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“Integration with Difference:” Harvey Gantt’s Legacy at Clemson Recontextualized and Resurrected into Architecture

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“INTEGRATION WITH DIFFERENCE:” HARVEY GANTT’S LEGACY AT CLEMSON RECONTEXTUALIZED AND RESURRECTED INTO ARCHITECTURE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

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

by
Marquise Deont’E Drayton
May 2021

Accepted by:
Dr. Abel Bartley, Committee Chair
Dr. Vernon Burton
Dr. Lee Wilson
ABSTRACT

In 2017, the Clemson Board of Trustees dedicated the granite marble surrounding Thomas Green Clemson's statue near Tillman Hall as "Gantt Circle." Named after Harvey Gantt, the first Black student at the university, it was an initiative pushed by the History Task Force to contextualize the Upstate land grant school's history better. The stonework complements the historical marker near the campus building where Gantt registered for his first semester there on January 28th, 1963. However, outside of these physical landmarks, a namesake scholarship endowment, and a multicultural office that honors him and his wife, there are no free-standing buildings on Clemson's campus that bear any people of color and women's names. The college sought to avoid the violent incidents at Oxford, MS, Tuscaloosa, AL, and Athens, GA, when racial desegregation came to its school doorstep in 1963. But in remembering their pioneers, Clemson has not done such an adequate job as Ole Miss, Alabama, and Georgia have in renaming buildings and erecting statues after their first African American students. And while Clemson celebrates itself as a game-changer for being a "high seminary of learning" in South Carolina, there are graphic details about Harvey's time yet to be revealed that would say otherwise about the respectability found there. Harvey Gantt graduated from Clemson College with honors in 1965 with a bachelor's degree in architecture. Following graduation, Gantt has gone on to invest in North Carolina through as mayor of Charlotte and building structures as an architect. Considering that, I argue in this paper for Clemson University’s administration to back the idea of creating a Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center, particularly in what it would mean for minorities of the university population and immortalizing Gantt's legacy. I also shed more light on the folklore's fallacies on his peaceful time at the college in the mid-1960s.
DEDICATION

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for granting me grace and mercy to continue my higher education at Clemson University. I serve a Lord of second chances who can trouble the waters for my adversaries and bridges the gaps for my allies. If people knew what I experienced in the past several years, they would understand that I am not supposed to be here. But like a cat with many lives, I am spared by another opportunity from His wrath.

Thank you to my mother, Krishona Gilliard, for instilling the work ethic in me to perform well. Watching your persistence in online nursing programs while taking care of your children demonstrated to me that nothing earned comes with ease. We come from a family of vocational trades and healthcare services, so allowing me to pursue education was the best thing you could have done. I appreciate you for always letting me be different, even though it can be awkward at times. I do not know what I could have done without you by my side. You are my companion, confidant, and caregiver. I love you, dearly.

I express gratitude to Dr. Paul Anderson for helping to convince me to enroll at Clemson. I also am grateful to Dr. Michael Meng for his role as my cohort's advisor. I owe credit to all of the professors I studied under as a student and worked for as a teaching assistant. To my fall 2019 cohort, we have a bond connected by a collective struggle that I will never trade. And to Drew Johnson and Ariel Moore, I cherish you both for being my friends of the past and lovers for the future.

Lastly, to Harvey Bernard Gantt, thank you for all that you have done for the land grant school in Upstate South Carolina and Charlotte's growing city in North Carolina. Your journey in life is a testament to your benevolent faith and humble roots.
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INTRODUCTION

During my senior year of high school, I read an excerpt from Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* for my AP English Literature and Composition class. It was riveting to hear about the opportunity that the unnamed black narrator had to earn a scholarship for an all-black college. To attain financial aid, he had to endure a brutal battle royal with his fellow black male classmates amid the southern town's white elite. The naked white woman in star-spangled banner paint parading in the middle of the ring represented the temptation of the American Dream sought by outsiders. Greed was exposed to the poor as the rug with money electrocuted the black students who ran towards it. The main character tries to maintain his dignity in quoting Booker T. Washington in his commencement speech after the gruesome gauntlet match. However, he rubs white supremacy's feathers wrong when he says the wrong thing in "social equality" for blacks rather than "social responsibility." Still, his participation as their white entertainment afforded his black education. Barack Obama cited the novel as inspirational in shaping his 1995 memoir *Dreams of My Father.* I think about the trials and tribulations that this first chapter introduces to me. Being black in a white setting is like working twice as hard for half as much. Despite the protagonist gaining a chance to be a credit to his race, the possibility to perform well within their white institution of higher learning would be not only forbidden but unthinkable.

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1 AP stands for Advanced Placement. The high school program is under the College Board organization, which is also responsible for the SAT standardized test. In taking the courses, students have the opportunity to earn college credit via an end-of-year exam based on each school's scoring criteria. This not only allows for high school students to save money on general education classes, but demonstrates to admission offices that they are challenging themselves in schoolwork that replicates college rigor. “What Is AP?” New York City, NY: College Board, n.d. [https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/what-is-ap](https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/what-is-ap).


While attending primary school in Georgetown, South Carolina, I realized that racial segregation was not explicit in everyday life but implied. The Lowcountry part of the Palmetto State felt like a stereotypical black and white world to navigate. Main service hours in the church between AME and Baptist denominations were the most segregated times on Sundays. Certain areas' demographics could be distinguished by how dilapidated or developed the living spaces looked. The most glaring difference I have seen in the port city was the class rosters' structure in standard classes versus honors and Advanced Placement. According to recent studies, gifted and talented programs create a new caste system for educational racism.\(^4\) Conducting special testing for students to jumpstart into more challenging classes creates this influx of demand similar to "white flight" as suburban neighborhoods desegregated. For the most part, I was a standard student at Georgetown Middle School. There was an interest in challenging myself further with getting entry into this program, but the circumstances were difficult to move ahead in. By the time I enrolled in Algebra II, there were honors classmates I had that were taking Geometry Honors. I was struggling to play catchup against a ladder where my location was at the lower end.

It was not until ninth grade at Georgetown High School when I requested to enroll in Honors World History. It was the only honors credit that was on my transcript at that point. As one of the few black students taking the course, I could see the dichotomy in curriculum and color compared to the standard courses. We read Herman Hesse’s *Siddhartha* for its moral lesson of fasting. Then we critically analyzed Stanley Kubrick’s film *Spartacus* for its subjectivity of

\(^4\) Similar to AP, the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program used placement tests for students to gain access for harder coursework in their primary and secondary education. Propelled by parental pressures and schools' perceptions of who can be successful in post-grad, a “school within a school” dynamic was created to reflect more white and Asian representation in these special programs than Black and Latinx. Purtle, Whitney. “The Other Segregation.” Washington, DC: The Atlantic, Published April 23, 2019. [https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/gifted-and-talented-programs-separate-students-race/587614/](https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2019/04/gifted-and-talented-programs-separate-students-race/587614/).
the lower-class unrest in response to the government. Overall, we chronologically studied various international dynasties that preceded the Western Hemisphere. Many of the fellow Georgetown Bulldogs I befriended in the honors class would become undergraduate students at Clemson, the University of South Carolina, the Citadel, College of Charleston, and Coastal Carolina. These are some of the best public schools in the state of South Carolina.

Nevertheless, this early strive towards post-graduate success was not demonstrated in my standard Earth science and English classes. Few of the classmates I had taken courses with later went to Claflin and South Carolina State. Others at Georgetown did not attend college at all. Yet, I would argue that these differences in academics, race, and preparedness can come down to the anonymous philosophical quote: "Be the energy you want to attract." Therefore, the majority-white honors/AP classes worked towards applying to college while the predominantly Black standard courses were concerned with passing the state objectives. In retrospect, I am grateful for my mother in her faith to move our family to North Carolina for a better opportunity in 2011.

Joining my family to live in Charlotte in the summer of 2012, I finished my secondary education at West Mecklenburg High. On the first day of my sophomore year, I can recall spewing disgust for the school on Facebook after witnessing the learning environment's violent and rude nature. Likening my limited experience to the movie *Lean On Me*, I pleaded with my parents to transfer me back home to South Carolina.5 West Meck is one of the city's most underperforming high schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools District.6 It is a Title I

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5 Based on Joe Louis Clark's real-life story, the movie *Lean on Me* tells a tale of a turnaround for one troubled New Jersey high school to get their act together. Threatened by the state to improve test scores and behavioral issues, the principal portrayed by actor Morgan Freeman plays a pivotal role in changing Eastside High's direction. I reference this film to illustrate the comparison in a chaotic environment to West Mecklenburg. Avildsen, John. *Lean on Me*. Paterson, NJ: Warner Bros, Released March 3, 1989. Film.

6 Between the 2015-2018 academic years in Charlotte-Mecklenburg county, West Mecklenburg High received a “D” grade by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Johnson, Mark. "North
school, which means that state funding helps the public school due to its high percentage of children from low-income families. The racial makeup at West Meck included primarily underrepresented minorities, particularly Black and Latinx students. The local news station took advantage of the chance to cover my alma mater for the bad press. There had to be a reason for this.

Established in 1951, West Mecklenburg High racially integrated two decades later in the 1971 school year. I found this information from an old episode of CBS's *60 Minutes* television show covering the class reunion. Founded as an all-white school during the era of Jim Crow laws, the school district as a whole is infamous historically for the Swann V. CMS Supreme Court case that required busing to encourage racial integration. Physical strife occurred on the

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7 Another component of the Title I program under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is providing free and/or reduced lunch to nearly all students during regular school hours to combat food insecurity at home, especially for the low-income population. "Title I." Charlotte, NC: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, n.d. [https://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/westmecklenburgHS/Pages/Title1.aspx](https://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/westmecklenburgHS/Pages/Title1.aspx).


9 In this episode, the West Mecklenburg High Class of 1971 congregated together for their 20th-year class reunion. The alumni recounted with the TV show host on the rough 1970-1971 academic year where the school was forced to integrate. About 350 African American students were bused to the all-white West Meck High School on Tuckaseegee Road to much dismay and violence. Dixon, Evan. “60 Minutes-West Mecklenburg High School Class of 1971.” *60 Minutes*. Charlotte, NC: CBS, Debuted originally on September 13, 1992. Uploaded later via YouTube on December 17, 2011. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtIwEy1bavY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtIwEy1bavY).

10 Reverend Dr. Darius and Vera Swann were a black couple seeking to enroll their son James into a local North Carolina school in 1964. Seversville Elementary School was one of the few integrated schools in Charlotte. It was also closer to the Swans than the school James went to before. Their request for his transfer was rejected. The school district instructed James to attend an all-Black school in a different region. As a result, the NAACP sued CMS. The case moved from the federal district court all the way to the US Supreme Court. Smith, Clint. “The Desegregation and Re-segregation of Charlotte’s Schools.” New York City, NY: The New Yorker, Published October 3, 2016. [https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-desegregation-and-resegregation-of-charlottes-schools](https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-desegregation-and-resegregation-of-charlottes-schools).
campus as armed forces had to enforce desegregation three and a quarter years after the *Brown V. Board of Education* federal decision. Nevertheless, West Meck High was not alone in its opposition to forced integration. In the mid-to-late 1900s, many schools were slow and stagnant to open their doors to people of color. To whites, it was like asking them to practice another religion other than Christianity. Letting blacks into white spaces was viewed as an attack on the typical way of life. Those comfortable with the conditions were not ready to accommodate newcomers. In 1957 at Little Rock, Arkansas, state guards opened the high school and escorted African American students to class.\(^\text{11}\) As I read in history books, the scenery shook me about the bravery and boldness those kids of color had. Threats came by outside and local violence. They were shunned from their peers and were pushed to leave. Even so, the Black students built thick skin and persisted onto graduation because they wanted an equal, local education.

Later as a West Meck Hawk, my feathers got ruffled a few times. After my tenth-grade year, I got beat up & robbed for my iPad while walking near my neighborhood. It was days after quitting my first job that summer, on the brink of termination. My grandmother was in stage four of pancreatic cancer during my junior year. The woman who encouraged me to join my immediate family in “the North State” for a greater standard of living, given her restricted life in South Carolina, was not able to live to see me succeed. She passed away eleven days before my eighteenth birthday. Speaking on behalf of the family at her funeral was one of the hardest things

\(^{11}\) The protection only happened due to President Eisenhower’s reversing act when the jurisdiction led to the nation’s highest executive stepping in on local events. Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus commanded the state National Guard to prohibit the black students from entering Central High, which was all-White at the time. After meeting with him, the 34th President saw that Faubus was adamant about maintaining racial segregation in the South. The African American students enrolled in much turbulent opposition with little help from the top Arkansas executive. Called up by Little Rock’s mayor, the US President intervened by not only controlling the Arkansas National Guard but including more federal troops to enforce the *Brown V. Board* decision that Faubus so vehemently denied. Smith, David. “Little Rock Nine: the day young students shattered racial segregation.” New York City, NY: The Guardian, Published September 24, 2017. [https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/24/little-rock-arkansas-school-segregation-racism](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/24/little-rock-arkansas-school-segregation-racism).
I had to do. My sister became pregnant in my senior year at age sixteen. Thus, with death came new life.

Despite all of this, at the end of high school in 2015, I graduated as a top ten senior. The road to graduation was not academically problematic but socially and economically. For instance, West Meck High suggested AP and honors courses more for the well-behaved students to enroll in rather than academically gifted ones. Therefore, the class settings were not the most accurate representation of “the best.” But with the competitive drive I possessed, my pathway to undergraduate education was a breeze. Reflecting on my time in Georgetown, I would not attain this chance to advance back home. Following commencement, I was on my way to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, to begin my UNC journey that summer in a bridge program for first-year students. Making it out of my circumstances, I persisted in applying for scholarships to a point where I received a full-ride. All I had to do was keep my grades up, stay out of trouble, and finish my degree on time. With a will to work my way out of urban shortcomings within West Charlotte, I was not a victim of the "school-to-prison" pipeline as a young black man.

I have nothing against Black students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). North Carolina Central University in Durham, North Carolina, delivered my first college acceptance letter. NCCU is not too far from the greater Raleigh-Durham region from my undergraduate alma mater in UNC. Doing a bit more familial research, I learned that my grandma attended Voorhees College, a private Black school in Denmark, South Carolina. My mother nearly went to Clark-Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia, after high school had she been able to receive adequate financial assistance. HBCUs have an essential place in staking the claim for African Americans attaining social mobility through higher education. As a Ronald McNair Scholar at Chapel Hill, I discovered the story of how early racism shaped the NASA
Black astronaut's trajectory to another state for school. A native of Lake City, South Carolina, he had aspirations of studying at nearby University of South Carolina. But USC-Columbia denied McNair based on the color of his skin. Therefore, he attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, a public Black land grant school in Greensboro, North Carolina. The first three Black undergraduates at the University of North Carolina in John Lewis Brandon, Leroy Frasier, and his brother, Ralph, would not finish as Tar Heels but as Eagles at North Carolina Central.

Understandably, there are still reasons why these schools are here and should remain. For many of my high school classmates at West Mecklenburg, HBCUs served as Last Chance U for them to obtain access to a college education. But if those places of higher learning secluded black students as their only option, educational segregation of resources would happen with the
haves and have nots between Predominately White Institutions (PWIs). Recently, minority schools in the UNC System like Elizabeth City State University and Fayetteville State University face the threat of being defunded and closed down.\textsuperscript{15} My parents encouraged me to apply to and attend the best state schools for my major I wanted to pursue. It just so happens that the flagship universities are it instead of the sister schools. This same strive for excellence is similar in artists' dreams of earning a Grammy or Oscar instead of a VMA or BET Award.\textsuperscript{16} Going to a Title I school, I witnessed many dreams of minority students die harshly before applying themselves in real work. The worst thing you can tell someone is that they cannot do something, according to various inspiring figures that I admire. In response to that claim, people are bound to prove naysayers wrong. And that is why I need to recognize those black and brown students who came before me to break down barriers and build bridges for people like me.

