

## CHAPTER 3

---

### Rights, as Opposed to Privileges

#### *Race and Space*

---

The Black students who came to Duke and other historically white colleges and universities in the early 1960s did not arrive on campus intent on launching a movement. Like their white peers, they arrived at college hoping to benefit from positive academic and social experiences and to use their undergraduate years as a springboard for personal and professional growth. The product of families, schools, and communities that had groomed them for success, Duke's Black students looked forward to entering a professional world where opportunities were expanding dramatically.

Like all freshmen, each of Duke's Black students arrived on campus with a set of unique experiences, skills, and aspirations. Some had participated in the civil rights movement. For Bertie Howard, the movement had been a part of her childhood. "Many days my grade school was interrupted," she recalled, "as we stood and applauded students from a local historically Black college as they marched downtown to picket local stores that would not hire African-Americans." Howard's sophomore homecoming football game was canceled, she remembered, "because most of the [football] team was in jail for boycotting segregation." "I have what is now a tiny little scar," Michael LeBlanc recounted in 2019, pointing to his forehead. "As a 135-40

pound thirteen-year-old, I got beat by the police for sitting down at Woolworths back in 1963 or 1964.”<sup>1</sup>

However, even with these experiences, few of Duke’s first Black students were focused on protest or confrontation when they arrived on campus. Some arrived with feelings of gratitude toward the university for the chance to attend Duke. “We came in as the most benign, ineffectual people they could possibly bring in,” Brenda Armstrong recalled. “People who were so afraid and so frightened by Duke, that we’d be overwhelmed by it. Thankful for being allowed to come there.” C. G. Newsome described the Black students entering Duke in the early years following desegregation as “the model kids in the communities they came out of. These were not troublemakers,” he stressed. Looking at matters from the administration’s perspective, William Griffith, appointed vice provost and assistant dean of Arts and Sciences in the mid-1960s, also sensed that these students did not come to Duke as activists. “I don’t think we were really getting the militant student—out of the ghetto,” he recalled. “We were getting the middle-class Black who almost had to discipline himself or herself to be a militant.”<sup>2</sup>

By 1966 several Black student leaders had emerged at Duke. One was Chuck Hopkins, who had arrived at college having been politically active in high school. “I was really influenced by stuff that was happening at other places,” Hopkins remembered. “Before I even got active dealing with the Black issues, some of my white friends [and I] were going downtown for vigils against the war. . . . And the incidents right here at Duke—all of those things were having an impact and making me say to other students, ‘Hey—we need to be doing something.’”<sup>3</sup>

Law students Charles Becton and J. Lee Hatcher were also leaders. Both had been undergraduates at predominantly Black Howard University and “knew the kind of camaraderie that was there.” They saw “none of that on Duke’s campus.” “Not only were there few of us,” Becton recalled, “but [the Black students] did not . . . associate together . . . to any great degree.” Duke’s Black undergraduates, in Becton’s view, “faced the danger of being assimilated into a society without thoughts of their roots. . . . I thought at least they needed to start meeting as a group to discuss common problems.” Stef McLeod also assumed an early leadership role. Studying to be an electrical engineer and, in the fall of 1966, president of the sophomore class in the School of Engineering, McLeod was seen by colleagues like Becton as someone who “had a good handle on things” developing on campus.<sup>4</sup>

Starting in 1966, these students, along with a handful of others, tried to organize a meeting of Duke's Black students. Although Black student groups had already formed on other campuses, these initial organizing efforts at Duke were unsuccessful. Duke's Black students were simply not ready to meet as a group. "Chuck Hopkins, Stef McLeod, Charles Becton—they all had their heads at a place it took us all a year to get to," Armstrong explained. "They had already decided that Duke didn't want us at Duke. . . . They had found that although Duke was willing to accept us, they had in no way changed the socialization process that goes on in college to accommodate Black students. . . . They had already seen that Duke had no intention of changing to meet what we thought were our needs. We had to get to that point," Armstrong said.<sup>5</sup>

The first group meeting of Duke's Black students occurred in March 1967. By that time, circumstances had converged to make the students ready for such a gathering. One key factor was a controversy over "race and space" that began in the fall of 1966 and focused on Duke's long-standing practice of using segregated off-campus facilities for events sponsored by administration, faculty, student, and alumni groups.<sup>6</sup>

In the early years following desegregation, President Douglas M. Knight had been able to convince the Duke University board of trustees to eliminate certain vestiges of Jim Crow such as segregation at Duke University Hospital and a racially restrictive covenant in newly granted deeds to property in Duke Forest. Even these changes, however, had not been easy. "I think the feeling [among board members] was that they had made a major concession in permitting Black students to come to the university at all," Knight recounted. "But these other matters were not of a piece with that. The question of mixed wards, the question of housing—take the whole list." The view was, according to Knight, "we've let them in, now what's the matter?"<sup>7</sup>

Despite this incremental progress, by 1966—four years after Black graduate students first enrolled at Duke—the university had still not issued any policy restricting or otherwise addressing the use of segregated off-campus facilities by university groups. Focused initially on university events hosted at nearby Hope Valley Country Club, the dispute soon broadened to include demands that Knight resign his membership in the segregated club. The segregated facilities controversy provided both a backdrop and an initial focus for the emerging Black student movement at Duke. It also reignited the fears of many at Duke and in the Durham community that the admission of Black students to the university would inevitably disrupt the privileged social order existing outside campus. For decades, Hope Valley Country Club had been

a haven for Durham's white academic, business, and social elites. Members relished the chance to mix business with pleasure by hosting events at *their* club. They believed, director of alumni affairs Roger Marshall explained, that as members of a private club, they had the right to determine the membership policies and guest criteria "on any basis we want."<sup>8</sup> For them, the segregated facilities controversy represented a challenge to this "right."

By any measure, Hope Valley Country Club was impressive. Founded in 1926, its clubhouse was constructed in a "classic Tudor design," today encompassing fifty-two thousand square feet of recreational facilities, including dining, swimming, and tennis. Noted architect Donald Ross designed a championship eighteen-hole golf course for the country club. The Hope Valley residential district, Durham's first "full-fledged country club suburb," was developed with the course as its centerpiece. The country club and community sought to attract the young white professionals who, in 1926, were thriving in Durham's tobacco, textile, and health-care industries, as well as faculty members and administrators from recently endowed Duke University and the rapidly expanding University of North Carolina (UNC).<sup>9</sup> Hope Valley also turned out to be a perfect fit for the young physicians recruited to Duke following the completion of the Duke hospital in 1927. As the growth of the surrounding community accelerated, hundreds of Durham's business and academic leaders joined the country club and enjoyed its many privileges of membership.

