

A Ruckus on High Street: The Birth of Black Studies at The Ohio State University

Thomas Albright

Teach for America

Judson L. Jeffries

The Ohio State University

N. Michael Goecke

The Ohio State University

The history of Black Studies as a discipline is one of struggle, adversity, failure and triumph. Involved in its birth and development are some of America's most foremost intellectuals and activists. Historically, Black Studies at The Ohio State University has been given short shrift in the scholarly literature. This article helps fill that void. Utilizing materials from the personal archives of former professors, students and administrators coupled with oral histories, this work offers a vivid account of the birth of Black Studies at OSU. Situated firmly within the context of the tumultuous Vietnam War era, Black Studies at OSU is a history that is robust in character and far-reaching in impact, hence any history of Black Studies that omits the happenings at OSU is incomplete.

INTRODUCTION

A perusal of the scholarly writings on campus unrest during the Vietnam War era finds the events at The Ohio State University conspicuously absent. Instead, much of the literature privileges schools such as Columbia University, UC Berkeley, Cornell University, the University of Michigan, San Francisco State College, University of Wisconsin (UW) and most notably, Kent State University. Each campus was the site of a memorable demonstration, strike, stand-off or take-over by students and, in some cases, faculty. At Kent State University and UW, however, campus discord resulted in tragedy as four students were killed by members of the Ohio National Guard, and a young scientist died when a bomb obliterated the Army Math Research Center on the Madison campus. Despite the lack of attention by scholars, writers and documentarians, the events at The Ohio State University were no less remarkable. The student-led protests at OSU during the late 1960s and early 1970s had as far-reaching an impact on the university as those that occurred at any of the institutions mentioned above. That enduring legacy lives on in the creation of Women Studies, increased student participation in university governance, greater numbers of Black¹ students and faculty, the establishment of offices charged with addressing the concerns of students of color such as the Office of Minority Affairs [now the Office of Diversity and Inclusion], the Frank Hale Black Cultural Center [albeit twenty years later] and of course, the creation of a Black Studies Department, which is the focus of this article.²

Recently, a generation of younger Black scholars has taken it upon itself to excavate and document the history of the first cohort of Black Studies programs in America. Over the past several years both the *Western Journal of Black Studies* (2010) and the *Journal of African American Studies* (2012) have devoted special issues to this topic; in both cases, though, the development of Black Studies at The Ohio State University was absent. Given the department's stature in the discipline any history of Black Studies that does not include The Ohio State University is grossly inadequate. Black Studies emerged in the 1960s and 70s as a result of college student and faculty upheaval across the country. Black Studies is undoubtedly one of the most important developments in education over the past forty years. As Floyd W. Hayes III wrote in *A Turbulent Voyage*, the establishment of Black Studies was insurrectionary and emancipatory in at least two ways. First, African American students and their allies sought to challenge and transform the policies and practices of institutional racism. Second, Black Studies represented a bold movement that undertook the unmasking of the power/knowledge configuration of Eurocentrism and the White cultural domination characteristics of the American academy (Hayes, 1992, xxiv).

The fight for Black Studies is just one in a long line of battles waged by African Americans where education is concerned. For years, Blacks who were held as slaves were not by law, permitted to read; anyone attempting to teach Blacks to read did so at his or her own peril. When formal education opportunities availed themselves to Blacks, white elites went to great lengths to make certain that Blacks received an education that was inferior in both quality and quantity. Historically, no organization or institution, with the exception of the Black Church, has been more at the forefront of this battle than the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Our Mission, 2005). From 1935-1938, the NAACP, led by Charles Hamilton Houston and Thurgood Marshall, devised a plan to assail Jim Crow laws in education. The first opportunity came in 1935 in *Pearson v. Murray* (James, 2010). Donald Murray sought admission to the University of Maryland School of Law, but was denied due to his race.³ The rejection letter noted the university's responsibility under the *Plessy v. Ferguson* doctrine of 'separate but equal' to assist him in studying elsewhere. At the circuit court hearing, Marshall stated that Maryland failed to provide a 'separate but equal' education for Murray as required by the Fourteenth Amendment. Since laws differ from state to state, a law school in another state could not prepare a future attorney for a career in Maryland. The circuit court judge issued a writ of mandamus ordering Raymond A. Pearson, president of the university, to admit Murray to its law school. The ruling was appealed to Maryland's highest court of appeals; and in a unanimous decision, affirmed the lower court ruling in 1936 (Laverne, 2010). The Court of Appeals' edict was never taken to the U.S. Supreme Court, and as such, the ruling was not binding outside the state of Maryland, but the groundwork was laid in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada* (1938).

Lionel Gaines, an aspiring African American law student, applied to the University of Missouri School of Law, but was declined admission on the basis of race. The state offered to pay for Gaines' tuition at a neighboring state's law

school, which he declined. Houston argued that Missouri could not provide equal protection to Black students by sending them to an out-of-state law school. On December 12, 1938, the Supreme Court ordered the State of Missouri to either admit Gaines to the university or provide another school of equal stature within state borders. The university built a Black law school.⁴

Arguably the most important segregation case since *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), it prompted the NAACP to establish a Legal Defense Fund with the expressed purpose of abolishing the “separate-but-equal” doctrine.⁵ The struggle for equal opportunity in education reached a crescendo in the early 1950s with *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. In 1952 the Supreme Court consolidated five separate cases under *Brown v. Board of Education* including *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, *Briggs v. Elliot*, *Davis v. Board of Education of Prince Edward County (VA)*, *Boiling v. Sharpe*, and *Gebhart v. Ethel*. Marshall argued that separate school systems for Blacks and whites were inherently unequal and violated the “equal protection clause” of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In 1954, the Court unanimously ruled that “‘separate but equal’ has no place” within public education (Belknap and Warren, 2005). This was followed by *Brown v. Board II* (1955), which held that racially dual systems must be abolished “with all deliberate speed” (Belknap and Warren, 2005).

Black Student Enrollment, Vietnam, and the Emergence of a New Campus Radical

Although not often acknowledged, the Brown decision impacted the numbers of Blacks who enrolled in predominantly white institutions. Prior to Brown, the student body population at predominantly white colleges was overwhelmingly white with middle-and-upper-class backgrounds. For the most part, the “ivory tower” of higher education discriminated against Blacks, women and the poor. In 1950, only 83,000 African Americans attended college (U.S. Census Bureau, 1979). Ten years later, in 1960, that number swelled to 250,000. By 1973, this number skyrocketed to more than 540,000 African American college students (“Progress Report”, *Ebony Magazine*, 1975). Over that thirteen year period, Black students began to assert themselves, organizing around issues of racial injustice and equal opportunity. Non-violent forms of protest such as sit-ins, marches, and rallies, were employed to educate their peers and elicit support. In some cases, Black students took their grievances to university administrators; at other times, they confronted the Board of Trustees and, as a last resort, some felt compelled to contact their local and state representatives. Greensboro, North Carolina, Jackson, Mississippi, Nashville, Tennessee, and Richmond, Virginia were just some of the cities where students staged demonstrations.⁶ At the forefront of many of these sit-ins was the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Formed in 1960, during a series of student meetings at historically Black Shaw University in North Carolina, SNCC grew to become one of the Civil Rights Movement’s most effective organizations, politicizing and organizing thousands of [Black and White] students who traveled south to participate in sit-ins, freedom rides, and other demonstrations (Carson, 1995). In

1962, at the annual convention for Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the Port Huron Statement was issued, which recognized SNCC's importance on society (Berger, 2006, 31-49). In the ensuing years, SNCC supported the anti-war movement and recognized the university's role in helping the government promulgate war efforts, namely by enforcing selective service regulations and supporting the recruitment efforts of ROTC and other government agencies. SNCC not only opposed the government's war in Vietnam, but denounced its efforts to undermine liberation efforts in other parts of the world. SNCC was also one of the first organizations to declare publicly that poor Blacks should not be forced to fight for a country that deprived them of basic civil rights.