Before enrolling in graduate school at Clemson University, I was aware of who Harvey Gantt was. He was the first Black mayor of Charlotte, NC, serving two terms.\textsuperscript{17} Three African

\textsuperscript{15} With ten HBCUs that are members of the overall 17 schools within the UNC System, funding for these institutions has recently been under threat. In contrast with PWIs, the investment in research, infrastructure, and scholarships/grants fall shorter for the Black universities. Having similar programs in bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. to their counterparts, the problem is about equity and not equality. Burns, Matthew. “Lawmakers, students want parity funding for HBCUs in NC.” Raleigh, NC: WRAL-TV, Published May 15, 2019. https://www.wral.com/lawmakers-students-want-parity-funding-for-hbcus-in-nc/18388967/.

\textsuperscript{16} In 2016 when the Motion Picture Academy released the Academy Award nominations, a glaring concern arose with the lack of diversity in race and gender for nominees. Critics viewed the disparity deeply within categories like Best Picture and Best Actor/Actress. It spawned the Twitter hashtag #OscarsSoWhite in protest of the absence of Black and brown blockbuster films like \textit{Straight Outta Compton}. This importance of representation in major award shows raises a concern for validation for people of color in historically white venues. Not to mention, stereotypical roles in servitude and crime have won many Oscars for black actors/actresses. Ali, Rasha. “The Oscars were never meant to be diverse, and we can stop pretending as if they were.” McLean, VA: USA Today, Published February 6, 2020. https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/movies/oscars/2020/02/06/oscars-why-we-need-stop-waiting-diverse-nominations/4595861002/.

\textsuperscript{17} Harvey Gantt was elected as Mayor of Charlotte in 1983, serving until 1987. When he first arrived in North Carolina after graduating from Clemson, he had difficulty getting a hotel room due to segregation. Gantt had made it clear that his entry into Clemson two decades before was a factor as to why he ran for local office. WCNC Staff. “Former Charlotte Mayor Harvey Gantt has made history more than once.” Charlotte, NC: WCNC News, Published February 18, 2020.
American local leaders have followed suit. The current mayor in Vi Lyles is the city's first Black woman to serve.\(^{18}\) As a North Carolina resident, I have visited the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Culture and History in Uptown Charlotte a few times. My first visit to the Jacob's Ladder exterior-themed Afro-American Center on North Tryon Street was in the fall of 2013 for a Char-Meck Schools youth summit for student governments around the district.\(^{19}\) Gantt is more known for his campaign loss for the North Carolina seat in the US Senate against his Republican opponent Jesse Helms.\(^{20}\) But before Harvey cemented his political legacy in the Tar Heel State, his lore in education began as the first black student at the Upstate SC school.\(^{21}\)

\(^{18}\) Vi Lyles became the first black female mayor of Charlotte, NC, in 2017. Three years before, I received a hand-written letter from her after earning the Academic Award for my high school AFJROTC unit at the CMS JROTC End-of-Year Ceremony. At the time, she was a member of the city council. She expressed congratulations on my hard work and achievement. It is incredible to know that you connected with someone before they reached their fruition of success. McFadden, Jonathan. “10 Black Charlotteans Who Have Transformed Our City’s History.” Charlotte, NC: Charlotte’s Got A Lot, n.d. 

https://www.charlottesgotalot.com/articles/arts-culture/10-black-charlotteans-who-have-transformed-our-citys-history?token=WdinjCB6oQYy1zm3y3Gjhv-talTiV2BZ.

\(^{19}\) Phil Freelon of Raleigh, NC, helped to design the center through his architecture firm. The Freelon Group is known for its work on the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. The Gantt Center's outdoor pattern pays homage to the Myers Street School, the oldest black school in Charlotte before integration occurred. The latter was nicknamed "the Jacob's Ladder School" for its cunning fire escape plan built into the building. Skinner, Sarah. “Architect Phil Freelon's legacy reflected in 'Jacob's ladder' design of Gantt Center.” Charlotte, NC: The Charlotte Observer, Published July 11, 2019. 


\(^{20}\) Harvey Gantt lost to Jesse Helms twice in the running for US Senate as an NC representative. He first ran unsuccessfully in 1990 and failed again in 1996. Notably, Jesse Helms’ "White Hands" ad about affirmative action racial quotas was the bullet that killed Gantt's campaign, according to the former Charlotte mayor. Tomlinson, Tommy. “SouthBound: Harvey Gantt.” Charlotte, NC: WFAE 90.7 Radio, Published November 15, 2017. 

https://www.wfae.org/post/southbound-harvey-gantt

\(^{21}\) In 1963, Harvey Gantt integrated Clemson College as the school's first African American student. A transfer student originally from Charleston, SC, Harvey only gained entry after filing a class-action lawsuit against Clemson, which made its way to the federal courts that ruled in favor of him. With the state government of South Carolina and school administration, the day of desegregation lacked the violence that Ole Miss, Georgia, and Alabama had when their black students enrolled. Saturday Evening Post writer George McMillan deemed the moment in January as "integration with dignity." Lewis, Camille. “Integration with Dignity": The Inside Story of How South Carolina [Convinced White America that it had] Kept the Peace." San Francisco, CA: Medium, Published October 8, 2017. 

On January 19, 2020, I enjoyed meeting Mr. Gantt with the Clemson Gantt Multicultural Center at his namesake building in my hometown of Charlotte, NC. It was the day before my 23rd birthday. I went with the diversity and inclusion office to their annual Dr. Martin Luther King weekend alternative break, with that year being in North Carolina. We traveled to Greensboro, NC, to tour North Carolina A&T State University, see Winston-Salem State University in Winston Salem, NC, and visit the Gantt Center in Uptown Charlotte. On our final day in "the Queen City," Clemson students like me were in for a big surprise. Harvey arrived in the large art gallery where we were sitting to roaring applause. Following some brief time of hearing Harvey speak about his time at the college, he opened up the discussion for any questions. With the theme of our MLK weekend trip surrounding the 60th anniversary of the "Greensboro Four" lunch counter sit-in, I asked Harvey about his heroism on April 1st, 1960, precisely two after the latter event.22 Reading Dr. Skip Eisiminger’s Integration with Dignity, the 2003 publication made out to cover his climb into Clemson on its 40th anniversary, I came across an early act of bravery back in his heyday.

In high school, Harvey and George Fludd, his classmate, attempted to desegregate the local S. H. Kress department store in Charleston, South Carolina. As a result, police arrested the boys for stirring up trouble to what seemed the natural order of Southern life. Because they were underage, they dropped the charges, however. The cancellation was beneficial for the black boys of Burke High because had it remained on their criminal record it could have affected them in applying for college. Like Gantt, Fludd would apply to Clemson for admission later too. When

22 Inspired by the February 1, 1960 sit-in event by NCAT students at Woolworth's in Greensboro, NC, Harvey Gantt and Cornelius Fludd sought to desegregate the local S. H. Kress department store in Charleston, SC on April 1, 1960. The Black boys from Burke High got charged with "trespassing," being issued a $50 fine each and posting a $10 bail. The authorities dropped the charges on them later due to their minor status. Eisiminger, Skip. Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono.
answering the question, Harvey Gantt not only seemed a little startled by the flashback but by the fact that I addressed him by his first name, breaking the respectability in age decorum. How could a 20-something-year-old student know about an act of bravery he did over half a century ago? But with such a storied life, I was surprised North Carolina and South Carolina students did not study him as a regional hero in their primary and secondary education.

After the talk, I thanked him for what he did architecturally for buildings around the city. More importantly, I expressed gratitude for his early advocacy for the Stone Center, the black cultural center at the University of North Carolina. It meant so much to remind him of his local work in my last remarks before departing back to South Carolina with the Clemson group of students. To me, he was a small representative of the “why” in where I am now at his alma mater. The free-standing building in Chapel Hill, NC, celebrated 30 years during my senior year at Carolina. Earlier that week, Gantt turned 77 years old on January 14. Over half a centennial is what separated Harvey and me that day. At the time, he was the same age as the US Presidential candidate and former Vice President, Joe Biden. He was old enough to be my great-grandfather yet still physically able to walk fine as a young man. In 2015, I lost not only my grandmother to cancer but my great-grandmother to natural causes. The latter was able to survive longer than the former, and she had breast cancer. It was very ironic meeting Harvey at the Gantt Center; typically, important people receive honors like that after passing. I wondered how Harvey felt about these many recognitions dedicated to him and his living legacy. And honestly, meeting him was a beautiful thing in seeing an older, dignified black man in an era where black males'
life expectancy is threatened. Hence, he symbolizes a life goal in wisdom, aging, and health. One of my favorite musicians is Kanye West who once said in a song, "If you admire somebody, you should go ahead and tell them. People never get the flowers while they can still smell them." In that microcosm of a moment, it was my chance to do so. But it would not be the last time we would meet.


25 This picture captured the first time that I met Harvey Gantt on January 19, 2020. He stopped by the Gantt Center for African American Culture and History in Uptown Charlotte as a special guest that evening for the Clemson Gantt Multicultural Center's annual MLK weekend trip. I later met with Gantt
Three years before in 2017, I received the UNC Harvey Beech Scholarship when our men's basketball team won the national championship. It is tough to forget April 3, 2017. Dedicated to the first African American graduate of North Carolina who helped to integrate its law school, I was a decade too late to meet him when I first came to campus. Harvey Beech was already deceased. After earning the financial award, I dug deeper into inquiring about Harvey Beech's time at UNC. Raised as a native son of Kinston, NC, and classmates with Dr. King at Morehouse during his undergraduate years, Beech came into Carolina as one of four black law students. After suing the University for blocking their admission, they entered Chapel Hill in 1955. Lawyer Thurgood Marshall represented them in the federal courts before his fame grew as the first black US Supreme Court justice. When he sought to attend a football game in Kenan Stadium, the UNC Chancellor allowed him to do so only if he sat in a segregated section. Harvey Beech was the first of the quartet to come out of Carolina with a law degree in 1952. I had so many questions about what made him remain loyal to a school that initially did not want him there. I drove to the Eastern North Carolina region in March 2019 to see his replica Old Well water fountain by his old law firm in downtown Kinston. The first two of three Black undergraduate students passed away during my junior year. They now have scholarships named in their honor. If I had the chance to talk to them, I would thank them as I did to Harvey Gantt. 


26 The information provided came from an article released by the Carolina Alumni Review days after Harvey Beech's passing. It covers his storied pathway to UNC School of Law, involvement with the Alumni Association as "a first," and formidable encounters faced as one of the first African American students at the nation's oldest public university. "Harvey Beech '52 Never Liked Being First." Chapel Hill, NC: Carolina Alumni Review, Published August 10, 2005. https://alumni.unc.edu/news/harvey-beech-52-never-liked-being-first/.

27 Less than a month after Leroy Frasier passed away in December 2017, the second of the first three black undergraduates to enter UNC passed away in January 2018. Ralph Frasier is the only one left living in the trio. Waggoner, Martha. "2 of 3 men who helped desegregate university have now died." Raleigh, NC: Associated Press, Published January 24, 2018. https://apnews.com/article/f9c4114c73ec47c4b818d83b28689d14.
Because although I never met them, I felt like I knew them through the library archives where I read about their college life. Thus, when we met Harvey, I sensed that I knew him. That is what compelled me to call him by his first name because I saw a bit of his younger self in me. And although I suffer from imposter syndrome in being one of a few black students in the classroom, I understand that I am not the first to bear this burden of “being the only one.”

In reading his biography, I had a better idea of who he was than others. But there is more to the lore of the story that is hidden. In the fall of 2019, my classmate and I filmed a video as a social experiment at Clemson for how familiar current students were with the pioneering person of color. We concluded that many were unaware of whom he was, despite filming the video by his historical markers by Tillman Hall on the campus. The telling of Gantt's coming to Clemson is integral to comprehensive public education in the Palmetto State. But before 1963, Clemson observed Tuscaloosa in 1956, Athens in 1961, and Oxford in 1962.\(^{28}\) In doing so, the college defined itself as a difference-maker for a peaceful transition in the face of racial agitation for Black students entering white schools. In the schools mentioned earlier, their university administration, alumni, and students have made concerted efforts to remember their significant pioneers of color. By renaming problematic campus buildings, erecting life-sized statues, and granting apologies to them for the troubles they had integrating, a reversal occurs where yesterday's wrongs become right for those today. In my quest to delve deeper into this more, Clemson University has not done a good job honoring Harvey and his wife Lucinda. With the COVID-19 pandemic ensuing, his age group is the most threatened. Gantt graduated with honors from Clemson in 1965 with a degree in architecture. Therefore, physical structures are

\(^{28}\) These examples of violent desegregation at other Southern schools provided the blueprint for what South Carolina needed to do next in Clemson's admission of Harvey Gantt. Newman, Betsy. Carolina Stories: The Education of Harvey Gantt. Columbia, SC: South Carolina Educational Television, Released on February 7, 2013. Film.
meaningful representations for him. But nowhere on campus are there any visible university buildings that bear people of color's names. This omitting of a building bearing Gantt's title begs the question about authority in physical structures and name dedications on college campuses. In recent years, Clemson has had difficulty combating its history as current students expose the past's dark details for whom these buildings honor. In today's time, many colleges and universities around the country pride themselves on diversity and inclusion. As there is an increase in enrollment, more students of color who couldn't attend 50-60 years ago are doing so. But if these higher institutions are committed to serving diverse communities, they should not carry symbols and structures that otherwise contradict their current mission. Beyond Harvey Gantt, there is a lengthy lineup of pioneers of color from which Clemson can choose to highlight in architectural honoring. For example, with Clemson Football being a staple for the university, a statue for the first black football player in Marion Reeves or Homer Jordan, the first black quarterback who led the team to a national championship, should be erected. Other than some signage inside Tillman Hall, a historical marker outside the campus building, and the circle around Thomas Clemson's statue bearing his name, there are no larger projects that carry Harvey Gantt's likeness at Clemson University. There are currently no university facilities named after people of color or women at the Upstate flagship school. Given his background in architecture and design, this is very startling. With all that in mind, I will revisit the infamous cases of integration leading up to Harvey Gantt and trivializing the difference in his "conflict-free" entrance. In the end, my goal is to lay an argument for the Clemson University Board of Trustees to begin the process of establishing a foundation to crowdfund for an actual free-standing building in the Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center.
James Meredith first expressed interest in the University of Mississippi in January of 1961. Sending in a written letter to inquire about the application process, the admissions team had no clue that he was Black. He filled out the application with a discrepancy note at the end,

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29 James Meredith stares into the camera as the local newspaper reads the in the enlarged caption of his lawsuit winning his entrance into Ole Miss. (NPR/Debbie Elliott). 
saying that he still shares the values of Mississippi (or more affectionately known as Ole Miss) despite not being white. "I am an American-Mississippi-Negro citizen." declared Meredith.\(^{31}\) There was a certain duly hope that he would gain a shot at higher education. But the trajectory to Oxford would be a tremendous one for him.

Born on June 25th, 1933, in Attala County of Mississippi, physical work shaped his upbringing and later prepared him for mental escape through education. The Meredith family worked cotton fields and animal farms, earning little income to sustain a living. His father, Cap Meredith, emphasized the importance of taking school seriously for James. Both Meredith and his mother, Roxie Meredith, had a limited education that did not make it beyond middle school. Therefore, the next generation of their lineage had to extend past the familial deficit. Other than that, the conservative values taught to him and religious lessons instilled in him shaped Meredith significantly.\(^{32}\) He sought a stable marriage, wanted to own his own home, keep a steady job, and be educated rather than ignorant. He attended Kosciusko’s Wesley Memorial Chapel for church services at his father's request instead of worshipping at local services. There he received very structured teaching on faith that differed from Baptist churches. In 1950, his family sent him to Florida at his uncle's place to finish high school.\(^{33}\) Wanting better for Meredith, he had stellar grades when he graduated a year later at the segregated Gibbs High in St. Petersburg. Usually, a high school senior would consider the college/university route following graduation. But Meredith could not afford it and opted for the US Air Force.\(^{34}\) While an Airmen, he still maintained close ties to his scholarship by taking classes at different national schools where he was based. Discharged after serving four years, Meredith considered college on the GI Bill. Yet

\(^{31}\) Ibid.


