

Race Not Impediment for BU-Howard Coed

Note: Anyone interested in the Howard Exchange Program, for a semester or a week, can call Barbara Beach at extension 383 or the CA office for information. Barb will also discuss her semester at Howard at the 9:30 class this Sunday. **any further questions you All are urged to attend and might have will be answered there.**

by Barbara Beach

Howard University is a Negro school of about 7,000 students in Washington, D. C. Last semester I went to school there on an exchange program between Bucknell and Howard.

Before I went to Howard I had had very little contact with Negroes. I had lived in white communities and attended white schools.

Exposed to Bias

I also had been continually exposed to the stories and beliefs about Negroes which are so common in white societies. Although I never believed these stories, I felt that constant exposure to them could not help but have an effect on me. I did not want this effect, but because I had so little opportunity to know any Negroes personally, I felt unable to avoid it. Therefore when I heard about the Howard exchange program I decided to apply.

I am so glad I did. At Howard I was part of a Negro society. I was welcomed warmly and sincerely. Everyone was very friendly, willing to know me and accept me, as a fellow student and as a friend. People acknowledged the fact that I was white, but they took me as myself rather than as a white girl.

No one tried to impress me, nor did anyone make me feel uncomfortable because I was different. If I was willing to consider the color difference irrelevant then everyone else was willing to ignore it too. If anyone I knew felt any bitterness about our country's racial situation it was never directed toward me. Because of the sincere and complete acceptance everyone gave me, I soon forgot I was different.

Fact of Life

No one was embarrassed to talk about the race situation (except me, at first). The race problem was not a main topic of conversation, but neither was it avoided or ignored. People were realistic and relatively unemotional about the subject. They treated it as a fact of life which must be faced and adjusted to.

They know that in many places they go people will not

be happy to have them or will consider them outsiders. They must consider, when planning a career, whether there are opportunities for Negroes in the field of their interest. Their choice of a home where they will be welcome is limited. Often travel is inconvenient because in restaurants, motels and service stations is limited to whites.

The Civil Rights bill changed much of this, however. Concerning the Civil Rights bill, people at Howard are moderately optimistic but also quite realistic. They consider it more as a step in the right direction than as a cure.

People are generally in favor of the goal of the civil rights movement, but they do not support every group which is a part of the movement. Most of my friends are strongly opposed to radical groups such as the Black Muslims.

SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) is present at Howard, although the University Administration has not granted it University sponsorship. Its members are very active, but only a small percentage of students belong. Many others are not interested or do not approve of the organization.

Anti-Sit-Ins

Many people are not in favor of sit-ins, lie-ins, pickets, and demonstrations in general because they feel that groups are overdoing these practices. People vary widely in their opinions of civil rights groups and their methods. However everyone I know is strongly opposed to violence and any form of militancy.

While I was at Howard the Oscar presentations were given in Hollywood. When Sidney Poitier was given an Oscar for his performance in *Lilies of the Field*, everyone was thrilled. All the girls in the dormitory cheered when his name was announced, and everyone congratulated everyone else. That was a wonderful night.

Campus and social life is very similar at Bucknell and Howard. The main differences I noticed were differences of degree. Fraternity and sorority membership seemed to be more important at Howard. Membership in a Greek organization has high prestige value, both in school and in adult Negro society. The pledge period is long and difficult, and members are very loyal and proud of their group.

Queens Galore

Another difference is the number of queens on campus. There are very many queens at Howard. Every fraternity, fraternity pledge class, ROTC unit, campus-wide dance, and many other organizations have a queen and several girls on her court. I think the great importance of these social practices is a result of the almost total lack of recognition of Negroes in our society. To make up for this Negroes recognize each other.

There are some noticeable scholastic differences between Howard and Bucknell. Howard has many deficiency courses, required of freshmen who do not meet minimum standards of achievement on their entrance. These courses are a necessity because of the inferior education

St. Jose