By 1964, hundreds of young northerners descended upon the South to participate in Freedom Summer, some of them joining SNCC. Out west, students were just as engaged. That same year, the Free Speech Movement emerged at UC Berkeley as white student protestors chided the university for its paternalistic and racist policies; and demanded wholesale changes (Cohen and Zelnik, 2002). Reportedly, a liberal Quaker and Democrat, some students viewed President Clark Kerr's 1961 refusal to allow Malcolm X to speak on campus as racist. Kerr defended his position on the grounds that Malcolm X was a sectarian religious leader (Burner, 1996). Yet, Kerr did not interfere with a decision to invite Billy Graham, the prominent evangelical preacher to campus.

As the years passed, student activism increased. According to Mario Savio; efforts at UC Berkeley were tied to the larger struggle for civil rights (Cohen, 2009). By 1965, the Vietnam conflict sparked student anti-war protests on college campuses across America. Some of the more noteworthy efforts were launched by New Leftists at the University of Michigan. From March 24-25, 1965, teach-ins⁷ occurred in Ann Arbor and were attended by well over 3,500 people (Olsen, 1999, 26). Teach-ins, which became a popular method of instruction, were comprised of lectures, movies, debates, and musical performances aimed at protesting the war. Before long, teach-ins started sprouting up all over the country as way of informing and on occasion indoctrinating faculty and students alike with certain ideas and values. On April 17, 1965, the SDS held a massive anti-war demonstration at the Washington Monument in D.C. that attracted thousands.

As the country teetered on the edge of war in the early 1960s, Black students in the Bay Area were embroiled in a conflict of their own, one that involved college curricula. Unlike some of their predecessors, this new breed of college student was not content to sit quietly as colleges and universities offered courses that featured American and European history while ignoring the history of African peoples altogether. As the Vietnam War unfolded, some college students were not only openly questioning whether the education they were receiving was an accurate reflection of their political, geographical and cultural heritage, but also whether the instruction for which they were paying was at worst oppressive and at best a form of mis-education. Nowhere in the courses was there any substantive discussion of Black people's contributions to America, let alone, the world. Black students desired a curriculum that spoke to Black people's lived

experiences—they wanted Black Studies. In their book *Introduction to African American Studies*, Talmadge Anderson and James Stewart offered the following:

The ideas and efforts leading to the establishment of African American Studies did not originate with academic administrators and faculty in accordance with custom. Demands for the formalization of programs and curricula in the study of African Americans began with Black students who were aided and abetted not only by professional, ordinary, and “street” people of the Black community, but also by enlightened White students. The emergence of student power and the powerful effect Black students had on the moral consciousness of White America compelled schools, colleges, and universities to reassess their academic mission and social objectives (Anderson and Stewart, 2007).

The Battle Cry for Black Studies

Perhaps the first initiative toward the development of a Black Studies curriculum on a college campus occurred at Merritt College in Oakland, California in 1963. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale led Black students to demand a Black history course, which resulted in a class titled “Negro History,” taught by a white instructor. Seale was flabbergasted and refused to enroll, until he changed his mind at Newton’s urging. Newton wanted to, at least see, what the instructor had to offer. Not long after the course got underway, Seale exclaimed that “the cat that was teaching . . . didn’t know what he was doing. He really wasn’t teaching Black History; he was teaching American history and reiterating slavery . . .” (Seale, 1991, 20). To Newton and Seale’s surprise, few students questioned this arrangement, not even the Afro-American Association, which purportedly was all about things Black. Unimpressed with the leadership and message of the Afro-American Association, Newton and Seale formed the Soul Students’ Advisory Council—the major purpose of which was to generate Black pride, push for the introduction of culturally relevant courses and the hiring of Black faculty (Jeffries, 2002, 3).

The late 1960s saw a push by African American students across the country to make college life more relevant and appealing to Black students. In 1967, the Black Student Union at San Francisco State College called for a Black Studies curriculum. The following year Nathan Hare was authorized to develop an autonomous Black Studies program, which ultimately resulted in the creation of the department, provisions for the admission of Black students, and a B.A. in Black Studies (Bobo et al., 2004, 2). Initially, the Board of Trustees opposed the idea, resulting in a student strike that shut down the school. On October 14, 1968, twenty members of the Black Student Union at San Francisco State seized control of a campus building that housed the main computer center and demanded that the Black Studies department be established. Meanwhile, students and community sympathizers clashed with police. Eventually, the students persevered and San Francisco State became the first institution to establish a Department of Black Studies along with a Center for Black Studies (Bobo et al., 2004, 2). Students

across the nation observed the goings-on at San Francisco State and recognized that if similar pressure was applied at their respective campuses, concessions could be gained. In 1969, another high profile fracas broke out at one of the country's most prestigious university's three thousand miles away, as both Black and white students, implored Cornell administrators to take seriously their demands for a Black Studies program.

On April 19, 1969, students at Cornell University took over Willard Straight Hall during Parents' Weekend for thirty-six hours as part of an ongoing protest about racism at the university and a curriculum that held little relevance to black students. After students from the all-white Delta Upsilon fraternity unsuccessfully attempted to retake the building, some of the protestors secured firearms to discourage future heroics. Additionally, members of SDS formed a protective barrier around the building. Political historian Rick Perlstein explains

Militants had intended to hold Willard Straight Hall for a few hours, for the campus to awake in the morning to the spectacle . . . The administration was willing to wait things out, letting AAS supporters come and go. SDS members guarded the perimeter. (They called themselves "voluntary niggers.") The fateful escalation came when twenty-five brothers from the "jock fraternity" Delta Upsilon entered the building through an unguarded window. . . The black students came at the white students with pool cues and fire extinguishers, barked forth threats about "filling the whites with lead. . ." (Perlstein, 2008, 377)

Following intense negotiations with administrators, including Vice President Steven Muller, the takeover ended and students marched out of Willard Straight Hall brandishing firearms with clenched fists raised high in the air. The takeover received national media attention and resulted in a renewed debate about racism on America's college campuses. Ultimately, the protestors' efforts resulted in the establishment of the Africana Studies & Research Center and an Africana Studies curriculum.

Similar demonstrations popped up elsewhere, resulting in an increased number of Black Studies units. "Between 1968 and 1975 over five hundred academic programs and departments offering Black Studies courses were in place across the country" (Bobo et al., 2004, 2). This includes The Ohio State University, where efforts by students, faculty, and community residents led to the establishment of a Black Studies program in 1970. Although an increased number of Blacks were attending college during the period cited earlier, racism on college campuses persisted;⁸ The Ohio State University was no exception.