\(^{34}\) Ibid.
after some weeks at Wayne State University, he grew weary of civilian life and volunteered for more years of military service.\textsuperscript{35} This second tenure would take him around the world to Tokyo, Japan. He birthed his first child, bought a Cadillac, managed his money well, and even learned a foreign language.\textsuperscript{36} Still, the more Meredith grew intellectually, the more his consciousness grew as a citizen. During the early rise of the Civil Rights Movement, he felt fired up to participate in social justice efforts. Yet, in his position as an airman of the US Air Force, there was so little he could do politically that would put him in a tough place.\textsuperscript{37} As a result, James Meredith made his way out of the military through his temper and nerves. His early resistance was manifesting before his legal stand at Ole Miss began years later. Upon his second discharge, Meredith and his family moved back to Mississippi. This time he headed toward Jackson State College (now University), a historically black college in Jackson, Mississippi.\textsuperscript{38} However, the education he expected fell short of his expectations, and his thoughts on Black people probed the professors to think more differently. James Meredith was a very odd person from the typical Negro. He wanted Black people to think for themselves, build self-esteem, and think creatively. On the other hand, the black education he experienced did not satisfy those qualities. And with more talk with the NAACP, Ole Miss was a mission of his to accomplish.\textsuperscript{39}

In 1961, a lawsuit was filed against the University of Mississippi by James Meredith and the NAACP. It came as a result of being denied admission many times.\textsuperscript{40} If Ole Miss did not desegregate by choice they would have to by force. This legal action was a common thread when

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Eagles, Charles. \textit{The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss}. Pg. 212-213.
\textsuperscript{38} Eagles, Charles. \textit{The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss}. Pg. 214.
\textsuperscript{39} Eagles, Charles. \textit{The Price of Defiance: James Meredith and the Integration of Ole Miss}. Pg. 218.
\textsuperscript{40} History Editors. “James Meredith at Ole Miss.” New York City, NY: A&E Television Network, Published Feb 2, 2010. \url{https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/ole-miss-integration}
it came to predominantly white institutions in the South following the *Brown V. Board* decision in the 1950s. White schools were slow and inconsistent with adhering to federal law. Unfortunately, legal matters had to be taken into account when protecting Blacks' equal rights to gain an education elsewhere. Reaching the US Supreme Court by appeal, the decision came in favor of Meredith in September 1962.\(^41\) Therefore, the beginning of the end of segregation came to Oxford in the early 1960s. James Meredith registered as the first African American student at Ole Miss that next month, October 1st, 1962. It was an inevitable ruling that Mississippians had to accept. Still, the opening of school doors to African Americans did not come without opposition. At the time, the governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, stood against the United States government in guarding his state against Meredith's arrival.\(^42\) He was a known segregationist like his neighboring states and did not want life at the University to change. Hundreds of white students and citizens awaited by the campus, berating Meredith each day he came to class. In seeking to improve his life, he faced threats. Protected by US Marshals when coming to campus, outside violence ensued during most of his duration there. It got ugly to a point where national guards were sent by Attorney General Robert Kennedy (brother of US President John Kennedy) after the violent riot resulted in two people killed and injured hundreds more.\(^43\) It was a war down in Oxford, Mississippi, and Meredith was not only wanting to make it out alive but succeed and thrive. He did so in 1963 when he graduated from Ole Miss and wrote a personal account of his time titled *Three Years in Mississippi*.  

Today in Mississippi, James Meredith is heralded as a civil rights hero. After his time in college, he participated in the "March Against Fear" from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson,
Mississippi. The method behind what some folk called his madness was to raise awareness for the right to vote for African Americans. In a horrific change of events, he got shot in Hernando, Mississippi. A historical marker now stands there, commemorating the moment in history that pushed Dr. Martin Luther King and other activists to march. In 2006, a bronze statue was made of James Meredith to honor his integral role in integrating the University of Mississippi. This physical reverence is becoming more prominent for people of color pioneers. Last year, the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) unveiled a set of statues erected to the first Black students at that predominantly white institution in Atlanta. At first, Meredith disdained this honor that brought attention to him. Recently, the statue has been a site of vandalism by white supremacist. Former Ole Miss students have been expelled for hanging nooses on the statue and leaving Confederate paraphernalia. Someone did damage to a Confederate monument not too far from the Meredith statue. But in recent times, he has decided that this school is honoring him is meaningful. "This is really a time for change in me and in what I'm going to do," said James Meredith in response to the school newspaper. Although from what I read about Meredith later falling out of faith with the Civil Rights Movement due to his conservative views, he recognized the importance of his place in telling the story of equal rights. With a change of heart on the hallmark statue, he appreciated the respect given to him by his alma mater.

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44 Ibid.
46 Suggs, Ernie. “Georgia Tech to honor pioneering black students.” Atlanta, GA: Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Published September 3, 2019. https://www.ajc.com/news/georgia-tech-honor-pioneering-black-students/iBQFFg0NFgT5s1FZyVBl/
48 Ibid.
James Meredith (in bow tie) and his wife (right) view his likeness in the form of a bronze statue for the first time on October 1, 2006, at the dedication of the civil rights monument at the University of Mississippi (University of Mississippi/Robert Jordan). https://www.upi.com/blog/2014/02/18/James-Meredith-statue-at-Ole-Miss-draped-in-noose-Confederate-flag/9711392754477/
In 1956, Autherine Lucy tried to desegregate the University of Alabama. At the time, it was not a big deal to her as a state native to attend school there. She felt it to be a natural right to want to go to a school within her backyard. Born in 1929 in Marengo County, Alabama, the idea

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50 Civil rights activist Roy Wilkins (left pointing) and Thurgood Marshall (right standing), director and special counsel for NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, accompanied Autherine Lucy (sitting center) in a meeting for her entry into the University of Alabama on March 2, 1956 (Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress). https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2016/2/7/1477252/-The-courage-of-Autherine-Lucy.

of applying came from a close friend who tried to attend and was denied.\textsuperscript{52} When Lucy applied to Alabama, she already had bachelor's degrees from Selma University and Miles College.\textsuperscript{53} Still, it meant so much to her friend that Lucy was the first, as she was denied based on marriage. Her friend, Pollie Ann Myers, was rejected because of the moral dilemma of her being a divorcee and having a baby out of wedlock. With Alabama being within “the Bible Belt” of the South, the administration saw it as cruel to divorce then birth. One supporter in student Emory Jackson said, "We don't care how many cross burnings or camp meetings or whatever they have. We demand equal opportunities for her in everything."\textsuperscript{54} Within three years of legal troubles, Lucy was able to attend, however.\textsuperscript{55}

But obstacles awaited her at the University. She was not granted housing security and could not enter the dining halls. As a result, Lucy had to travel to Tuscaloosa from Birmingham to attend UA. It was not comfortable for some students to attend school with her. In response to this, Lucy was a target for racial intimidation to leave Alabama.\textsuperscript{56} From grotesque verbal words aimed at her to physical displays of threats given, Lucy's graduate school acceptance was under attack as an African American woman. On February 6th, she recalled it as the "day I'll never want to live through again." On her way to another class building, the protesters scared her security guard escort. Students, outsiders, and workers made up the hate mob who had enough Autherine at Alabama. During this time, white people in the South and other parts of the country could not fathom sharing public facilities with African Americans.

\textsuperscript{52} Hollars, B. J. Opening the Doors: The Desegregation of the University of Alabama and the Fight for Civil Rights in Tuscaloosa. Pg. 10.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{54} Hollars, B. J. Opening the Doors: The Desegregation of the University of Alabama and the Fight for Civil Rights in Tuscaloosa. Pg. 13.
Lucy's earlier schools that she graduated from were HBCUs. As those colleges/universities grew, minority schools would implement similar institutional segregation there. At their founding, people of color made up their student body, particularly black people. Thus, the "separate but equal" clause brought by the *Plessy V. Ferguson* Supreme Court case was applicable in a way in both worlds. Protestors sent stones and eggs to her car windows escaping from the madness. Eventually, they cornered her inside a building to where she could not leave. The mob's focus on fear tactics shifted to ordinary day blacks in Tuscaloosa, issuing violence towards them to get out. Students yelled battle chants in celebration of throwing her out of the college. Due to this riot, the NAACP took the University of Alabama to court for conspiring to create chaos.

Ultimately, the court sided with the school citing her arrival as an ongoing issue to the establishment. Thus, Autherine Lucy was expelled from being a student there and had to leave, not only for the school's image but for her safety. This expulsion is one of the few cases where I have seen segregation win instead of integration. It was a significant blow not only for the University's history of managing life with marginalized people but a setback for minorities' rise in higher education. "God knows I didn't intend to cause all this violence. I merely wanted an education."

Decades have passed since that sad moment of departure for Lucy. The football team kept winning, the state remained red politically, and more schools began to desegregate. Despite being expelled back in the '50s, she would become a Roll Tide graduate many decades later in

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57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
1992.\textsuperscript{60} She earned her master’s degree in education a year before but delayed her fateful moment to share with her daughter who completed undergrad that same year.

In 2019 at the University’s graduation commencement ceremony, Atherine Lucy (now Foster) received an honorary doctorate from her alma mater.\textsuperscript{61} To her surprise there was a good reception with a standing ovation, a stark contrast to the flack she received sixty years earlier. "I sat down last night, and when I thought about it, I was crying. The tears were just rolling down my eyes because it is so different and so unique for me to be able to come to such a university as this. That is a wonderful campus out there."\textsuperscript{62} That's what she had to say to the Tuscaloosa News before being recognized for the honor at 89 years old. This reversal is a beautiful case of someone getting their flowers before they are due. After the riot in 1956, it would not be until 1963 when Black students would be allowed at the University of Alabama.\textsuperscript{63} This year in the state is infamous for Governor George Wallace standing in the way of African American students entering the campus to attend class. The school has been open to all minorities and races, even though institutional racism can still work within the flagship school. In addition to earning an honorary degree, the clock tower on campus bears her name, and the college of education bears a historical marker.\textsuperscript{64}


\textsuperscript{61} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
Mary Frances Early, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes at the University of Georgia

66 Sharing a room with Charlayne Hunter at UGA, the photo here shows Mary Early sitting on a suitcase ahead of graduation in 1962. Sharing a room with Charlayne Hunter at UGA, the photo here shows Mary Early sitting on a suitcase ahead of graduation in 1962 (UGA Today/Heather Skyler). https://news.uga.edu/mary-frances-early-georgia-groundbreaker/.

In January 1961, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes began applying to the University of Georgia in Athens.\textsuperscript{68} Two years before, they had been high school seniors in Atlanta receiving excellent educations at a local school. Holmes was a star athlete and valedictorian while Hunter was homecoming queen and editor for their school's newspaper at Henry McNeil Turner High.\textsuperscript{69} Coming from a majority-Black high school to a predominantly white institution meant a lot to them. Not only would establishing a connection at the nation's first public state university lead to social mobility for Black people in the Peach State, but history-making for them to be the firsts. Coming from affluent Black families in the South, not even nearby Georgia State University could have fulfilled their desire for higher education when GSU offered them the opportunity to apply.\textsuperscript{70} They wanted the best a public college education could offer, and the oldest school in the state carried that reputation. The pair expressed their initial interests in UGA by mail.\textsuperscript{71} Inquiring about the application, they sent in the information requested for admission with local community leaders' help. It truly took a village to counsel these kids to apply to the flagship school. At the shock of many in the city, the two students landed themselves on the \textit{Atlanta Constitution}'s front page.\textsuperscript{72} The news was buzzing from the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets to historically Black colleges like Spelman and Morehouse. And while the administration in Athens was devising a plan for their application when they arrived, the Black duo was diligent in becoming Bulldogs. Waiting for their admission to come through, Holmes attended Morehouse and Hunter went to Wayne State University in the meantime.\textsuperscript{73}

\textsuperscript{68} Pratt, Robert A. \textit{We Shall Not Be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia}. Athens, GA: UGA Press, Published in 2002. Pg. 66. ProQuest Ebook Central.
\textsuperscript{69} Pratt, Robert A. \textit{We Shall Not Be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia}. Pg. 71-72.
\textsuperscript{70} Pratt, Robert A. \textit{We Shall Not Be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia}. Pg. 72.
\textsuperscript{71} Pratt, Robert A. \textit{We Shall Not Be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia}. Pg. 73.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid.
As usual in the story of racial integration, legal action had to be taken for the plaintiffs/applicants seriously as part of their student body. As I said before, white schools in the South would not bat an eye at the high court's *Brown V. Board* decision. They were slow to open their doors to Black and brown students when mandated to do so. On January 9th, 1961, the inevitable occurred with them entering onto campus.\(^\text{74}\) Still, like those examples mentioned previously, the arrival did not come without anarchy. Ernest Vandiver, the Governor of Georgia, threatened to close down the school had the two black students stepped foot there.\(^\text{75}\) Student protestors had them lying awake with agitation and anger aimed towards them. People harassed Hunter and Holmes wherever they went on campus. What ended up happening was their dismissal from the school, similar to Autherine Lucy's expulsion.\(^\text{76}\) But a local judge reversed the earlier ban placed by the school.

Interestingly enough, at the time, another Black student at the University of Georgia was inspired by their plight.\(^\text{77}\) Her name was Mary Frances Early, who went to the same school. Transferring from a graduate program at the University of Michigan, she superseded their desegregating the school by becoming the first Black UGA graduate in 1962.\(^\text{78}\) Holmes and Hunter graduated the following year in 1963. Today the Academic Building at Athens, GA, bears their names along with a titled guest lecture.\(^\text{79}\)

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\(^\text{74}\) Today in Georgia History. “Desegregation of UGA.” Savannah, GA: Georgia Historical Society, n.d. [https://www.todayingeorgiahistory.org/content/desegregation-uga](https://www.todayingeorgiahistory.org/content/desegregation-uga).

\(^\text{75}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{76}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{77}\) Richmond, Krista. “Holmes and Hunter-Gault: They followed their dreams.” University of Georgia; Athens, GA. Published Feb 1, 2019. [https://news.uga.edu/holmes-hunter-gault-georgia-groundbreakers/](https://news.uga.edu/holmes-hunter-gault-georgia-groundbreakers/).

\(^\text{78}\) Ibid.

\(^\text{79}\) Ibid.
Charlayne Hunter-Gault helps to unveil the historical marker that chronicles her and Hamilton Holmes’s efforts to break down the doors for minorities to attend the University of Georgia. “UGA Celebrates 40 Years of Integration.” Black Issues in Higher Education, February 1, 2001, 10. Gale Academic OneFile. https://link-gale.com.libproxy.clemson.edu/apps/doc/A70902240/AONE?u=clemsonu_main&sid=AONE&xid=29201830

Dean Denise Spangler, Mary Frances Early, Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion Michelle Cook and President Jere W. Morehead in front of Aderhold Hall. (UGA/Peter Frey). https://news.uga.edu/college-education-named-for-mary-frances-early/
CHAPTER ONE

MY GROWING PRECONCEIVED NOTIONS TURNED CURIOSITY FOR CLEMSON

“Clemson doesn’t have a black legacy… once these youngsters leave; they have a
tendency to stay away.”\textsuperscript{82} Warnings like these over thirty years ago still ring true today when
telling people that I was going to Clemson University. Attending Georgetown Middle School
was the earliest memory in my life where awareness of the land grant campus came. David
Stalvey was one of my classmates there. He was a White honors student who stayed out of
trouble, played sports, and seemed very likable. But the thing that I could never wrap around my
conscience was his love for Clemson. David sported the solid orange whenever he could weekly.
Seeing him more for a South Carolina Gamecock, it did not sit well with me at the time what
little I found out about Clemson. From hearing others talk about the school, I got from their intel
that the college was on a plantation. Like many college football fans today, I had no clue in the
world where to locate the town.\textsuperscript{83} Therefore, resentment as an African American student grew
towards David’s admiration for the school. I associated racism with Clemson in that early
assumption. As my one year of high school in South Carolina proceeded, I learned that several
teachers at Georgetown graduated from the Upstate college. One of them was Mrs. Ivy Palmer,
who was a science teacher for upper-level students. She was an educated black woman,
neighbors with my family in North Santee, and her daughter was good friends with my little
sister. Palmer was the first minority person aligned with Clemson University that I knew. But

\textsuperscript{82} Munro, Jenny. “Clemson plans to lure black students.” \textit{Greenville News}. Greenville, SC: The Greenville

\textsuperscript{83} Heyen, Billy. “Where is Clemson University located? A geography lesson & more facts about the
https://www.sportingnews.com/us/ncaa-football/news/clemson-university-location-geography-
football/1ry2yifqu58if1dazagla204f0#:~:text=Clemson%20University%20is%20located%20in,Clemson%20in%20upstate%20South%20Carolina.
these misconceptions at my young age would change when I moved in with my immediate family in Charlotte, NC, on June 2nd, 2012.