Established only two years after Trinity College had become Duke, Hope Valley Country Club essentially served as a social and recreational "annex" for the university. Duke administrators, faculty, students, and alumni took full advantage of the many resources at the club, located about four miles from campus. As early as March 1928, for example, a Duke "junior social" was planned at the club. When Duke's academic school year began in the fall of 1928, the *Duke Chronicle* noted that horseback riding would now be offered as a hobby for the school's coeds at Hope Valley Country Club. In 1931 the club was the site for Kappa Kappa Gamma's sorority social and Delta Delta Delta's installation ceremony. At least as early as 1932, the Duke golf team used Hope Valley's golf course for practice and tournaments. Over the years, university events such as commencements and alumni reunions routinely included activities at Hope Valley.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the variety of events at Hope Valley Country Club, all had one thing in common: participation was open to white people only. “Only persons of good character and reputation who are of the Caucasian race shall be qualified for membership in the Club,” its by-laws stated. As membership was limited to whites, so too were guest privileges. The only Black people on the grounds were those providing landscaping, caddy, housekeeping, porter, kitchen, and other services to white members and guests. Black service workers accessing the majestic Hope Valley clubhouse were required to enter through a back door.<sup>11</sup>

Given the club’s close connections to Duke, it was natural that Knight would become a member of Hope Valley. His application for membership proceeded smoothly. After he was admitted, Knight told the club president that he and Mrs. Knight “look forward very much to the privilege of membership.” Duke reimbursed Knight for his \$600 membership fee and paid his annual dues.<sup>12</sup>

Neither the school’s practice of holding events at segregated off-campus facilities nor Knight’s membership in Hope Valley drew much comment.<sup>13</sup> Until 1966, the contradiction posed by a desegregated university holding off-campus events at a segregated location went largely unnoticed, at least by white administrators, faculty, and students.

.....

C. B. Claiborne, Duke’s first Black basketball player, came to the university in the fall of 1965. Growing up poor in Danville, Virginia, Claiborne was a star player on a high school basketball team that rarely lost. He performed well on precollege standardized tests and began to receive interest from schools around the country, including the Ivy League. “C. B. could have gone to any school in the country,” his high school coach Hank Allen commented. “Whether he played anything or not, they still wanted him academically because he was a brilliant kid.” Recruited by Duke basketball booster Al Newman, Claiborne received a National Achievement Scholarship for Outstanding Negro Students as well as financial support from Duke. “None of us ever thought about going to a white school,” Claiborne recalled. “I was the first one in my community to go.” Still, choosing Duke “wasn’t a hard decision,” Claiborne explained, “because this is what I was expected to do. . . . No one had ever had this opportunity before. . . . You don’t say no to it.”<sup>14</sup>

Claiborne performed well both academically and on the basketball court. His play as a freshman earned him a “letter,” to be given out at the athletic department awards banquet scheduled for the spring of 1966. At the time, Eddie Cameron, Duke’s director of athletics, had just completed a term on the Hope Valley Country Club board of governors. Given the club’s close relationship with Duke, Hope Valley must have seemed ideal when it was chosen as the location for the awards banquet. Not for Claiborne, however. There were no exceptions to Hope Valley’s segregation policy. Actively recruited, a standout on the basketball court, and a fine student, Claiborne was prohibited from attending the awards banquet. “I couldn’t even go to receive my letter,” Claiborne recalled. “One of my teammates, Fred Lind, had to bring my sweater and my letter to me. But it wasn’t just me. Duke University still had a bunch of functions at Hope Valley when it was still segregated.” Becton recalled this episode as a “catalyst” for many Black students on campus.<sup>15</sup>

Duke’s nursing school had also decided to hold its annual Christmas dance at Hope Valley in 1966. According to the *Duke Chronicle*, the committee was not aware of Hope Valley’s segregation policy when plans for the dance were finalized. At almost the same time that the nursing school was making its plans, the Women’s Student Government Association (WSGA) was looking for a venue for its 1966 winter coed ball. Also unaware of the club’s segregation policy, the WSGA reserved Hope Valley for its upcoming party.<sup>16</sup>

As the fall 1966 semester began, racial matters continued to attract attention on campus. In September the school announced the appointment of visiting political science professor Samuel DuBois Cook as its first Black faculty member. Soon, Cook was offered a permanent teaching position in the department, despite concerns expressed by Knight. When told by department chair John H. Hollowell that the department wanted to keep Cook at Duke, Knight responded, “Oh no, we can’t have Sam here.” As reported to Cook, Knight said, “It hurts fundraising,” among other things. When Hollowell persisted, telling Knight that the political science department “unanimously and enthusiastically” wanted to keep Cook at Duke, the Duke president was unmoved. Hollowell was then very direct with Knight. “Well, you tell him,” he said. “I’m not going to tell Sam we don’t want him here because we do.” Cook never heard from Knight and soon became a permanent member of the Duke faculty.<sup>17</sup>

In early October 1966, the *Duke Chronicle* reported that a white Duke student protester had been attacked and injured at a local Ku Klux Klan rally. The

episode occurred after imperial wizard Robert Shelton urged that “subversive elements” be purged from the crowd.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps most significant, the Duke community learned in early October that Knight had sent a letter to Duke’s fraternities and sororities directing them to eliminate all racial and religious restrictions to membership by September 1, 1967. The groups were also asked to sign a nondiscrimination pledge. In his letter, Knight appeared to take the high ground, explaining that Duke could not permit the use of university property by any organization that, through its organizational documents or practice, bars members based on “race, creed or color.” Left unsaid by Knight was that the university acted to end discriminatory requirements only when the federal government threatened to cut off funding if it failed to do so. Therefore, even as the nondiscrimination requirements were announced, the university sought to reassure those concerned. “Above all,” university vice provost Frank T. de Vyver stated, “this does not require integration at the local level.” The vice provost also declared that the university had no plans to monitor whether sororities and fraternities had, in fact, met the new requirements.<sup>19</sup> Thus, while Duke seemed committed on one level to a nondiscriminatory policy, on another, more basic level, it refused to follow through with direct action.