Black History at OSU

Unlike some other prestigious colleges and universities, OSU has a long history of admitting Black students, dating back to the late 1880s when Fred D. Patterson [the first Black student] enrolled, although Sherman Guss would be OSU's first Black graduate (1888) (Goerler, 2011, 160). Jesse Frances Stephens,

OSU's first Black female graduate followed in 1905. As more Black students enrolled at OSU, they formed their own social and cultural groups. By 1920, they had organized Alpha Phi Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta, two of the oldest Black fraternities and sororities in the U.S. Eight years later; Aletha Hebron Washington (in 1928) became the school's first Black doctorate. In spite of these achievements, Black students still found life at OSU trying at best and racially hostile at worst. In 1932, Doris Weaver took OSU to court for not permitting her to live in the Grace Graham Walker House, a residence for home economics majors. The Ohio State Supreme Court ruled in OSU's favor, upholding its "separate but equal" code.

On the subject of OSU's purported impressive history of admitting Blacks, Dr. Evelyn Luckey, an OSU alum and retired Assistant Superintendent for the Columbus Public School system had this to say, "while OSU may have a long history of admitting Blacks, when I was there in the mid 1940s, there couldn't have been more than 100 Black students on campus, that's being generous" (Luckey, 2011). Luckey also intimated that in addition to being few in number, "Black students did not always find OSU hospitable" (Luckey, 2011). "I had very good grades when I transferred into OSU from Wilberforce; I intended to major in psychology, but the psych department made it clear that it did not want any Black students no matter what their grades were" (Luckey, 2013). Stan Dixon, among the first cohort of Blacks to integrate the United States Marine Corps and a 1949 graduate of OSU remembers one incident that has stayed with him over the years:

I had enrolled in an English course for science majors. One of the texts assigned to the class was a book of short stories. One of the stories was titled *Niggers are such Liars*. There were about 50 students in the class, but I was the only Black in the class . . . and wouldn't you know it . . . on the day that we were to discuss that short story the professor called on me for comment. I was angry and I sensed that the professor knew it. You could hear a pin drop. . . I mean there was dead silence. I was sitting near the front of the class, but I never turned to look at the expressions on the other students' faces. I looked straight ahead, and made a short comment. Sensing the tense atmosphere, the professor moved on to another topic (Dixon, 2011).

Despite OSU's long history of admitting Black students, Blacks were not permitted to live on campus until the 1950s. Not long after settling into the campus dormitories, Black students began to gain in confidence. Nineteen sixty was a historic year as Marlene Owens, the daughter of Jesse and Ruth Owens, became OSU's first African American Homecoming Queen (Goerler, 2011). Black students, on the whole, however, did not benefit from this unprecedented "first."

Black Students Rising

As the years went by, African American students began organizing and protesting the university's racist workings and its stale curriculum that, in their minds, reinforced Eurocentric views of history and marginalized the lived experiences of African peoples. Jim Upton, an OSU alum and long-time faculty member in the Department of African American and African Studies and Carla Wilks, former Senior Outreach Program Coordinator for the Community Extension Center explain that this struggle was also in part a response to the history of institutional racism that, "kept black enrollment to a bare minimum and denied the few blacks enrolled equal opportunities in practically every aspect of campus life" (Upton and Wilks, 2011, 1). When asked to account for the change in Black students' level of consciousness, Lela Boykin, who attended OSU from 1962 to 1968, pointed out that "the early 1960s saw an influx of African Americans from urban communities who had witnessed the civil rights movement on television . . . we saw the students in the south involved and it motivated us to stand up and address issues here at OSU" (Boykin, 2011). By the late 1960s, students had formed the Black Student Union (BSU), Afro-American Society, and the Ad Hoc Committee for Student Rights (AHCSR) as well as organized protests, marches, rallies, teach-ins, and other political demonstrations in order to affect change. These student-led initiatives transpired over a three year period, from January 1967 to August 1970, and resulted in the creation of the Committee of Afro-American Studies (CAAS)—the purpose of which was to research the feasibility of Black Studies at OSU, an Office of Minority Affairs, a Black Studies Library, and scholarships for Black students.

The late William E. Nelson Jr., professor emeritus, explained that the protest movement started when activist and comedian "Dick Gregory was invited to campus and urged students to do something about the reprehensible way the University had treated them" (Nelson, 2011). Among the student's demands was a Black Studies department. Although the Black student population was small, its impact was considerable. Although the exact number has proven elusive, a campus report compiled by the Kurfess subcommittee estimated that in 1970 there were about 938 full-time Black students out of 37,199, representing only 2.5% of the total student population (Committee of Inquiry, 1970, 7). Black students faced racism, not only from other students, but from faculty and staff as well as local residents. In an article in the *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, George Roberts explained that, "Black students were the victims of racial injustices . . . that ranged from being unable to eat in certain off-campus restaurants to the carving of "KKK" on their dorm doors" (Roberts, 1968, 1). Students took their concerns to the administration and when that did not work they held protests in such places as the Ohio Union, main library, Denney Hall, as well as Hitchcock Hall. Once students realized that only a coordinated and organized effort would bring about change, they formed the Black Student Union in 1968. By that time, BSUs were sprouting up at white colleges everywhere. Machumu Bandele, a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and at least ten years older than the typical undergraduate

remembers, “within a short time the BSU became the dominant Black student organization on campus” (Bandeled, 2011).

In her honors thesis, Tina Diggs wrote that the “BSU served as a formal indigenous organization for Black students on campus to create communication networks . . . and organize to perform insurgency that would deter racism on campus, increase the number of Black students, faculty, and administrators; and develop scholarships for minorities” (Diggs, 2001, 25). To get its message out, the BSU established a newspaper titled the *Black News Notes* that covered an array of issues, most of which were race-related. A BSU member at the time, Boykin noted, “We got it started by bringing up concerns of racial discrimination...we were not afraid to speak up” (Boykin, 2011). On the heels of the Tet Offensive⁹ Black students at OSU launched an offensive of their own. On February 1, 1968, the BSU submitted a list of “legitimate grievances” to John Bonner, executive dean of student relations. Months went by without any meaningful response. On April 4, 1968, the campus was rocked by news of the assassination of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Four days later, the BSU held a rally and urged Black and White students to take collective action against the University (Hofheimer, 1968). On April 26, BSU students staged a demonstration in the office of Vice President of Student Affairs Gordon B. Carson on the second floor of the Administration Building. When the decision to protest was made, OSU students became part of a global revolt that rocked the world; joining students in such places as France, Mexico, Italy, Germany, Syria and Argentina. A wave of independence movements in Africa also crested in the early to late 1960s that included the Angolan War of Independence, the Senegal uprising, the Guinea-Bissauan Revolution, the war of liberation in Mozambique and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. For some, revolutionary minded students who had read the works of Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral and considered Carmichael and Hamilton’s book *Black Power* (1967) the paradigm for fomenting a revolution in the U.S., these struggles, especially those in Africa, signaled a new era in Black student activism, here and abroad.

