

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE SONJA HAYNES STONE CENTER FOR BLACK CULTURE AND HISTORY

A progressive student-led movement in the early 1990s to build a free-standing building for the Black Cultural Center (BCC) created the current Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, today one of the preeminent centers in the nation for the critical examination of African-American and African diaspora cultures.<sup>257</sup> The BCC movement brought together a diverse coalition of student organizations on behalf of what appeared to be a straightforward idea—a free-standing building for a center that already had a detailed plan developed by the BCC’s planning committee. But the movement ended up asking something far more profound: could Black culture ever exist within the cultural landscape of the University?

Although the existence of the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History would suggest that the answer might be yes, the history of the University’s resistance to the power of the BCC movement supplies a different answer and confirms the institution’s deep anti-Blackness. The Stone Center, as the final institutionally-recognized counter-space created by Black students, faced discrimination through anti-Black policies as had prior Black counter-spaces, including Upendo Lounge and the Fishbowl. This chapter argues that as a result of institutional actions taken to diminish the potential for the Stone Center to serve as a space which supported Black culture against the University’s white supremacy, the Stone Center was never able to be included within the mainstream of the University’s dominant culture. But the BCC

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<sup>257</sup> Mission Statement, The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, Accessed 1 November 2018, <<https://stonecenter.unc.edu/about-us/>>.

movement, led by Black students and supported by non-Black students and an array of staff and faculty, forced the University's leadership to determine whether a distinct building and center devoted to the study of Black culture could be incorporated into the white hegemony of the institutional and campus landscapes, ultimately exposing the institution's anti-Black policies and laying the foundation for future acts of space contestation.

### **Laying the Foundation for the BCC Movement**

When students returned to campus for the start of the school year in late August 1991, they learned that Dr. Stone had died of a stroke on August 10th. Stone arrived on the Chapel Hill campus in 1974 from Chicago to lead the curriculum in Afro-American Studies, and she had spent her last seventeen years making an impressive impact not just at the University, but in the Chapel Hill community, the growing field of Black studies, and the nationwide movement for Black culture centers. The year before Stone arrived in Chapel Hill, the University had fourteen Black professors (less than two percent of the total faculty), only two of them women—Hortense McClinton and Roberta Jackson.<sup>258</sup> Stone's addition to the faculty was crucial for the development of several generations of Black students, particularly women, to whom she provided informal mentoring, counseling them on how to handle the regular discrimination they faced from white students and faculty.<sup>259</sup>

Stone personally experienced the institution's anti-Black and misogynist policies, having been denied tenure in 1979 despite her strong academic record. Although the University System's Board of Governors eventually granted her tenure and promotion the next year, the

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<sup>258</sup> Sam Fulwood, "Recruiting Continues as Black Join Faculty," *The Daily Tar Heel*, 1 March 1977, 1.

<sup>259</sup> Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

initial rejection of Stone by the institution was deeply felt by Black students who believed that Stone embodied the ideal professor, who served as a gifted educator, dauntless researcher, and dedicated community leader.<sup>260</sup> “She was a race woman,” Michelle Thomas, Stone’s student in the fall of 1990 described. “And she was not ashamed about it. And there was nothing about being a race woman that made her racist. There was nothing about it that diminished anyone else’s humanity. She was so in love with our community.”<sup>261</sup>

As a mentor and friend to Black and white students alike, Stone’s death resulted in an outpouring of emotion from across the student body, which fixated in the space of the Fishbowl. By the beginning of September, students turned their grief into action, creating the multiracial Sonja Haynes Stone Task Force, which began organizing towards three goals: the renaming of the BCC in honor of Dr. Stone; an endowed chair named for Dr. Stone; and departmental status for the curriculum in Afro-American Studies. In November, the University’s Board of Trustees voted to rename the BCC in honor of Dr. Stone, but made it clear to students that an endowed chair would require raising \$500,000.<sup>262</sup> Having now found some success in working with the University’s administration, students in the Task Force next turned to the new goal which they thought would truly honor Dr. Stone’s legacy: a free-standing BCC.<sup>263</sup>

Through the fall of 1991 and into the next spring, Black student leaders began to lay down the groundwork for the movement, building a wide and diverse foundation on which to lead their campaign. Michelle Thomas described the early months of the movement, stating,

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<sup>260</sup> “Stone’s tenure denial provokes criticism,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 29 November 1979, 8; “Playing games,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 17 July 1980, 14.

<sup>261</sup> Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

<sup>262</sup> Adam Ford, “Outside Funding Needed to Endow Chair,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 9 September 1991, 1.

<sup>263</sup> Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

“That year we were really organizing. We were developing our list of demands. We were meeting with different groups and people, developing our strategy around raising awareness. We began doing some protests, but we also spent some time trying to talk with members of the Board of Trustees, individually, particularly Angela Bryant, to try to help us to do it—we didn’t want to have to raise hell. We wanted to see if we could figure it out.”<sup>264</sup> By the late spring of 1992 it became clear that the University would not easily submit to the request from the students to build a free-standing building, though administrators had promised one as early as 1986.

Communication between students and administrators was almost non-existent on the issue of the BCC. Chancellor Paul Hardin repeatedly refused to acknowledge the possibility of a free-standing BCC, apparently unconcerned that the center had now spent four years in a “temporary” space. “Honestly, a lot of the activism,” Carol McDonald, a member of the class of 1997, explained, “was, ‘We want to sit down and have a meeting,’ and the chancellor saying, ‘I’m not meeting with you.’ It was really just that simple. There was such a level of disrespect with which the students felt they were treated.”<sup>265</sup> Administrators had previously employed the strategy of ignoring Black student dissent during the struggle for the Black Student Movement’s (BSM) autonomy over Upendo Lounge and during the conversations surrounding housing segregation policies. By 1992, simply ignoring student attempts at dialogue with administrators had become an established method of controlling Black students, exercised with the goal of excluding Black students from the dominant cultural dialogue through “benign neglect.”<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

<sup>265</sup> Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

<sup>266</sup> Tim Wise, *Colorblind: the rise of post-racial politics and the retreat from racial equity*, (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 2010), 27-28.