At almost the same time, final arrangements were being made for WSGA’s coed winter ball. To confirm that Hope Valley’s segregation policy would not be challenged, T. F. Brovard, manager of the club, contacted the WSGA, informing the group that a Black band could not play at Hope Valley and seeking assurances that no Black students would attend the dance. Having now been made aware of Hope Valley’s segregation policy, the WSGA decided to move its coed winter ball to another location. The *Duke Chronicle* commented on the development, urging “President Knight and the other members of the faculty and administration who are members of the club to work to have the rules of the club changed.” The paper wanted university club members to “assure that there is never another such affront to the University community.”<sup>20</sup>

However, predictably, another “affront” was not long in appearing. As the nursing school was making final plans for its Christmas dance, it too was advised by Brovard that the dance could not be hosted at Hope Valley if any Black people attended. At the time, no Black students were enrolled in the nursing school and it was considered unlikely that a Black person would be invited to the dance as a guest. Still, the Nursing Student Government Association considered whether the dance should be moved to another location. Significantly, the university remained neutral on the question. “Our student

government association is in a position to make decisions,” Mary Jane Burch, assistant dean of the nursing school, commented, “and it is their responsibility.” When the association’s Executive Council met to consider whether to move the Christmas dance, it decided not only to relocate the upcoming event but also to prohibit the use of segregated facilities for all future social events. The student body of the nursing school quickly voted overwhelmingly to affirm these decisions.<sup>21</sup>

Stef McLeod wrote about the nursing school’s actions in an article published in the *Duke Chronicle* titled “The Half-Student.” Perhaps the first widely distributed commentary on the racial climate at Duke published by a Black student, McLeod’s article detailed that the situation confronting the nursing school had served to point out “how . . . the Negro student [at Duke] suddenly finds that he is a ‘half-student,’ discriminated against and offended daily in several aspects of this institution.” Calling the idea of using a segregated facility “pathetic,” McLeod expressed relief “that the nurses, as a whole, were . . . committed enough . . . to stand firm against” segregation. McLeod condemned the “hypocrisy and discrimination” that would allow a segregated facility to even be considered as the venue for a dance sponsored by a Duke college.<sup>22</sup>

The controversy over segregated facilities continued to gain momentum during the final weeks of the fall 1966 semester. Just after the action by the nursing school and the publication of McLeod’s article, the Men’s Student Government Association (MSGAs) came out against the use of segregated facilities for off-campus events. It also asked Robert B. Cox, dean of undergraduate men and associate dean of Trinity College, to remove five facilities known to be segregated from Duke’s “approved” list of off-campus venues.

Focus then shifted to a Duke-Durham Alumni Association dinner at Hope Valley planned for December 1. Although invitations to the dinner had already been sent to all “local alumni and friends of Duke,” the Hope Valley location precluded Black “alumni and friends” of Duke from attending. Questioned by the *Duke Chronicle* about the choice of location, M. Laney Funderburk, executive secretary of the Department of Alumni Affairs, informed the paper that the question of race probably never entered the minds of those organizing the dinner. What would happen if a Black person tried to attend? he was asked. “We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it,” Funderburk responded. In an editorial, the *Duke Chronicle* expressed embarrassment that the Department of Alumni Affairs was unconcerned about an “affront” to Duke’s Black graduate school alumni and friends and called on Marshall to issue a statement of policy regarding “the use of segregated facilities for any alumni function.”<sup>23</sup>



The Department of Alumni Affairs served as the front line of communication between Duke and its thousands of alumni, a segment of whom were vocal in opposing recent changes at Duke. Many local alumni were members of Hope Valley Country Club. Getting an alumni group to consider restricting its use of Hope Valley would be extremely difficult. As Knight observed, the people working in alumni affairs “took on the color of the alumni.”<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, even with segments of the university moving to a more progressive stance on race, alumni affairs continued to be very sensitive to the conservative racial attitudes of former Duke students, particularly those in North Carolina.

Compounding this dynamic, Marshall appears to have harbored attitudes toward Black people that made him resistant to changes in Duke’s racial policies. These were highlighted in a January 1966 exchange of letters with William M. Werber, a standout baseball player at the university who was also the first Duke basketball player to be named an All-American. In December 1965, the *Duke Alumni Register*, the school’s alumni magazine, published an article titled “Reason against Racism.” In response, Werber wrote a letter to the editor to put forth certain facts regarding “the coming clash between the white and colored races.” He said that he embraced “love thy neighbor” and similar concepts “in theory,” but not in the case of race relations where your Black “neighbor happens to be your dedicated enemy” who has “sworn to bury his hatchet in your skull whenever you turn your back.” “Blacks, wherever found, . . . have a demonstrated inability to compete in any society,” Werber wrote. “Wherever you find them in numbers you will find illiteracy, poverty, disease and crime.” “You most certainly have my permission to publish this letter,” he told the editor, “for I believe it to be an expression of convictions held by the vast majority of Duke alumni.”<sup>25</sup>

Marshall responded to the letter. “I know that you have all the courage in the world,” he told Werber, “and that you are not reluctant to set forth your opinions firmly and emphatically, but I think always fairly.” Marshall wrote Werber that he had vetoed publication of his letter to the editor, however, because he was worried about the reaction it would “excite among people who, in their attachment to the opposite side of the cause, are perhaps less tolerant and more vituperative.” “Criticism of the Negro race, or even the toleration of such criticism, at the moment is most unfashionable on virtually every college campus in this country,” Marshall said. “I don’t mind admitting,” Marshall concluded empathetically, “that I think it is most unrealistically unfashionable!”<sup>26</sup>

As the alumni dinner approached, a committee of students and faculty was formed to coordinate picketing at the event. The University Caucus, an ad hoc group of undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty formed in October 1966 to consider campus issues outside the existing student government structure, endorsed the protest. While some caucus members worried that a public stand on the segregated facilities issue could cost the fledgling group support, one student saw the Hope Valley issue as a bellwether for future controversies. “Those who are alienated by taking a stand on this,” Randy Shannon declared, “will be alienated by our taking a stand on anything.”<sup>27</sup>

On November 30, the WSGA joined the MSGA in opposing the use of off-campus segregated facilities by campus groups. Like the MSGA, the WSGA sought to implement the policy by asking Cox to remove segregated facilities from the approved “social list” maintained for the Woman’s College. At the same time, the WSGA passed a resolution urging that all university events be held at desegregated facilities and “remonstrated” the Duke-Durham Alumni Association for hosting its upcoming dinner at Hope Valley. These views were communicated to Marshall.<sup>28</sup>

On December 1, the day of the alumni association dinner, Marshall responded to the student newspaper’s demand for a statement of policy. Suggesting that the *Duke Chronicle* had implied that members of his department and Durham alumni “keep pointed hoods in the deeper recesses of their closets,” he assured students that “this is scarcely so.” Marshall pointed out that the permissive stance of the alumni affairs department on the use of segregated facilities was “entirely consistent” with that of the university. Like others who resisted change, Marshall characterized the segregated facilities issue as one involving “freedom of choice,” not discrimination. “I should think that anyone so concerned with the philosophy of *in loco parentis* on the campus,” Marshall patronizingly told the students, “would . . . be entirely sympathetic with the opinion that it is neither practical nor desirable for the University to select the meeting places of all of its various groups of alumni and friends.” Most Duke alumni are “sane, balanced, and considerate people,” Marshall explained, who can be depended upon to “move quickly and gracefully in the right direction when circumstances become awkward.” Thus, it was up to Duke’s alumni and “well-intentioned . . . Durham friends” to make a change “when, in their good judgment, conditions make their occasional meeting place of more than twenty years inappropriate.”<sup>29</sup>