The April 26 protest at OSU was spurred by two incidents. First, four Black female students were kicked off a campus bus for “allegedly talking about blackness” (Scheen, 1968, 1). Second, campus police purportedly harassed a group of Black students who attempted to file a formal complaint against the bus driver. Media coverage of the demonstration only served to heighten tensions as one reporter from the *Columbus Citizen-Journal* suggested that Carson was being held prisoner by the student demonstrators (Scheen, 1968,1). The OSU *Committee to End the War in Vietnam* (CEWV), which had planned a teach-in on the Oval at noon, joined forces with members of the BSU at the Administration Building. The demonstration lasted nine hours and ended with an agreement between BSU members, Vice President Carson, and Provost John Corbally. Satisfied with the meeting’s outcome the students exited the Administration building triumphantly with raised fists, a symbol associated with the Black Power Movement (Diggs, 2001, 29). Lorraine Cohen, an entering graduate student remembers her first day on campus as eventful. “When I arrived in 1968, I saw throngs of students protesting in front of the administration building” (Cohen, 2011). When asked to

describe what she felt during the tense days that followed, she commented “they were tumultuous, extraordinary, frightening and exhilarating all at the same time” (Cohen, 2011). By 1970, Cohen had become one of the campus’ most visible and vocal student leaders. Cohen’s involvement in the 1970 protests is noteworthy as many graduate students steered clear of the ruckus. Greg Thomas, a graduate student in education remembers “the climate was hostile particularly in the area of education . . . Blacks felt alienated” (Thomas, 2011). Sokoto Fulani, also in education exclaimed that the faculty as well as the dean of the school of education “warned us students that if we wanted to graduate we had better not involve ourselves in the campus upheaval” (Fulani, 2011). “People’s funding was threatened and all kinds of stuff” said Fulani (2011). Consequently, some who may have wanted to join the student movement; perhaps did not, for fear of reprisal.

The 1968 sit-in at the administration building resulted in the arrest of 34 African American students who were indicted on five counts of unlawful detention: one count of menacing threats, one count of blackmail, and five counts of conspiracy to abduct (Franklin County Court Records Case #45439). Similar to that of student protests at San Francisco State College and Cornell University, direct action was taken by students who asserted their demands for more diverse educational opportunities. Like that of other sit-ins and demonstrations across the United States, the pressure placed on the administration by OSU students not only gave them a heightened sense of political consciousness, but also put the administration on notice. OSU administrators came to realize that they had to take students demands seriously. As Upton and Wilks noted, in the wake of the mass arrest of black students, university officials began, for the first time, to show an interest in black concerns by hiring new black faculty for the 1969-70 school year (Upton and Wilks, 2011). An unfortunate consequence of the police roundup of students was the weakening of the BSU. Some of BSU’s most vital members were among those arrested and subsequently expelled from school. Paul Cook and Ako Kambon responded to the repression of the BSU by creating the Afro-American Society (Afro-Am) in 1969. That same year William E. Nelson Jr. arrived on campus. Said Nelson:

I came in 1969 and their demands were still hot on the table. I was appointed by the President to a committee to look into the possibility of organizing a Black Studies program on campus. We investigated other Black Studies programs that were either on the table or being contemplated. We even went to various places like the University of North Carolina that already had a Black Studies program (Nelson, 2011).

The exploratory committee reported to the President that such a program was “a reasonable possibility and something that should be done” (Nelson, 2011). Nelson explains, however, that “before the committee could really get its business off the ground all hell broke loose again. Protests broke out again; students not only wanted the Black Studies department, but they wanted an office of minority affairs and an increased number of black students. This was at the same time that

the Kent State thing was going on. The OSU protest might have gotten more publicity, except no one was killed. The National Guard was brought in and the university was closed down for a while by the President” (Nelson, 2011). Said John Champlin, retired professor of political science “When the National Guard came down hard on the protestors, many students became enraged” (Champlin, 2011). Unlike at Kent State University where the protestors were mainly white students, the actions on the part of OSU’s administrators and Washington politicians prompted Blacks and whites to join forces. Student hostility toward the ‘war machine’ grew more intense as casualties increased and thousands of troops invaded Cambodia. Students, both Black and white not only demanded an end to the war, but an end to any kind of military presence on campus, namely ROTC, which had been banned from a number of prestigious campuses in previous years. Among them were Columbia, Harvard and Stanford. From 1968 to 1974, 88 ROTC units were closed down (Neiburg, 2000).

Perhaps for the first time in American history, *huge* numbers of Black and white students were forging alliances on college campuses across the nation. At OSU, a formal coalition was established between Black students and white anti-war students. Mike Jones, a member of Afro-Am at the time of the 1970 uprising noted, that there was “tremendous cooperation between white and blacks in the student movement” (Jones, 2011). Ronald Cade, a political science major and polemarch¹⁰ for OSU’s chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi recalls “we even had a strong alliance with women who were calling for a Women Studies program” (Cade, 2011). Paul Cook was quick to point out however “if there was going to be a coalition we made it clear that we [the Black leadership] would run it . . . no other group’s demands would take priority over our concerns (Cook, 2011). This bi-racial student coalition helped hasten the creation of OSU’s Black Studies program in a way that may not have occurred had Black students protested in isolation. If the Ohio State University was going to have a Black Studies program, the first order of business was to form a search committee.

Charles Babcock, dean of the college of humanities, assembled an exploratory/search committee that consisted of some of the campus’s most well respected faculty members as well as some of its most politically astute student leaders. Among them were William E. Nelson, Jr. of political science, Associate Dean Paul Olscamp in Philosophy, and John Muste in English who served as its chairman. Machumu Bandale, Edmund Boston (aka Turwanire K-T Mandla) and Roger Barriteau were members of the student contingent.

Black Studies at The Ohio State University

The committee conducted a nationwide search for a director. Early in the process, Olscamp along with Barriteau, a graduate student in philosophy, traveled to Cornell University to get a close look at, what was considered by many, to be a successful Black Studies program. Says Olscamp “we wanted to talk to students and faculty, look at the types of courses that were being offered and put the word out that we were in the market for a director for our program” (Olscamp, 2011).

The position attracted candidates from around the country. Boston remembers one candidate in particular:

Apparently this guy shared some of his thoughts with Olscamp that he had hoped would remain confidential. After returning home from the interview, this guy calls up Olscamp and says something like if the university is looking for someone to keep the Black students in check then I'm your man. The next thing I know I get a call at 5:00 am the next morning. I answered the phone nervously, because I normally didn't get calls that early in the morning so I'm thinking it might be a family emergency or something. I picked up the phone and Olscamp immediately starts in . . . I could tell that he was incensed. He told me in no uncertain terms that if me and the other students tried to push for this guy he would veto it immediately. When I asked him why, he began to relay to me the story. I assured him that I was not interested in that candidate anyway and neither were the other students. There was something about him that we felt uneasy about anyway (Boston, 2011).

The pool, which initially comprised of fifteen candidates, was eventually narrowed to two; one of which was Charles Ross, a Professor of Social Work at the University of Chicago (Nelson, 2011). Nelson had met Ross in Gary, Indiana while Nelson was writing his dissertation. After nearly eight months of meetings, site visits, recruiting trips and interviews, the Black Studies Search Committee recommended to the provost that Ross be hired as director of the Black Studies Division ("Summary of Black Studies" as cited in Diggs, 2001, 2). The provost approved the selection, but the University's Board of Trustees balked at Ross's candidacy. Nelson recalls

When Professor Ross came in he had some harsh things to say about the administration and about white racism and black protests in general. He said he saw an inevitable clash between black students and the administration. They were like two trains coming at each other in opposite directions. . . When his interview appeared in the news, the University withdrew its offer. As a consequence, students again protested. Now Black Studies became the center of the protest movement. Ross accused the administration of renegeing on its commitment . . . not being serious and not honoring or respecting Black folk and our decisions. . . As a consequence of our protest, the University backed down, caved in, and appointed Professor Ross as the new director of the Black Studies Program (Nelson, 2011).

At the time John Bricker was OSU's chairman of the board of trustees. According to Warren Van Tine, longtime Professor of History "Bricker was an attorney and head of a big law firm; he was not the kind of person who would be amenable to negotiating with students. In fact, he tried to stonewall all negotiations with

students. Fortunately, the more he stonewalled the more demands students submitted” (Van Tine, 2011).

