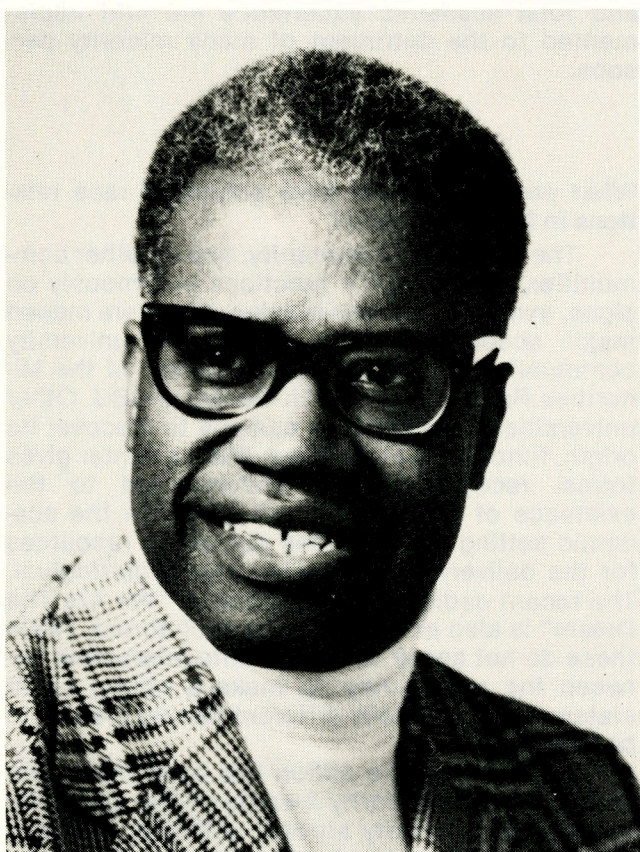


# MINORITIES RESOURCE AND RESEARCH CENTER NEWSLETTER

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## Perspectives on Race Relations at KSU and Beyond



### About Dr. James Boyer

James Boyer, (Ph.D., The Ohio State University), joined the faculty of the Department of Curriculum & Instruction in 1971 and was a major influence in the establishment of the Minority Resource/Research Center. His most recent publications include a book: *Teaching the Economically Poor and the Multicultural Instructional Inventory for Enhancing College/University Curriculum*. Dr. Boyer has directed several doctoral research studies associated with cross-racial, cross-ethnic understandings as they relate to curriculum and he is also the Kansas Correspondent to the National Alliance of Black School Educators. Dr. Boyer was the first recipient at KSU of the Presidential Award for Distinguished Services to Minority Education. Recently, he presented a paper on *Strategies for the Survival of Black Americans in Higher Education* at a Detroit Conference.

by Dr. James Boyer

The dynamics of race relations are so forceful and complex that it is difficult to summarize the events in a manner which connects with the psychological implications of those events. However, a university of this magnitude must review periodically its image, stature and progress in removing the caste-class mentality which permeates so much of higher education. As early as 1964, there were perspectives which essentially said "ignore the racial problem" in Manhattan and it will go away. While some progress has been made in educating and sensitizing all Americans to the difficulty, much more must be done. Historians and researchers like Lerone Bennett, Jacqueline Jackson, Harry Kitano, and Roosevelt Johnson have consistently worked to analyze race relations nationally. However, our analysis requires that we look at race relations at three levels:

### Level #1

In the segregated society, total separation of the races on all matters specifically implies the superiority-inferiority model. It involved functioning with each other across racial lines while at the same time legally excluding Black Americans from public places and institutions based solely on skin color and its silent manifestations.

### Level #2

In the desegregated society, the legal barriers are removed, and human relations efforts are instituted to eradicate the practices which deteriorate positive cross-racial interactions. This level attempts to move thinking patterns from the implications that "differences" are primarily "deficits" in humanity because one is racially different from the masses.



### **Level #3**

This level seeks the integrated society and involves the movement from a desegregated society to a level which implies the "social acceptance as equals" of individuals who are racially and ethnically different from each other.