At West Mecklenburg High, Clemson became a bit more familiar with me. Van Smith, who played safety on Clemson's 2016 college football team that won the CFP National Championship in 2017, was my classmate the sophomore year I moved to North Carolina. We had Honors English and Honors Civics & Economics class together during the first semester. There at West, he received an offer and committed to the team. He transferred from West Meck to Hough High that next year. My high school crush would go onto Clemson and, in an unconventional turn of events, become best friends with my long-lost cousin, who attended the school too. Also, my childhood friend Drew attends Clemson for undergrad. I have known him since middle school in Georgetown. Thus, Clemson became a professional choice of education and a personal decision when I applied during my senior year of undergrad at Carolina in 2019.

Still, the local lore of Harvey was a constant reminder earlier on in his livelihood in Charlotte. Anthony Foxx and Patrick Cannon served as the second and third African American mayors of "the Queen City" while I was in high school. President Barack Obama called the former to work in his Cabinet, while the latter resigned after charges of bribery discovered in his campaign placed him in the negative spotlight. Fast-forwarding to my junior year at Chapel Hill, my hometown elected Vi Lyles as its first Black female mayor, serving her second term in the current day. Ultimately standing on College Avenue with my high school crush and

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hometown friend for the night of the 2019 CFP National Championship Game planted the seed for higher education interest in Clemson. The following month, I gained admission into their history department as a graduate student. Later that summer, when I enrolled in biology class at UNC-Charlotte, good news from the past met me by surprise from a former mentor in Mrs. Sherry Davis-Livingston. I got a phone call from my previous choir director at Mt. Zion AME Church in the North Santee community of Georgetown, South Carolina. Not only was she that, but Livingston serves as the Senior 4-H Youth Development Agent County Coordinator for Clemson Extension's Office in Georgetown County. She received emails from the school, which included admission updates, as a university employee. Having seen my name under the graduate school for their history program, she contacted me via my mother to say her congratulations. Her son, Zhabray, was my neighborhood best friend growing up in the Lowcountry. Years before taking Dr. Stephanie Barczewski’s History of Disney Parks course at Clemson, it was the Livingston Family that took me with them on a trip to the theme park in Lake Buena Vista. Aware that she cared so much to reach out for a message of encouragement, "Mrs. Sherry" helped to ease the doubt I had with the idea of graduate school that next season. I could feel okay about returning home, knowing that I did not have to go it alone.

Yet and still, breaking the news to others was not an easy task. Many family members and friends forewarned me about going to the Upstate. A former Carolina staff member who is a Clemson M. Ed. alumna asked me to consider my options regarding other schools when I made it clear to her that I would be attending Clemson that upcoming fall of 2019. My great uncle from

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Georgetown and great aunt in Darlington precautioned me to stay out of trouble when I got there. As a native growing up, I had no clue about the area, both politically and racially. I knew that Columbia had USC, was over an hour away from Charlotte on I-77, held its status at the state capital, and sat above Orangeburg, where HBCUs like South Carolina State and Claflin are. As for Clemson, I became afraid that the area could isolate students of color like me from living freely in my own skin. And history shows the same worries. "Places such as the area surrounding the University of South Carolina are metropolitan and have a solid commuter base. This allows for easier access to the university, which naturally increases black enrollment."88 In a recreational sense, I heard the disappointment in extracurricular activities for students of color outside the college area. With the city of Atlanta and Charlotte about two hours on each end of the college town, there are temptations to leave on the weekend for a different scenery that Clemson cannot provide. One minority student in the past has said, "Carolina is getting Luther Vandross, and we're getting Hank Williams Jr."89

At the time of applying, I lived in the Tar Heel State for up to seven years. Admittedly, the North in the Carolinas taught me more about the world than what I witnessed in limits during my first tenure in South Carolina. There were many events in my home state from afar that I observed with both anguish and awe. From Governor Nikki Haley's ordering down for the Confederate Flag from the state capitol following the Charleston Nine tragic shooting to watching Clemson Football win its second national championship in thirty-five years on my roommate's TV, nostalgia grew into my past life in the Palmetto State. The Silent Sam Confederate statue controversy at UNC-Chapel Hill inspired Clemson to act in its confrontations

with bigotry. In reading about student activism at universities around the nation, I saw some similarities. Something that made Clemson different was their lack of recognition for events in their history that dealt with social justice and racism. That is why going to the Strom Thurmond Institute for archival research felt abysmal. When requesting unique material on Harvey Gantt, the idea of investigating Clemson's infamous integration case looked startling for the desk specialists. It was a difficult time using the library's equipment (and lack thereof) for research. In conversing with a classmate who graduated, she explained that I had to carefully navigate the space for what I wanted as they knew some uncomfortable topics. I have heard the idea before discussing certain taboos in a group setting: Race, Religion, and Republicans (i.e., Politics). Those three characteristics can be divisive as knives. I did not aim to attend Clemson to cause trouble but to raise awareness of the trouble caused.

With the turnover of students graduating, movements tend to die off. After talking with several underclassmen at Clemson, many are not aware of Harvey Gantt, the Sikes Sit-In, nor whom white supremacists some buildings are named after. Eventually, my goal was to confront this absence and fill in the gaps needed to tell a side of the story never discussed. Within the discipline of history, there is a contemporary issue in reflecting on the historiography presented. With more contextualization added with intersectionality, questions happen in who and what presents itself. As visible as the landmarks on Harvey Gantt are inside Tillman Hall, around Gantt and Carillon Garden at Clemson's campus, I do not believe that these physical displays do full justice to the details of his story. Thus, I will strip-build from what is unknown in this tale.

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Born in Charleston, South Carolina, on January 14th, 1943, Harvey Bernard Gantt came into the world through a hardworking, faith-based Black family. The time he grew up was marked by Jim Crow laws in segregated public facilities such as restaurants, restrooms, and hospitals. Ethnicity and race served as a significant jurisdiction for how movement, both physical and socio-economical, could be conducted for African Americans compared to their counterparts. Religion and education were essential staples in his youthhood because of these extrinsic limitations. He worshipped at Morris Baptist Church with family and attended Burke

92 Eisiminger, Skip. *Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt’s Admission to Clemson.* Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. [https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono](https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono).
High School, a predominantly Black high school in the Lowcountry. Still, Harvey would say that legal discrimination and racism were not major factors of his childhood, yet he could not see why they were there. "But there were curiosities and questions we would raise. Why we walked past the white elementary school to the black elementary school. Why we didn't use the water fountain at Belk."\(^9\)

At his June 1960 graduation, Gantt graduated salutatorian of his senior class with an exceptional grade point average.\(^4\) Thus, the young Black scholar had many options as far as higher education goes. In a recent interview with his grandson at UNC-Chapel Hill, Harvey Gantt explained his reason behind applying to PWIs in contrast with attending an HBCU for architecture. "My first notions about going to study architecture were that I should go to the schools that taught architecture to African Americans: Tuskegee Institute, A&T [here in our state], and Howard University. I applied to all those schools and got accepted. But I'll never forget the day a guidance counselor came to me and said, "Harv, I know you can do well in those schools, but I bet you can't do well in a school of predominantly white students who study architecture. Why don't you consider going to a white school or a predominantly white school in order to get trained amongst the predominance of who were architects professionally? They were ninety-nine percent white in this country which is telling of itself how bad things are."\(^5\)

Therefore, the expectations placed on Gantt were high in utilizing the best architectural education one could find. Although the minority schools he listed were excellent science and math for black students, his guidance counselor saw something in him that would break out from

\(^5\) “BHM Discussion-Christopher Holliday speaking with his grandfather, Harvey Gantt.” *UNCTarHeelsAthletics.* Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Athletics, Debuted on February 9, 2021. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2iwn8ONDww&l=98s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2iwn8ONDww&l=98s).
his racial barriers academically. In South Carolina, Clemson was and still is one of the best science, technology, engineering, and math schools. It made sense for the Charleston native to attend the Upstate college in his backyard of the Palmetto State. Based on his parent's background, it was understandable for others to want more of him. His mother did not finish school after the 11th grade, while his father ended his education after 8th grade. However, there was a problem that Clemson had like many other schools in the South: they upheld segregation in their admissions process. Hence, this was an institutional issue that Harvey had a hard time grasping as a kid despite what occurred around him as the way of life and land of Jim Crow laws.

But Harvey Gantt would engage in what Representative John Lewis deems as "good trouble" at a young age. Inspired by the Woolworth Dining sit-in protests by four North Carolina A&T students in their effort to desegregate public restaurants, Harvey was among the twenty-four black students arrested and tried in court for sitting at the S. H. Kress chain store. Fear consumed the minority high school kids for what could happen to them when faced with opposition by violent whites. The possibilities for earning injuries like burns and bruises were realistic based on what they have seen at other peaceful demonstrations. There were severe implications of being violated that the students mentally risked and physically signed up in staging this disruption. Yet, they persisted with a plan of action that took weeks to execute. "Our parents were concerned because we did it without their knowledge. Even colleagues at school didn't know because we wanted the element of surprise." Gantt was seventeen years old during

98 Ibid.
that April 1960 sit-in at the Charleston staple store. With his father serving as a member of the school's PTA club and the town's NAACP chapter, he learned the importance of social justice on the Youth Council of the latter national organization.\(^9\) Nonviolent resistance, best demonstrated by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and SCLC/SNCC in the mid-1900s, appealed to him in getting things done not only correctly but respectfully. One did not want to fight fire with fire but a fire extinguisher. Harvey once said, "If you can't appeal to the morals of a South Carolinian, you can to his manners."\(^10\) With that said, no massive violence ensued that morning at the Kress store. But the children were still in trouble with breaking the law. On April 1st, 1960, each high school student earned a $10 charge for their disturbance.\(^11\)

A few years before representing his case against Clemson College, Attorney Matthew Perry served as the lawyer for Harvey and the other children in their local case against the department store.\(^12\) Ultimately, all the charges dropped for the youth group once the court could find no conspiracy planned. The legal victory was crucial for those involved present and for Harvey, who had to apply for colleges that senior year. Had the charges not been dropped and the students found guilty, it would hurt his chances of transferring to Clemson, where they could pick his criminal record apart.\(^13\) After the case, Harvey tapped back into the Honorable Judge Perry to assist with his lawsuit for admission to Clemson. Perry could perceive the determinism


\(^12\) Ibid.

in Gantt to attend the in-state engineering school. "He approached me with his right hand extended and introduced himself: "I'm Harvey Gantt, a senior at Burke High School, and I want to be an architect. I want to attend Clemson, which has the best engineering program, but I think that might be a problem." At that time, the problem was a state law, which prohibited desegregated education. Thus, Gantt's dream was "a Dream Deferred." He packed his bags and departed for the Midwest where he enrolled at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa in the fall of 1960." Harvey Gantt applied to Clemson College five times during his long-distance excerpt undergraduate education in the Midwest. The school kept denying him, citing minor inefficiencies like transcripts and standardized test scores. As a result, Harvey took them to federal court by filing a class-action lawsuit in the summer of 1962.

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106 Ibid.
CHAPTER TWO
TAKING CLEMSON TO COURT WHEN COUNTED OUT

Representing Harvey Gantt as his primary attorney, lawyer Matthew Perry filed a class-action suit against Clemson College "to enjoin the College from refusing to consider the application of Negro residents upon the same terms as whites." Gantt applied multiple times to

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108 Harvey Gantt, right, meets with his attorney Matthew J. Perry in the Jenkins & Perry law firm. Gantt is the plaintiff in an integration lawsuit against Clemson College, which is to be tried in U.S. District Court in Anderson, S.C. on November 20, 1962. (The State Media Company/Richland Library).

Clemson after graduating from Burke and while attending Iowa State to no avail. Citing a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment, he saw their reasoning for his denial to be racist based on him being African American.\textsuperscript{110} Clemson administration saw his repeated efforts at admission as "a dream deferred." But Harvey had enough of the excuses in his applications denied. On June 13th at Clemson College, an incident sparked this push in the courts a month later.\textsuperscript{111} Harvey Gantt and Cornelius Fludd, his classmate that went to court with him for the Kress store sit-ins, traveled to the Upstate school to inquire about admission. In this instance, the two black students brought it to Clemson's doorstep to get into their house for higher education. Perry joined them in their quest to cover the interview portion of their college application to Clemson. That was the purpose of meeting with the administration. Those present in Director of Admissions Kenneth Vickery, Attorney William Watkins, and Dean Walter Cox listened to the young black men's stipulations for entry with some consideration.\textsuperscript{112} But thirteen days later, on June 26th, Gantt's sense of urgency caused tensions among the school leaders.\textsuperscript{113} He telegrammed Vickery for an interview, to seriously evaluate his application and get a response back to him within forty-eight hours. This hurried effort was a strategic one in forcing the administration to act upon his wishes, particularly in knowing how timely telegram responses worked. But when Gantt received no answer from his request, legal action was the next option.

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\textsuperscript{110} Eisiminger, Skip. Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. \\
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudpMono.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Clemson College Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 21, August 1, 1962; see also biographical sketch of "Harvey Bernard Gantt" in Edwards Papers. Above is a "background" sketch after he applied for admission.
\textsuperscript{113} Eisiminger, Skip. Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. \\
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudpMono.
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Christopher Gantt, Harvey's father, had to represent him as the plaintiff in court due to
the applicant being a minor at the lawsuit's time.\(^{114}\) In the first case at the district courts of
Anderson, SC, the ruling was not in Harvey's favor.\(^{115}\) They founded Clemson College not guilty
of racial discrimination in denying him as an enrolled student. Judge CC Wyche ruled that he did
not complete his full application as instructed by the admissions office. One of the requirements
for the school of architecture was to submit a complete portfolio of his architectural work and
design that he did at Iowa State.\(^{116}\) In the short term, this was a big win for Clemson in delaying
integration in the meantime. There was not going to be much difference in budging for the
barriers to be open for the first Black student at the local level. The College President RC
Edwards's office amassed many letters of approval and praise from the school's alumni and
supporters for maintaining and defending its "Southern Way of Life."\(^{117}\) The state school's social
image was under scrutiny had they folded to federal orders of desegregation less than a decade
earlier in Brown V. Board.

Following the initial defeat, Gantt returned to Iowa State for school again.\(^{118}\) But the fight
to attend Clemson did not end. Gantt's legal team knew they could not settle with the lower

\(^{114}\) Affidavit, In the U. S. Western District of South Carolina, Harvey Gantt, A Minor by His Father
Christopher Gantt Plaintiff vs. Clemson Agriculture College, Nov. 1, 1962. Office of Admissions and
Registration, Records 1893-1970, Series 10, Box 7, Folder 101. After issue of “Special Emergency Exam”
in Disposition hearing, Professor J. L. T. thanked Edwards. "No knowledge of issue … since not reported
remark, Affidavit, pp. 16-18.