Despite opposition from Bricker, the Black Studies Division began operating as a unit of the College of Humanities in July 1969 (Public Flyer, 2). An array of courses were offered ranging from Swahili to African American Literature to Black politics as well as a course on the role of the Black woman in the struggle for Black liberation. Given the debates taking place within Black Power circles, such a course was not only appropriate, but highly sought after. When asked how the new Black Studies courses were received, Cook says “they were refreshing” (Cook, 2011). Of course, not everyone shared Cook’s enthusiasm. Lonnie Robinson, one of the department’s first secretaries, distinctly recalls the hate mail received over the years. Said Robinson: “we would get letters with photos of dead bodies with the inscription; this is how you will end up if you don’t stay in your place.” “On another occasion, someone sent a letter addressed to the Director of Nigger Studies. We received those kinds of letters on a regular basis for some time” says Robinson (Robinson, 2011).

Aside from the frequent racial opposition encountered by those in Black Studies, one of the unit’s primary concerns was locating adequate space for the growing program. In the early years, the program was located in Dieter Cunz Hall near 11th and Neil Avenue. According to Nelson “this location was not ideal at all . . . the space was small . . . we didn’t have a lounge and faculty members had to share offices . . . but at least we had our own space” (Nelson, 2011). By the mid-1970s Nelson had secured more suitable accommodations in University Hall. From the outset, many did not believe that Black Studies should be a standalone unit; its faculty should hold joint appointments with traditional departments, and its courses cross-listed with other units. Although this was the program’s initial design, things changed once we hired Ross. Nelson remembers that Ross was adamant that Black Studies should be “autonomous and stand on its own merit” (Nelson, 2011). Furthermore, he argued that the program needed the full support of the College of Humanities, which it did not have. Ross’ criticism of the College prompted Dean Arthur Adams to question Ross’s leadership. As Michael Norman noted in the *Columbus Monthly*, “Dean Arthur Adams charged that Ross’ administration was ineffective, and that faculty recruiting and budget and curriculum planning was suffering as a result” (Norman, 1985, 59).

Nelson remembers that Dean Adams and Ross argued through the campus newspaper and at one point, Ross called Adams a racist, prompting local whites to lash out at Ross (Nelson, 2011). Ross’ son, Charles K. Ross, Jr., an associate professor of African American Studies at the University of Mississippi recalls those times. “There would be threatening phone calls to our home and they happened at least a couple of times a week. Ironically, my father didn’t have a fire arm in Gary but when we moved to Columbus he bought a .38 pistol” (Ross, 2011). The fact that Ross did not own a firearm while living in the tough blue collar city of Gary, but felt compelled to acquire one while living in Columbus, a city purportedly known for its laid back style, is telling. Despite the city’s reputation for being laid back, it was considered, by those familiar with the city, to be a rather conservative town. David Kettler, a political science professor at

OSU during those years argues that in “some ways Columbus resembled that of a southern city” (Kettler, 2011). Like the South, there were places in Columbus, on High Street, where Blacks could not patronize. Says Kettler: “there was one particular downtown skating rink that only allowed Blacks to skate on certain nights and at certain times” (Kettler, 2011).

As in many other big cities, police relations with the African American community were strained and at times acrimonious. Each, more or less, tolerated the other. Ross remembered that Columbus had its share of police misconduct incidents involving Black residents (Ross, 2011). Yet, his father remained undeterred by the racist actions of some whites, continuing to speak out, on and off campus. Unlike many professors at OSU, Ross’s political activities extended beyond the campus. He joined students at Linden-McKinley High School in a protest for more African American teachers, resulting in his arrest. “While handcuffed to a bench, a white police officer called him a nigger and knocked him to the ground” (Ross, 2011). For his role in the student protest, Ross was sentenced to 30 days to a workhouse where he worked during the weekends. Back on campus, the climate grew more intense. Because of his tendency to quarrel with the Dean and, his militant attitude, Ross was viewed as a rabble rouser. Said Ross’s son, “Dad was seen as the facilitator for protest; and not seen as dialing the students back. The administration viewed him as a problem” (Ross, 2011). Consequently, when Ross’s contract expired, it was not renewed. Nelson explained that he was unaware that Ross was given a yearlong contract rather than the traditional four-year contract.

He wasn’t their boy by any stretch of the imagination; he was more militant than they thought he was. He had a reputation for being militant in Gary, which is one of the reasons we wanted him in the first place. He had been one of the chief architects of the successful mayoral campaign of Richard Hatcher in Gary, and had been involved in a number of community protests in his day. So we wanted him not only as an administrator, but as a political leader, because we saw Black Studies as being a political program (Nelson, 2011).

Not only was Ross’s contract not renewed, the Board of Trustees sought to have Ross stripped of his tenure, to no avail. According to Cook, Mike White (who later became mayor of Cleveland) led a march in support of Ross (Cook, 2011). Moriba Kelsey, a young assistant professor in the college of education maintains that the students were more steadfast in their support of Ross than were the Black faculty. Black faculty members were asked to sign a petition agreeing to resign if Ross was removed as director of the program. Some signed the petition. Several, however, wanted nothing to do with the situation. “I distinctly remember calling a few in particular who responded by saying don’t call me anymore with that Black stuff and hung up” (Kelsey, 2011). After Ross was removed, Nelson was installed as Acting Director. Cook, former president of Afro-Am stated, “Dr. Nelson was always attentive to students” (Cook, 2011). As acting director, Nelson threw himself into his work. No Black professor [with the exception of Ross] was

more visible on or off campus than Nelson. Nelson gave talks all over town and served on committees of varying kind. Moreover, as Upton and Wilks noted, “The Director of the Division served as an advisor to numerous black students’ organizations and was instrumental in the forming of the Black Choir, Proud Black Images, the United Black Faculty and Staff Organization, and the Black Education Center.”(Upton and Wilks, 2011, 2). Those committed to Black Studies were not just concerned with academic issues, but all matters pertaining to African descended people. Hence, the reason Nelson felt compelled to take on those outside responsibilities. He believed “it vital that those organizations establish a strong foundation if they were to be successful” (Nelson, 2011).

With a Black Studies program in place, students felt even more empowered. In March 1970, Afro-Am issued nineteen demands to the office of the Vice President of Student Affairs, John T. Mount.¹¹ Bandlele says, “by this time Afro-Am was the engine that drove a lot of things.” (Bandlele, 2011). Upon meeting with Vice President Mount to discuss those demands, the conversation took an unproductive turn. Bandlele noted that Jack Gibbs, OSU’s sole Black member of the University’s Board of Trustees, arranged a meeting with the co-founders of Afro-Am, President Novice Fawcett, and himself. The three hour meeting was held at the Cavaliers Club, a swank social club that catered to Columbus’s Black elite. Bandlele noted that after the meeting with President Fawcett, “it was obvious that he didn’t seem to get it... at the conclusion of the meeting we all decided he didn’t get it. To affect change we would have to do something else, as it was clear to us that he was not going to initiate it” (Bandlele, 2011).