Over the past decade, there has been some progress in Levels #1 and #2, but very little in Level #3. There are few places, programs or buildings which would formally deny racial minorities entrance. Legal accommodation has been achieved. However, the psychological victimization which results from the lack of psychological accommodation in a university—is still very much a problem in the university community and Manhattan at large. It ranges from the broad institutions in our society (businesses, schools, churches) to the kind of cross-racial contact which families have with each other.

Institutional racism (the full pattern of decision-making, policy implementation, and institutional philosophy) which communicate a "superior/inferior model" of human worth—is very much alive in our university community.

### **What university practices over the past decade have led to these conclusions?**

The university community has had to further sensitize itself to cross-racial factors by analyzing the basic assumptions of realities around KSU. Incidents like the difficulty the Black Fraternity had in securing a fraternity house, a total university understanding of the need for Black Awareness Week observations, bi-racial membership in sororities, the distribution of negative pamphlets implying proposed extinction of Black Americans, and the recent concern of several groups over the lecture of an individual perceived by many as deeply racist . . . all point to the conclusion that there is still much to be done in helping the university community rid itself of notions which are perceived as detrimental to positive race relations.

### **Where do we go from here?**

The continuous movement from total exclusion to total inclusion as human equals must become a top priority. This will involve many areas of the university community which affect programmatic thrusts, policy declaration, and policy implementation. Institutional barriers which preclude certain levels of "visibility" must be removed through faculty decisions, student organization perspectives, administrative practices including financial priority setting and the total university curriculum thrust. The academic orientation of people will dictate the following:

- (a) which books shall be read by all students
- (b) which speakers shall have ceremonial and academic endorsement
- (c) which questions shall be included on examinations
- (d) which library documents shall be acquired and endorsed
- (e) which activities of the university shall become "institutionalized."

We still have multiple incidences of "artificial relationships" across racial/ethnic lines. Such artificial relationships result in impressions which suggest that we all think positively about each other across racial lines. However, behaviors which ultimately affect the image, development, and total academic experience are still implemented to the detriment of many minority persons.

### **What positive actions have enhanced race relations in the last decade?**

The university community, like all other communities, is one which functions enormously on **signs, symbols, and ceremonies**. There are indeed major accomplishments within the university community through the establishment of the Minorities Resource/Research Center at KSU. Other universities have come to campus to discover its origin, function, and success. Such a center gives formal recognition and endorsement to the existence of racial/ethnic minorities in the academic setting and provides numerous resources for the delivery of equitable college curriculum. The recent dedication of the mural, "We Are The Dream" is also an extension of such thrust. While these do not speak to the specific **interaction** between the races, they do make a strong silent statement that racially-different people are not to be ignored.

Another positive action has been the establishment of the Minority Awards by the university to recognize minority student activities, achievements, and concerns plus the Presidential Award for Contributions to Minority Education. It is significant that this award may be given to either minority or majority persons. Other actions include the establishment of several courses within various departments and the existence of the several student organizations.

A third positive force has been the existence of federally-funded programs which support the minority presence on campus (TRIO Program, the Title III Program of the College of Education, and of particular significance is the location of the Midwest Race/Sex Desegregation Center on our campus which serves the four-state area of Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa.).



### Are Positive race relations easily developed in the university community?

Individuals who become friends across racial/ethnic lines have usually found something in common with each other. Generally speaking, the "caste-class mentality" of many Americans in the academic community prevents open dialogue and also prevents self-analysis from occurring with the frequency and at the level needed for positive relations. One's experiences in cross-racial and/or international situations will dictate the degree of comfort which one has in such settings.

In the academic community also, the behaviors of people in the delivery of their professional responsibilities communicate so much of what they believe about people who are racially/ethnically different from themselves. The university is the academic marketplace where new ideas, high levels of analysis, and research activity emerge on a continuing basis. When those ideas and that research and instruction result in psychological victimization of members of that community, then race relations suffer. Knowledge is a base for the improvement of race relations; however, one must be assertive in the acquisition of knowledge about people different from one's self so that relations take on an authentic characteristic rather than an artificial one.

The development of positive race relations appear to be dependent upon the **institutional commitment to the well-being** of all persons who seek the university's services—or who provide services for the university. Improved relations will occur when social, political, economic, and academic priorities are re-organized by greater numbers of persons who live and work in the academic marketplace.

