ Minimum Combinations of SAT-Total Score and Rank in High School Graduating Class Required to Predict 1.600 First Year College Grade Point Average. Robert C. Edwards Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

SAT score, such as a 589, the median of African-American high school students in South Carolina in 1965, could still qualify one for athletics so long as the student maintained at least a 3.23 grade point average in high school or finished in the 84th percentile or higher in their graduating class (see Figure 2.7 & Figure 2.8).¹⁰⁴ The inherent fairness of the 1.6 rule for African-American students was the ability to do well within the educational opportunities one had, and succeed relative to one's classmates, which greatly differed from the 800 SAT minimum score, which only one or two African-American high school students in South Carolina out of a hundred would achieve on average.¹⁰⁵ Despite the years President Edwards spent advocating for the removal of the 800 rule within the ACC after 1965 in favor of using only the less-discriminatory 1.6 rule, the ACC did not abolish a minimum SAT score requirement, and did not amend the 800 rule until December, 1970.¹⁰⁶ In the end, President Edwards positively impacted the process of advancing toward athletic desegregation at Clemson University in the late 1960s, and while he was unsuccessful in implementing all of the policies he believed would reduce discriminatory practices, he promoted a mentality of eliminating discrimination and inequality at Clemson University and among its community.

1968: The Watershed Year

In 1968, the biggest shifts occurred among the Clemson University students of any year since 1963, as racial issues came into the forefront of the university and explicit

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.; Scholastic Aptitude Test Scores of South Carolina High School Students, 1965 Negro. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Proposed 800 Rule Amendment, December 9, 1970. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 24.

calls for athletic desegregation from Clemson students and alumni materialized. The issues of race, which had remained present, but mostly latent since Gantt's admission, were first sparked on April 12th, when *The Tiger* published a series of articles from white and African-American students, including two mock debates, "White Militant vs. Black Pacifist" and "Black Militant vs. White Pacifist."¹⁰⁷ One of the biggest sparks for this issue on racial issues was the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., which occurred just eight days prior to the April 12 issue. In the first debate, the two speakers went back and forth, beginning with the white militant claiming that Martin Luther King Jr. "got what he deserved," because he was a trouble maker, and subsequently making numerous extremely racist and bigoted comments about African-Americans. In the second debate, the black militant primarily expresses the deep anger and contempt that he feels because of hundreds of years of oppression and dehumanization, and justifies the violent struggle as a means to obtain true freedom, as "white America has shown that it is a violent country."¹⁰⁸ Overall, the stated purpose of the mock debates was to demonstrate the perspectives of both sides, white and African-American, militant and pacifist, and to initiate discussion on racial issues at Clemson.

In the fall, *The Tiger* featured additional treatments of racial issues at Clemson, but rather than simulated debates, actual personal experiences were shared. On September 6th, *The Tiger* reported on a community gathering, in which two African-American members of the Clemson community discussed challenges that they personally

¹⁰⁷ "Keep Your Mouth Shut and Work," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), April 12, 1968.

¹⁰⁸ "A Blackness That's More Bonding," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), April 12, 1968.

faced, “the sum total of the Negro problem today, as expressed by Pettigrew and Martin, is the failure of people to see the Negro as an individual rather than collectively as a race.”¹⁰⁹ The exact issue that Pettigrew and Martin alluded to is manifested in a letter to the editor on November 1st, in which a freshman, Bruce Cole, claimed that a group of African-American students were tearing down posters, and when he asked them what they were doing, they attempted to start a fight with him. Cole goes on to write, “I’M NOT A RACIST but incidents such as Monday can cause one to have strong feelings . . . If race relations are ever to become harmonious, then the Negro must learn that laws are made for him also.” One isolated incident led this student to the conclusion that all African-Americans believed that laws did not apply to them, which is a prime example of viewing African-Americans collectively as a race and not as individuals.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Cole’s letter to the editor sparked a chain of letters to the editor of *The Tiger* in which four African-American students respond to Cole, a “rebuke” to the African-American students by two white students, and then lastly three more letters to the editor from white students criticizing the African-American students again. These series of letters in November, which all began with one letter from Bruce Cole, demonstrated the immense racial tensions at Clemson University by the fall of 1968, which needed only a small spark to ignite.¹¹¹

On November 25th, a more positive development in the racial progression of Clemson University took place, as the Clemson Student Senate unanimously passed the

¹⁰⁹ Bill Porterfield, “Negroes Discuss Problems,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), September 6, 1968.

¹¹⁰ Bruce Cole, “Negroes,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), November 1, 1968.

¹¹¹ *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), November 8, 1968; *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), November 15, 1968; *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), November 22, 1968.

constitution of the Student League for Black Identity (SLBI).¹¹² The stated purpose of the SLBI was to “promote black awareness through encouragement of black history courses, the study of black culture and the black man’s relationship with his society,” in addition to making Clemson students more “socially conscious of blacks.” SLBI President Charles A. Williams also hoped that the organization could bring more understanding between white and African-American students, and membership was open to all students with an interest, white and African-American. Furthermore, the SLBI committed to increasing recruiting of African-American students to Clemson, and was established in order to help students of all races.¹¹³ The formation of the SLBI acted as a counter to the racial tensions on campus, by providing additional dialogue and consciousness of the African-American experience, which supported African-American students at Clemson University and could help students from all backgrounds develop understanding. Amid the racial debates at Clemson, the year 1968 represented a distinct shift among students toward requesting that Clemson’s athletic teams recruit African-Americans.