The *Duke Chronicle* called Marshall’s explanation “unsatisfactory.” In an editorial, the paper explained that protesters at Hope Valley that evening were

there to demonstrate that “many within the University . . . do not agree with those practicing or supporting discrimination by attending the dinner.”<sup>30</sup>

A group of almost two hundred Duke students, with some faculty, picketed outside Hope Valley Country Club to protest the alumni association dinner. Both Black and white students joined the protest, including the leaders of the MSGA, WSGA, and a number of other student groups. One protester carried a sign stating simply “There ARE Negro Alumni” to communicate the contradiction posed by holding a Duke alumni event at a segregated club. Inside, attendees saw the co-captains of the football team honored and all graduating seniors on the team receive wrist watches. When reporters tried to enter the club, Brovard turned them away. Afterward, protest organizers called the demonstration a success. “Our public rejection of racial discrimination will, hopefully, restrain further participation in segregated situations by any organizations associated with Duke,” Harry Boyte and Clint Wilson declared.<sup>31</sup>

The nursing school, MSGA, and WSGA had gone on record opposing the use of segregated facilities by campus groups. The protest at Hope Valley Country Club had been well attended and had generated considerable local publicity. Thus, it is easy to see why some believed that the controversy over the university’s use of segregated facilities could well be moving toward resolution.

But such optimism was premature. In January, a local paper ran a picture of W. P. Budd, president of the Blue Devils Club, and basketball coach Vic Bubas at a club luncheon at Hope Valley, the *Duke Chronicle* observing that “it is disappointing that Bubas . . . would be a party to embarrassing the University in this way.” Clearly no change in policy or practice had occurred. The MSGA and WSGA were similarly distressed to learn that their request to Cox that segregated facilities be removed from the university’s “approved list” for off-campus events would have no practical impact. Cox explained that while the university maintained a list of “suggested” facilities for off-campus events, it was not binding on campus groups. “I couldn’t say, you can’t go here, you can’t go there,” Cox explained. “We do not want to be put in a position of being paternalistic.”<sup>32</sup> As the fall 1966 semester ended, the segregated facilities issue remained unresolved.

Given his role as university president and his hands-on management style, Knight almost certainly would have signed off on actions taken by Marshall, Cox, and others in his administration on the segregated facilities issue. He

likely knew that he would eventually be drawn into the controversy—not an inviting prospect. Knight risked badly damaging his relationship with whatever side of the dispute he ended up disappointing. Complicating matters further, Knight believed that much of the controversy was being “fabricated” by internal factions “who saw that there were fascinating games to be played.” “There was as much push on one side as the other,” Knight recalled, “to try to get the university into a situation where it would have to make great political noises that would be very happy noises for one group and very unhappy noises for another.” Students, Knight believed incorrectly, “went out of their way to pick a facility that would pose an issue.”<sup>33</sup>

Initially, Knight looked for a practical solution to the problem. He asked his senior management team to collect, on a very confidential basis, “information about the restrictive regulations of private clubs which the University may want to use for meetings from time to time.” Knight believed that the administration could “avoid a good bit of trouble if we know this beforehand and quietly get the information out to groups that are likely to have large meetings here.” Knight understood that he was dealing with an “extremely delicate matter.” “We could be construed as supporting the restrictive policies of the clubs,” he told his colleagues, “while on the other hand private organizations must continue to have a right to select their own members.” Knight had “no desire,” he said, “to be backed by the *Chronicle* into a reactionary position on this one.”<sup>34</sup>

William Anlyan, dean of the medical school, responded to Knight’s request in a letter dated the following day, telling the Duke president that neither Hope Valley nor the Tobac Club admitted Black people as members or guests. Anlyan also shared his view on the use of these facilities. “It is, indeed, a shame,” Anlyan told Knight, “that the occasional Negro guest makes it necessary not to use these two facilities.” For the dean, the issue was a pragmatic one. “The message we need to get across to any critics,” he explained, “is that we have to get along with all segments of our society, and we cannot please everybody all the time.” In a handwritten note, Anlyan added, “We have to maintain our ‘access’ to all people.” Knight agreed with Anlyan’s view, responding, “Absolutely.”<sup>35</sup>

In December, university secretary Rufus H. Powell provided Knight with detailed information on the racial restrictions at local clubs. Powell’s report confirmed Anlyan’s information on Hope Valley and the Tobac Club; neither allowed Black members or guests. As to whether Asians could be admitted as guests at the two clubs, Powell noted in his comments about

Hope Valley: “Orientals? Dr. Luke Lee, Chinese, attended Dean Latty’s reception, held there.” He also told Knight that the Ambassador Club “probably will accept Negro guests,” the Elks Club allowed use of its hall on an unrestricted basis but would not rent the facility to “all-Negro groups,” and the Key Club at the Holiday Inn would only allow Black people if they were “guests of the Inn.”<sup>36</sup>

There is no record of whether Knight tried to use this information to direct university groups to the few desegregated Durham clubs. In any event, campus groups continued to use Hope Valley and other segregated facilities as 1967 arrived.

At the same time that pressure was building on Knight to clarify Duke’s policy on segregated facilities, he was challenged over his personal membership at Hope Valley. The first communication came in a letter from undergraduate Doug Adams, described by the *Duke Chronicle* as a “clean-shaven midwest Republican with deep religious convictions” who is both “a serious scholar and a committed activist.” “I know many Negroes (students and employees) and Jewish students and faculty,” Adams wrote to Knight, “who are greatly hurt by your continued support (however minimal) of a segregated club which has upon several occasions insulted members of the Duke community.” Although acknowledging that resigning from the club “will cause difficulties in your relations with the Durham community,” Adams argued that the action would “greatly improve [Knight’s] relations in the Duke community.”<sup>37</sup>

Soon thereafter, the University Caucus presented Knight with its own resolution. While the resolution acknowledged that Knight’s membership in Hope Valley “may be valuable to the University in terms [of] community relations,” it nevertheless called on him to resign. “We believe that, because of his office,” the resolution stated, Knight “uniquely represents the University in the community, and his underwriting of the policies of this Club jeopardizes the seriousness with which the stated policies of the University can be taken.”<sup>38</sup>