Paul Hardin, the University chancellor from 1988 to 1995, who became a “nemesis” for many BCC supporters, eventually advocated building a multicultural center rather than a Black Cultural Center.<sup>267</sup> On March 17, 1992, standing in front of a banner held by BCC supporters which read “Hardin’s Plantation”—a reference to his paternalistic attitude towards Black workers in particular—the chancellor stated his belief that a multicultural center could serve the campus as a “forum, rather than a fortress.”<sup>268</sup> His phrasing infuriated BCC supporters, who had, since 1986, explained that the BCC, when given adequate space, would serve the academic interests of the entire campus population, not just the social needs of Black students. Hardin, in turn, resented BCC supporters’ characterization of him as a stalwart racist for throwing his support behind a multicultural center. Hardin explained that his perception at the time was that “we had an activist group under the leadership of Margo Crawford really making a whipping boy out of the chancellor and seizing on a reservation I’d expressed about a free-standing center in terms of the fortress mentality.”<sup>269</sup>

Hardin’s support for a multicultural center was shaped in part by his tenuous connection to the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Hardin’s father, a bishop in the Methodist Church, was one of the white clergymen to whom King directed his *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, in which King wrote of his disappointment in the “white moderate who is more devoted to ‘order’ than to justice...who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man’s freedom.”<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Interview with Ruby Sinreich by Jonathan Tarleton, 24 March 2011, L-0334.

<sup>268</sup> Text of 17 March 1992 Address in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>269</sup> Interview with Paul Hardin by Douglass Hunt, 24 October 1995, L-0335.

<sup>270</sup> Martin Luther King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” 16 April 1963.

Hardin often spoke publicly about the relationship between his father and King's famous *Letter*, apparently unaware of King's indictment of both his father and Hardin's own position in the BCC debate as a white moderate. Hardin was hardly the only white moderate guilty of adulterating King's words, which historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explains have been "endlessly reproduced and selectively quoted, . . . los[ing] their political bite."<sup>271</sup> By continuing to invoke his dubious relationship to King, Hardin appears to have interpreted King's rebuke of white moderates as a sign of King's support for a multicultural center. At his March 17th speech, Hardin explained that his support for a multicultural center was grounded in his belief in "the inclusion of all people into the full opportunities of American society," this belief the result of "the unique impact Martin Luther King Jr. had on [him] and [his] father."<sup>272</sup> In truth, by refusing to provide institutional support for a Black Cultural Center, Hardin was "constantly say[ing] 'I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action.'"<sup>273</sup>

Acting on his own view of himself as a progressive leader of a liberal institution, Hardin called for the formation of a BCC Working Group headed by Provost Richard McCormick, to investigate finding a space for an "adequate BCC," repeating the task that the initial BCC planning committee completed six years earlier.<sup>274</sup> The University community's allegiances divided as the case for a multicultural center, which would presumably celebrate the diversity of

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<sup>271</sup> Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, No. 4 (March 2006): 1234.

<sup>272</sup> Text of 17 March 1992 Address in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>273</sup> Martin Luther King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," 16 April 1963.

<sup>274</sup> Text of 17 March 1992 Address in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

the student body, grew among white students and administrators. Myron Pitts, the editor of *Black Ink* from 1991 to 1992, described white student opinions on the BCC as dividing into four camps: “the uninformed set,” “the pseudo-multiculturalist faction,” “the apathetic majority,” and “the racists.”<sup>275</sup> *The Daily Tar Heel* frequently published opinions about the BCC movement from members of each of these four camps, focusing particularly on the multicultural center argument forwarded by seemingly progressive white students (rarely were there other non-Black students of color who argued for a multicultural center). Student Elliott Zenick, who would have belonged to Pitts’ “pseudo-multiculturalist faction,” wrote in a March 23rd guest column that “the idea of a Black cultural center is a good one, but it fails to celebrate the diversity on this campus...A multicultural center would better serve the needs of all campus minorities.”<sup>276</sup>

It was during this quasi-campaign for a multicultural center that the public language promoting the University’s current cultural paradigm of “diversity without justice” began to ascend to prominence.<sup>277</sup> At least in part to oppose increasing displays of Black student and worker power, during the early 1990s, the University began to tout the racial diversity of the institution’s student body, though administrators made little effort to dismantle the power structures that kept student of color in separate cultural domains within the institution.<sup>278</sup>

Although the numbers of non-Black students of color were slowly increasing, Native, Latinx,

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<sup>275</sup> Myron B. Pitts, “No 40 Acres, No Mule and No BCC,” *Black Ink*, 4 February 1992, 2.

<sup>276</sup> Elliott Zenick, “Multicultural Center Would Serve All Minorities,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 23 March 1992, 9.

<sup>277</sup> John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.

<sup>278</sup> Donyell L. Roseboro, *Icons of Power and Landscapes of Protest: The Student Movement for the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005), 17.

and Asian-heritage students together comprised less than four percent of the total student body in 1991.<sup>279</sup> Administrative efforts to increase the diversity of the student body were often presented with reminders to maintain the civility that had come to define the Chapel Hill community. In 1990, while creating the Chancellor's Committee on Community and Diversity, Hardin explained that "no more urgent issue confronts the University than to make certain that this is truly a diverse campus while, at the same time, encouraging honest appreciation of the differences among us and thus preserving the unity and civility of the University community."<sup>280</sup>

Although the Committee reported that "the campus climate is a 'chilly' one for minority students" and provided dozens of quotes from Black students and faculty regarding the social and academic isolation they experienced on the campus, the proposals suggested by the members of committee were not, for the most part, implemented.<sup>281</sup> Instead, the University utilized the specific rhetorical technique of highlighting institutional diversity in order to reify the white supremacy of the institution without having to draw attention to the ubiquity of its own whiteness. Sara Ahmed, in her groundbreaking text on racism and diversity in institutions, explains this technique, writing that "diversity pride becomes a technology for reproducing whiteness: adding color to the white face of the organization *confirms the whiteness of that face*."<sup>282</sup> Thus, by increasing its display of pride in the institution's racial diversity through

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<sup>279</sup> "Focus: Institutional Racism," *The Daily Tar Heel*, 3 April 1991, 5; However, in the 1990 North Carolina census, citizens who identified as neither white or Black made up 2.47 percent of the total population.

<sup>280</sup> Final Report of Chancellor's Committee on Community and Diversity, 15 September 1991 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>281</sup> Final Report of Chancellor's Committee on Community and Diversity, 15 September 1991 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>282</sup> Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity In Institutional Life*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 151.

expanding administrative support for a multicultural center, the University did so not to celebrate racial diversity, but to protect its own white supremacy.