Afro-Am protested the university to try and pressure the administration into action. Fearing that the student demonstrations might spiral out of control the university enlisted the support of the State Highway Patrol and the Columbus Police Department. John Heimaster, a student at OSU at the time submits that “neither the Columbus Police Department nor the state police were particularly adept at handling large crowds” (Heimaster, 2011). The State Highway Patrol and Columbus Police attempted to disperse the protesters by throwing tear gas into the crowd. “The police used a helicopter to further intimidate students by flying low above students’ heads. . . It was a war zone,” noted Cook (2011). Nelson noted that the police beat some students ferociously with billy clubs (Nelson, 2011). Robert Ransom, a longtime OSU administrator and former graduate student at OSU during the uprising noted, “Violence was directed at any student of color, and it didn’t exclude women...they would be thrown to the ground and clubbed. There wasn’t any selective behavior of whom they would and wouldn’t hit. If it looked like a student was protesting he or she could be victimized because they were protesting” (Ransom, 2011). Ransom further noted, “Some National Guard were not really into hurting the students, but others seemed very gung-ho and thought that was what they were licensed to do” (Ransom, 2011). Ako Kambon, former Afro-Am Vice President recalled, “we knew it was dangerous because the police called out the ‘D-Platoon’ which were officers whose jobs were to crack heads” (Kambon, 2011). Upton, who at the time of the campus uprisings was Nelson’s teaching assistance, remembers seeing Cook and Kambon facing down

the National Guard who had their rifles drawn and bayonets pointing toward the students (Upton, 2011). Keith Bartlett, a student involved in the uprising noted, “those were sobering moments for all of us who had stood before the police...it made you realize that this was not kids play, that they were serious about keeping the status quo, and that we needed to be just as serious” (Barlett, 2011).

On April 29, 1970 students went on strike in hopes that such a disruption would force the university’s hand. No one went to class or work. In doing so, the protestors joined more than four million other students nationwide who were part of a strike where more than 450 universities, colleges and high schools were paralyzed by this massive disruption. The OSU strike lasted until May 6, 1970 and was a huge success. Cook says “we blocked the doors to all academic buildings . . . we had 10 to 15 people assigned to each building that contained a classroom. No one was allowed to attend class. The strike was so popular that we even had the support of the Black workers on campus” (Cook, 2011). President Fawcett, with the governor’s backing, closed the University from May 7th through the 18th (Public Flyer, 10-11). Nelson remembers that during this turbulent time, even walking down High Street was dangerous, because of the amount of tear gas deployed in the area (Nelson, 2011). Mike Jones noted that “you needed a student identification to enter campus, because all the entrances were guarded by the National Guard” (Jones, 2011).

While the struggle to bring Black Studies to OSU was not without its challenges, by December 1972 the Black Studies Division was granted full departmental status; a major accomplishment considering, that at the time, Departments of Black Studies were relatively few in number. Originally, Nelson, and others including Winston Van Horne, a young assistant professor in political science, floated the idea of a School of Black Studies, something administrators found outlandish. The plan according to Van Horne was to “lobby Adams for the whole of Sullivant Hall, which would serve as the School of Black Studies” (Van Horne, 2011). Nelson knew that the idea was far-fetched; however, “we raised the matter anyway believing that administrators would ultimately find our demand for a department more palatable” (Van Horne, 2011). Once the department was in place an undergraduate major was created; after which, demand for Black Studies courses soared. Upton claims that Nelson’s course “Urban Politics had 100 students enrolled in it” (Upton, 2011). The “intro to Black Studies course attracted even more . . . 200 hundred students, easily. . . The class was so big that we had to use the auditorium in the School of Pharmacy” remembers Nelson (Nelson, 2011).

A year later on December 7, 1973, the Board of Trustees approved a program leading to the Master of Arts in Black Studies to be effective upon the approval of the Ohio Board of Regents. Two years later, in 1975, the graduate program was launched, but not without opposition, some of which came from other African American faculty. In 1974 Nelson went before the Graduate School’s curriculum committee to seek approval for a slate of courses; the lone African American committee member objected, on the curious grounds that “the library didn’t have enough books to support a graduate program in Black Studies”

(Nelson, 2011). More tense moments followed (Nelson, 2011). Nelson recalls one unnerving moment involving the Ohio Board of Regents:

We had to have the Board of Regents' approval in order to get our M.A. program . . . so sometime in 1974 we were summoned to Cincinnati to answer some questions about our M.A. proposal. Me and someone else, whom I can't remember at the moment, rode up to Cincinnati to meet with the regents. When we got there, we were surprised to see a number of Black people in the room. We knew there couldn't be that many Blacks on the Board of Regents so we were wondering who these people were. Come to find out, they were faculty members at Central State University. It turns out that the Central State folk were trying to block our efforts at getting a M.A. program. The Central State folk opposed our proposal, claiming that it would disrupt future efforts at Central State to do likewise; despite the fact that they were unable to produce any documentation to that affect (Nelson, 2011).

The weak argument presented by Central State's faculty, apparently, did not impress the regents, as OSU's proposal was approved, making OSU's M.A. program in Black Studies the first of its kind. As chair, Nelson oversaw the department's growth and development from 1972 to 1986. Under Nelson's leadership, the department's faculty grew from 2 to 20. Said Nelson "We also began to develop off-shoots such as a radio and television program...It wasn't very long before we became the most comprehensive Black Studies program in the country" (Nelson, 2011). The television show, *Afromations*, was an especially exciting thirty minute segment that aired on WOSU. It hosted a number of high profile guests during its two year run, including Muhammad Ali, Lerone Bennett and Kathleen Cleaver. The radio and television programs were novel ideas that enabled the department to get its message across in a way that was unprecedented for an academic unit. By the late 1970s, OSU's Black Studies department was arguably the crown jewel of the discipline.

Watershed Moments in the Department's History

Two watershed moments for the department were the granting of its first official undergraduate degree and the creation of the Community Extension Center. In March of 1973, the first undergraduate degree granted by the Black Studies Department at Ohio State was conferred to Garfield Jackson (Public Flyer OSU, 2011; Jackson, 2011). In explaining why he chose Black Studies, Jackson noted, "Charles Ross was one dynamic person. I came to OSU on the project 100 in 1969, which was a project to bring in 100 students to campus...I really needed to know more about who I was. Charles Ross, more than anyone else, made me realize that. I was the first to graduate, because the students who would have been first were expelled as a result of their protest activity" (Jackson, 2011).

The Community Extension Center was established in 1972 and, from 1972-1978, it was located at 657 South Ohio Ave.; moving to 640 South Ohio

Avenue in 1978 where it stayed until 1985 (Upton, 2011). In both locations, the CEC was housed in buildings for which the department paid rent. In 1985, a standalone facility was built at the corner of Mount Vernon Avenue and Monroe where it sits today. The decision to build the new CEC on Mount Vernon Avenue is historically significant as “The Avenue” [as it was affectionately known from the 1930s through the 1950s] was once the social, cultural and economic epicenter of Black Columbus. Willis Brown, President of the Bronzeville Neighborhood Association says “The Avenue was the place to go for entertainment, commerce or just plain fellowship” (Brown, 2011).