Knight knew that he would have to respond. The challenge to his *personal* membership at Hope Valley was even more problematic for Knight than the related dispute over the university’s use of segregated facilities. If forced to resign, Knight knew that his relationship with the many Duke and Durham leaders who were Hope Valley members would be severely damaged. In responding to Adams, Knight tried to buy time by warning about the need to avoid publicity. “If I were put under any public pressure to

resign,” he wrote, “I would then be in a situation where I’m afraid I couldn’t do a good job of discussing the problem, let alone finding a constructive answer to it.”<sup>39</sup>

Shortly after the adoption of the University Caucus resolution, two student representatives of the Council of the Methodist Church at Duke University weighed in as well. Emphasizing the university’s religious roots, the students wrote that “Duke University has a unique responsibility in as much as its motto is ‘Erudito et Religio.’” The students asked how this tradition was manifested in its present life. They recognized that “too often the distinction is blurred between Dr. Knight, the President of Duke University, . . . and Dr. Knight, the man.” Regretting “the conflicts this blurred distinction must often bring,” the students told Knight that they felt “in this situation, Dr. Knight the symbol should take precedence.”<sup>40</sup>

Before the semester ended, Knight tried to organize his thoughts on the resignation demand by scribbling notes on the back of an envelope. He was clearly attempting to rationalize his continued membership in Hope Valley. First, he rejected the argument that his position as university president required that he limit the choices he made in his “private” life. “What about referencing other restrictions,” he asked testily. “Should [the] president belong to a particular church, or no church (since his membership is offensive to some)[?]” “Should he live by the codes of others?” More broadly, Knight did not accept the argument that his membership in a segregated club meant that Duke University, *as an institution*, practiced discrimination. “The university is not *as such* the espouser of this or that cause,” Knight wrote, “unless the cause stands at the *center* of human freedom or the center of the university’s *own* action.” Knight apparently did not see Hope Valley’s “Caucasian only” membership policy as “standing at the center of human freedom.” Although the school paid his Hope Valley dues and Knight routinely used the club for university business, the Duke president did not view his connection to Hope Valley as standing “at the center of the [university’s] *own* action.” Clearly, Knight seemed ready to engage in elaborate mental gymnastics to avoid taking the politically costly step of resigning from the club.

Notably, Knight’s analysis did not account for the rights or needs of the school’s Black students. His approach was more tactical than substantive. Concerned that a backlash could tie his hands, Knight wrote, “The cause in question would be damaged by the action called for.”<sup>41</sup> Knight was clearly frustrated, and he saw the Hope Valley issue as increasingly perilous. This was

an accurate perception. By the spring semester, Duke's Black students would emerge as a powerful voice in the controversy.

Although by 1967 a number of long-standing traditions at Duke had been set aside, the annual practice of crowning a "May Queen" endured. Selection of the queen was a centerpiece of popular May Day celebrations, a holiday whose origins date back to the ancient world. Villagers throughout Europe would collect flowers and participate in games, pageants, and dances throughout the day. It became customary to crown a young woman May Queen to oversee the festivities. During the early twentieth century, selection of a May Queen became common at women's colleges in the United States and had acquired a special meaning in the South. "The crowning of the May queen as the ritual incantation of Southern society's ideal of femininity," historian Christie Anne Farnham wrote, "was a traditional event at Southern female schools. . . . The queen was usually elected by the students on the basis of 'sweetness' and beauty," Farnham explained, "although the father's status often played a role."<sup>42</sup>

May Queen traditions at Duke dated back to 1921 when the school was still known as Trinity College. The *Trinity Chronicle* reported that two thousand spectators attended May Day festivities that first year and that the two-day celebration was spent "in gaiety and amusement." Undergraduate Martha Wiggins was crowned May Queen that year. The school newspaper wrote that she "wore a lovely costume of shimmering white, bearing a corsage of white roses with her golden hair cascading in waves down her back, making a charming picture of perfect grace and absolute loveliness."<sup>43</sup>

Given this context, it was newsworthy when Wilhelmina Reuben, a member of Duke's first class of Black undergraduates, was selected as the Woman's College's May Queen in the spring of 1967. As runners-up in the voting, white coeds Mary Earle and Jo Humphreys were designated to serve as Reuben's "court." The Associated Press picked up the news, reporting that "Mimi, as she is known to her friends, is a Negro—the first of her race to receive the honor at the women's college of the university." Chosen for her character, leadership, campus service, and beauty, Reuben had been selected May Queen by a vote of students in the Woman's College. A fact sheet on Reuben prepared by Mary Grace Wilson, dean of women, described her as "warm, friendly, perceptive and sensitive to the feelings of others." Wilson called her "one of

the most admired and highly respected students on the campus.” Reuben was a member of the freshman honor society and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as a junior. A student intern at the State Department, she was listed in “Who’s Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.” For her part, Reuben was pleased by her selection. “I’m still trying to adjust to it,” she told the Associated Press. “I’ve been walking around in a delightful haze of disbelief and excitement.”<sup>44</sup>

Many at Duke were pleased with the news. Randolph C. Harrison Jr., an alumnus from Richmond, Virginia, wrote to Knight that the “undergraduates’ choice of Miss Reuben as May Queen attests once more to Duke’s greatness. What a step towards inter-racial accord.”<sup>45</sup>

If Reuben’s election represented progress to some, however, the prospect of a Black May Queen flanked by two white members of her “court” felt like a violation of the established social order to others. Jonathan C. Kinney, president of the Associated Students of Duke University (ASDU), the unified student government, saw the reaction when he had the responsibility of “crowning” the queen and her court. “I kissed all the rest of the panel,” he recalled, “so I kissed [Wilhelmina Reuben]. There were a lot of boos in that stadium at that time.” An anonymous alumnus sent the Duke president pictures of the “pretty May Queens chosen at Peace, St. Mary’s, and Meredith Colleges,” all of whom were white, along with a picture of Reuben, “a colored girl who was chosen May Queen at our Dear Ole Duke University.” The alumnus noted the “deplorable contrast between the May Queens of other colleges and the stunning representative from Duke.” He told Knight that “Duke Alumni everywhere were stunned and several in South Carolina had strokes.” One correspondent, identified as a “lifelong, respected citizen of Wilmington, North Carolina,” outlined with exasperation the problems that Reuben’s election was creating at the city’s annual Azalea Festival where May Queens from throughout North Carolina were invited to attend: “The Sprunt’s annual garden party at Orton [Plantation] for the college queens (held for the past 20 years) has been cancelled; the Coastguard Academy, which was supposed to furnish her escort, says they don’t have a colored boy available; the private home in which she was supposed to stay is not now available; and there are all sorts of complications. The crowd who elected her has done a *disservice* to her,” the writer opined, “and placed a no doubt nice girl in an embarrassing situation.”<sup>46</sup>