On February 12th, the Student Senate voted on a resolution endorsing the recruitment of African-American athletes to Clemson, which passed easily with 42-2 vote.¹¹⁴ In the same week, multiple articles appeared in *The Tiger* in which the recruiting of African-American athletes was supported and advocated. An article from Chuck Whitney, the associate editor of *The Tiger* makes a compelling argument for recruiting African-Americans, one that goes beyond the athletics themselves, “the question of

¹¹² Reggie Harper, “Blacks Form Student Group,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), December 6, 1968.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ “Negro Athletes,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), February 16, 1968.

athletic competence should be taken into consideration, but there should also be considered the matter of justice. It is unjust to deny a scholarship to an athlete because he is a Negro.”¹¹⁵ Whitney’s stance provides one of the rare moral reasons for desegregating the athletic teams at Clemson University, regardless of the circumstances, it was unjust and wrong to deny African-Americans the opportunity to compete on Clemson’s teams, and while the barriers were not concrete, they were enough to hinder any African-American from officially joining any Clemson sports for over six years following Harvey Gantt.

While the leadership of IPTAY did not explicitly state that they were in favor or not in favor of recruiting African-American players, they petitioned for the lowering of academic standards, specifically the ACC’s 800 rule. In January, IPTAY advocated in Columbia for entrance standards to be lowered, with the reasoning that “present entrance standards are forcing players into schools outside of the state.”¹¹⁶ Moreover, members of IPTAY signed a petition in support of a proposal to amend or abolish the minimum SAT requirement of the ACC, and finished with five and a half pages full of signatures.¹¹⁷ In the context of the state of Clemson football in the 1960s, it is likely that IPTAY’s leadership and members were willing to support any changes that could possibly improve the prospects of the football team, and so the lowering of academic standards was a clear way to improve the team. Some, including *The Tiger’s* Chuck Whitney, expressed the

¹¹⁵ Chuck Whitney, “Integration and Things,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), February 16, 1968.

¹¹⁶ IPTAY. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 43.

¹¹⁷ IPTAY Petition. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 24.

fear that signing African-American players, especially to Clemson's football team, would reduce the amount of donations from IPTAY as a backlash to desegregating the team.¹¹⁸

While it may be possible that IPTAY could lose money if Clemson athletics desegregated, its direct support of President Edwards and his proposed changes to the academic eligibility standards of the ACC suggested that a large portion of IPTAY was in favor of African-American players. President Edwards explicitly stated dozens of times that he believed the 800 rule was discriminatory, and made no secret of his efforts to recruit African-Americans to Clemson's athletic teams; therefore it is unlikely that the IPTAY members supporting President Edwards were not aware of Edwards's goals.

Conclusion

The process leading up to athletic desegregation at Clemson University contained legitimate institutional and societal barriers, but these challenges were such that if the desire and mutual interest had existed with an academically-eligible African-American athlete, it could have taken place much sooner. There were certainly individuals who opposed the desegregation of Clemson's athletics, there were two members of Clemson's Student Senate who voted against an endorsement of African-American athletes, for instance. Yet, by 1968, essentially every commentator on the subject expressed support for the recruitment of African-American athletes. The three most impactful forces slowing down the desegregation of Clemson athletics were test scores, personal choice on the part of the athletes, and fear of community backlash. None of these forces were immovable, and the persistent efforts of President Robert C. Edwards over several years

¹¹⁸ Chuck Whitney, "Integration and Things," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), February 16, 1968

spearheaded the recruitment and eventual signing of Craig Mobley in 1969 and Marion Reeves in 1970, in which the process of integration finally replaced the pathway to desegregation.

CHAPTER THREE

“THEY GOT ONE ON THE TEAM”: THE EARLY YEARS OF FOOTBALL’S INTEGRATION AND THE PARADOX OF SPORTS CULTURE, 1969-1973¹¹⁹

The following article appeared September 25th, 1970 in *The Tiger*:

A new era has begun in Clemson athletics and with its emergence the Black athlete has become a figure on the campus. A few years ago it became inevitable that one day soon a Charlie Scott, an O. J. Simpson or maybe even an Arthur Ashe, would pull on a Tiger uniform. Everyone from the Gold Card members in IPTAY down to the rats in the Tin Cans waited and anticipated . . . The Black athlete at Clemson faces a challenge placed before no one else. The Black face which yesterday was nameless is now recognized . . . Times have changed and the people with them. Our generation sees things differently than the one preceding it. Before, people said never, we say perhaps.¹²⁰

African-Americans had finally broken the color barrier in athletics at Clemson University. By 1970 the desegregation of both Clemson’s basketball and football team formally was in the past and the process of athletic integration had begun. The above article from Clemson student Mike Gill illustrates several of the challenges that African-American students and all athletes alike needed to overcome along the path of integration. While the article only specifically represented the opinion of Mike Gill and not Clemson as a whole, because it was published in *The Tiger* it was widely distributed and read among a large portion of Clemson students and the Clemson community.

On the surface, Gill’s article seemed to celebrate the addition of African-Americans to the sports teams at Clemson University, but the entire article mentioned only three names, and none of them were of the new athletes at Clemson. The three people mentioned by name in the article were: Charlie Scott, a famous basketball player

¹¹⁹ The phrase “they got one on the team” comes a line of verses from the inside cover of the 1970 *Taps* Clemson University yearbook.

¹²⁰ Mike Gill, “Trailing the Tiger,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC) September 25, 1970.

who played at the University of North Carolina and later went on to have a 10-year NBA career and win an Olympic Gold Medal in 1968; OJ Simpson, who despite his later controversies was one of the most dominant college football players in history at Southern California University and a future Heisman winner and NFL MVP; and Arthur Ashe, arguably the greatest African-American male tennis player ever, and to this day the only African-American man to have won a singles title at Wimbledon, the US Open, and the Australian Open.¹²¹ Gill does at least mention that there was a African-American basketball player, a football player, and a track and field athlete, but it is telling that he did not provide the names of Craig Mobley, Marion Reeves, and Johnny Moon.¹²²

Perhaps the most difficult racial issue present in Mike Gill's article was expressed by the phrase, "the Black face which yesterday was nameless is now recognized."¹²³ As one African-American at Clemson University stated previously, one of the greatest challenges African-Americans faced was that white people viewed them as a collective and not as individuals.¹²⁴ Gill's description of the "nameless" face was indicative of how white students at Clemson often described African-Americans, but on the other side, their participation in Clemson athletics made them stick out from the crowd of faces.¹²⁵ Overall, articles like Gill's were emblematic of the obstacles that African-American athletes faced at Clemson University as the teams progressed on the path to integration.

