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Newspaper Article, Scott Free, April 26, 1968

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Scott

by

Free

Scott Wendelsdorf

This campus has been told off and on for several years now that a select group of self-appointed guardians of aristocratic student government was controlling their politics.

Now you know it for sure.

This writer informed the Vice President of Student Affairs of the existence of this group in March (as if he were not already well aware of its existence). Then as now that office has done nothing. That office WILL DO NOTHING!

One benefit of this group's existence has become evident, however. Because of Student Affairs' refusal to act in order to curb an organization that in my opinion is clearly in violation of University regulations, several students have become convinced that the only way to fight the "Group" is to form opposing student political parties that operate above board and will run on issues, yet will have the resources necessary to counter the power of the "Group".

MSU has long needed the advent of the student party, and with Student Affairs inaction--hence approval--concerning the "Group", that office cannot deny their initiation any longer.

Concerning my last column dealing with the circumstances surrounding the memorial service for Dr. Martin Luther King three weeks ago, it has been pointed out to me by Sterling Harper that although my analysis was a correct one, I had wrongly condemned Chief Hood by inference.

After checking into this charge, I have found that indeed I was mistaken and do owe Chief Hood an apology which I sincerely hope that he will accept.

The full text of Sterling's remarks follows:

"There has been a great deal written about that night on campus when a group of people came to the Chapel of Memories to mourn the death of Dr. Martin Luther King. The night was a night of sadness and fear. I would think that as many people went to the service to mourn the horrors that resulted from the death of Martin Luther King, as the actual assassination, for Dr. King had become the image of peace and his assassination caused a great fear that people in frustration would turn from peace and burn cities and kill innocent people. Therefore, there was a memorial service at the Chapel of Memories to show and reinforce Dr. King's message that peace was the only way to a peaceful world. We sat and thought during that time on what was lost and what was going to come of this death.

The first sign of what was to come, was shown us when we came out of the Chapel. There was a crowd of people with a rebel flag singing Dixie. They broke a window in the Chapel and began following students who had come to the Chapel with threats and words that can not be printed. Had it not been for Chief Hood I am sure there would have been violence. For like the people singing Dixie, we turned in fear and frustration and began accusing everyone we saw with words synonymous with racism. Actually we didn't know any more than those kids with the flags. We

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were a frightened mass of people who felt alone and without help. The only difference between us and them was that we printed what we thought instead of screaming it.

After reading Scott's column, I realized that the mass of those people who would read his column would misunderstand what he had said. Scott is one of the most serious young men I have ever known. He has never advocated violence, but like many others of us, he felt that violence was going to happen, here in Mississippi, unless both sides overcame their fears and sat down to try for once in our history to understand--just that--understand.

Scott's mistake was that he forgot two important things. It is difficult to separate the man from his position and it is difficult to criticize one without hurting the other. I realize that when Scott called the campus cops racist, he was upset. I feel that he does not even consider Hood a cop. But when one calls the cops a name, he also calls Hood a name. And if the person is in a department or in Scott's case, president of the YMCA, it appears that Scott is speaking for all of us. HE DOES NOT!

Chief Hood is probably one of the finest people I have ever known. He is the only man on the payroll of Mississippi State University that I could trust. He has been one of the most fair men that I have ever worked with. It was Chief Hood that made the memorial service possible. He saw that several people who were in trouble that night got away unharmed. My wife and I were two of those people. It was Chief Hood who kept the flag flying at half mast. In other words, I respect and admire Chief Hood.

I would like to take this time, however, to say that Dr. Jones made a very bad mistake that night. He forgot that the mass of people there that night could not separate the position of vice president of Student Affairs from the man. It was therefore in very poor taste for him to be standing with the very people that were causing the most trouble. Whether he was telling them not to be there or not is not the point. He was laughing or smiling. He showed expressions of pleasure whether or not he was pleased and caused a great deal of bad feeling on both sides. I think that the vice president should consider this the next time he is present at an incident."