Finally, two trustees weighed in. C. B. Houck told Knight that he liked and respected “the colored people” and wanted them to have “every opportunity that the white people have.” Still, he thought Reuben’s election was in “bad



taste” and that the “East Campus girls were leaning over backwards to be nice.” For Houck, the symbolism was deeply troubling. “To select a colored person for May Queen and have white maids of honor flanking her on either side,” he concluded, “makes for poor and critical relationship [*sic*] among many people, particularly in the South.” Trustee George M. Ivey Jr. was also deeply concerned. Writing from Bangkok, Thailand, he called Reuben’s selection “very upsetting to me.” Even if the selection was by Duke’s coeds, Ivey regretted “that the University has attracted the type of students that would vote for a Negro girl as a ‘beauty’ to represent the student body. It is nauseating to contemplate.”<sup>47</sup>

Although Knight responded to almost every letter, he was not unaware that the May Queen episode damaged him politically in the eyes of some board members and alumni. Knight later wrote that Reuben “became known among board members as ‘Doug’s dusky beauty queen,’” and he believed that George Ivey, among others, held *him* responsible for Reuben’s election. “Black undergraduates were new at Duke,” Knight wrote, “and a strong minority of the Trustees had been opposed to their admission. The same, alas, turned out to be true of the alumni during these troubles; each critical event compounded those before it, and I found myself riding a historic wave, which—according to my constituents—I should have been able to control.”<sup>48</sup>

Knight viewed such opinions as “an absolute bit of mythology” but acknowledged that “there was no way to free myself. If I had not chosen her myself, I had created a climate in which she could be chosen.” From that point forward, Knight explained, Ivey was always disaffected: “He had been troubled enough before, but that just finished it off.”<sup>49</sup>

The attitudes expressed in the letters to Knight about Reuben’s election are also important. To Knight’s credit, by the spring of 1967, Duke had eliminated most of the school’s *de jure* discriminatory policies and practices. Reuben’s election as May Queen could be seen as another positive sign of racial progress. But the episode also shined a spotlight on the depth of attachment some still had to traditional racist ideas. These attitudes would become even more pronounced as Black students at Duke began to assert themselves.

.....

By the spring of 1967, a core of self-conscious and effective Black student leaders like Hopkins, McLeod, Becton, and Hatcher had emerged on Duke’s campus. While Duke’s Black students were far from monolithic, many were now developing a deeper understanding of the consequences of the university’s

failure to fully acknowledge—and prepare for—their presence on campus. William Turner recognized that Duke had not “come to terms with what it meant, practically speaking, to have a significant Black student population on campus.” Janice Williams came to see that Duke was trying to “mesh two cultures and actually negating one.” The university did not, according to Williams, realize that Black and white students “truly do come from a different background.” Duke’s Black undergraduates, in addition to seeking a good education, had “certain identity needs, certain cultural needs, and emotional needs” that could not be forgotten. Armstrong put it most simply: “We came in thinking we should be thankful. Around about February, we didn’t know what we should be thankful for.”<sup>50</sup> Clearly, any feelings of gratitude Duke’s Black students felt for the chance to attend the university were disappearing.

Until the fall of 1966, the small number of Black undergraduates at Duke, and their isolation from one another, made establishing a cohesive group difficult. In September 1966, however, eighteen Black freshmen enrolled at Duke. As Armstrong described it, this established a “critical mass of ‘us’” sufficient to forge a collective identity.<sup>51</sup>

Just as Duke’s Black students were increasing in number and gaining insight into their situation at the university, a long-simmering generational schism in the civil rights movement exploded into the open. Martin Luther King Jr. had offered Black and white citizens a miracle born of nonviolent protest that held the promise of ending racial inequality in America and integrating Black people into mainstream society. But ever since the sit-in movement of 1960, a younger generation of leaders had started to see the prospects for change very differently. Frustrated by the slow pace of change in the civil rights movement and assaulted by the deaths of civil rights workers like Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, and James Chaney in Mississippi in June 1964; the assassination of Malcolm X in February 1965; and the widely covered carnage of “Bloody Sunday” on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Birmingham, Alabama, in March 1965, new, more militant leaders began to emerge. These new leaders had found, according to one historian, that “history could not be eradicated so easily, nor could the central significance of race to all American institutions and culture be rooted out simply through warm feelings.” These young leaders “concluded that white institutions and white people could not be trusted, and that their promises were simply another effort to control and define what black America was all about.”<sup>52</sup>

The most prominent of the new leaders was Stokely Carmichael, a graduate of Howard University who was elected head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in May 1966. “A striking thinker and speaker,”

Ibram X. Kendi wrote, “the courageous, captivating, and charismatic Carmichael embodied the new defiant young Black generation that Malcolm X had seen approaching around history’s corner.” After his arrest at the June 1966 March against Fear in Mississippi, Carmichael injected the words *Black Power* into the national conversation. Speaking to a crowd in Greenwood, Mississippi, Carmichael told his audience that “the only way we gonna stop them white men from whuppin’ us is to take over.” For Carmichael, taking over meant “Black Power.” “We been saying ‘freedom’ for six years and we ain’t got nothin’,” Carmichael exclaimed. “What we gonna start saying now is Black Power!” “Almost immediately,” historian William Chafe observed, the Black Power “slogan became a rallying cry for blacks as well as a justification for a white backlash against the civil rights movement.”<sup>53</sup>

In *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, Carmichael and political scientist Charles V. Hamilton described Black Power as “a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations. It is a call to reject the racist institutions and values of this society.” Carmichael and Hamilton saw group solidarity as the key. For them, the fundamental premise of Black Power was that “group solidarity is necessary before a group can operate effectively from a bargaining position of strength in a pluralistic society.” As Chafe explained, Black Power “required that blacks—not ‘good’ whites—control their own institutions, their own programs, their own demands.” It also rejected the integration of Black people into a nation dominated by white values and institutions as the appropriate goal for the civil rights movement. Significantly, Black Power questioned the view that nonviolence was the only acceptable strategy in the Black freedom struggle. “Black Power spokespersons,” historian William L. Van Deburg wrote, “felt that a beleaguered minority could hope to survive in the violent milieu of late-twentieth-century America only by developing the will and the ability to retaliate against outside attacks.” As Carmichael explained, “nothing more quickly repels someone bent on destroying you than the unequivocal message: ‘O.K., fool, make your move, and run the same risk I run—of dying.’”<sup>54</sup>

On September 27, 1966, under the front-page headline “‘Black Power’ Interpretation Due,” the *Duke Chronicle* announced that community organizer Howard Fuller would be speaking on the Duke campus that evening. Hopkins was struck by the description of Fuller in the article as a “moderately militant Black Power advocate.” “That blew my mind,” Hopkins recalled. “I said, ‘Who

is this guy?' . . . In 196[6], to be a Black Power advocate was enough to make you a radical, if not a revolutionary. And here was this guy who was supposed to be a 'moderately militant Black Power advocate.' So I went to the seminar."<sup>55</sup>