### Facilitating Authentic Relations

Facilitating authentic relations in the university will require numerous activities but the following may serve to further enhance that reality: Genuine belief that:

1. Ethnic/Racial/Linguistic minorities have a heritage of which they are proud—and which they would have perpetuated via the academic channels.
2. Black/White relations are always dependent upon the participant's knowledge base of institutional practices and policies.
3. Minorities are responsible people who must be viewed by the academic community as "assets" rather than liabilities.
4. All races must be sensitive to the **dimension of race** before adequate responses can be experienced. (Although some writers are beginning to

say that racial/ethnic identity is declining in significance, those writers have obviously not experienced the victimization of ethnic/racial profiles which have been assigned to them by those who perpetrate the victimization.) In other words, one must attempt to see the setting through the eyes of those who feel least appreciated.

5. Research activity, findings, and consumption must be conditioned so that the university's image will become one where racial minorities feel included, respected, and significant. Presently, few efforts are made to determine the full impact of minority reaction to university matters.



*Teresa Guillen, MEChA president presents plaque to President Acker during recent mural dedication ceremony.*

### "We Are The Dream"

On October 24, 1980, the Dedication Ceremony was held for the Minorities Resource/Research Center Mural "We Are The Dream." During the program a plaque was presented to President Acker on behalf of BSU, NAISB and MEChA. The plaque will be placed in the reading room of the Minorities Center.



## New Acquisitions

### BOOKS

**"Arna Bontemps-Langston Hughes Letters 1925-1967"** by Charles H. Nichols. Correspondence between two famous black authors that reveal their personalities, literary opinions, and significant developments in race relations.

**"Becoming a Woman in Rural Black Culture"** by Molly Dougherty. A study in cultural anthropology that details development of girls into women in rural black community in Florida.

**"Lectures: Black Scholars on Black Issues"** by Vivian Gordon. Focuses on educational, political and social movements; social institutions and contemporary issues as viewed by guest lecturers at University of Virginia.

**"Zoot-Suit Murders"** by Thomas Sanchez. A highly acclaimed second novel set in the Mexican American barrio of Los Angeles during World War II.

**"Ethnic Political Leadership: The Case of the Puerto Ricans"** by George Martin. A study of political leadership in New York City. Statistical tables included.

### REFERENCE BOOKS

**"How to Search ERIC for American Indian Materials"** by Ramona Sandoval. Introduction to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), a network of clearinghouses that collect, index on microfiche educational materials.

**"The Emigrant Indians of Kansas"** by William E. Unrau. A critical bibliography that covers the forced emigration of Native Americans into, and eventually out of Kansas.

**"Slavery: A Comparative Teaching Bibliography"** by Joseph C. Miller. Concentration of Twentieth Century publications on slavery in the United States and other countries.

### PERIODICALS

**"Good Living"** pilot issue of health and fitness

magazine "to celebrate well-being of today's Black Americans."

**"The Farm Workers Journal"** a quarterly journal on migrant and seasonal farm workers' research, programs and issues.

### FILMS

**"The Boyhood of George Washington Carver"** Filmed on site in Missouri; the story of a slave who becomes an honored scientist. Illustrates Carver's contributions to agriculture, industry and Black Americans. 12 minutes. Color.

**"Diary of a Harlem Family"** Poignant view of the deprivations endured by one Black family, photographed by Gordon Parks. 20 minutes. Black and White.

### NEW COURSE—Spring Semester of 1981

**"History of Mexican-Americans,"** History Department #241-533

Listed under line descriptions of "Topics in the History of the Americas." Tuesdays & Thursdays at 9:30 a.m.

Examines the history of Mexican Americans (Chicanos) starting with the coming of the Spaniards and giving emphasis to the period between 1940 and the present. It includes the development of the blurred Spanish borderlands background, wetback questions, bracero work contracts, complex social adjustments and migrant worker adaptations, recent immigrant issues, the important cultural contributions to life in the United States, and many aspects of the Chicano heritage as it has evolved here north to the border. Instructor—James C. Carey Office: Eisenhower #229—tel. #532-6730

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