\(^{115}\) Affidavits, U.S District Court of Western District of South Carolina, Office of the President,
Correspondence, 1959-1963, Series 11, Folders, 194-211; see also Features, “Order Filed in U.S. Court

\(^{116}\) Biographical Conversations With… “Harvey Gantt: Episode 1: The Young Pioneer.” Research Triangle
Park, NC: UNC-TV, Published on January 28, 2016. https://www.pbs.org/video/biographical-
conversations-harvey-gantt-episode-1/.

\(^{117}\) Eisiminger, Skip. Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson.
Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003.
https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mon.

\(^{118}\) Ibid.
court's decision in being complacent with Clemson admissions. The local community in law mirrored the agricultural school representatives in race and politics. Thus, the early decision came to no one's surprise on Gantt's side. As a result, Matthew Perry tapped Constance Baker Motley of the Legal Defense Fund for New York's NAACP to appeal to the US Fourth Circuit Court. Motley's experience in James Meredith's case at Ole Miss and Hunter/Holmes's UGA situation helped rejuvenate the battle. Motley argued that race was an apparent factor in bearing Gantt from the college. The reasons were Clemson's redirection of Black applicants to South Carolina A&M and the "out-of-state" cost difference that South Carolina would pay for minority students to enroll elsewhere when segregated laws could not allow them to attend in-state white schools. After graduating from Burke High School, Harvey took upon the latter option, trekking to a whole other part of the country to study architecture. Iowa weather conditions in the Midwest are starkly different from the Southern temperatures he grew up in South Carolina. Not to mention, the journey back home for breaks was incredibly long via public transportation. In doing so, he not only demonstrated how much he loved what he did, but it showed how expelling his home state was to his kind. In theory, public colleges like USC and Clemson would pay the difference of tuition for minorities to study somewhere else to make sure their institutions could maintain the majority white populations that went there. In 1955, the state went so far as to create a law school for South Carolina A&M in Orangeburg for African Americans to study instead of desegregating the flagship University of South Carolina Law

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119 Ibid.
121 Eisiminger, Skip. Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. [https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono](https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono).
School. Therefore, Motley stated that Clemson College did not uphold his Fourteen Amendment rights in "equal protection." The school's justification was not about racial discrimination but of admission insufficiency in Gantt's files. There were also deficiencies compared to him being a transfer student with credits that could not crossover accurately.

The circuit court of appeals in Virginia felt tied in their decision-making. They sent the case back to the district court in Anderson, SC, on its merits for argumentation. But the

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125 Federal Judge C.C. Wyche said 11/19 during the hearing of Harvey Gantt’s attempt to enter all white Clemson College that he did not consider the court effort of Gantt as a class action, one that would set a precedent for other Negroes to enter the school. Gantt, at left, is shown with two of his attorneys, Mrs. Constance Motley and W.T. Smith, Jr. November 20, 1962. Anderson, S.C. (Library of Congress). https://upnupnews.com/black-history-moment-harvey-gantt-desegregation-clemson/.

general census was that it was becoming a bit of a circus event in deliberation. The question of who would deliver the decision to let Harvey Gantt into Clemson was still debatable. Yet, the doubt of when was slowly fading away as the inevitable integration approached. The times were changing as African Americans utilized the judiciary system to mobilize for civil rights. It was not always an easy path to equal protection and justice. The media portrayed high-pressure hosing on peaceful protesters in Birmingham and state-ordered police bouldering of Black activists in Selma. Bringing minority students to predominantly white institutions was bound to occur. South Carolina was the last among the Southern states to yield to the Brown federal court decision.\textsuperscript{127} Still, the surrounding states acting on external pressures made it difficult for South Carolina to be different.

The sentiments from onlookers about Clemson College eventually accepting its first Black student were mixed. In reading \textit{The Tiger}, Harvey Gantt inquired that the student body was very concerned about violence ensuing on their campus.\textsuperscript{128} They did not want to mirror the madness in oppositional protest that happened in Oxford, Mississippi when James Meredith tried to enter as the University of Mississippi's first Black student. Not only were a couple of people killed as a result of the rioting, but hundreds suffered injuries in the process. In Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Autherine Lucy received hurtful epithets and harmful objects thrown at her while on-campus. Seeing no adequate means to protect her, it became clear that she was not a significant concern beyond allowing her in. Hence, the University of Alabama expelled her to end the general white students' hatred. At the University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia, tensions rose so

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\textsuperscript{127} Eisiminger, Skip. \textit{Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson}. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. \url{https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono}.

\textsuperscript{128} Biographical Conversations With... “Harvey Gantt: Episode 1: The Young Pioneer.” Research Triangle Park, NC: UNC-TV, Published on January 28, 2016. \url{https://www.pbs.org/video/biographical-conversations-harvey-gantt-episode-1/}.
high among white students following Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes. It got to the point where the school suspended the two Black students for a while until the social climate of UGA was calm. In all, Clemson had multiple examples of how not to welcome Harvey Gantt had the ruling come down that he could enter. They took pride in being a difference-maker for South Carolina. The school transformed over the years from a land-grant institution, a military college, invited co-eds to learn, and was on the brink of mandated desegregation. This case put the idea of "a high seminary of learning" by founder Thomas Green Clemson to the test. Clemson's turn to show the nation how they viewed others outside their majority came up in court. But unfortunately, on December 21, 1962, Judge Wyche reaffirmed Clemson's first stance on limiting Gantt due to his application not being completed fully.\textsuperscript{129} Besides, there was a 1955 statute by South Carolina that declared state colleges could shut down when faced with federally forced integration.\textsuperscript{130} For that reason, Clemson had the choice to "voluntarily" accept Gantt if they so choose to do so.

Consequently, Matthew Perry appealed the case back to Virginia in the Fourth Circuit Court for review. Then, the Fourth Circuit Court reviewed the evidence presented, reversed Wyche's decision, and ruled in favor of Gantt's camp.\textsuperscript{131} The higher court forced Clemson College to desegregate for Harvey Gantt to attend. The matter of if became when and the when was now then. The inevitable was here, and Clemson had to prepare. Harvey earned the right to head back home for an in-state education in architecture. Still, the dilemma of safety loomed

\textsuperscript{129} Eisiminger, Skip. \textit{Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson}. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. \url{https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudpMono}.

\textsuperscript{130} Affidavit, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit (No. 8871), filed Jan. 4, 1963; Affidavit U.S District Court for the Western District of SC, CA/4101.

\textsuperscript{131} Eisiminger, Skip. \textit{Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson}. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. \url{https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudpMono}.
over the administration. How was Clemson going to handle the integration issue? The Board of Trustees met in Columbia, SC, four days before Gantt arrived on campus to register for classes.\textsuperscript{132} They felt defeatism in exercising "all legal remedies immediately available" to prevent Gantt from entering and failing to do so in upper judicial courts. The legal representatives for Clemson brought Harvey's team through a gauntlet match of district and appeal courts. Yet, the expected end to segregation in higher education was to come. The traditionalists realized that around the South as nonviolent resistance earned stride in the streets, and the NAACP earned victories like this one in the courthouse. In that decision delivered down came a determinism to do what was right and lawful. Clemson had a duty to the state to not look dumb and dangerous like the other Southern schools did. The state government and school administration planned a "conspiracy for peace."\textsuperscript{133} Although they disagreed with allowing Gantt to enter their beloved institution of higher learning, they wanted to serve a higher purpose in representing the state well when faced with confrontation in integrating.

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\textsuperscript{132} Board of Trustees, Clemson University, "Clemson Trustees Minutes, 1963 January 24". Minutes 298 (1963). https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/trustees_minutes/298.

\textsuperscript{133} Eisiminger, Skip. Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson. Clemson, SC: Clemson University, Published in January 2003. https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=cudp_mono.
\end{flushright}
On January 28, 1963, Harvey Gantt arrived at Clemson College to register for the Spring Semester. His pastor, father, and attorney joined him in the Lowcountry's long drive to the Upstate. But it was him who had to walk inside Tillman Hall to sign his name as a Clemson Tiger. Matthew Perry stated to Harvey that they brought him ninety yards up to that point. It was up to him to score the touchdown in running the last ten yards. And in the metaphorical sense of Clemson Football, Harvey did so amid massive cameras from local and state news that captured the moment in history. From what was said, no physical altercations occurred to harm him along the way. Top administration made it clear to students that expulsion would result from

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any who acted out of line.\textsuperscript{136} In the grand scheme of things, it was a temporal event that happened and passed. There was not anything controversial that sparked within the Clemson-Seneca-Anderson community. Harvey just wanted to be a student at Clemson after all the years passed, and he got what he wanted.

\textsuperscript{136} Ibid.
There's always more to every story told. I thoroughly believe that, especially when speaking directly with someone who was a part of it. I heard that people who construct autobiographies have a bit of half-truth that seeps out in their stories. It gives the author complete jurisdiction to the plot as to what to include and what not to. Before meeting with and talking to Harvey Gantt, I knew there would be unfiltered things not disclosed to me about his transitional collegiate years at Clemson. He made it clear that he could not tell me everything because he may want to publish it in a memoir someday. Skepticism grew within me, looking at his time in life to make a publication. At the time, Harvey Gantt was seventy-seven years old. I had high doubts that his idea for recording an experience over fifty years ago was accurate. But I respect his decision to keep some matters private. There is power in privacy. Still, something did not

137 “Harvey arrives outside Tillman Hall to a crowd of cameras from the media after registering for class.” African American architect and political pioneer: Harvey Gantt design firm sold to New York-based company. (Dilemma X, LLC). https://dilemma-x.net/2012/12/12/african-american-architect-and-political-pioneer-harvey-gantt-design-firm-sold-to-new-york-based-company/.

138 Drayton, Marquise. “Phone Call with Harvey Gantt.” iPhone X: Charlotte, NC. Called on October 14, 2020.
seem right about his unwavering benevolence towards his alma mater. Why did he not feel the way of exclusion that many minority students stated decades after he graduated from Clemson? In comparing current-day students of color experience with his, a lot has changed, but racism remains. I was not born yet to understand the sheer distance that he faced as the first Black student here, but I can only imagine how that felt in settings where I'm the only one.

I believe the hate that James Meredith witnessed, the slurs Autherine Lucy heard, and the fear instilled in Holmes/Hunter were similar to what social anxiety Gantt experienced. I feel that his faith is a defense mechanism coverup used to suppress some of the traumatic racism he endured while in Clemson. The school's tale of "Integration with dignity" hides many things after Gantt registered in Tillman Hall. Even before getting into the college, it was an uphill battle in the courtroom for Harvey to gain entry. To take an individual or entity to court in a plaintiff v. defendant scenario is inherently oppositional. Clemson College would not willingly accept an African American to join its all-white student body before 1963. By definition, desegregation does not equal integration entirely.\(^\text{139}\) The former in desegregation is an event that forces an establishment to break up or a participant to break through. The latter in integration is the shared effort to include said participant in the community one has now entered. While George McMillan chronicles the calculated and calm day of enrollment for Harvey Gantt for the Saturday Evening Post, the good news was not always covering him on weekdays.\(^\text{140}\) In examining his experience after enrolling, I will break down how the hallmark story of how Clemson kept the peace is far from its peaceful notions.


\(^{140}\text{Burton, Vernon. "Dining with Harvey Gantt: Myth and Realities of “Integration with Dignity” Matthew Perry: The Man, His Times, and His Legacy. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina. Published in 2004. Pg. 194.}
On December 4th, 2020, I had the pleasure of speaking with Dr. Skip Eisiminger. I contacted him in November after exchanging private messages on a Zoom call during the book talk at Clemson for Dr. Rhondda Thomas's 2020 publication *Call My Name*. Dr. Eisiminger (or Skip, as he prefers for addressing) was one of the three former Clemson History professors in him, Dr. Jerome Reel and Dr. Harry Suggs, that wrote and edited *Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson*. We spoke over the phone a few days

141 “Harvey checking out a neighborhood craft that he made.” Integration with Dignity Historical Marker, Harvey B. Gantt and Clemson University. (Clio). [https://www.theclio.com/entry/47915](https://www.theclio.com/entry/47915).
before my interview with Harvey Gantt in Uptown Charlotte. According to him from a trusted source, enemies taunted those associated with Gantt as well.\(^{142}\) Dean Harlan McClure of the school of architecture at Clemson was meeting with Harvey to discuss his portfolio. As mentioned earlier, it was one requirement for undergraduates studying architecture to present their design and work in demonstrating their structural intellect before diving into the curriculum. He did so with Dean McClure at the building to much amazement from the administrator. But wonder in seeing potential at Harvey would transfer to worry and pain at the scene outside the department. Students in opposition to McClure meeting with Harvey for consideration to the program slashed the Dean's tires on his automobile. This vandalism was an intimidating act to warn others in leaving the African American alone to fend for himself.

The other instance that Skip spoke to me about was alarming. According to the same source he inquired with, Harvey Gantt had to retake sophomore English when he transferred to Clemson.\(^{143}\) The credits from Iowa State did not correctly translate out entirely in some general education requirements, and English was one of the courses he needed to retake. Professor Clare Caskey of the English department had the privilege of having Harvey Gantt as one of his students in the mid-1960s. One of the doubts aimed towards him came intellectually. "Is he academically qualified to be here?" was a question constantly raised in evaluating his place there. But Gantt put the inferiority worries to rest in attaining the highest grade at the end of the semester for Caskey's English class with a B+. The professor published students' grades for the course outside his office for them to check. Under current FERPA private protection, these practices ended in recent years while undergrad with our ID numbers next to our class average.

\(^{142}\) Drayton, Marquise. "Phone Call with Skip Eisiminger." iPhone X: Charlotte, NC. Called on December 4, 2020.

\(^{143}\) Ibid.
However, a few days later, Professor Caskey found a vulgar name given to him on the sheet: nigger lover. Thus, opposers did not view Harvey's strive for academic excellence since high school because he earned the highest grade. They saw Caskey's alleged love for an African American as the only way he succeeded. Skip said that another student later crossed out "nigger" and wrote "negro" to be more liberal. We shared a laugh to add a bit of dark humor to the derogatory termed story. But overall, this is not funny when witnessing something like this if it was Harvey who saw it.

As preparations were being made for Gantt to emerge from the Administration Building for his brief press interview on the steps before proceeding to the dormitory, a college electrician came to a second story window and tossed out a power line for use by radio and television cameramen. This brought a burst of laughter from the students. One student used it as a cue to shout: "Here's a lynching rope for you, Harvey."

Another student yelled: "Now where's the noose?"

But again the tone of voice was more closely akin to kidding than to epithet.

**SLED ON HAND**

The only hint of disorder Monday came when State Law Enforcement Division agents ordered two men off the campus, saying: "They had no business here."

A SLED spokesman said the two had been overheard making threatening remarks and had "been under surveillance all night."

A throne of civilian-clad state many of the foreign students at Clemson are also housed in the same dormitory where Gantt will be staying.

Finally, his patience worn thin by the demands of the newsmen, Gantt urged them to leave him alone to rest a few minutes. "I'm tired and nervous," he told reporters. "And I'm tired of acting like a goldfish."

Following his emergence from the dormitory and during his stroll, the distance of about five blocks to the School of Architecture, Gantt appeared weary and reluctant to answer reporters' questions.

The line of students had disappeared by this time, and Gantt walked with head down a good portion of the stroll. His smile came less frequently and during the entire five-block walk, he said only a single word.

This was in answer to a reporter's question as to how he liked Clemson's campus. "Nice," was his monosyllabic reply.

**FINAL PICTURE**

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https://www.facebook.com/callmynamecu/photos/bc.Abosw1GhFVaQTY2UZqI2KryYwNj-
This middle section of the Charleston News & Courier illustrates the sheer horror in-jokes that white classmates had towards Harvey. The misconstrued part of comedy sees through the puns as actual threats promised or playful ridiculing gestures. It is up to the interpreter to decide on whether to laugh in agreeance or leave in disgust. To note first, it was a safety hazard to have a hanging cord from construction at Tillman Hall fall in the open.\textsuperscript{145} But to make matters worse, some of his fellow students suggested that he made use of the mechanical rope to kill himself. With the times in mind, lynching took place for African Americans at a tremendous number in the South. Although a few students said that to him in a cowardly manner, it was a shared idea that they wanted Harvey gone somehow. But going out the violent way says a lot in riding a problem viewed by few.