That evening, Fuller addressed ideas at the center of the evolving concept of Black Power. Fuller told his audience that "integration at this time cannot be the answer when all of the power is in the hands of the white people." He identified organized Black political and economic strength as a necessary prelude to meaningful integration. Fuller derided the incremental progress toward integration achieved by the civil rights movement and emphasized that for Blacks to achieve an equal share of power, "the black man must begin to be proud of his blackness." He also rejected the contention made by some in the white and Black communities that Black Power had led to violence. "You don't get people to come out and burn things unless they see . . . nothing but dead roads ahead," Fuller explained. His talk impressed Hopkins. "After that we got together," Hopkins remembered. "We became good, good friends."<sup>56</sup>

Fuller was not the only speaker on Black Power at Duke during this period. As the most prominent Black Power advocate in the country, Stokely Carmichael spoke at dozens of community rallies and as many as twenty-five college campuses during the 1966–67 academic year. In March 1967, Carmichael visited Duke at the invitation of Lee Hatcher, who had known the SNCC leader when both were undergraduates at Howard University. Carmichael spoke before a packed crowd in Page Auditorium. Hatcher introduced him, calling Carmichael a "historic figure" who has "made a great, great impact on American Black people and . . . is destined to bring our people to freedom."<sup>57</sup>

In his prepared remarks and the question-and-answer session that followed, Carmichael used trenchant political analysis, provocative rhetoric, and wit to challenge long-standing assumptions held by both Black and white members of the audience. Carmichael critiqued the tactics and goals of the civil rights movement while arguing that the development of independent Black culture and institutions was essential to achieving change. Carmichael argued that "to bring about changes in the status quo, one needs power—not love, not non-violence, or morality—that's when you are developing a religion. When you want to bring change, you need power." "I'm not a pacifist," Carmichael explained. "If somebody tries to kill me, I'm going to shoot them before God gets the news. Dr. King would be willing to die to prove his point," Carmichael observed. "I would rather live and prove my point."<sup>58</sup>

Carmichael rejected integration as the goal of the Black freedom struggle. Integration was based, Carmichael argued, on the "assumption that there was

nothing of value in the Negro community and that little of value could be created among Negroes.” The civil rights movement was not seeking, according to Carmichael, to achieve progress for Black people as a group. Rather, “its goal was to make the white community accessible to ‘qualified’ Negroes” so that “each year a few more Negroes armed with their passport—a couple of university degrees—would escape into middle-class America and adopt the attitudes and lifestyles of that group.” Instead of integration, the focus of the Black freedom struggle, Carmichael said, should be to “return to the ghetto to organize these communities to control themselves.”<sup>59</sup>

Carmichael also challenged the white educational system. “I do not believe that the educational system in this country is perpetrated to help Black people,” Carmichael noted. “It is perpetrated to help white people and reinforces white supremacy without even many of the white people noticing it. . . . It reinforces and gives validity to the values and institutions of this society. . . . That is the problem with education. One is given technical skills but one is [also] given an ideology . . . [that] warps the mind of Black people in this country.” More broadly, Carmichael argued that white people should have no direct role in the Black freedom struggle. Instead, whites should return to their communities, organize poor white people, and attack institutional racism “so that Black Power become[s] a reality without bloodshed.”<sup>60</sup>

Carmichael’s critique of the civil rights movement, institutional racism, and the contradictions faced by Black students attending a white university resonated powerfully with Duke’s Black students. “Stokely Carmichael just . . . brought it home,” Armstrong recalled. “All of a sudden, there was someone who knew nothing about Duke who came in and just . . . described in a very graphic way exactly what was happening to us [on campus]. Things that we had tried to neglect.” Armstrong’s reaction to Carmichael was not uncommon. After Carmichael spoke at Tougaloo College outside Jackson, Mississippi, the student newspaper reported “a new awareness in the minds of the students. There has been a lot of thinking going on since he left, and these have been profound thoughts about US Black people.” Aaron Dixon commented after hearing Carmichael speak at his Seattle high school that “the way I looked at myself and America changed.”<sup>61</sup>

Carmichael’s visit to Duke reignited discussions about organizing Duke’s Black students. Charles Becton remembered a conversation with Lee Hatcher, campus visitor Samuel Shoots, and undergraduates Stef McLeod and Charles Hopkins after Carmichael’s speech at the law school. We were “walking out . . . talking about the need to get together as a group and stay together as a group,”

Becton explained, “and Samuel was telling us there was an [organized Black group] at Tennessee State [University]. Almost simultaneously we said, ‘Why don’t we do that here at Duke?’” With that, Becton and Hatcher asked Hopkins and McLeod to round up Duke’s Black undergraduates for a meeting. Now, when Hopkins approached his colleagues about getting together, their response was positive. Within a week of Carmichael’s visit, the first group meeting of Duke’s Black students was held. That meeting, Becton observed, “was the beginning.”<sup>62</sup>

Virtually all Black students at Duke attended the first meeting, although some came with misgivings. Armstrong, for example, remembered “being awfully afraid.” For her, the meeting “represented . . . a real revolutionary move . . . because I always associated it with a certain form of militancy.” Becton remembered one student speaking out against the formation of a Black student group. “He came to the first meeting saying,” according to Becton, “‘we’ve got to all live together. We can’t be holding separate meetings. What can you accomplish? You can’t live in a separate society.’”<sup>63</sup>

With Becton, Hatcher, McLeod, and Hopkins leading the conversation, Duke’s Black students got to know one another. “There were Blacks on campus we didn’t know were on campus,” Becton recalled. “Basically, studying by themselves.” “Some of the people that the undergraduates thought were . . . janitorial staff,” Brenda Brown remembered, “turned out to be graduate students.” A key step at the first meeting was the decision to establish the Duke Afro-American Society (AAS). In so doing, Duke’s Black students joined counterparts at other colleges and universities who had formed similar organizations. Scholars have recognized the key role these Black student organizations played in the Black activism that developed on many campuses. Sociologist William Exum described such student groups as “exclusively black in membership, monolithic in appearance, highly self-conscious, and motivated by sociopolitical concerns.” Education professor Joy Ann Williamson noted that such groups “worked towards providing Black students with a structured and legitimate power base from which to force change at their institutions.” While some student leaders at Duke viewed the AAS in these political terms, most students, at least initially, had more practical goals in mind. “We decided to make some formal structure,” Brown recalled, “to make sure we didn’t all get scattered and out of contact with each other.” Accordingly, the initial focus of the AAS was to foster interpersonal connections. “The political evolution of the Afro-American Society came after the social evolution,” Armstrong observed. Looking back, she remembered “a tremendous amount of needing to be with Black people on campus.” The first project undertaken by

the group was the preparation of a Black student directory listing the names, addresses, phone numbers, and major areas of study of all Black students on campus. With that contact information, “we had a couple of parties,” Becton remembered, “just to get together.”<sup>64</sup>