The BCC movement occurred as part of a national increase in Black student activism and a growing national interest in what it meant to be Black in the United States in the decades post-desegregation. “The ever-changing black experience in America is being assessed with a new intensity,” *The New York Times* reported in 1991. “Not since the tumultuous 1960s has there been such an intense focus on blackness.”<sup>283</sup> The popularization of Blackness in mainstream popular culture contributed to a growing sense among members of the BCC coalition that they were part of a new movement to define Blackness in Chapel Hill. Tim Minor, who arrived in Chapel Hill in 1990, explained the ways in which Black students manifested pride in their Blackness, remembering that “my friends were coming on campus with African medallions. You had it in your music, your hip-hop, Afrika Bambaataa, and you had just different types of expressionism of Blackness. You had it in your fashion—there was Cross Colours and FUBU... There was a lot of ethnic pride.”<sup>284</sup> As Black students continued to assert their identity, seeming to many white members of the campus community as flaunting their refusal to assimilate into the dominant culture, the University continued to use the argument for a multicultural center to suppress students’ expressions of Blackness.

Despite growing popularity among white students for a multicultural center, student supporters for a free-standing BCC continued to make their case to their peers, attending meetings with receptive student organizations and holding speak-outs to share their message.

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<sup>283</sup> Lena Williams, “In a 90’s Quest for Black Identity, Intense Doubts and Disagreement,” *The New York Times*, 30 November 1991, A1.

<sup>284</sup> Interview with Tim Minor by Charlotte Fryar, 7 March 2017, L-0463.

Student supporters also met with students at other colleges across the state, including North Carolina Central University. “We very much talked about that a building that is dedicated to Black culture and Black studies is very much just a lens to telling the story of our state and of America,” Carol McDonald explained, “and it wasn’t intended to be some isolated thing, that this is another academic building... and that recognition of one group, particularly the group that was brought here and was enslaved, really then opens up the conversation about all.”<sup>285</sup> By positioning themselves against the institution’s liberalism, BCC supporters used counter-storytelling as an effective method to advocate for their cause and build a foundation for their coalition.<sup>286</sup> After meeting with Black student leaders, particularly BSM president-elect Michelle Thomas, the Asian Students Association, the Carolina Indian Circle, and the Carolina Hispanic Association, each issued private statements of support for a free-standing Black Cultural Center and joined the growing multiracial BCC coalition.<sup>287</sup>

Negating the argument forwarded by white students and administrators that a multicultural center would better benefit all students of color, Michelle Thomas and Scott Wilkens, the white Campus Y co-president, wrote in *The Daily Tar Heel*, describing a campus landscape that operated to exclude Black students: “Each day on this campus, African-American students must go into buildings built by their forefathers, but named for plantation owners and Klansmen. We are not suggesting that buildings be renamed, we merely wish to describe the

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<sup>285</sup> Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

<sup>286</sup> Daniel Solórzano and Tara Yosso, “Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, No. 1 (2002): 23-44.

<sup>287</sup> Letters to Michelle Thomas from Asian Students Association, Carolina Indian Circle, and Carolina Hispanic Association, 1991-1992 in the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History Records #40341, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

atmosphere in which Black students find themselves. Thus it is true that a free-standing BCC would give African-American students a place to celebrate their culture in an atmosphere free of intimidation found elsewhere on campus.”<sup>288</sup> These comments by Thomas and Wilkins demonstrate clearly the dual purpose of the BCC movement to transform both the institutional landscape and the built landscape.

### **The Black Awareness Council Changes the Narrative**

By the end of the spring semester of 1992, the Sonja Haynes Stone Task Force had achieved only one of its stated goals: the renaming of the BCC in honor of Dr. Stone. The BCC coalition—which included members from all major Black, Latinx, Asian, and Native student organizations as well as more liberal majority-white organizations—needed a new strategy. Over the summer of 1992, a new student group formed that would dramatically change the political rhetoric and direction of the BCC movement. John Bradley, Tim Smith, Jimmy Hitchcock, and Malcolm Marshall, four members of the University’s football team, founded the Black Awareness Council (BAC) in July 1992.<sup>289</sup> “So that was really our mode of trying to operate to figure out how to change the narrative and change the movement,” John Bradley explained of BAC’s origins. “The movement had always been there. We didn’t start the movement by any stretch of the imagination, but we wanted to take it to the next level so that there would be some change that occurred.”<sup>290</sup> Renee Alexander Craft, who covered the BCC movement for *Black Ink*, recalled that BAC “served the important role of amplification. There’s one thing to think,

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<sup>288</sup> Michelle Thomas and Scott Wilkins, “Free-standing Black Cultural Center: Chancellor Must Recognize Coalition’s Demands,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 23 March 1992, 9.

<sup>289</sup> Initially the group was called the Black Athletic Council, but changed their name to include other members not affiliated with University athletics.

<sup>290</sup> Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.

oh, the BCC is over there for the cultural folks and the activists. Well, these aren't folks who are identifying solely as cultural folks and solely as activists. These are people who have come to get to make their legacy in football at UNC who are also daring to move forward in other kinds of ways."<sup>291</sup>

BAC's campus celebrity status as members of the football team attracted national media attention to Chapel Hill as demonstrations in support of a free-standing BCC grew in size. On September 3, 1992, an estimated four hundred supporters marched to Chancellor Hardin's home at eleven o'clock at night, chanting "No Justice, No Peace," hoping to deliver a message of strength. Hardin was out of town and missed the students' protest. A week later, on Thursday, September 10th, three hundred supporters marched from the Pit to South Building to present Hardin with a letter demanding his support for a free-standing Stone Center and the development of a BCC proposal to be given to the University's Board of Trustees for a vote by November 13th. "Failure to respond to this deadline," the letter said, "will leave the people no choice but to organize towards direct action."<sup>292</sup>

BAC's members brought with them to the movement their experiences as Black male student athletes for the University, a role which both gave and denied them power on the campus. Following the heightened student-led action at the beginning of the semester, *The New York Times* reporter, Bill Rhoden, approached members of BAC for a story, eventually writing on the influence Black student athletes could exert on predominantly white campuses. Tim Smith, speaking on behalf of BAC in the *Times*, explained the unique role that Black student athletes could play in justice movements: "It's not common for athletes, Black athletes, to be in

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<sup>291</sup> Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.