Despite the fact, that as a land grant institution, The Ohio State University has a legal and moral obligation to help improve the quality of life of Ohioans, some administrators at the university did not enthusiastically support the idea of a new Community Extension Center. Ike Newsum, the department’s current chair, stated that the university did not assist with the fundraising nor did it help acquire the land on which the current CEC rests (Okafor-Newsum, 2011). While Newsum’s observation is correct; it is somewhat understated. Some administrators openly questioned the need for a new Community Extension Center. Others like Dean Mike Riley of the College of Humanities attempted to block the building of a new Community Extension Center (Mathes, 1985, 12). Lee Mathes noted, “According to Nelson [in 1983], Riley called Richard Jackson, OSU’s vice president for business administration, and requested that the proposal to establish the center not be sent to the OSU Board of Trustees” (Mathes, 1985, 12). Unable to keep the proposal from moving forward, Dean Riley, with the backing of others, tried to discourage Nelson and others not to expect any university funding. Nelson recalls the sequence of events,

We approached Al Kuhn, Vice President for Academic Affairs, about a new Community Extension Center. We asked him if he would include the CEC project in the university’s fundraising campaign. Kuhn made it clear that OSU wasn’t going to fund this project. He said that if we wanted a new CEC we would have to find the money on our own. We then met with the vice president of finance who put us in contact with a Black contractor named Charles Wallace. When we told Wallace about OSU’s lack of support he said that he would not only build the building for us, but do so on a parcel of land that he owned. With this promising news, we approached Kuhn again and asked if we could go to the statehouse and make our case, to which he reluctantly agreed. Over the next several months, Fulani and I began meeting with people who we thought could help us, like policy makers and so forth. Eventually, we had to go back to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. By this time, Diether Haniecke had replaced Kuhn. Haniecke put us through the ringer. . . he asked us about twenty questions . . . questions such as how would the university benefit from this project? What were the goals and objectives of this new Center? Why we needed one? Who were the stakeholders . . . stuff like that.

Haniecke gave us a two-day deadline. Winston Van Horne and I stayed up all night writing responses to his questions. After submitting the document to Haniecke, I approached Senators William Bowen and Morris Jackson, to no avail. Bowen told me he lived in Cincinnati, not Columbus. That was his way of telling me that he wouldn't or couldn't help. We talked to others democrats. . . none lifted a finger. Luckily, a white student at OSU who was involved in the movement found out that one million dollars had been set aside for a bowling hall of fame. Upon further investigation, we learned that the Bowling Hall of Fame decided to move their project to St. Louis. We immediately made Harry Meschel, the Republican chairman of the senate finance committee aware of our findings. He pretended he didn't know that the money existed. Still he scoffed at giving us the money. Senator Bowen suggested we enlist the help of a young political upstart by the name of Republican John Kasich. When Meschel found out that we had approached Kasich, Meschel fumed that under no circumstances would we get any money. Ignoring Meschel, Kasich saw an opportunity to make inroads into the Black community and seized it. After much political wrangling, Kasich was able to get the legislation passed, but not before Meschel took 700,000 off the top for his constituency. The new building cost \$300,000 exactly . . . had it cost a penny more, we would have been out of luck (Nelson, 2011).

When the CEC was first established the slogan "outreach and engagement," which now characterizes a critical aspect of the university's mission, was not yet in vogue. However, extending the university's resources and capital to the community has always figured prominently in Black Studies as a discipline. Yet, when the department announced it would create a Community Extension Center, it was ahead of its time in pioneering a new role for a major Research 1 university, located in an urban setting. Again, the idea of a Community Extension Center was in-keeping with the mission of Black Studies. Nathan Hare, a sociologist and first head of Black Studies at San Francisco State College emphasized that "strong connections to a community base are the measures of an authentic Black or African American Studies program" (Hare, 1969, 733).

The CEC's goal was to help uplift the Black community by providing educational and other opportunities that enhance the life chances of those who live, work, play and attend school on the near eastside. However, it also sought to discover ways of making the activities and programs through which it actualizes its mission, responsive to the relative needs and realities identified by residents. Over the years, the CEC has had to necessarily remain dynamic in its effort to be responsive to economic, political, social and even demographic changes over time.

The CEC helps bridge the gap, and sometimes disconnect, with the real world that has so often characterizes academia. Among the kinds of activities and programs that the CEC has offered over the years include credit and noncredit courses, lectures, computer literacy training, leadership development, income tax

assistance, legal counseling and college prep seminars for high school students. The CEC has also hosted a number of exciting and high profile events such as the Alvin Ailey Dance Troupe, the South African play “Sizwe Banzi is Dead” and the inaugural National Council for Black Studies Conference (Blake, 1987). As Efua Akoma and Lawrence Johnson points out, “The commitment to Black communities is what makes Black Studies relevant as a field and distinct from other disciplines; furthermore Black Studies will only be strengthened by forging strong reciprocal relationships with Black communities” (Akoma and Johnson, 2010, 283). As with other institutions committed to serving peoples’ needs; the CEC has over the years been challenged by internal and external factors in its ability to respond to the pace of cultural and social change. These challenges have most often had the effect of allowing the CEC to transform itself into a stronger institution by reviewing its commitment and revitalizing its activities in ways that are beneficial to the community it is charged to serve.

Where are they now?

So often, local history makers have a way of either fading from public memory, being under-acknowledged, going undocumented and/or taking on iconic status. In some cases, local history makers move away, making them difficult to locate. The authors of this article were fortunate to have access to the key actors in the student movement at The Ohio State University during the late 1960s and early 1970s, thus allowing the authors to put names to faces. What we found were extraordinary people who were committed to an important and noble cause—the democratization of the academic curriculum and an end to an immoral war. Since that time, many of them have carved out their niche in their chosen fields of endeavor. William E. Nelson Jr., enjoyed a rather distinguished forty-year career as a member of the Departments of Political Science and Black Studies [later African American and African Studies]. During his long tenure, Nelson climbed the ranks to full professor and served as President of both the National Conference of Black Political Scientists as well as the National Council for Black Studies. After the University elected not to renew Ross’s contract, Ross dedicated himself to the Department of Social Work; where he taught for nearly twenty years.

The paths chosen by the student activists were more varied. Edmund Boston (Turwanire K-T Mandla), who currently lives in Arizona, dropped out of OSU, and spent the next twenty years organizing communities across America and Western Europe as a member of the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party. By the mid 1990s Boston completed a B.A. degree in International Studies at Union Institute in Cincinnati and recently completed two advanced degrees—an MBA and a Master’s of Science at Grand Canyon University.

After graduating from OSU in 1974 with a degree in Black Studies, Paul Cook devoted his life to the struggle for Black liberation, also as, a member of the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party. From 1972 to 1978, in his capacity as chair of the education committee, Cook hopped around the state organizing in Cincinnati, Toledo, Akron, Canton, Bowling Green and Cleveland. In 1981 Cook

earned a master's degree in Black Studies (also at OSU) and later embarked on a doctorate in history before leaving to teach at Central State University from 1991 to 2006 where he was a tenured professor. In 2006, Cook returned to Columbus where he has resumed work on a PhD.

Ako Kambon is the founder and president of Visionary Leaders Institute (VLI), headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. VLI is a national educational consulting firm; founded on the belief that the root causes of academic underachievement are lack of motivation, chronically low expectations and school environments that do not consistently promote excellence. After graduating from OSU in 1973 with a degree in political science, Kambon held numerous private and public positions such as the Legislative Aide to Columbus's City Council President and Executive Director of the Ohio Commission on African American Males.

Roger Barriteau earned a B.A. and M.A. in philosophy at OSU. From there, he entered the PhD program in the same department. Several years into his doctoral program, Barriteau left to teach at the University of California at San Diego. Barriteau continued to teach after he returned to Ohio, extending his volunteer and outreach efforts into the prisons. According to Barriteau, teaching in the prisons was one of his most rewarding experiences as an instructor (Barriteau, 2011). Since returning to Ohio, Barriteau has gotten involved in a number of social justice causes, leading him to develop interests outside of academia. Barriteau is currently one of the organizers of Comfest, a local festival that features politically progressive themes via concerts, shows, events and other activities.