¹²¹ "Charlie Scott," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlie_Scott; "O. J. Simpson," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O._J._Simpson; "Arthur Ashe," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Ashe.

¹²² Mike Gill, "Trailing the Tiger," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC) September 25, 1970.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Bill Porterfield, "Negroes Discuss Problems," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), September 6, 1968.

¹²⁵ Mike Gill, "Trailing the Tiger," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC) September 25, 1970.

Student League for Black Identity

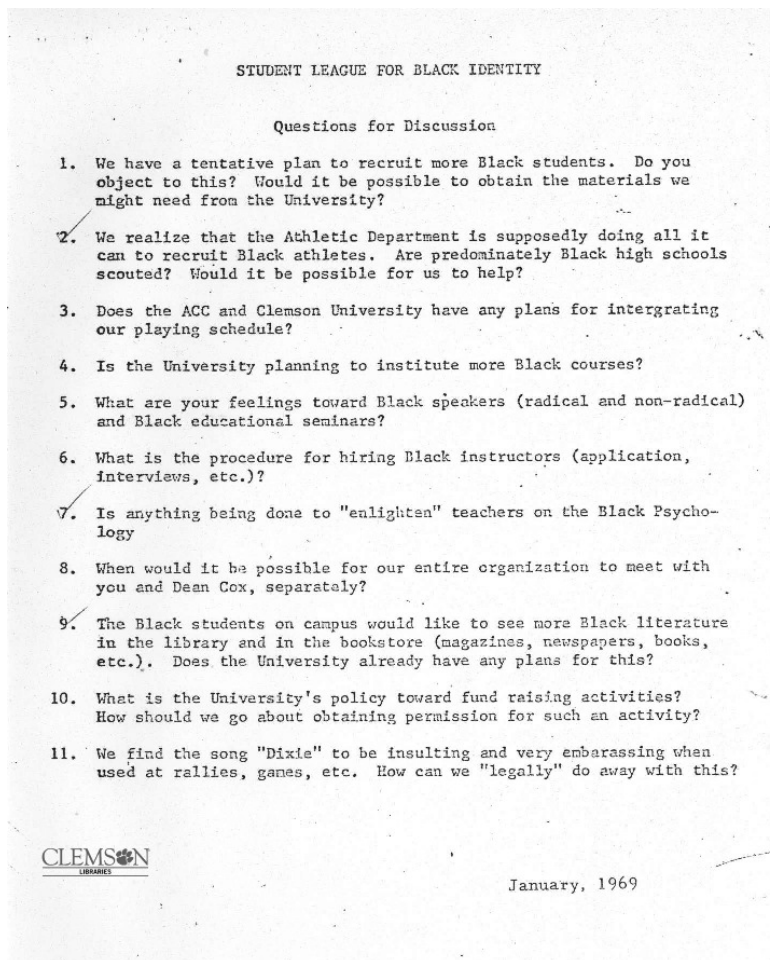


Figure 3.1: Student League for Black Identity discussion questions for President Edwards, January 1969¹²⁶

After its formation in December 1968, The Student League for Black Identity (SLBI) shortly began to work toward solving the racial issues their members observed at Clemson. In a meeting with President Edwards in January, 1969, the SLBI presented a variety of questions for discussion, in which the SLBI offered its assistance in recruiting

¹²⁶ Student League for Black Identity Questions for Discussion. President Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 385.

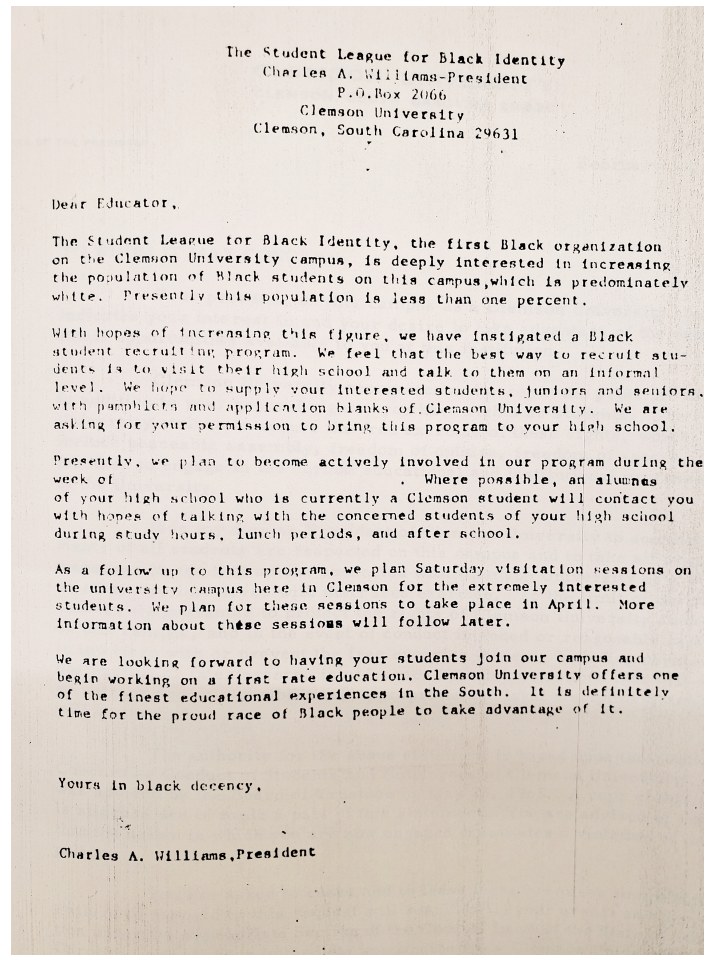
African-American students and athletes to attend Clemson University (see Figure 3.1).¹²⁷ Moreover, the SLBI inquired after the level of specific academic resources, from African-American-authored literature in the library to specific courses on African-American history. One critical question for discussion concerned the playing of “Dixie” at rallies and sporting events, which the SLBI’s leadership considered to be insulting and embarrassing; the SLBI’s issue with “Dixie” is one that sparked immense community backlash that eventually boiled over much later in the year. Overall, the SLBI quickly demonstrated that its members were serious in their desires to promote black consciousness at Clemson University and to help the university attract more African-American students.