The two men warned away by the SLED office raise concerns for his safety when not under watch.\textsuperscript{146} In speaking with Dr. Rhondda Thomas at her office, she clearly stated that Clemson could not supervise Harvey all the time. But when he was on-campus, security had to be aware of what he took in. For example, she said that his mail needed to be checked for any explosives. His windows on his residence hall could not show too much lighting due to possible

\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
threats by terrorist groups like the Ku Klux Klan showing up. Placing him in a space where the international students lived did not make much better labeling him "foreign" at Clemson.\textsuperscript{147} Like a tiger put on display at the zoo, Harvey grew weary of his notoriety on campus. The next section of the news article illustrates this. Harvey Gantt made it clear that he was frustrated with the constant news coverage in his daily life in college. The media subjected him with a watchdog gaze to how he would succeed at Clemson to the point where he felt there was no space for privacy outside his dormitory confines. The goldfish analogy best sums this up as the animals are typically indoor aquarium pets.\textsuperscript{148} I also would argue that this is where his reservation in giving intimate details to the public began. With so many different publications making stories about him, Harvey could not control the multiple narratives that came out. As celebrated as "Integration with Dignity" is today at Clemson University, the news in the mid-1900s did not reflect today's positivism. Later as a politician, Harvey combated with his public image.

Even those who have connections to Harvey Gantt had to remind him of the bad that happened to him. Despite his benevolence for his alma mater now, the devil is in the details of what went on then. In "Dining with Harvey Gantt: Myth and Realities of "Integration with Dignity," Dr. Vernon Burton sheds light on the social intimidation directed towards Clemson's first Black student.\textsuperscript{149} A pro-Confederate student waved the Old South's battle flag outside Harvey's residence hall on the first night he was at Clemson. Summoned to the Dean of Students office by the building supervision, Dean Walter Cox explained why the symbol could be dangerous in rallying violence. The student felt so compelled to keep his freedom of expression

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{149} Burton, Vernon. "Dining with Harvey Gantt: Myth and Realities of “Integration with Dignity” Matthew Perry: The Man, His Times, and His Legacy. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina. Published in 2004. Pg. 194.
protected. As a result, he cried at the idea of his protest coming to a halt. Although there are trigger warnings on certain things said in contemporary times, most people would categorize this as hate speech to a particular group.

Gantt could not easily enjoy the social activities that come with being a college student either. At one dance, the organizers sent out a warning to guests saying, "Everyone welcome except Harvey Gantt."\(^{150}\) To single him out, knowing his status as the school's only African American student at that time, says enough in making him feel excluded. In another instance, the administration warned Harvey Gantt not to attend a campus event.\(^{151}\) Brook Benton, an African American singer, had a concert scheduled at Clemson that Gantt wanted to see. Nevertheless, President Robert Edwards kindly cautioned him not to attend the event even though Benton was one of his favorite musicians. Edwards feared that the concert would get out of control when seeing Gantt within the crowd. Yet by surprise, Benton invited him backstage, and no problems erupted as Gantt had a good time at the performance. In Harvey's time as an undergrad, these lesser moments present an opposite viewpoint of what South Carolina saw as dignified in their delayed desegregation.

\(^{150}\) Ibid.
\(^{151}\) Ibid.
CHAPTER FOUR

HEART TO HEART WITH HARVEY GANTT

In writing about Harvey Gantt and Clemson, it would be only suitable to have included him in a project that pertains to his storied legacy at the Upstate SC school. The search for his voice and approval of my thesis began after meeting him with the Gantt Center in January 2020. From there, I consulted with Corrine Grant, Director of Alumni Relations and Development in Clemson's Inclusion and Equity Department. She showed him my GIS Day-winning story map that I presented for my digital history graduate seminar. It detailed the story of how Harvey Gantt integrated Clemson College in 1963, mapped out the historic buildings on campus, and argued why there should be a structure honoring people like him. After speaking to her, she made me aware that there should be something I ought to avoid when conversing with him. I thought about it more while being under lockdown during the COVID-19 health pandemic. One day during the early fall of 2020, I was biking with my hometown friend, Chris McCullough, in Uptown Charlotte. At one point, I parked my bike by the Gantt Center on North Tryon. A white man in a navy SUV with a cargo carrier yells at me while waiting at the intersection: "You know Harvey Gantt was the first Black student at Clemson?" He says this in response to seeing me wear my Clemson solid orange. I reply, "Yeah, I know. I'm a grad student there." Then he says, "I went to East Meck with his daughter, Sonja Gantt." I told him, "She's famous as a news anchor. I went to Carolina with his granddaughter, Gabrielle." The brief encounter was cut short at the sight of the green light, but I thought about our exchange. After a few emails and aligned associations, she made Harvey aware of my outreach.

On October 14th, 2020, I spoke with Mr. Gantt over the phone about my inquiry for an interview. Admittedly, I displayed a very fanboy approach in letting him know that he could trust
me. From having his godson, Dr. Joseph Pinckney, as my family doctor at Atrium Health Riverbend to learning about him when I first moved to Charlotte, I sought to lay the foundation for transparency. Although he admired my detailed knowledge of his life, he wanted to get to the point of what I desired. Harvey was honest about his restraint on time, and I understood it: not only did the novel Coronavirus make it difficult for us to meet, but as a former politician, the city of Charlotte still taps him into current happenings. Therefore, I had one shot at getting his attention, interest, and investment into my project.

I interviewed Harvey Gantt on December 7th, 2020, at 2:30 PM in Charlotte, North Carolina. We met at his former Gantt-Huberman Architect office on North Tryon St in Uptown. Upon seeing him show up, I was surprised to see how able he was at age seventy-seven. Gantt arrived in a new Lexus by himself with his keys to the firm building in hand. To adhere to COVID-19 protocols, I printed out my nasal PCR test results to show him as we interviewed on the second floor. He sat behind a desk in the bare khaki room while I sat across from him with my iPad in hand to record our conversation. Once again, he wanted to know why I needed him and why it was necessary. I told him that I needed to learn more about him during his undergraduate years for my master's thesis paper to add something different to the "Integration with Dignity" tale. Back in our phone call, he was adamant about not telling me too much information, so I was strategic in the way I shaped my questions. Along with the purpose of the meeting, he wanted to know about me too. I informed him of my upbringing in Georgetown, SC, and life in the Tar Heel State as a resident/student. In describing myself, I felt that there were many parallels between us. Ultimately, I explained to him that was the reason why I was so enamored by his story. When we crossed those preliminary boundaries, he was comfortable with
my good intentions. Before recording, we made sure that we were socially distancing appropriately. This summary is a transcribed account of our hour-long talk:

Harvey Gantt: Let’s see, am I six feet away from you? If so, I’m probably not gonna speak with this on. Alright!

Marquise Drayton: How important was it to you to have an in-state undergraduate education as a South Carolina native?

HG: Well, I never thought of it as being important initially because when I came out of high school, my guidance counselor guided me. Clemson wasn’t even integrated at that time obviously. And she felt I was a good enough student that I needed to test myself in white schools. So, the subject of in-state tuition was not broached as a selecting criterion for college. But the aim when I was coming out of high school was to see how many schools I could get in. It included the historically Black schools and good schools of architecture around the country. I got into a few, all of the black schools, and went to school out there. Now when I went to school at Iowa, they had something called “state aid.” If you were an African American student, you were going to a school that was out of state, and you were paying an out-of-state fee, the state of South Carolina would pick it up. So, I got the benefit of, you can call it a scholarship, or the aid. They call it state aid for African American students who went out-of-state in my case, to study architecture, because architecture wasn’t available in South Carolina at the historically Black institutions. Now to answer more directly to your question. It would be, it would have been very important to me to get in-state tuition because it would have been cheaper for me and my family. It ultimately became cheaper after I entered with my wife, the second student, and others because they didn’t have to pay to go to an out-of-state school. In-state tuition was relatively cheap.

MD: Were there any extracurricular activities you were involved in while at Clemson?
HG: No. I attended a couple of Baptist student fellowship meetings because I’m a Baptist by faith and they were the most accommodating of students. So, they invited me to come to some of their meetings and I went to a couple. But I even didn’t become a member of that. My focus, Marquise, was not that I was carrying the race on my back, the black race. I was determined to do well academically and that was the challenge for me. Even if I had been, as I was at Iowa State where I went to school initially. I did not join a lot of things there at all because again, my focus was to be the best architect I possibly could be. I wanted to graduate with honors. All those things because I thought that was going to help me in my career. So, when I came to Clemson, I didn’t change my goals on that. But I also had not the barrier but the hurdle to jump over as to whether groups would even want me in their organizations. I didn’t want to be distracted by those kinds of things: that is trying to join a fraternity, being a member of the track club, or even playing intramural football, which I did do at Iowa State but I didn’t do at Clemson. I used to play football in high school before I went to college.

MD: That’s an important question in regards to faith, which is one of my questions in regards to the resilience that you had. So, let’s go to it: What place did your faith play a role, whether big or small, in your time in college during the Civil Rights Movement era?

HG: Well, first of all, I was a Christian and got baptized when I was eleven years old. I went to the old historic Morris Street Baptist Church and my parents were very active in the church. They made sure we were active in the church. Over time, I actually started doing what I did not because my parents made me do it but because I believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ. When I went away to Iowa, I went to church every Sunday. It was a very different setting than the one I grew up in Charleston because that church was all-white and very few occasional Black students from Iowa State would go to church there. But I was faithful going every Sunday that I was in Iowa. It
helped to make me stronger. I still think a lot of my life is guided by faith in God and believing that whatever happened to me is His Will that will happen. That turns out to be a great source of consolation, a great source of feeling, and confidence in the things that you will try to do just simply because it was Jesus’s Will for me to be doing these things. When I got to Clemson, I was immersed in the Black community, surrounding them for a lot of reasons. #1 They befriended me. They made life very comfortable for me, whether it was taking care of me in the cafeteria line or whether it was just making sure that my laundry was done properly and all those kinds of things. Black people were just proud that I was there and you could see it in their expressions in lots of different ways. So, on weekends, I spent a considerable amount of time when other kids were going to normal things you go to on-campus. I was in the Black community. I got to know people who were part of the maintenance services, janitorial services, the school people who cooked, and the people who worked in the laundry. I just got to know them all. It was an excellent relationship. I also then went to their churches every Sunday so I got to know everybody there. I used to sing in the choir in high school in Charleston, continued to do that while I got the opportunity even in Iowa and certainly when I went to the Baptist church near Clemson.

MD: I grew up in the AME church going to Mt. Zion in North Santee, a black community of Georgetown, so there were various where we went to Kingstree to like YPD Summits. We went to Mother Emanuel too.

HG: I spent a lot of time at Mother Emanuel. You didn’t call it Mother Emanuel back then. You just called it “Emanuel.” But I have high school friends who were members there. None of us could project the horrific thing that occurred in that church so much later in my life.
MD: That happened during my first-year summer at UNC. I had just left West Meck, graduating at Bojangles Coliseum. Can you tell me how helpful it was to have Lucinda Brawley as your second Black classmate in the fall of 1963 at the college?

HG: Well it was helpful enough that I fell in love with her. I mean, that was like a fairytale. But it was very uplifting for me to see another Black student come to Clemson. I would have always projected that it would have been a man because Clemson had really just started taking in coed less than ten years earlier or less than that maybe. My expectation was that because school was about science, technology, and engineering that most of the students coming there, that were the professions back then that were predominant by men. That’s not to put down the women, it just was what was happening. But she was a good math student when she elected to come. I met her maybe a summer before she came because she had applied. Somebody introduced me to her amongst high school students at a thing put by the community relations committee in South Carolina. But her coming gave me company. I had somebody who I could, when we went to football games or basketball games, go together with. I always make the joke that Clemson made sure she was attractive, good-looking, and smart too because they were trying to find me another mate. I didn’t think it was going to work as well but it did because a year later, we got married. So that’s the way it is.

MD: Looking at past interviews, she would describe you as a big brother on campus.

HG: That’s the way it always starts out. I mean, I really didn’t have any intentions of getting into a romantic relationship with her. I just thought I would be like her big brother. I had a semester and a full two summer semesters worth of Clemson. Once I got there in January of 1963, I never left. I mean, I’d only come home for a week or two at a time all the way through to my graduation. The reason I did that was because I wanted to graduate with the class that I should
have been graduating with. When I went to Iowa State in 1960, it’s a five-year course and I wanted to graduate in ’65. I had already had that in my mind. When I entered Clemson, they said “Well in order for you to graduate with the ‘65 class, you’d have to go to school in summer of ‘63, summer of ‘64 to graduate in the spring of ’65.” I said, “Hey, that’s what I’m gonna do.” So, I learned to love Clemson and get through. I was just there year ‘round and she made it even better because she went to school in the summer too after her first semester. It worked out very well for us.

MD: Other than her, were there other people of color in the local Upstate community or at the school outside of academics who were integral to your journey as a transfer student?

HG: There were lots of white students who were very friendly with me. I would say most of those were in architecture school. But being the only African American student on campus, my expectations were that I wasn’t going to see another African American. Cindy was next, then Larry Nazry from Columbia came. Naz and I became roommates. So now by the time of the second semester, I can’t remember. It was 1963 that Cindy came, ’64 Larry came… I believe I’m getting those years mixed up. He was the first African American male behind me. And then I started seeing each semester one or two other additional students, which was making me feel good because people were finding out that it was not… Clemson really is a wonderful place to go to school in terms of being up in those hills and being able to concentrate. Beautiful setting in spring and fall. Winters are not too cold which is one of the many reasons why I ran away from Iowa because I couldn’t stand the cold weather. But I met other men and other African Americans who were going to school in other places. Most times, it almost had to be in the predominantly Black schools like South Carolina State College, Claflin, Benedict, and Allen University. I used to have a girlfriend before Cindy. My girlfriend from high school was at Allen
University. So, I could make myself comfortable in that first year because I would occasionally take off-campus trips to visit friends in the other colleges. But that’s about it. My social life was study, study, study, study. On the weekends, I spend time in the town, in the black community of Clemson and Seneca. Then maybe once a month, I’d come down to Columbia and other places to look around. It was not an experience, as some folks thought, very negative. I never felt like I wasn’t a student. In the classroom, I never felt intimidated by that environment. My professors were all fair. I mean, there was maybe one guy, but I’m not even going to highlight that who might have shown his displeasure with my being there. But he was a teaching assistant. But the professors were all great and I’ve said that through the years.

MD: I’m currently a TA now so I understand students-teacher’s relationships. You mentioned him, which I was very happy that you did. Larry Nazry, class of ‘68, was the first Black student to complete all four years at Clemson and he was also the first Black member of the Tiger Band. Did you have any interactions with him outside of just being roommates before and after Clemson?

HG: I never met Larry Nazry until I walked on-campus when he came and became my roommate. He was not a person that I knew. He was out of Columbia and loved to talk. We became fast friends. I was delighted to see him do what I didn’t do, that was becoming a member of a Clemson organization. He joined the band and he did that because he loved playing his instrument. I can’t remember if it was a trombone. My wife played trombone. He might’ve been a trumpet. But just watching him in the band at events, seeing the only Black person in there. He seemed to enjoy it. Now, of course, Larry left Clemson well after I did. I think it was 1967 or ‘68 and got involved in insurance. I think I want to say Allstate or State Farm, one of those big insurance companies and moved to the West Coast. We would talk to each other occasionally. A
couple of homecomings, when the Black student population was beginning to build up, I got to see him a couple of times. But not much more than that. I think we kept track of each other but we never had much opportunity to share.