After earning her master's degree in political science, Lorraine Cohen went to New York and completed a PhD in sociology at CUNY graduate Center. For many years, she has taught at LaGuardia Community College in New York City.

Machumu Bandele, who initially enrolled in the university in 1956, before his studies were interrupted by a stint in the military, graduated from OSU in 1974, with a degree in education. Bandele continued to work on issues of fairness and justice as a member of such organizations as the NAACP, the National Black Political Assembly and the African/American Summit to Senegal. Currently, Bandele is president and CEO of GET Smart Enterprises Incorporated, an organization that provides an array of career development seminars for youth as well as adults; focusing specifically on higher education, computer science and diversity. GET Smart also serves as a consultant on race relations, mathematics, computer science and education.

Conclusion

Any history of the development of Africana Studies in America that omits the goings-on at The Ohio State University is incomplete. We can think of no other department that has, over the years, had the kind of long-lasting and far-reaching impact on both a discipline as well as a major metropolitan area, than that which exists at The Ohio State University. It is worth mentioning that beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year; the Department of African American

and African Studies will offer a PhD program in Black Studies, making it one of the few free-standing doctoral programs in the nation. There are few areas of Black life in Columbus that have not been impacted by the Department of African American and African Studies at OSU in some way, shape or form (Nelson, 2013). It is our hope that this article will put the birth of Black Studies at The Ohio State University in its proper place in both American and African American history. As was mentioned at the outset, the history of Black Studies as a discipline is replete with stories of the 1969 takeover at Cornell, the strike at San Francisco State College and demonstrations at other campuses, however, the developments at The Ohio State University have not garnered a similar level of fanfare.

Over the years, a younger generation of Black scholars has embarked on a much-needed effort to excavate and document the history of Black Studies programs across the country. The story surrounding the creation of Black Studies at OSU is a rich one that deserves a broad hearing. The Black Studies Department [now African American and African Studies] at The Ohio State University, has for years, been one of the most prominent Africana Studies departments in the country, yet it has been given short shrift in the scholarly literature.

This article will help enlighten many: especially future OSU students and faculty about the history of Black Studies, the actors who figured prominently in its birth and the degree to which Black Studies at OSU has impacted not only the lives of students and faculty, but local residents as well. It is important that OSU students and faculty recognize upon whose shoulders they stand, learn of the sacrifices made by people such as Paul Cook, William E. Nelson, Jr., Charles Ross, Ako Kambon, Ed Boston (Turwanire K-T Mandla), Lorraine Cohen, Roger Barriteau, Machumu Bandele and others, which came at great personal and professional expense. Student protestors who stood their ground against the police, the highway patrol, and the National Guard, took beatings, others incurred suspensions and one-year expulsions from the university, while some lost scholarships and other incentives. Several faculty members also risked their professional careers so that the department could be established. From this long protracted struggle came tremendous reward; a department that recently celebrated its fortieth year anniversary and a newly minted doctoral program to name a few. The Department of African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University has made an indelible mark, not only on the field of Black Studies, but also on the city of Columbus, Ohio, the country's fifteenth largest city. Indeed, if not for the Department of African American and African Studies at The Ohio State University, the university, Black Studies as a discipline as well as the city of Columbus would no doubt be lacking in a number of important and meaningful areas.

¹ The words Black and African American are used interchangeably throughout this article according to sound and context as well as to avoid repetition.

² The data used for this article was gleaned from free-flowing conversations with both former and current OSU professors and administrators; the personal archives of Dr. William E. Nelson Jr. and James N. Upton; newspaper articles; and conversations with OSU alumni.

³ Years earlier, Thurgood Marshall encountered the same racist policy. Rejected by the University of Maryland School of Law, Marshall enrolled at historically Black, Howard University.

⁴ Three months after the ruling, Gaines left his apartment to run an errand. He was never seen again.

⁵ Following Gaines, the Court held that segregation in law and graduate schools was unconstitutional in *Sweatt v. Painter* (1950) and *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents* (1950).

⁶ February 1, 1960, four black students sat at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina which sparked hundreds of sit-ins over the next six months. In May 1960, students, under the training of nonviolent activist James Lawson, staged successful sit-ins in Nashville. On February 20, 1960, Virginia Union University students staged a sit-in at Woolworth's lunch counter in Richmond, Virginia. In May 1961, Nashville students, coordinated by Diane Nash and James Bevel, participated in Freedom Rides initiated by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

⁷ A teach-in is an informal lecture, series of lectures, or discussions on a controversial subject of public interest that usually takes place outside the confines of the classroom or campus.

⁸ Maulana Karenga identifies four major components of this movement, including 1) the organization, mobilization, and politicization of thousands of Black and white students to work for freedom in the South, 2) the events surrounding the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in 1964, 3) the anti-war protests against the conflict in Vietnam, and 4) the establishment of the first Department of Black Studies at San Francisco State College (SFSC) in 1969.

⁹ The Tet Offensive was a military campaign during the Vietnam War that began on January 31, 1968. Regular forces and irregular forces of the People's Army of Vietnam fought against the forces of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), the United States, and their allies. The purpose was to strike military and civilian command and control centers throughout South Vietnam and to spark a general uprising among the population that would then overthrow the Saigon government.

¹⁰ The polemarch is the highest ranking officer in the chapter. In ordinary nomenclature, he is the president

¹¹ Afro-Am Demands state: We the Black students of Ohio State University and members of the Black community demand the following: That, 1. An additional bus be added to the evening service of the campus bus so that the waiting time will be approximately ten minutes. 2. Forty-five percent (\$20,000) of the money that Black students pay in general service student fees be submitted to a Black Student fund under the direction of the Minority Affairs Office. 3. "Our Choking Times" receive a permanent office space in the School of Journalism Building and have access to all equipment in the Journalism Building. 4. Students working on "Our Choking Times" receive journalism credits to be given by the advisor of the paper. 5. The administration issues funds (\$100,000) during the regular orientation program to oriented Black Students under the direction of the special assistant to the Dean of Special Affairs. 6. Xerox machines, typewriters, and other office equipment be furnished to the NAACP. 7. At least six Black policemen be employed to serve the Ohio State University campus. 8. A separate office be established of Black faculty and students of Afro-AM to bring 2,500 additional Black students on campus by Autumn Quarter 1970-1971. 9. Blacks be implemented in all hiring of supervisory and academic personnel at Ohio State University. 10. At least four Blacks be seated on the Committee of Cultural Service at O.S.U. 11. At least ten Black dorm directors, twenty-five Black R.A.'s [Resident Advisors] and ten Black S.P.A.'s [Student Personnel Assistants] be hired for Autumn Quarter 1970-1971. 12. The University establish a Black cultural center in the Black Community of Columbus. 13. A concentrated effort and support of funds on the part of the University to enroll more Black Students in the fields of Mathematics, Pre-Medicine, Natural Sciences, Technology, Business, and Law be made. 14. More scholarships, fellowships, and loans be made available to Black students. 15. A degree-granting department in the field of "Afro-American Studies" be established capable

of granting a B.A. with the potentials of expanding. 16. More jobs for Black students be made available and created. 17. Fees be lowered for all in-state and out-of-state students. 18. At least four Blacks be installed on the Committee of Disciplinary Matters at Ohio State University. 19. More Blacks be hired throughout the Athletic Department in such capacities as trainers, groundskeepers, coaches, as well as an extensive recruiting of Black Athletes. We demand a reply, no later than Friday, March 13th at 12:00, Afro Am. (Diggs, 80).

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