In the summer of 1969, Craig Mobley of Chester, South Carolina turned down a prestigious appointment to the United States Military Academy to sign with the Clemson University basketball team. Mobley was an outstanding high school basketball player and student from Chester High School, where he maintained an “academic average” of 94.21 and finished 12th in his graduating class.¹²⁸ As the first African-American athlete at Clemson University, Mobley’s signing was a monumental moment in the history of Clemson University, and although it received only minimal recognition, it represented the beginning of a rapid process of integration within Clemson athletics. Any arguments that were made about the ability of African-American athletes to succeed academically at the college level could look at the example of Craig Mobley, whose grades put him among

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ “First Negro Athlete, Two Cage Giants Give Roberts Hope For Better Future,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), July 25, 1969.

the top 60 out of over 250 student-athletes at Clemson, less than ten of which were African-American during Mobley's time on the Clemson basketball team.¹²⁹ In addition to being the first African-American athlete at Clemson University, Craig Mobley also joined the SLBI in his first semester at Clemson University.¹³⁰



The Student League for Black Identity
Charles A. Williams-President
P.O. Box 2066
Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina 29631

Dear Educator,

The Student League for Black Identity, the first Black organization on the Clemson University campus, is deeply interested in increasing the population of Black students on this campus, which is predominately white. Presently this population is less than one percent.

With hopes of increasing this figure, we have instigated a Black student recruiting program. We feel that the best way to recruit students is to visit their high school and talk to them on an informal level. We hope to supply your interested students, juniors and seniors, with pamphlets and application blanks of Clemson University. We are asking for your permission to bring this program to your high school.

Presently, we plan to become actively involved in our program during the week of Where possible, an alumnus of your high school who is currently a Clemson student will contact you with hopes of talking with the concerned students of your high school during study hours, lunch periods, and after school.

As a follow up to this program, we plan Saturday visitation sessions on the university campus here in Clemson for the extremely interested students. We plan for these sessions to take place in April. More information about these sessions will follow later.

We are looking forward to having your students join our campus and begin working on a first rate education. Clemson University offers one of the finest educational experiences in the South. It is definitely time for the proud race of Black people to take advantage of it.

Yours in black decency,

Charles A. Williams, President

Figure 3.2: Recruitment letter from SLBI to African-American high schools¹³¹

¹²⁹ Top Athletes, Academically. Athletic Department Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 40, Box 40, Folder 17.

¹³⁰ Student League for Black Identity Membership, 1969-1970. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

¹³¹ Student League for Black Identity High School Recruitment Letter. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 385.

By September, 1969, the SLBI developed a recruiting plan in which they reached out to predominantly African-American high schools to provide tours of Clemson, pamphlets, and applications. The letter, which was sent by the SLBI to all relevant high schools in South Carolina, stressed the need to increase the African-American population at Clemson University, which was less than one percent (see Figure 3.2).¹³² In tandem with the SLBI, President Edwards worked to establish the history course, “History of Black America,” which Edwards believed would be a “means of attracting an increased number of black students.”¹³³ The relationship between President Edwards and the SLBI’s leadership remained strong, which aided the recruitment efforts as the university administration and the SLBI worked both collectively and individually to attract more African-American students.

In October, the racial tensions at Clemson exploded, beginning with a racist portion of a skit at “Tigerama” during Clemson’s Homecoming weekend. A skit intended to hype up the crowd during the Homecoming Rally originally included a white student with painted black face, acting like Clemson football’s African-American trainer, Herman McGee and speaking in a “stereotyped Negro dialect,” yelling “here come de fans! Here come de fans! Everybody knows dem is de fans!”¹³⁴ The African-American students and the SLBI found the skit to be extremely offensive when an African-American student saw a taped advertisement of the show, and threatened legal action if

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Letter from Robert C. Edwards to Joseph Grant, September 10, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records, Series 12, Folder 385.

¹³⁴ Clemson Dispute Sparked By Student Variety Show. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

the lines were not removed from the skit.¹³⁵ The painted black face and stereotyped speech was removed, but the skit nevertheless remained offensive to some members of the SLBI.

October 26, 1969

President R. C. Edwards
Parkway Drive, Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina

Dear Sir:

In light of events which have occurred in the past two weeks, I thought it just that I inform you of steps taken by the Student League for Black Identity to prevent this racially tense situation from snowballing into infinite magnitude. Because of the racial tensions that have developed due to the Tigerama controversy and more recently the issue of the Confederate flag, I, in lengthy consultation with advisors, felt it indeed better for all black students who are members of the Student League for Black Identity immediately to leave the Clemson University campus. These students agreed unanimously that due to the particular situation this was the best move; the campus will be vacated by 6:00 p.m. October 26, 1969.

It is our belief that the majority of white students are restrained from abusing black students only by the administration. This is implicitly understood by black and white students alike. Therefore, when the administration acts in such a way to show that such restraints are no longer in force racial relations deteriorate badly. This is well understood by everybody, black and white students alike, and this is what has now happened.

Our reason for leaving the University campus is the result of the above mentioned. There is general fear and complete panic on the part of the black students certain as we are that our physical being is in danger. Accordingly we do not wish to be provoked into defending ourselves physically.

It is our desire to inform you that we will release this letter to the news media at 10:00 a.m. October 27, 1969.