<sup>292</sup> Anna Griffin, "BCC Supporters Give Hardin Ultimatum," *The Daily Tar Heel*, 11 September 1992, 1.

this type of leadership role. Athletes feel they have a chance to make it, as the white man defines making it, in this society. You have a chance to go and make millions of dollars, and you don't want to jeopardize that by speaking out about injustice. We feel it's our responsibility to speak out and lead. That's what's surprising a lot of people. As athletes here, we have a lot of untapped power because we bring so much money into this university."<sup>293</sup>

Smith's comments in the *Times* demonstrate the acute recognition of members of BAC both of the power that they could exert by the nature of their distinction as athletes and of the devastating personal losses they might suffer for choosing to engage in actions deemed insubordinate by the University's administration. They also address the first of the two main institutional processes through which anti-Blackness is reproduced: "the extraction of labor from the Black body without engaging the body as a laborer, but as property."<sup>294</sup> Smith, as an athlete for the University, was not financially compensated for his labor as a football player, situating his and his teammates' labor "outside the constraints of wage labor" and inside the realm of institutional property.<sup>295</sup> Smith also went on in the *Times* article to address the inadequacy of the Fishbowl and Hardin's refusal to endorse a free-standing center: "To me, when he says we want a forum, not a fortress, he's saying he doesn't want us to have any power. Having our own building would give us a unique sense of power. As long as you can have us in a glass-enclosed

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<sup>293</sup> William C. Rhoden, "COLLEGES: At Chapel Hill, Athletes Suddenly Become Activists," *The New York Times*, 11 September 1992, B9.

<sup>294</sup> T. Elon Dancy, Kirsten T. Edwards, and James Earl Davis, "Historically White Universities and Plantation Politics: Anti-Blackness and Higher Education in the Black Lives Matter Era," *Urban Education* 53, No. 2 (2018): 180.

<sup>295</sup> T. Elon Dancy, Kirsten T. Edwards, and James Earl Davis, "Historically White Universities and Plantation Politics: Anti-Blackness and Higher Education in the Black Lives Matter Era," *Urban Education* 53, No. 2 (2018): 180.

room where you can watch everything we do, every move we make—you can control us.”<sup>296</sup> His statement directly addresses the second process through which anti-Blackness is reproduced—“the mechanisms that institutions use to police, control, imprison, and kill”—by condemning the space in which the institution sought to contain and surveil Black students.<sup>297</sup>

The national coverage of BAC drew the attention of Spike Lee, then still an emerging filmmaker and a cousin by marriage to the late Dr. Stone. Lee, along with Black nationalist leader Khalid Abdul Muhammad, spoke to over five thousand people in the Dean Dome on September 18th. After meeting with Black student leaders including Bradley, Smith, and Thomas, Lee spoke to the crowd, urging more Black athletes to sit out games to advocate for a free-standing BCC. Muhammad spoke last, urging Black students to give up on gaining the support of white students, whom he described as “blue-eyed devils” and “crackers.”<sup>298</sup> Hundreds of white students left the rally early, upset at Muhammad’s comments, and momentarily, there was concern that the BCC coalition, which included many white members of SEAC (Student Environmental Action Coalition), the Campus Y, and B-GLAD (Bisexuals, Gay Men, Lesbians and Allies for Diversity), would fall apart. But Black student leaders did not waste time attempting to mend the white fragility of students distressed by Muhammad’s incendiary

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<sup>296</sup> William C. Rhoden, “COLLEGES: At Chapel Hill, Athletes Suddenly Become Activists,” *The New York Times*, 11 September 1992, B9.

<sup>297</sup> T. Elon Dancy, Kirsten T. Edwards, and James Earl Davis, “Historically White Universities and Plantation Politics: Anti-Blackness and Higher Education in the Black Lives Matter Era,” *Urban Education* 53, No. 2 (2018): 180.

<sup>298</sup> Wallace Kaufmann, “Racism and the BCC Controversy,” *Carolina Alumni Review* 81, No. 4 (Winter 1992): 25.

remarks.<sup>299</sup> “I think most of the students understood that the things that he said weren’t really reflective of what we believed,” Bradley explained.<sup>300</sup>

There was no doubt following the Spike Lee rally that the introduction of BAC had dramatically changed the momentum, strategies, and rhetoric of the BCC movement. Speaking on behalf of “the majority of students,” Student Body President John Moody explained his concern that after the rally, “the label *racist* seems to have come an easy line of argument against the opponents of a free-standing BCC.”<sup>301</sup> Because BAC’s platform was proudly pro-Black, their involvement in the movement threatened white privilege, risking a loss of the social and cultural dominance established in Chapel Hill by white students. Even for white members of the BCC coalition, the new outspoken pro-Black rhetoric coming from the members of BAC was suspect. “There was a little bit of curiosity as to what their agenda was,” Ruby Sinreich, an organizer with SEAC and white supporter of the BCC movement explained. “I may have had biases because they were athletes, but it was more, in my mind at least, that they weren’t activists before that.”<sup>302</sup> A white writer for the *Carolina Alumni Review* explained that BAC’s refusal to use conciliatory rhetoric with white students “took center stage with the kind of aggressive bluntness encouraged on the football field...as in sports, there was no middle ground, only *for* or *against*.”<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Robin DiAngelo, “White Fragility,” *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy* 3, No. 3 (2011): 54-70.

<sup>300</sup> Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.

<sup>301</sup> Wallace Kaufmann, “Racism and the BCC Controversy,” *Carolina Alumni Review* 81, No. 4 (Winter 1992): 25.

<sup>302</sup> Interview with Ruby Sinreich by Jonathan Tarleton, 24 March 2011 L-0334.

<sup>303</sup> Wallace Kaufmann, “Racism and the BCC Controversy,” *Carolina Alumni Review* 81, No. 4 (Winter 1992): 23.

Even beyond the unfounded fears of white students, there was another division in the coalition along gender lines that BAC's entry into the movement amplified. Carol McDonald explained that members of BAC "brought a lot of visibility and used their sort of star power as athletes, which, again, also helped elevate the issue beyond campus and beyond sort of the Triangle area...I don't know how much people talk about the tension that that created, three men with some very stereotypical, traditional notions about their role versus women's roles in the movement and organizing."<sup>304</sup> For other women students who had been organizing for over a year, BAC's introduction into the coalition was a welcome one. "I was happy that they were there. It was revolutionary for student athletes on scholarship to stand up and to be such strong beautiful Black men, and to have them stand up for us. It was a relief," remembered Michelle Thomas.<sup>305</sup> John Bradley explained that BAC understood they needed Black women's leadership: "we never pushed away the ideas or the involvement of other women, because they were the majority of the leadership...we needed them, and I think that we understood that obviously this can't become a male-driven leadership or movement, because there's not enough of us to make an impact."<sup>306</sup>

BCC supporters followed up on the momentum they gained from the national coverage of BAC and the Spike Lee rally by interrupting the proceedings of University Day, October 12, 1992, by then an established tactic of direct action for student organizers. They entered Memorial Hall after the start of the morning program, standing along the rows of the auditorium, holding

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<sup>304</sup> Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

<sup>305</sup> Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

<sup>306</sup> Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.