MD: If you can recall, how different was your schooling at Iowa State from that of Clemson?
HG: Well the architecture school was much similar. I would say that for the size of the school, Clemson may be a little bit smaller. They had a program that was a little more recognized than Iowa State because Dean Harlan McClure had come to Clemson and really vowed to make it a school that was distinguished. At the time I really got attracted to wanting to apply because I saw somewhere in a publication at the school in Iowa that Clemson was one of the top twenty schools in the country. I said, “Wow! In my own home state.” I might have seen that on a day when it was five below zero. I said, “Whoa… What if I just decide to go back to Clemson? Wouldn’t that be great? I’d be three hours from Charleston. I’d not be on a thirty-six-hour train ride back home.” All those things would appeal to a kid who is eighteen years old, nineteen years old. That’s why I started my application process. But the school and the teachers were all good folks. It didn’t hurt that I had good grades in architecture. You know, if I was struggling to stay abreast of the curriculum it might have been a struggle. I might not have good feelings about Iowa nor would I have good feelings about Clemson if I had to struggle. But architecture was never a struggle in designing buildings or just design was never something that I struggled with. I mean, I would help other students out. That’s a gift from God, you know. You have the ability to design spaces. So, I took to my architecture class like a duck takes to water in both Clemson and at Iowa. I did not see much distinction. The professors were all well-trained people and I thought that they treated me the same. Architecture is a curriculum where you have to have a thick skin because you are always going to be criticized. Everything you do is what they call a critic. When
designing a building, no matter how big or small it is, there’s a teacher that comes around or kids that come around and then tell you what they don’t like about it. You have to defend it. I learned early at Iowa and it transferred to Clemson the same way. You still got to be confident about what you’re doing but you basically know that if you succumb too much to criticism, you’ll just get beaten up and leave. Ultimately, you couldn’t take it and a lot of students did leave as a result of that.

MD: Yeah, criticism is something that I’ve learned throughout schooling that some of it you definitely want to take into consideration but some of it you can filter out as “other.” I want to see if this keeps going now. Yep, it’s still going. Where was the first place you went after registering for class in Tillman Hall?

HG: You’re recalling the time where they pictured me registering at Tillman? Well that’s a good question to look at so let me see. When I left the registration with the procedures like signing all the papers and all that stuff. I left the registrar’s office, stepped out on the steps of Tillman Hall. Every time I see those steps, I remember that day. The crowd was just news people, maybe a couple hundred. I don’t know how many. Looked like a big crowd to me. I think I’ve seen some film of that. And then when it was over, I got escorted probably by some SLED agents. State law enforcement people in plain clothes and others. My father who was with me and my minister from Morris Street had taken my clothes while I was registering. They told me that I couldn’t take my parents or anybody with me. I’d do it alone as a student. They’d taken my clothes to the dorm room which was nearby, not too far from Tillman Hall. Only thing I can clearly remember is going back, checking by the room and then going by the architecture school to meet Harlan McClure, the dean. Then coming back to the room, I discovered that I was hungry. I went to the dining hall where I had a similar experience of seeing, for the first time that day, a whole lot of
black people. Imagine up to that point in time, I didn’t see a lot of Black people, right? Not in the registrar’s office, not in the huge crowd of news people amongst all the cameras. Got to my room where my father and minister were there. Then I had to walk down to the school of architecture which allowed me to figure out how to get there when classes started. Clemson did a good job of picking out the room I was going to be in, wasn’t far from the dining hall, and it wasn’t far from where most of my classes were going to be which was the architecture school. That’s it: room, architecture school, dining hall. I don’t know why that’s so important to you?

MD: I don’t know. Just thinking about the magnitude of the moment and what I’ve seen from footage coverage, it stops at the point where you were registered. I just wondered how the rest of the day went. There were other Black students before you from Kentucky and North Carolina A&T that tried to enter into the land grant college to either no avail or accidental acceptance. What pressure and/or privilege comes to mind in being the first to break down barriers?

HG: You mean there were others in South Carolina or others across the South?

MD: Across the South that applied to Clemson.

HG: I really didn’t even know all that at that time. I always said and still say that people make too much of Harvey Gantt going to Clemson. It could’ve been one of the thousand other students. It just happened that my timing was right or they had other experiences with Blacks applying so they knew the right questions to raise. For example, when I first sent my application to Clemson in January 1961 the response was a very positive one. They said, “Wow! You’re a student at Iowa State. You want to transfer? We’ll be glad to have you come or whatever.” I bragged to the guys in the dorm. “See I told you so! Nobody would probably seriously apply to Clemson or they’ve seen Autherine Lucy and all these other things happening. James Meredith hadn’t gone to Mississippi yet. Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter had just begun their
oord deal at Georgia around January 1961 or earlier. So, I said, “Maybe the timing is right. Clemson is going to do this without a fight.” I showed the letter around to the guys I was living in the dorm with. I said, “Maybe so.” So, what may have happened in those other cases, I speculate, is that many of those kids applied and may have been accepted then didn’t go or maybe some way the school discovered that they were Black. They required my high school transcript. Mind you I was in college already but they required my high school transcript. Maybe that had become a standard policy with anybody applying to school who’d already gone to college. When they got my high school transcript that’s when the world changed. I went to Burke High School, a segregated school in Charleston that was a well-known Black school. So, the next letters came saying things like “You’re too late on your application,” “We notice that you’re getting good grades at Iowa State. Stay there.” In effect, that’s what they were saying. But I said, “No, you misunderstand me. I want to go to Clemson.” You have to be persistent in something like that and I don’t think if I had been persistent, I would’ve just been one more person who applied that didn’t get in. But I always say that someone else would’ve done it one day but it took five applications. I’d just continue doing it, over and over again. In fact, it became a little bit of a joke in the dorm I was living in: “Did you apply again this semester?” I said, “Yep, I sure did!” “Think you’re ever going to get in?” “Yep, I expect I will.” “Well you might be graduating from Iowa State before you get to Clemson.” We finally said, “No, we don’t want that to happen,” and filed a lawsuit eventually.

MD: That brings me to my next question: Legal action was needed when states were slow to act upon federal orders of desegregation. After so many attempts at applying for admission, do you think that it had to get to that point of taking the school to the courts? Other than the day of peace when you registered, does that not go against this notion of “integration with dignity?”
HG: Let me make sure I understand your question. That fact that I had to fight so hard to get in that I have a bitter taste in my mouth? Even though Clemson likes to brag about the fact that it was “integration with dignity” That phrase you know where it came from?

MD: Yep, a reporter.

HG: A reporter said that on the *Saturday Evening Post*, which was a national publication. It’s like *LIFE Magazine*. You wouldn’t know about those because you were too young. It’s like *TIME Magazine* is today. But those were sort of big pictorials.

MD: McMillan, one of the reporters said “integration with dignity.”

HG: He said something about “integration with dignity” or that whole thing. To answer your question: No, I was actually pleased that they finally accepted it, that it was gonna happen. I have James Meredith to thank for that in Mississippi where it was not integration with any kind of dignity. Later Alabama wasn’t any better with the governor standing in the schoolhouse door. Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes weren’t greeted well.

MD: They got expelled.

HG: It was just tough for them. Clemson had made a decision. It started with the governor at the top, Fritz Hollings, who was leaving office. He said, “Look, this fella Gantt is a citizen of South Carolina. Our laws did not allow him to go to school here. But we as a state have exhausted every legal remedy…” He said, “We will do it. To say we have not discriminated against him.” Never did say every legal remedy to keep him out, but that he had never been discriminated. Clemson kept arguing in those applications that I was late to do this and late to do that, fully understanding that they would never tell me that there were some additional requirements beyond my grades, transcripts from high school, etc. There was always a new requirement: “Did you interview with the proper people to determine you were a person with integrity?” All that
kind of stuff. Obfuscation, I call it, to discourage my entrance. The state legislature passed a law that said I had to be a person of “high character.” This would only be determined by an interview with the registrar then we use some self-diffuse to get in. I understood it was a game and my lawyers did too. The reason that I employed the lawyers in the beginning was after a couple of those things had been turned down, I got in contact with Matthew Perry, who I had met when I was a sit-in demonstrator in Charleston with a bunch of other students. He was a very impressive lawyer. I told him what I was trying to do and he was delighted. He said, “We’d be glad to take your case. You keep writing the applications but you send them to me. We will make sure we’re saying all the proper things.” So, I had legal advice before the lawsuit was filed. When they continued to turn me down, we filed the lawsuit in the summer of 1962… I’m taking a long time to get to answering your question. We understood that there was going to be some kind of resistance. We appreciated the politicians who we felt all along knew that this was inevitable. I even went to the extent of starting to get a subscription to The Tiger, the Clemson student newspaper, so that I could gage the impact of how students were feeling about this thing. What I was getting from the students, as I would read those things late at night in the Iowa dorms, there were a group of moderate students that said, “Hey this is inevitable. This is gonna happen. We can’t follow the paths of these segregationist politicians who talk about this never, ever happening in our state. We know it’s going to happen; it’s happening all around.” So, when the trials came about, I would watch the lawyers on both sides, our lawyers and their lawyers in the cloak room so to speak. Before they went out on the courtroom floor, they’d be laughing and talking not about whether they would win or lose the case but when Harvey Gantt was going to enter Clemson? Was it gonna be in January? Most people concluded that it was going to be in January. So, you could say it was a little bit of a charade. I wasn’t bitter. I ultimately was glad
that they didn’t have to call the national guard and all that because the president of the school
and the governor of the state made it clear to everybody, parent and child at Clemson. If you
were caught doing something negative to Harvey Gantt, that you would be sent home and they
meant it. The reason they meant it was because they were interested in continuing to attract
business to South Carolina and to have this impression that it was really a “New South” state.
That’s what the governor and the succeeding Governor West were all about. They just had to get
by the backwoods segregationists that were the loudest at what was going on. They could always
point down to Mississippi and say, “Do we want all these people getting killed? We’re just not
gonna have it.” That president, R.C. Edwards, was determined that he was not going to have it.
Some students ignored me. A small group was very supportive like kids in the school of
architecture and that Baptist student group I was telling you about. But very few people were
negative. Very few people would come up to me and say something negative to me like, “We
don’t want you here, nigger” or something like that. Never heard that. I heard it from the high-
rise dorms. Someone would holler it out in a kind of cowardice way. You might hear somebody
yell, “Nigger!” But not really. How about at the football games? That’s why they said it was a
really dignified integration and in two days, the story was gone. Whereas in all the others, those
were one-week long stories or longer. I think Clemson ended up being very proud of themselves.
I was probably relieved that I didn’t have the trauma of having to go through. I was determined
to go through. But you know, I didn’t have people doing things that would have made it more
difficult. In fact, about four or five weeks out after I had been there, I made friends with people
in the architecture school. We all sat and we played this game one day coming back from classes:
it was to pretend that we got in a fight. The goal was to see how many people would notice. But
more importantly, let’s see how many people are still watching you. Few people know about this.
We pretended the fight was there then all of a sudden two or three SLED agents showed up as plain clothes folks. “What’s going on here?” We said, “We’re just kidding. We’re just playing. We’re just joking. Just wanted to see how many of you guys were around.” I never knew who my roommates were around me. Those rooms were designed to keep the KKK or whoever might likely want to come in the dark of night. So, it was comfortable for me ultimately, very comfortable.

MD: I’m going to name drop a few people and I would like for you to answer with the first word and/or idea that comes up: Christopher Gantt.

HG: That’s my dad and I love him to death. My biggest supporter.

MD: The Honorable Matthew Perry.

HG: Absolutely an outstanding attorney and a good friend.

MD: Clemson President Robert Edwards.

HG: I respected him because he held to… I don’t know if R. C. Edwards really wanted me there or not but I never knew it. I could never tell it. He was interested in his university on his watch, remaining a university and I was his biggest goal. We met a couple of times in private. Once because he was trying to encourage me not to attend the student dance or something. The second time he wanted to know whether or not I was going to attend the March on Washington, which was in the heat of summer and I was in the middle of summer school classes. But, go ahead. I’m not giving you one-word answers because I don’t know how to do that.

MD: If you can spew out more that’s fine. State Governor Ernest Hollings.

HG: Lots of respect for him. Got to meet him a lot later in life. He loves to talk about his courage back then and how he was leading the state towards a “New South” future. I respected him as a politician. I later became a politician and I respected what he was trying to do.
MD: Professor Claire Caskey… English Professor.

HG: I can’t remember as much as I want to remember. But he was probably very professional and very good. He… It’s coming back to me but it’s very slow. There was a professor that was not in the architecture school that I thought was very good but I don’t remember his name. That might be him.

MD: Dean of Students Walter Cox.

HG: A very friendly, perfect dean of students whose job it was to keep the students in line. He, like Edwards, was very proud of what he did. He always tried to befriend me and make me know that I was comfortable there. Dean Cox coming in you knew he had something positive to say. “Are you getting good grades?” It was amazing how they scrutinize every darn thing I was doing on the campus. But he was a good guy.

MD: A lot of these are very interesting answers because going through some of the archives I saw that your father represented you in the case because you were a minor at the time. The Honorable Perry represented the University of South Carolina three Black students who were also trying to get in. Walter Cox has the Cox Plaza right by Tillman Hall and there’s a statue of his likeness there. It’s pretty interesting. In May of 1965, you graduated from Clemson with honors in architecture. Can you explain the culmination of that moment at the Outdoor Amphitheater when you received your bachelor’s degree?

HG: My parents were all there. It was the first college degree in the family. I mean, I was the first one and I was the oldest too, of course. My parents had never gotten a college degree. They hadn’t even gotten a high school diploma. So, it was a very special moment for me. I was also newly married. Well not newly married, by that time I was about eight or nine months. I had a baby. It’s probably one of the most memorable moments of my life and it helped shape a lot of
what I was going to ultimately become. That is, “Young man if you work hard, if you prioritize the right things, if you don’t get discouraged by the people who are going to try to hold you back, you’re going to do well.” I had passed that goal. I’m remembering when I decided to come to Clemson. Here I was walking across the stage, third in my class of students in the architecture school with honors. My parents were looking on and my new young family was there. I mean, what more could a guy ask for? And I had a job in Charlotte. I mean, the world is my oyster so I knew that I could do anything with God’s help. Anyway, you didn’t ask me for all that. Here I am in 1965. I was twenty-two years old. I was feeling pretty good. I guess people could say, “Well that was a pretty good track record to show a Black student could get through there.” I did think how many kids in high school did want to be an architect, engineer or whatever? They’re gonna say, “If Harvey Gantt could do it, I could do it.” It turns out thousands of students. They didn’t go to school ultimately later on in the volume I wanted them to go. More of them went to the University of South Carolina than went to Clemson. But that’s because engineering and technology were still foreign to a lot of Black students. It still is today. Math and science still run us away from those areas. But those were the jobs I saw for the future that were going to be great. So, I’m always encouraged when I see the Black alumni of Clemson growing steadily, slowly but steadily. But no, I felt pride in family, pride for me, and pride for all the students who thought that they would have a great chance at this beautiful place called Clemson.

MD: There’s this picture of you from The Greenville News shaking the President’s hand and getting your degree called “Harvey’s Ultimate Moment.”