THE STUDENT LEAGUE FOR BLACK IDENTITY
Clemson University
Joseph Grant
Joseph Grant, President

cc: Matthew J. Perry; Governor Robert McNair; Edgar Brown, Chairman Clemson University Board of Trustees; Student Organization for Black Unity; National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; Southern Christian Leadership Conference; South Carolina Education Association; South Carolina Council on Human Relations; William P. Steirer Jr., Advisor of the Student League For Black Identity; Members of the Student League For Black Identity.

Figure 3.3: SLBI letter informing President Edwards of African-American students vacating the university, October 26, 1969¹³⁶

Roughly two weeks after the “Tigerama” incident, the SLBI made great efforts to have the confederate flag banned from being used to represent the school. Throughout

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Letter from Joseph Grant to Robert C. Edwards, October 26, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

1969, the SLBI leadership advocated for the removal of “Dixie” and the confederate flag, and finally on October 22nd, they succeeded in convincing the Central Spirit Committee and the Southern Student Organizing Committee vote to prohibit the use of the confederate flag following the 1969-1970 Clemson basketball season.¹³⁷ On the 25th, in the home football game against the University of Alabama the cheerleaders agreed, in support of the SLBI and all African-American students at Clemson University, to use the American flag rather than the confederate flag when they ran out onto the field at halftime. The switch from the confederate flag and the prohibition of “Dixie” pushed groups of white students and community members into a frenzy at the football game. Dozens of confederate flags filled the stands as students brought their own flags to wave during the game. Additionally, a flag with “SPONGE” written on it was brought to the game, the acronym stood for “The Society for the Prevention of Niggers Getting Everything,” which was an unofficial campus group with a noisy following at sporting events.¹³⁸

The antagonism toward the SLBI and the African-American students escalated to the point that the African-American members of the SLBI vacated campus on October 26th, because they felt that it was too dangerous for them to remain on campus. President Joseph Grant of the SLBI published a letter in which he outlined the rationale for sixty African-American students vacating Clemson campus (see Figure 3.3):

It is our belief that the majority of white students are restrained from abusing black students only by the administration. This is implicitly understood by black and white

¹³⁷ Troutman & Harper, “Committee Votes to End Use of Confederate Flag,” *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), October 24, 1969.

¹³⁸ Clemson Dispute Sparked by Student Variety Show. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

students alike. Therefore, when the administration acts in such a way to show that such restraints are no longer in force racial relations deteriorate badly. This is well understood by everybody, black and white students alike, and this is what has now happened . . . there is general fear and complete panic on the part of the black students certain as we are that our physical being is in danger. Accordingly we do not wish to be provoked into defending ourselves physically.¹³⁹

The overall intent of the SLBI vacating campus was to prevent the situation from exploding into riots and violence, which the African-American members were terrified of, especially when the demographics of Clemson are considered, because less than one percent of Clemson students were African-American. The day after the African-American members of the SLBI vacated campus, Joseph Grant met with President Edwards, and after several hours of discussion, Grant felt that the Clemson University administration's repeated assurances that African-American students would be protected on campus were sufficient, and he wrote a note calling for the SLBI members to return to campus.¹⁴⁰

Mercifully, the remainder of the fall semester passed without additional escalation or incident for the SLBI. The intense racial divides that surfaced in the 1969 fall semester with the SLBI stood in stark contrast to the triumph of the arrival of Craig Mobley and Johnny Moon, Clemson's first African-American athletes. In this comparison, the distinction between desegregation and integration is exemplified. The desegregation of Clemson athletics occurred within the backdrop of Clemson University still undergoing

¹³⁹ Letter from Joseph Grant to Robert C. Edwards, October 26, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

¹⁴⁰ Clemson Dispute Sparked by Student Variety Show. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

the painful process of integration, as the SLBI's struggles unearthed the deep-seated racial tensions that remained mostly dormant until the end of the 1960s.

A New Era of Clemson Football

The 1970 football season at Clemson University represented the biggest year of change within the football program in decades. Not only did Marion Reeves join the freshman team in 1970, formally marking the desegregation of Clemson football, but Coach Howard retired at the end of the 1969 season after thirty years as Clemson's head football coach, and remained on solely as Athletic Director.¹⁴¹ Thus, for the first time ever an African-American played on a Clemson football team, and for the first time in over three decades Frank Howard was not the head coach on the sidelines. After considering at least four coaches to fill Howard's empty seat, the Clemson Athletic Department and President Edwards chose Cecil "Hootie" Ingram, a young but highly recommended coach who played football at the University of Alabama and coached as an assistant at the University of Arkansas.¹⁴² After thirty years of Frank Howard's conservative style of coaching, Clemson's coaching search was focused on finding a coach with skills and experience in recruiting, and a fresher, more progressive style; therefore, Hootie Ingram appeared to be a perfect fit for Clemson football.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Correspondence with Coach Howard. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 42.

¹⁴² The three other coaches that were considered were Homer Smith from Davidson, Bill Peterson from Florida State, and Cally Gault from Presbyterian College. Letter from Conwell Anderson to Robert C. Edwards. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records, Series 12, Folder 41.

¹⁴³ November 20, 1969 Letter from Robert C. Edwards. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records, Series 12, Folder 40.

Outside of Clemson University, the ACC made major adjustments in 1970 to its academic eligibility requirements, which proved to work in Clemson's favor for recruiting both white players and African-American players. Firstly, on March 25th, the ACC's Commissioner reported four major amendments to junior college transfers and eligibility: 1) if a junior college student meets junior standing, 60 credits completed, then no 800 SAT score was required to be eligible; 2) if a junior college transfer had not attained junior status, then an 800 SAT score prior to entering junior college or an 800 score on the SAT taken during the first available test date while attending junior college was required for eligibility; 3) if a student had scored 800 or higher on the SAT, but did not predict a 1.6 first year grade point average, then they became eligible after completing one year in school; 4) if a student scored less than 800 and predicted less than a 1.6 first year grade point average, they had to complete two full years of school to become eligible, but were only given two years of eligibility rather than four.¹⁴⁴ The junior college eligibility changes represented a drastic improvement for Clemson University, because not only could Clemson open up far more recruiting to junior colleges, it gained additional opportunity to assist a player, particularly an African-American player, in attaining ACC eligibility.