signs that read “BCC Now,” “No More Waiting,” and “Time Is Running Out Hardin.”<sup>307</sup> That afternoon, the BCC Working Group, which had begun meeting that September, presented to Chancellor Hardin their recommendation to support a free-standing BCC and offered three possible locations for the building: “the area between Kenan Labs and Wilson Library, the area between Coker and the Bell Tower, and the area just south of the Student Union and across from Fetzer Gymnasium.”<sup>308</sup> Three days later, Hardin finally publicly voiced his endorsement for a free-standing BCC named for Dr. Stone, but did not state a preference for the building’s location.<sup>309</sup>

### **The Question of Location**

Hardin’s statement of endorsement did not indicate that he would provide the support needed to plan and sustain the center, and indeed, following his statement he largely disengaged from the issue until students forced him to once again enter the conflict. Hardin explained that he felt that his endorsement of a free-standing BCC would be enough to appease student protestors, though privately he still “had some intuitive concerns about this being misperceived as resegregation and as an exclusive kind of Black Student Union.”<sup>310</sup> Hardin’s passive endorsement of a free-standing BCC without institutional support was a function of the institution’s “diversity without justice” paradigm, in which the University escaped further media portrayals as a racist institution without having to provide the administrative support structures

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<sup>307</sup> Anna Griffin, “BCC protest interrupts University Day event,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 13 October 1992, 1.

<sup>308</sup> Justin Scheef, “BCC panel asks chancellor to OK free-standing center,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 13 October 1992, 1.

<sup>309</sup> Jennifer Talhelm, “Hardin OKs free-standing center,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 15 October 1992, 1.

<sup>310</sup> Interview with Paul Hardin by Douglass Hunt, 24 October 1995, L-0335.

necessary to insure the construction of a center that honored the legacy of Dr. Sonja Haynes Stone.<sup>311</sup>

Despite Hardin's private reservations, with his statement of support for a free-standing BCC, planning for the creation of the building began. The BCC Advisory Board—which had advised the BCC since its creation in 1988 with a membership of students, faculty, and a handful of administrators—had previously refused to acknowledge the BCC Working Group, headed by Provost McCormick. Now that the construction of a free-standing building had been agreed to, the two groups combined efforts to begin planning for the center. The co-joined groups employed Yongue Architects of Durham to make recommendations for each of the three proposed sites. In the early weeks of 1993, the Advisory Board and Working Group solidified programming decisions, but clashed over the potential building site. Working Group members preferred the site near Coker Hall and the Bell Tower, in the Coker Woods, across South Road, away from the main quad of campus. The BCC Advisory Board favored the site between Wilson Library and Dey Hall, a space on Polk Place which would physically include Black culture at the University within the main part of the campus landscape. Yongue's report, delivered in late January 1993, also favored the Advisory Board's preferred Wilson-Dey Site, stating that "putting a building here would reflect a serious commitment from the University to its students and their awareness of Black culture."<sup>312</sup>

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<sup>311</sup> John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.

<sup>312</sup> Yongue Report to the BCC Working Group, 28 January 1993 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Despite the architect's overwhelming recommendation for the Wilson-Dey site, the two groups could not agree on a final decision. Margo Crawford, the director of the BCC, walked out of a February 15th meeting, stating that the process for choosing a building site lacked "integrity."<sup>313</sup> BCC student supporters shared Crawford's determination that the BCC be included into the physical and symbolic center of the campus, arguing that the only way to carry Stone's legacy into the building would be to locate it on the main quad of the campus.<sup>314</sup> The BCC Working Group's resistance to the Wilson-Dey site highlighted the University's fear over the potential loss or dilution of whiteness at stake in building a free-standing BCC on the main quad of the campus, which would display a shift in the institution's culture.

As geographers Aubrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake explain, "Whiteness is... a standpoint: a place from which to look at ourselves and the surrounding society, a position of normalcy, and perhaps moral superiority, from which to construct a landscape of what is same and what is different."<sup>315</sup> By placing the BCC within the main academic quad of the campus landscape, the institution would have been forced to draw attention to the ubiquity of its own whiteness and the way in which its hegemonic cultural landscape had proscribed Black culture and delineated Black bodies to labor. Not only would it have reflected the University's commitment to Black culture, but placing the BCC on Polk Place would have been a decisive step towards the integration of the University, in its shared culture as well as on its campus. The

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<sup>313</sup> Thanassis Cambanis, "BCC design endorsed as Crawford walks out," *The Daily Tar Heel*, 16 February 1993, 1.

<sup>314</sup> John K. Chapman, *Black Freedom and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1793-1960*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2006), 191.

<sup>315</sup> Aubrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake, "Racism out of place: thoughts on whiteness and an antiracist geography in the new millennium," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90, No. 2 (2000): 394.

demand for a free-standing BCC, Vice Chancellor for Minority Affairs Harold Wallace explained, “is a cry for inclusion.”<sup>316</sup>

The two groups split after the BCC Advisory Board rejected a proposal from the Working Group which suggested a 48,000 square foot center with no clear preference for a site. In response, the Advisory Board drew up their own proposal, which stated clearly their preference for the Wilson-Dey site and a 53,000 square foot center. Through February and March of 1993, students called on Chancellor Hardin to adjudicate the process for site selection.<sup>317</sup> When the Board of Trustees met on March 26th, omitting any discussion of the BCC from its agenda, BCC supporters were furious. Although there were still other details related to the planning of the BCC that had not yet been decided, the battle over the site became the crucial hinge on which the rest of the movement depended.<sup>318</sup>

Donyell Roseboro, in her dissertation on the BCC movement, explained that the Wilson-Dey site “symbolized for some the essence of the struggle, the significance of the center, and the spirit of Dr. Stone. For that reason, some considered the issue of location absolutely non-negotiable—the center’s location on the main academic quad would mark the ultimate renegotiation of space, the final traversing of boundaries previously believed impenetrable.”<sup>319</sup> Thus, for some BCC supporters, the campus landscape became the moral ground of the

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<sup>316</sup> Wallace Kaufmann, “Racism and the BCC Controversy,” *Carolina Alumni Review* 81, No. 4 (Winter 1992): 22.

<sup>317</sup> Peter Wallsten, “McCormick denies misleading BCC advocates,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 15 February 1993, 1; James Lewis, “Board splits from BCC working group,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, March 23, 1993, 1.

<sup>318</sup> Interview with Ruby Sinreich by Jonathan Tarleton, 24 March 2011, L-0334.