HG: It was an ultimate moment. It was a very special moment.
MD: Do you have a good and healthy relationship still with Clemson? Do you ever return to
教 or help with the Board of Trustees? If so, are there times when you appreciate telling your
story but get tired of addressing it?
HG: I taught part-time for a semester in the school of architecture. Must’ve been thirty years out
by then. We did some planning work for the school, for the college that is on that end of campus.
A master plan in some work we did there… What was the other part of that question?
MD: Are there times when you appreciate telling your story but you get tired of addressing it?
HG: Yeah, I get tired of addressing it. Been doing it for fifty some odd years now. But what was
the first part of the question, again?
MD: Oh, do you have a good and healthy relationship with Clemson?
HG: Yeah, that’s what I want to talk about. I spent time on the Clemson University Foundation
Board. I think a couple of terms. I was part of Jim Barker’s Clemson President Advisory Group.
MD: The previous president?
HG: Yeah, Jim Barker. In fact, my relationship with the presidents goes back to Edwards. Every
single one of them though I got to know. I can’t remember them all but there were one, two,
three. Lennon… I can’t remember the one between Lennon and Edwards. But because Jim
Barker was an architect, when he was going after that job, I wrote a reference for him. He and I
got to know each other very well. I served on his advisory board and now Jim Clements is
someone who has been very… This is the time of the year when we usually catch up with each
other because we go to the ACC Championship Game together and I’m usually in his suite. So
no, my relationship with Clemson has been a good one. I think that the leaders are more
progressive than… The staff, faculty and administration have been a little bit more progressive
than the trustees and political people who were appointed to run it. Louis Lynn has done a good
job. You know who he is, Louis Lynn?
MD: Oh, yeah. He actually said that because he saw you go through Clemson that he would be
inspired to do it.
HG: He’s been on the board forever. Done a good job there. There have been things I’ve
discovered about Clemson as we dug deeper that I’m not all that impressed with. You know, a
couple of times when the movement came about for changing the name of Tillman Hall,
someone wrote me and I sent an email. They said there’s a movement to name it after me.
MD: Yeah, the Sikes Sit-Ins.
HG: A couple other racists but Tillman himself. As I studied my history again, I was saying,
“How could I have been so dumb not to have internalized where the name Tillman Hall came
from?” For a racist such as that, “Pitchfork” Ben Tillman. But it never registered with me in all
the time that we were there that this man symbolized everything that Clemson was not supposed
to be moving forward. And I think eventually you’re going to see that name changed there. But
it’s probably two or three generations away. Not that long but it’s a little bit off before that’ll
happen. Taken by the Board of Trustees, be a different political environment to see that go. But
South Carolina is moving forward. Look at races like Jaime Harrison this last year… Alright,
your time is running out. Don’t want to take too long. Let’s try to see if we can get through the
rest of your questions. That’s my fault because I’m taking too long to answer them.
MD: You’re fine, you’re fine. It was said that late Lake City, South Carolina Dr. Ronald McNair
from NASA could not attend USC due to segregation. Therefore, that’s what led him to going to
North Carolina A&T for physics. But both of you graduated near the top of your high school
class. Both of you found time split between the Carolinas. Both of you went to MIT for advanced
degrees. And both of you are known for future successes beyond the circumstances of your time period. How do you feel about the magnitude of being associated with other African American home state greats?

HG: Home state? What you said, greats? I feel like I’m in a special circle. In fact, I don’t even belong in the circle of being great. The fact that Ron McNair was the first African American to be on that plane and that he achieved a level of excellence in engineering that probably puts him in a very small class group of people makes him truly great. The fact that he had aspirations like I did. Ended up going to A&T, could’ve very well been the first Black student at Clemson without question or any other school he wanted to go to in the South. But you know for whatever reasons he got a very good education at A&T and probably went further than that as you said at MIT. He represents a group of people who believed in themselves and who believed that race should never be a barrier to whatever their aspirations were. There were a lot of people like that. There were a lot of pioneers like that. It comes from a determination and the values you got as you were growing up. It came from your emulation of people who were making a difference in the community. So, to be in association with Ron McNair is very special because I certainly think that what he achieved in his area for his short life was just remarkable. So, I’m honored to be apart. If you mention me in the same breath of him, that’s good. But there are other Carolinians too that have done great things that came along during that period.

MD: A few months ago, I went to the South Carolina Hall of Fame in Myrtle Beach. One of the first portraits I saw was of Matthew Perry. But I was surprised that you’re not in it yet.

HG: South Carolina Hall of Fame?

MD: In Myrtle Beach at the convention center.
HG: Oh really? Probably because I’m not a South Carolinian now. People recognize me more as a North Carolinian. They said, “Okay, the first twenty years of his life he lived in South Carolina. But he moved to North Carolina and made his name in politics there. Other than going to Clemson.” I didn’t even know there was a hall of fame in Myrtle Beach. You’re telling me something that I didn’t even know existed. I felt that I have been honored enough in South Carolina for going to Clemson. So much so that, as one of your earlier questions, I am so tired of talking about it. Well, you’re talking about it at a different level than a lot of what I have to answer. Most people are dealing with superficial dates like when you graduated and what it feels like. I think I’ve shared a little more with you about personal feelings and stuff like that.

MD: I have three questions left, is that fine?

HG: Yeah, I’ll try to give you short answers.

MD: Not only are you the first Black student/graduate at Clemson but you were the first Black mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina. Did your experience in 1963 have a bit of influence on your further history-making two decades later in “the Queen City” in ‘83?

HG: Of course, it did! Of course, it did. When I walked across that stage and shook President Edward’s hand, I told you a while ago that the world was your oyster. That is another way of saying I absolutely feel that I can blossom in any areas that I wanted to blossom in. That I can take a fellowship and go to MIT and get a graduate degree in city planning. That I could form an architectural firm here in North Carolina unlike any that you’d ever seen and do well designing buildings because I thought I was that talented. So, it is a confidence that one sort of builds. That said, even when I got into politics, I felt having observed the people who were mayors prior to studying them, that's something I could do. Which is what I say to the young people, whether in elementary school, if you feel you can do it and you’re willing to work you can do it. But you got
to believe in you. If you don’t believe in you, somebody’s telling you something that you really
don’t want to do. I’ve seen enough people whose parents want them to be a doctor. They go
ahead and do it but they don’t want to do it. They’re never going to be great at it. I used to tell
my kids, “When you want to go to work on Mondays after a great weekend because you just love
what you do, greatness is probably somewhere out there for you. You’re going to achieve things
that you never thought you could achieve.” So yeah, I could go even further back than Clemson.

MD: I have a letter from 2014. I was in JROTC and we had our end-of-year award ceremony at
Bojangles’ Coliseum. Vi Lyles wrote me a handwritten note when I got the academic award for
West Meck’s unit. I wouldn’t think that years later-

HG: -She’d be the mayor?

MD: Although much has been said about you in history, you are very humble in your remarks.
Did you see yourself as situational in the right place, right time for these to happen? For
example, did you think that a young Harvard Law student who would later become the President
of the United States wearing your Senate race shirt was a big thing then?

HG: How’d you know about that shirt?

MD: It’s a pretty iconic photo!

HG: I had no idea about those kinds of things. I was pursuing something I wanted to do. I wanted
to run for the United States Senate. The same reason I wanted to run to be mayor of Charlotte. I
had observed the people who had served in those roles. I thought I could do a good job, maybe
even a better job reflecting the vision of the constituency I wanted to serve, which is the people
of North Carolina. I ran and I ran hard. The Lord didn’t want me to win that race for other
reasons whatever they were. But what I learned later when I saw a New York Times story talking
about whether this fella Barack Obama could win the election, they showed that picture. That’s
where it came from people don’t realize. He had on a Gantt shirt. I was at a convention in
Washington and they couldn’t believe it. How surreptitious is that? You ran a generation ago in
the 1990s. He’s a law student. I was on that campus campaigning and my folks were passing t-
shirts out. Barack Obama gets it, comes to the rally, keeps it, and shows it in a picture that he
was inspired by. I didn’t plan that, the good Lord did. That’s what that meant. That might’ve
been my reason for running, that it might’ve inspired him. He said later and wrote it out on the
picture it was the first inspiration for where he could go. But a lot of people in the South have
said that. “If you could step back then all those years ago and run?” Carol Moseley Braun won in
Illinois. She came after me. Said she thought that race inspired her and she won hers.

MD: I saw that in 2012 you also opened up for him at the Democratic National Convention.
Honestly, your race is still inspiring today. I saw a couple months ago in a video that you were
saying, contextually, that you didn’t lose because ultimately this little loss here propelled for
bigger wins like him in 2008.

HG: No question about it. I think that’s what the Lord’s purpose was here. To use me as an
example of what could be done to elect presidents and now vice presidents. Jaime Harrison
coming close to winning and maybe over in Georgia. You have to start something and here I am
almost seventy-eight years old. I said this after the second Helms loss that my inspiration is that
the things that I’m talking about are the things that are gonna happen in this country. The things
that Helms talk about; they’re dying. I’m representing the growth; he’s representing the dying
elements of the country and that’s turned out to be true. It’s going to keep going with people like
yourself and others who are going to make it even happen more.

MD: Last question.

HG: Well I thought that was the last question?
MD: This is it because it’s the longest question. You just have to answer it: James Meredith has a statue at the University of Mississippi and a historical marker that captures the event within Ole Miss. Atherine Lucy later came to Alabama years after the University expelled her to earn her master’s and now her name is on the university clock tower. Her expulsion was annulled. There’s a historical marker by the School of Education along with a scholarship made out in her honor. Then last year at their graduation, they bestowed her with an honorary doctorate. The University of Georgia’s first Black students, Hamilton Holmes and Charlayne Hunter-Gault, not only have their academic building named after them but they also have a conjoined name for their annual African American lecture there. There was another graduate student who would ultimately become UGA’s first Black graduate, Mary Frances Early. The College of Education bestowed her name this past February.

HG: I’m sorry. Hamilton Holmes didn’t get a degree from Georgia?

MD: oh no, they did. They did. They were still students while she came in as a graduate student already having credits and finishing first. Other than some signage around Tillman Hall, a historical marker outside the campus building and in 2017, the circle around Thomas Clemson’s statue bearing your name as Gantt Circle, there are no larger projects that bear your likeness at Clemson University. In fact, there are currently no university facilities named after people of color or women at the Upstate flagship school. Given your background in architecture and design with Gantt-Huberman Architects and also your early advocating for the Sonja Haynes Stone Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, what would it mean to you, if anything, to have an actual free-standing structure like the Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center?

HG: Well, they’ve got a facility now what they call for years now the Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center.
MD: But it’s an office within Brackett Hall.

HG: You won’t believe this but that’s not important to me. You know, I get people who inquire almost every year about “Shouldn’t Clemson be putting up a statue for you or something? They use your name when they want to use it but they’re not doing anything.” That doesn’t bother me and I never push it. They have a Harvey Gantt Scholarship Endowment Fund that I think fourteen or fifteen students got scholarships this year. That’s plenty for me. When they named the Harvey B. Gantt Center here in Charlotte, you know how it took for me to decide to accept that?

MD: How long?

HG: Almost six weeks. Finally, somebody said, “You’re embarrassing people because they want you to do this and they’re wondering why you’re distancing them. Why aren’t you allowing it?” Things like that are not important to me. They really aren’t. But if it happens, I’m not going to turn it down because I think it may mean so much to others. If it inspires others, that’s what I’m all about. But if they never do it, you’ll never hear me pushing a campaign to see that happen. That’s just not me. How did you know I was humble? It was a question you raised there. You don’t even know me well. Where’d you get that from?

MD: I feel like in being a historian you have attachment issues with looking at the past. You see some of you within them as you go throughout your current journey. I never got the chance to thank Harvey Beech from UNC for the scholarship. He was our first Black graduate. I never got time to thank Ronald McNair for the Ronald McNair Scholars Program. I met Carl, his brother, in Miami two years ago for a conference. But in terms of being within Lake City, I never got the chance to thank him. So once again, I just thank you for having this opportunity. Even in my
own journey now at Clemson to speak with living history about what I’m doing because to me that’s important. Thank you. From Barack Obama to Vi Lyles, you’re an inspiration.

HG: Well, I see you’re going to be a fine scholar and historian.

Following the interview, Harvey and I had a brief talk about his Senatorial race for North Carolina with Jesse Helms in the 1990s. My biggest regret from that day was not asking him about the alleged "Republicans buys sneakers too" quote from NBA Champion Michael Jordan. The campaign endorsement snub reignited debate about Jordan’s political activism compared to Muhammad Ali and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar after Episode Five of ESPN’s *The Last Dance* docuseries revisited the controversial rejection for the Gantt campaign.¹⁵² I felt that my UNC-Chapel Hill alliance in MJ would conflict with my Clemson allegiance in Gantt. Thus, I avoided the topic mentally in total. When he locked the door outside, I asked him one last question before we departed: "What are some of the buildings that your architectural firm helped to design in the city?" He pointed to one across the street and said, "That one, Friendship Baptist Church on Beatties Ford, Charlotte Transportation Center across from where the Hornets play, ImaginOn, some campus buildings at Johnson C. Smith, the UNC-Charlotte Center City structure nearby. A few things." Amazement painted my mind to know that his legacy will escape time in these multiple withstanding projects. As I was driving home to West Charlotte, I felt stunned at what just happened. I looked over to the passenger seat at the photo I bought off eBay of Harvey Gantt moments after winning his trial in the Fourth Circuit Court against Clemson to get in. I asked him to sign it with a message of encouragement for my final year in graduate school. He wrote, "Best wishes to you Marquise, I enjoyed our time together and wish to you all success in

becoming a great historian! HB Gantt." Later on, January 28th, 2021, I brought the photo to me while I returned to campus in ordering my class ring. Standing by the historical marker that summarized his fight to obtain admission into Clemson at 1:33 PM, the approximate time he arrived on campus for class registration, I reimagined how he felt coming on the steps of Tillman Hall. When I got back home and remembered that on the same day Dr. Ron McNair passed away with the other NASA astronauts in Florida in 1986, I was at odds. Consequently, I burst into tears in my living room as my mother came home from work.

153 “Autographed Harvey Gantt photo with interview on iPad.” iPhone X: Charlotte, NC. Taken on December 7, 2020.
CONCLUSION

His final answer in our interview was not the one that I was anticipating. While he was not enthusiastic about the idea of erecting an actual Gantt Multicultural Center for him and his wife to admire, he understood what it could mean to thousands of students, staff, and faculty of color in utilizing the space. It would be nice to receive his wholehearted blessing for something like this to be commissioned. But if it is not something that he cares for with validating his legacy to live longer than him, I am okay with his lack of compelled push. With writing a lengthy paper and striving for a loftier goal in architecture, I fell short. One of my favorite quotes from rapper Kanye West is, "Reach for the stars, so if you fall, you land on a cloud."¹⁵⁴ In doing all this archival work amidst a pandemic, I tried that feat. But I am at peace with this endeavor because it adds something new to the ongoing conversation and lore of Harvey Gantt's presence at Clemson University.

This journey has been one of challenge and champion. It was not easy trying to obtain archival information in the age of coronavirus. The mere delicate handling of fragile objects like newspaper clippings, photographs, and letters inherently goes against the touch-sensitive protocol that people were under in 2020 and currently today. But like others, I tried to make do and make use of what tools were available to me as an academic. Many book publications, transcribed interviews, and secondary sources in photos and articles helped this paper. Financially, I hold grave doubts that my dream of a free-standing Gantt Center will come to fruition anytime soon in the near or far future. Even looking into UNC’s Stone Center dedication while I was an undergrad, I was shocked at how long the road took to get it from a student union room to a campus building, succeeding over a decade after Dr. Sonja Stone's death. Besides, it

was a task that fell upon the students, alumni, faculty, staff, and partners to work on most of the time. The University combined a small portion of its endowment compared to the grassroots crowdsourced funding from outside partners.

But if Clemson wants to take pride in being different like they market themselves, they should look not too far in the state for inspiration. As we highlight founders, we should tell stories on unsung heroes who placed those ignored at the forefront. For example, Clemson's rival school in the University of South Carolina dedicated a statue of their first black professor, Richard T. Greener, in February 2018. This life-size statue not only can encourage students of color near the library as they study that their place at USC is warranted but serve as a proud symbol for black faculty and staff to come. Signs and figures carry meaning beyond words. Therefore, "Integration with Dignity" can ring further if Clemson commissions projects on spaces and structures for minority people to show their place in the grand family.

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University of South Carolina unveiled a statue of its first African American professor, Richard Greener, on Wednesday. By Jamie Lovegrove jlovegrove@postandcourier.com. https://www.postandcourier.com/news/university-of-south-carolina-unveils-statue-of-first-black-professor/article_8ec4462a-175e-11e8-8e5a-a7a40648a14c.html
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