The second major policy change within the ACC took place in December, when an amendment was proposed to the 800 SAT rule. On December 9th, an amendment was proposed that would adhere to the 1.6 first year grade point average predictor as a

¹⁴⁴ Junior College Eligibility Changes, March 25, 1970. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 21.

minimum requirement, but adjusted the 800 rule so that a student who scored between 700 and 799 could still qualify for eligibility in the ACC, provided he or she predicted at least a 1.75 first year grade point average.¹⁴⁵ Two days after the amendment was proposed, it was passed by the ACC on December 11th, 1970. Both Clemson University officials and University of South Carolina officials opposed the new 1.75 rule, and many speculated that both Clemson and South Carolina would withdraw from the ACC.¹⁴⁶ Following the years of President Edwards advocating for the abolition of the 800 rule, the ACC compromised only slightly, but still allowed for high performing students with slightly lower SAT scores to qualify academically.

At the time Marion Reeves was recruited and joined the team in 1970, freshmen were not eligible to compete in Varsity football, and so it was not until the next season, 1971, that Reeves had the opportunity to play on the main Clemson team. In an interview, Reeves recalled his very first game, September 11th, 1971 against the University of Kentucky, and remarked that he was not afraid of the reception from the fans, but rather worried about playing in the game.¹⁴⁷ While the end of the 1960s marked a resurgence of racial issues at Clemson University, Reeves claimed that he received no racial taunts nor racial disturbances during games that he can remember.¹⁴⁸ When Reeves was recruited, one thing the scout noticed was his speed and nose for finding the ball as a defensive

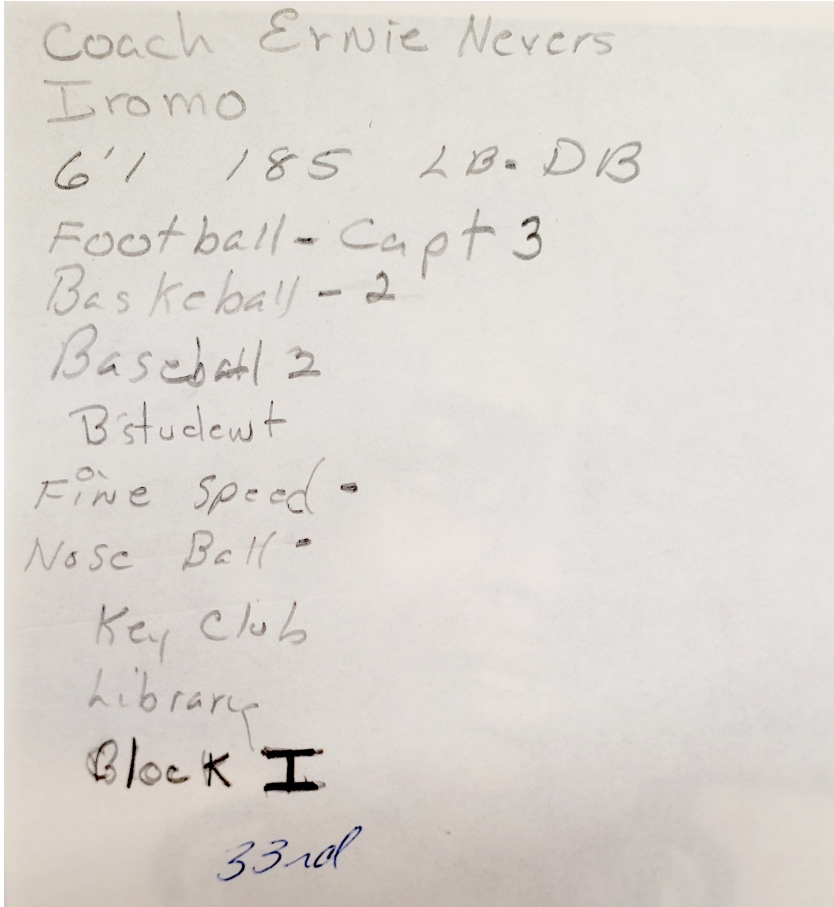
¹⁴⁵ Proposed Amendment to ACC 800 SAT rule, December 9, 1970. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 24.

¹⁴⁶ ACC 1970. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 18.

¹⁴⁷ Travis Sawchick, "Clemson's First Black Football Player Has Spent Lifetime Laying Foundations," *Independent Mail* (Nov. 10, 2010).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

back. (see Figure 3.4).¹⁴⁹ Reeves's speed translated well at Clemson, and upon finishing his college career at Clemson University, Reeves spent a year in the NFL with the Philadelphia Eagles and two years in the CFL with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.¹⁵⁰



Coach Ernie Nevers
Iromo
6'1 185 LB-DIB
Football - Capt 3
Basketball - 2
Baseball 2
B student
Fine speed -
Nose Ball -
Key club
Library
Block I
33rd

Figure 3.4: The only surviving recruiting notes on Marion Reeves¹⁵¹

In the 1971 season, in which Marion Reeves played his first Varsity games at Clemson, Coach Ingram received dozens of letters from Clemson alumni and fans. In more than fifty letters to Coach Ingram, not one letter that survived to today criticized

¹⁴⁹ Marion Reeves. Athletic Communication Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Uncatalogued Series, Box 82, A2015-001.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

Marion Reeves's presence on the field. All in all, the fans expressed support and encouragement as the team experienced multiple close losses, including to rival Georgia.¹⁵² It is not to say that Reeves did not experience hardships, but people across the Clemson community wrote piles of letters to Coach Ingram, and among the letters that remain preserved today in the Clemson University Special Collections, not one letter even mentioned the presence of Reeves or any other African-American from 1972 onward.¹⁵³