<sup>319</sup> Donyell L. Roseboro, *Icons of Power and Landscapes of Protest: The Student Movement for the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005), 258.

movement, and the invisible boundaries surrounding the main quad of the campus became the paramount border to cross. Geographer Daniel Trudeau writes that “landscapes represent socio-spatial practices aimed at fixing boundaries, imposing cultural coherence and stabilizing meaning.”<sup>320</sup> In placing the BCC on the Wilson-Dey site, BCC supporters believed they could finally destabilize the dominant cultural landscape that had for centuries fixed them outside the boundaries of the institution.

### **South Building Sit-In and After-Effects**

Working from the Fishbowl in the last week of March 1993, BCC student supporters drew up plans to sit-in in South Building until Hardin called for an emergency meeting of the Board of Trustees and endorsed the Advisory Board’s proposal for the Wilson-Dey site.<sup>321</sup> On April 1st, students began their sit-in. After delivering a letter to Chancellor Hardin, signed by “The Occupants,” a core group of Black and white students including members of BAC, SEAC, and the Campus Y, moved into the rotunda of the building.<sup>322</sup> Chancellor Hardin refused to acknowledge their presence, and traveled to New Orleans to watch the men’s basketball team vie for the NCAA national championship title. During the two weeks they occupied the administration building, students made themselves at home, moving in a fax machine and television, rushing to Franklin Street to celebrate the men’s basketball team winning the NCAA championship, and hosting several guests, including labor and civil rights activist Dolores

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<sup>320</sup> Daniel Trudeau, “Politics of belonging in the construction of landscapes: place-making, boundary-drawing and exclusion,” *cultural geographies* 13, No. 1 (2006): 437.

<sup>321</sup> Thanassis Cambanis, “BCC ralliers take aim at trustees,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 25 March 1993, 1.

<sup>322</sup> Letter from the Occupants of South Building to Chancellor Hardin in the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History Records #40341, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Huerta.<sup>323</sup> On April 15th, the students still sitting in were expecting a visit from former presidential candidate Jesse Jackson. Upon arrival in Chapel Hill, Jackson met first with Chancellor Hardin, which confused and upset BCC student supporters, who understood Hardin to be their adversary in the struggle. Those students who were still occupying South Building moved directly from the rotunda into Hardin's office.

Hardin, perhaps as a result of his conversation with Jackson and certainly having wearied of his limited access to the administration building, called for the intervention of the campus police, a step last taken against protesting Black students and workers during the Foodworkers' Strikes. Although the students sitting in repeated their sincere request to simply have a conversation with the chancellor about the future of the BCC, Hardin used police intervention as way to both end the sit-in and punish students for their insubordination. Roseboro explained that "in authorizing the removal of students from his office space, the chancellor enacted his ultimate role as a 'master' of the plantation" of the University.<sup>324</sup> The escalation of the situation by calling for the campus police to remove students practicing civil disobedience demonstrated Hardin's disregard for the lives of Black students, a public display of the institution's deepest anti-Black processes. As scholars Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton explain in their work on white supremacy, "police impunity serves to distinguish between the racial itself and the elsewhere that mandates it...the distinction between those whose human being is put permanently in question

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<sup>323</sup> Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461; Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

<sup>324</sup> Donyell L. Roseboro, *Icons of Power and Landscapes of Protest: The Student Movement for the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005), 253.

and those for whom it goes without saying.”<sup>325</sup> By ordering the policing of Black and allied white students sitting-in in South Building, Hardin exemplified one of the crucial ways in which the institution denies the humanity of those who stand against its white supremacy.

Within an hour, over three hundred students had gathered in the building’s rotunda and the campus police began to threaten students with arrest. Carol McDonald remembered that “the way that the arrest then unfolded was interesting. It was like, ‘People have to leave, or you’re going to get arrested.’ That went on for almost forty-five minutes to an hour, and that’s how the giant group of three hundred got whittled down to, ‘OK, so these seventeen really are not going anywhere, so these are the ones that we have to do something with.’”<sup>326</sup> One-by-one, sixteen students (and one local teacher), including Carol McDonald, Chris Baumann, Jimmy Hitchcock, and Tim Smith, were arrested and carried down to a van waiting for them on Cameron Avenue, which took them to the county jail in nearby Hillsborough. Chris Baumann remembered feeling both pride and fear while in police custody: “So I was scared, because I didn’t know what the consequence was going to be in my record. It’s something today I’m proud of, but at that moment, I was scared.”<sup>327</sup> The remaining students, who had gathered outside South Building, marched down Franklin Street towards the Chapel Hill jail, where they believed police had taken the arrested students, chanting “No Justice, No Peace.”<sup>328</sup>

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<sup>325</sup> Steve Martinot and Jared Sexton, “The Avant-Garde of White Supremacy,” *Social Identities* 9, No. 2 (June 2003): 174.

<sup>326</sup> Interview with Carol McDonald by Charlotte Fryar, 31 March 2017, L-0461.

<sup>327</sup> Interview with Chris Baumann by Charlotte Fryar, 21 December 2017, L-0450.

<sup>328</sup> Thanassis Cambanis, “16 students arrested in Hardin’s office,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 16 April 1993, 1.

Chancellor Hardin eventually dropped the charges against the seventeen arrested, but the issue of site selection for the free-standing building had still not been taken up by the Board of Trustees by May, after spring commencement. The Board of Trustees deferred to the University Building and Grounds Committee, which reported in June that they recommended the Wilson-Dey site, calling it “acceptable” and the Coker Woods site “less acceptable.”<sup>329</sup> At its next meeting, on July 23, 1993, the Board of Trustees approved a free-standing BCC at the Coker Woods site, citing the Wilson-Dey site’s square footage capacity as a deciding factor, though the architect’s plan stated clearly that the Wilson-Dey site could contain a building larger than the planned 50,000 square foot building.<sup>330</sup>

Supporters were disappointed, and at the request of the BCC Advisory Board, trustees agreed to hear arguments for re-evaluating the Wilson-Dey site at its September 24th meeting, though afterwards, they agreed not to re-vote on the issue. Trustee Angela Bryant—one of two Black trustees, and an alumna of the University who had witnessed the violence against Black students during the second Foodworkers’ Strike—voiced her frustrations about the Board’s decision, telling *The Daily Tar Heel* that the issue wasn’t just over the building or the site, but rather was a “symbolic acknowledgement of the importance of Black culture... I’m not sure that there’s a way that the [Board of Trustees] can understand that or wants to understand that.”<sup>331</sup> By placing the BCC on the Coker Woods site outside of the physical and symbolic center of the

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<sup>329</sup> Report from Buildings and Grounds Committee, June 1993 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>330</sup> Michael Workman, “BOT Sticks to Decision On Coker Woods Site,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 27 September 1993, 1.