In 1972, most likely due to the junior college transfer eligibility requirements, Reeves was joined on the Clemson football team by Jay Washington, David Thomas, and Leon Fabers, all of whom were junior college standouts, as Jay Washington was second in the nation in rushing the previous season and Fabers was a junior college All-American.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, future Clemson football star Willie Anderson was also on the Varsity squad now as a Sophomore. As mentioned in chapter one, going into the 1972 football season, there were five African-Americans on Clemson's football team, and every one of them made it on the Pollock's Pigskin Preview of 1972, which showed how quickly the African-American players were integrating into the team, not just as token members of the roster, but as pivotal players and starters.¹⁵⁵

By the 1973 season, Marion Reeves's senior season, eleven African-Americans suited up for the Varsity football team. Additionally, William Swinger, Clemson's first

¹⁵² Hootie Ingram Correspondence, 1971. Athletic Department Records, Series 40, Box 40, Folder 17.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Pollock's Pigskin Preview 1972. Athletic Department Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 40, Box 40, Folder 17.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

African-American football coach joined the team as an assistant JV coach. Unfortunately for Coach Hootie Ingram, he was not able to rebuild the team as quickly as he and the community desired, and he resigned after the 1972 season to be replaced by a new coach, Red Parker.¹⁵⁶ The experience of Marion Reeves was not only of unparalleled importance for the football team and its future, but also a personal witness to the early years of integrating the Clemson team.

When Reeves arrived in the football locker room in 1970, he was the only African-American to be found besides longtime trainer Herman McGee, but when he graduated he had ten other African-American teammates of his and there was also an African-American coach of Clemson football. When he ran out on the field of Death Valley on September 11th, 1971 to compete against the University of Kentucky, it represented the last first time an African-American would run down the hill a member of the Varsity team. Since that moment, every single Clemson football team has had African-American players, and this will likely remain so forever. The integration was not just about adding additional players, but in the years following Reeve's joining of the team, it was as if a floodgate was lifted.

Clemson Football's Rapid Transformation

¹⁵⁶ "Citadel vs. Clemson (9/8/1973)." *Football Programs*, Sep. 8, 1973.

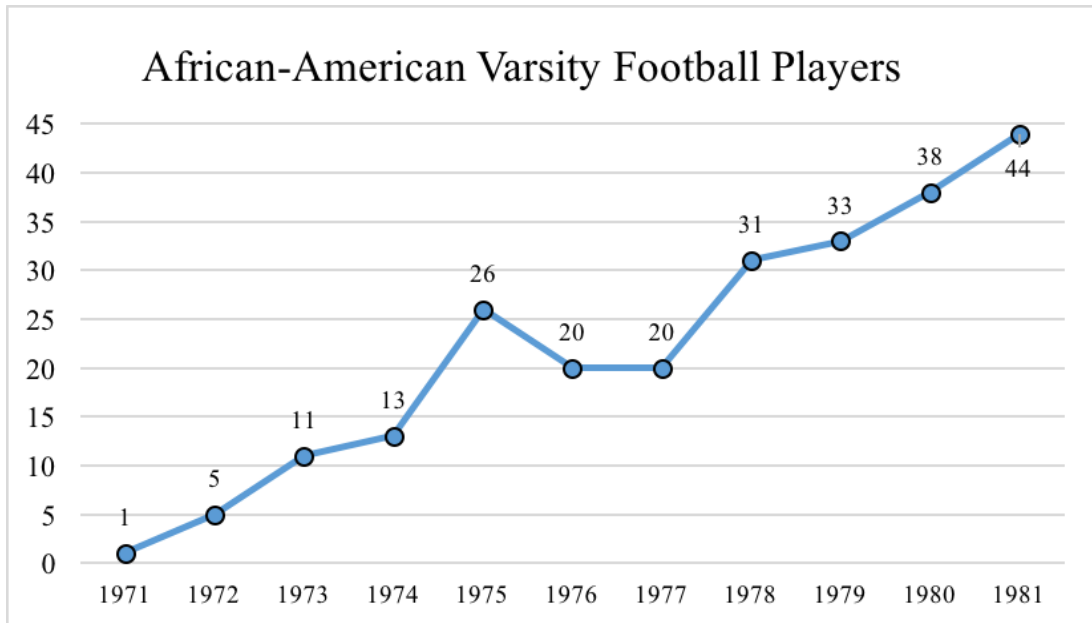


Figure 3.5: Graph showing the number of African-American Varsity football players at Clemson by year, 1971-1981¹⁵⁷

By the 1980 football season, there were thirty-eight African-Americans on the team (see Figure 3.5). The struggle for the desegregation of football at Clemson took seven years from the time Harvey Gantt was admitted, but after Reeves joined the team, the numerical integration unfolded rapidly. Furthermore, after the long drought of ranked Clemson football teams stretching back to 1960, Clemson football once again entered contention among the nation’s best college football teams.¹⁵⁸ The ultimate culmination of Clemson football’s renewed success occurred in 1981, when Clemson completed an undefeated season and won their first national championship. Moreover, Clemson’s starting quarterback Homer Jordan was African-American, and the game-sealing

¹⁵⁷ Data compiled and graph created by author. The African-American players were counted using the pictured rosters in the football game programs.

¹⁵⁸ “Clemson Tigers School History,” Sports Reference, <https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/clemson/index.html>.

touchdown in the national championship was a pass from Jordan to Perry Tuttle, an African-American wide receiver.¹⁵⁹ The integration of Clemson's football team undoubtedly paved the way for the success of Clemson football in the latter half of the 1970s and beyond, but the most important achievement in the history of Clemson football arguably remains the desegregation of the team and the signing of Marion Reeves.