<sup>331</sup> Michael Workman, “BOT Sticks to Decision On Coker Woods Site,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 27 September 1993, 1.

campus landscape, the trustees fortified the boundaries protecting the white hegemony of the campus.

On October 12, 1993, the University celebrated its bicentennial, but many Black students, faculty, and workers felt uncomfortable joining the celebration, frustrated that the seeming conclusion of the two-year long struggle for a BCC had resulted in a pyrrhic victory. Harry Amana, BCC Advisory Board chairman and a journalism professor (and later, a Stone Center director) expressed that frustration to *The Daily Tar Heel*, stating, “The University is throwing its 200th-year birthday party, and we haven’t been invited. African Americans were never included in the University in its beginning. Here we are—celebrating 200 years of what? We’re still on the outside looking in.”<sup>332</sup> In January 1994, Margo Crawford, the BCC director who had served as a mentor for the students within the movement, resigned to join a diversity consulting group in her hometown of Chicago. “She challenged us to push the envelope when we were fighting for the Stone Center, but she had so much to lose,” Michelle Thomas explained.<sup>333</sup> White administrators, particularly Paul Hardin, viewed Crawford as an instigator among the students supporters for the BCC movement, and many students believed that her departure was at least in part a result of the “personal enmity between her and some of the administrators at Carolina.”<sup>334</sup>

As the movement began to cool, conversations about the BCC turned to fundraising. Tim Minor, who managed donations for the Stone Center as part of his position in University Development, recalled the end of a slow process of fundraising in 1999: “We had a big twenty-

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<sup>332</sup> Ly Phuong, “BCC Will Have to Wait For Bicentennial Funds,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 20 September 1993, 1.

<sup>333</sup> Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466.

<sup>334</sup> Donyell L. Roseboro, *Icons of Power and Landscapes of Protest: The Student Movement for the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005), 260.

six million dollar bequest that came to the university by an alum who passed, and [Chancellor] Michael Hooker made the decision—before he died, made the decision—that monies were going to be used to help complete the fundraising for the Stone Center. Without that type of support the Stone Center wouldn't happen.”<sup>335</sup> By the building's groundbreaking in 2001, the \$9 million price tag of the Stone Center had been funded with private gifts, contributed by more than 1,500 donors. Those contributions covered one hundred percent of the total construction cost.<sup>336</sup>

Minor, who had been a member of the BSM and a witness to the movement as a student, played a crucial role in raising funds, reaching out to alumni and listening to their ideas for the future of the center. “You had to listen first before you could act and so they felt listened to,” he explained about talking to Black alumni from the 1960s and 1970s. “So being the bridge between the students who are alumni now and also with other folks who were looking to fund it and sort of being able to express or talk about it at that time made it a little easier for me than it might have for anybody else.” Through Minor's leadership and that of his colleagues in University Development, including Margie Crowell and Matt Kupec, the Stone Center became the first building on the campus funded entirely through private donations, with many of the largest donations from national corporations headquartered in the state. “A lot of the funding ironically came from people who weren't Black,” explained Minor. “The biggest gifts came from white people or from corporations run by alumni.”<sup>337</sup> Jimmy Hitchcock, who had co-founded BAC and

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<sup>335</sup> Interview with Tim Minor by Charlotte Fryar, 7 March 2017, L-0463.

<sup>336</sup> Geoff Wessel, “Wait Ends: BCC to Get Building,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 24 September 1999, 1.

<sup>337</sup> Interview with Tim Minor by Charlotte Fryar, 7 March 2017, L-0463.

enjoyed a successful career in the National Football League after graduating, also donated substantially to the center, as did his old football coach from the University, Mack Brown.<sup>338</sup>

### **Legacy of the BCC Movement in the Stone Center**

The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History opened in 2004 in a tri-level, 44,500 square foot building nestled in Coker Woods, adjacent to the Bell Tower. The center's opening, Roseboro argued, “epitomized a final shift in discourse” for the BCC from that of a social hub to an academic center. This shift also happened within institutional structures, with the movement of the Black Cultural Center from the Division of Student Affairs into Academic Affairs.<sup>339</sup> Hardin explained this move, stating that,

“When we shifted the line of reporting from Student Affairs to Academic Affairs [we did so] to underline that this is not a student union but an educational activity, when we planned a building that doesn't even have a lounge in it but has ten classrooms and all, I think we've underscored the fact that given the ambiguities that inhere in this kind of situation we have been extremely attentive to the dangers and have tried to avoid the dangers but still affirm some glimmer of understanding on the part of the majority culture ourselves that there is a need for some turf, a need for some respect, a need for a sense of ownership in the minorities but then to keep helping the minorities understand that that's just the first step and a second step is to share that rich culture with others and to be open to others and not to resegregate.”<sup>340</sup>

Hardin’s disparaging comments explain that the lack of social spaces in the Stone Center was intended as a way to create a space that would “keep helping minorities understand” that the center would not be a space of Black self-segregation. The purposeful lack of social spaces in the

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<sup>338</sup> “Stone Center to hold appreciation of Hitchcock,” University Press Release, 12 March 2002, No. 141, Accessed 26 September 2018, <<http://www.unc.edu/news/media/2002/hitch031202.htm>>.

<sup>339</sup> Donyell L. Roseboro, *Icons of Power and Landscapes of Protest: The Student Movement for the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005), 262.

<sup>340</sup> Interview with Paul Hardin by Douglass Hunt, 24 October 1995, L-0335.

Stone Center and its movement to Academic Affairs, therefore, can be understood as an institutional method of containing Black-created counter-spaces on the campus. Although the University would continue its ostensible support for Black academic achievement within the Stone Center, it did so through the logic of interest convergence, through which celebrations of Black academic accomplishments could be touted by the institution to rebuke critiques of racism.<sup>341</sup> Hardin's comments also demonstrate an institutional disregard for the argument BCC supporters had made for the center as early as 1986: it would serve not just Black students but operate to "educat[e] and sensitiz[e] non-Blacks to the history, concerns, and aspirations of Blacks in America."<sup>342</sup>

BCC supporters, for the most part, did not understand the degree to which the new academic focus of the Stone Center had been forwarded by white administrators as a way to undermine the potentials for the center to serve the social needs of Black students. Most believed that the new focus of the center as solely academic was crucial for securing funding and ensuring the BCC served the University's mission statement. Still, it seemed to many alumni of the BCC movement that the academic focus of the Stone Center disregarded the ways in which the social and academic aspects of Black student life had been integrated within the operations of its organizational predecessor, the Fishbowl.<sup>343</sup> For contemporary students who never knew the

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<sup>341</sup> Derrick A. Bell, "Brown v. Board of Education and the Interest-Convergence Dilemma," *Harvard Law Review* 93, No. 3 (Jan 1980): 518-34.