Deep Play and Football Culture

Thus, in many respects the Clemson community's acceptance of African-American football players was rather rapid once the initial segregationist barriers were breached. There are perhaps deeper sociological explanations behind this accelerated acceptance, particularly those suggested in the work of anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Geertz, in his examination of the Balinese cockfights, used the concept of "deep play" to explain the level of personal investment that the Balinese operated with in the cockfights.¹⁶⁰ Geertz adopted the term "deep play" from the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham, who used deep play to mean "play in which the stakes are so high that it is, from his utilitarian standpoint, irrational for men to engage in it at all."¹⁶¹ Geertz utilizes the concept of depth within the cockfights, where he argues that within Balinese society, the more a cockfighting match takes place between those of equal status or personal enemies, and among higher status individuals, the deeper the match becomes. Moreover, Geertz asserts that as the match becomes deeper, the personal investment into the fight,

¹⁵⁹ Travis Sawchick, "Clemson's First Black Football Player Has Spent Lifetime Laying Foundations," *Independent Mail* (Nov. 10, 2010).

¹⁶⁰ Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfights," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books), 1973.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

the quality of the birds, and the level of emotion all increase.¹⁶² Conceptually, Clifford Geertz's utilization depends on an increasing scale of personal investment in a match, and most importantly one that does not represent an essential activity for human survival, but rather a "play" with little utility.

In the context of college football and sports in general, the term deep play can be employed to understand the immense personal and societal investment that goes into sports as both a player or coach and a fan. While football serves an important economic function in areas across the United States, the act of playing football itself is just a game, one that serves little utilitarian function within human survival besides physical exercise and social interaction. In the utilitarian context, the extreme economic, physical, and emotional investment inherent in modern football is such that it may seem irrational to engage in it at all. Furthermore, deep play can manifest itself in the sports fan's obsession with winning, particularly when fans share no direct relationship with the players on the field, and yet fundamentally hinge their own self-worth and emotional well-being on the outcome of strangers playing in a game. Therefore, the game of football typifies a compelling example of deep play, and for the historian deep play can provide a strong conceptual lens with which to analyze college football.

In the case of Clemson's athletics and desegregation, the conceptual framework of deep play can be applied to understand how the culture at Clemson regarding racial issues evolved so quickly in relation to African-American athletes. In this deep play, a paradox emerges, in which the culture surrounding sports can overwhelm the societal and

¹⁶² Ibid., 10.

individual views that one may hold outside the realm of sports. In just one decade, between 1963 and 1973, the culture shifted as a whole regarding the perception of African-American athletes at Clemson University. In 1963, the case of Harvey Gantt opened the door for African-American students to attend Clemson University, but only under the strong arm of the federal court injunction did this take place.¹⁶³ Although six years went by until Craig Mobley officially joined Clemson's basketball team, Clemson coaches began seeking out African-American athletes within a year of Gantt's admission.¹⁶⁴ Among a community that had so clearly fought against the entry of African-Americans, the need for a competitive advantage in Clemson's athletic teams trumped the sentiment of opposition to integration.

As previously discussed, the racial tensions at Clemson University escalated in 1968 and 1969, prompting the formation of the Student League for Black Identity to help create consciousness and identity for African-American students, who some saw as just "nameless" faces.¹⁶⁵ It was in the exact same time period of open racial tension in 1968 that the arguments for recruiting African-American athletes to Clemson began to come from nearly every party associated with the university in 1968, from the Student Senate voting to endorse the recruitment of African-American to IPTAY donors petitioning for the abolition of the ACC's 800 rule.¹⁶⁶ Certain individuals calling for athletic desegregation cited morality and injustice, such as President Robert C. Edwards, but as a

¹⁶³ Board of Trustees, Clemson University, "Clemson Trustees Minutes, 1963 January 24". *Minutes* 298 (1963). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Hootie Ingram, *Clemson Chronicle* vol. XI no. 1 (Clemson, SC), fall 1970.

¹⁶⁵ Mike Gill, "Trailing the Tiger," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC) September 25, 1970.

¹⁶⁶ Chuck Whitney, "Integration and Things," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC), February 16, 1968.

whole the arguments revolved around attracting star athletes to Clemson, such a Charlie Scott or OJ Simpson.¹⁶⁷ The paradox of sports culture was apparent, because on the one hand Clemson University experienced a great escalation of race-related issues from the animosity in letters to the editor in *The Tiger* to African-American students refusing to come to campus out of fear for their safety, and on the other hand African-American athletes were sought after for Clemson's sports teams.¹⁶⁸ In the struggle for athletic desegregation, deep play can be applied to the investment in the success of the Clemson football team which promoted a paradoxical mindset toward the racial circumstances at Clemson, where ultimately the Clemson community embraced African-American athletes while at the same time antagonized African-American students to the point that they no longer felt safe at school.¹⁶⁹

For those who passionately support the athletics of a university or a sports franchise, the deep play of sports has the ability to greatly influence and even distort how one perceives the world. The desire to see the Clemson Tigers succeed on the football field and in other sports became the ultimate driving force for many, and the inclusion of African-American players offered a chance to increase the competitiveness of the teams. In Clemson's story of athletic desegregation, one can see a real-life example of the power of deep play as it pertains to sports, not just within Clemson University, but for any individual or collective who genuinely invests themselves in the successes or failures of a

¹⁶⁷ Mike Gill, "Trailing the Tiger," *The Tiger* (Clemson, SC) September 25, 1970.

¹⁶⁸ Joseph Grant Letter, November, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 386.

¹⁶⁹ Clemson Dispute Sparked By Student Variety Show, 1969. Robert C. Edwards Presidential Records. Clemson University Special Collections, Series 12, Folder 385.

sports team. Without the lens of sports, the dramatic shift from the widespread opposition to Gantt and desegregation to the open endorsement of recruiting African-Americans within less than a decade presents an astonishingly rapid societal progression; yet, when assessed through the eyes of the committed Clemson football fan or booster, the transformation in mindset is a completely understandable and logical development, and one that expresses the immense potential that sports possess to change individuals, and even society.

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