<sup>342</sup> Proposal for a Black Cultural Center, February 1986 in the Office of Chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: Paul Hardin Records #40025, University Archives, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<sup>343</sup> Interview with Michelle Thomas by Charlotte Fryar, 26 December 2017, L-0466; Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456; Interview with Ruby Sinreich by Jonathan Tarleton, 24 March 2011, L-0334; Interview with John Bradley by Charlotte Fryar, 2 December 2017, L-0452.

space of the Fishbowl, there is a palpable dissociation between the concept of a center for Black culture and the current role the Stone Center occupies on the campus and within the institution as a whole. “It feels like an academic building because I think it definitely is,” Mars Earle, a graduate of 2015 said. “You had weird classroom set ups and the security guard out front and the weirdness at the Women's Center that people didn't really know was in there. And it’s kind of hard to find.”<sup>344</sup>

The “weirdness” Earle describes is echoed in the feelings of alumni, who remember the vibrancy and dynamism of the BCC when visiting the Stone Center. “In the planning, we imagined what we didn’t have,” Renee Alexander Craft explained. “We didn’t have a freestanding building. We didn’t have a library. We didn’t have a suite of offices that some of this necessary work could happen in. We didn’t have a space for some of the student organizations who would need to be in close proximity. We didn’t have a theater. We didn’t have an auditorium. So we thought about what we needed, and the building was going to be that. And I think as we dreamed forward, one, it was such a struggle to even get that far. We just never thought about the space we had.”<sup>345</sup> The space that the BCC Planning Committee imagined and built is indeed impressive. Designed by the award-winning architectural firm, the Freelon Group (headed by the nationally distinguished Black architect and North Carolinian, Phillip Freelon), the building houses the staff of the Stone Center, seminar rooms, classrooms, a 10,000-volume lending library, a computer classroom, an art gallery and museum, a 360-seat auditorium, a

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<sup>344</sup> Interview with Mars Earle by Charlotte Fryar, 2 March 2018, L-0457.

<sup>345</sup> Interview with Renee Alexander Craft by Charlotte Fryar, 2 February 2017, L-0456.

multipurpose room, a dance studio, several office suites, and space for visiting scholars and artists.<sup>346</sup>

But many alumni, even with a deep appreciation of the remarkable nature of the center, register shock that the building does not contain a social space in which students can gather. “When we were students we thought the academic and the social just went hand in hand and they were integrated so seamlessly, and we didn’t understand why they had to privilege the academic when they built the free-standing center. Now, of course I get it,” Roseboro described. “But when I went to see the center...I was floored that there weren’t real social spaces.”<sup>347</sup> Unlike Manning Hall, Upendo Lounge, South Campus, and the Fishbowl, all primarily social counter-spaces created by Black students in which to support and nurture one another, the Stone Center, without a social space, cannot necessarily occupy the same role, a result of its status as an institutionally recognized academic counter-space. In this way, the Stone Center operates as a different kind of counter-space from its predecessors. Sanitized of its social capacities and disregarded by the institution despite the prodigious academic achievements of its staff and associated faculty and students, the Stone Center operates beyond the boundaries of the University’s cultural landscape.

The question of whether and how the Stone Center can become a social space for students is complicated by the lack of funding the center receives from the University. “It tries to serve a lot of purposes...But I think the question now becomes—the Stone Center’s basement is not even complete. The Stone Center doesn’t have a fundraiser,” Chris Faison, now a current

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<sup>346</sup> Stone Center Building, The Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, Accessed 1 November 2018, <<https://stonecenter.unc.edu/about-us/>>.

<sup>347</sup> Interview with Donyell L. Roseboro by Jonathan Tarleton, 3 March 2011, L-0333.

University staff member, explained. “So, I think it would be nice to see...a real focus on the Stone Center to get past just saying, ‘Oh, we have a building.’”<sup>348</sup> In 2015, the University System’s Board of Governors targeted the Stone Center along with eight of the System’s other centers and institutes (many of which support minority communities in North Carolina) for potential defunding, signaling that the status of the Stone Center within the institution is not secure.<sup>349</sup> Whether the Stone Center can serve as both a social and academic space for Black students remains a possibility. Roseboro, in her analysis of the current space of the Stone Center, argues for the potential for the growth of its social capacities, believing that “students will invariably mold it into what they need it to be.”<sup>350</sup>

While the potential for the creation of a social space within the Stone Center might still exist, the University’s leadership confirmed their approach toward Black-created spaces in deciding to place the Stone Center in a location removed from the social and academic center of campus: while the creation of Black spaces would be tolerated for the positive impression of racial diversity at the institution, support for those spaces and their inclusion within the mainstream of the University’s dominant culture would not be permitted. The question initially posed by the BCC movement—whether Black culture could ever been included into the cultural landscape of the University—has an answer in the position that the Stone Center occupies within the institution, which illustrates how the “conditional hospitality” of the white institution accepts

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<sup>348</sup> Interview with Christopher Faison by Charlotte Fryar, 9 December 2016, L-0459.

<sup>349</sup> The Editorial Board, “Opinion: Board of Governors should preserve research centers and institutes,” *The Daily Tar Heel*, 8 December 2014.

<sup>350</sup> Donyell L. Roseboro, *Icons of Power and Landscapes of Protest: The Student Movement for the Sonja Haynes Stone Black Cultural Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2005), 264.

spaces (or people) of color on the condition that “they return that hospitality by integrating into the common organizational culture, or by ‘being’ diverse, and allowing institutions to celebrate their diversity.”<sup>351</sup>

The Stone Center is, therefore, included within the campus and institutional landscapes only through this coded logic of diversity which upholds white supremacy. The geography of exclusion that had been established for Black students at the desegregation of the institution in 1951 remains in place, and the socio-cultural boundaries that Black students sought to finally cross with the placement of the BCC in the center of campus remain fixed. The University’s opposition to the inclusion of Black culture within the landscape of the campus and the institution all but insured that the Stone Center, like Upendo Lounge and the Fishbowl before it, would be prevented from reaching its potential as a Black student-created space which sustained and affirmed Black culture against the University’s continued anti-Blackness. The mitigated success of the BCC movement signaled to students and workers that a different approach to spatially-based organizing would be necessary, as future movements turned away from creating Black spaces and toward contesting campus spaces that represented and enacted white supremacy.

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<sup>351</sup> Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 77; Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity In Institutional Life*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 43.