The early meetings of the AAS were not expressly “political.” “Helping each other out—that’s what it was all about at first,” Becton recalled. Once Black students started to interact, individual experiences started to emerge as pieces of a broader pattern. “We talked about things that concerned us,” Becton remembered. “We realized that a lot of things were happening that we just didn’t know about.” These interactions were crucial because they eased the isolation many Black students were experiencing. Isolation was “disorienting,” Chuck Hopkins explained. “You were at Duke, but before something happened to you [personally], you knew something was wrong but you had no overt experience of [it]. When you finally got to know another Black student and you sat down and talked about experiences—it was a relief.”<sup>65</sup>

As personal connections multiplied, a sense of community began to emerge. Common experiences, Armstrong explained, “served as the impetus for making the Black students who were at Duke at that time a very cohesive group.” “We . . . became family,” Janice Williams explained. “You needed someone to catch you, someone to fall back on, someone who understood all those little things.”<sup>66</sup>

The initial student leaders remained highly visible during the early AAS meetings. Becton, Hatcher, Hopkins, and McLeod “were such strong individuals,” Armstrong explained, “that they provided a protective umbrella for all of us.” “We spent a great deal of time just talking to the kids,” Becton recalled, “letting them know there was no reason they were being treated this way.” Discussions also focused on the changes needed at Duke. “Once we started talking to people, we found out all sorts of problems—we needed tutors, we needed all sorts of things,” Becton remembered.<sup>67</sup>

In April, Hopkins was elected the first chair of the AAS. “It was a consensus,” Armstrong remarked. “Chuck was . . . elected because he was the most vocal, he was the most visible, he seemed to have the politics right, and he seemed to be much more familiar with the ‘ins and outs’ of Duke than we were.” Hopkins embraced his leadership role. “It was something that I thought was right, it was something I felt strongly about,” Hopkins explained. “I wanted to move people to [a higher] level of thinking.”<sup>68</sup>

Just as regular AAS meetings began, the segregated facilities controversy reignited. Sigma Alpha Epsilon (SAE) fraternity decided to hold its pledge

formal at Hope Valley Country Club on April 8, 1967. The *Duke Chronicle* reported the location and time of the dance and publicized plans by an ad hoc committee to picket the event. The ad hoc committee explained that the purpose of the picketing was to “protest and to express the insult to black students . . . brought about by the University’s lack of clearly stated policies concerning the patronage of segregated facilities by [university] groups.” One member of SAE described matters very differently. In a letter to the editor of the *Duke Chronicle*, he asserted that the choice of Hope Valley had nothing to do with race. Describing Hope Valley as a “nice establishment,” he explained that several members of the SAE pledge class had fathers who were members of Hope Valley. The fraternity had simply “decided to take advantage of the opportunity to have our formal there.” In an editorial, the *Duke Chronicle* compared SAE unfavorably to the nursing school and WSGA: a year earlier, they had “had the guts to say no to Hope Valley Country Club which they realized would discriminate against fellow students.” Sarcastically, the paper urged SAE members to “hold your heads high, men.”<sup>69</sup>

On the same day as the SAE formal, the *Duke Chronicle* published a list of Duke administrators and professors who were members of Hope Valley Country Club. The list was extensive—in addition to Knight, it included Duke’s president emeritus, vice president for business and finance, provost, vice provost, university counsel, university librarian, director of physical education and athletics, head basketball coach, dean of the law school, and five law professors. The *Duke Chronicle* also noted that more than fifty members of the university’s medical school and hospital staff were members of the segregated club.<sup>70</sup> Some noted that the list of Hope Valley members included many of the Duke senior administrators directly involved in setting university policy on the use of the facility by campus groups.

The renewed attention to the segregated facilities issue soon became a topic of discussion at AAS meetings. “Without those meetings, we wouldn’t have known where fraternities had their parties,” Brown remembered. “I wasn’t even interested that they had them.” Armstrong explained how the perception of the issue evolved. “It wasn’t until the end of my freshman year [in the spring of 1967] or the beginning of my sophomore year,” she recounted, “that we could understand what Hope Valley was. To condone Hope Valley and yet take in Black students was an obvious contradiction. Mutually exclusive views.”<sup>71</sup>

Aware that the school year would be ending in a few weeks, AAS leaders were seeking an issue that could be used as a catalyst for group action while publicizing that Duke’s Black students had gotten organized. With the SAE



pledge formal and a roster of Hope Valley members now attracting publicity in the *Duke Chronicle*, AAS leaders decided to publish an “open letter” to the many Duke administrators and faculty members who were members of the club. “It was definitely an organizational tool,” Chuck Hopkins remembered. “We had just started so we wanted to present ourselves in some form. . . . It was a chance to get out and do something active.”<sup>72</sup>

Drafted by Hatcher and published in the *Duke Chronicle* on April 25, 1967, the open letter was signed by thirty-eight of the university’s approximately fifty-two Black students. While recognizing “the right of any individual at [Duke] to belong to any private organization,” the letter highlighted the conflict presented when a university publicly committed itself to racial equality yet allowed dozens of its administrators and faculty to participate in a private segregated club. “It is one thing,” the letter asserted, “for the Administrators of this institution to say that we accept you Negro students here at the University on the same basis that we do other students, and quite another to smack us in the face by indicating in your private lives that you will not treat Negroes equally with others. The two are directly contradictory and must be considered irreconcilable.”<sup>73</sup>

The open letter cast the Hope Valley memberships as part of a broader pattern of indifference to the needs of Black students at Duke. “We, as a group of Negro students, are fairly convinced,” the letter explained, “that our sole purpose here at the University is confined to that of being conspicuous.” In support, the letter cited Duke’s failure to act in the interests of its Black students in areas such as graduate school housing, social life, and the hiring of Blacks in administrative positions. “For the school to continue sanctioning the use of segregated facilities by the various groups in the University community,” the letter stated, “is an arrogance so flagrant as to suggest contempt for our well being.” Despite using strong language, however, the letter made no express demand that Duke’s Hope Valley members resign from the club. Rather, the open letter simply expressed “dismay” at Duke administrators and faculty who were Hope Valley members. It ended by warning these individuals that they would “receive ample rewards for your misdoings.”<sup>74</sup>

That thirty-eight of Duke’s Black students signed the open letter reflected the organizational strides the group had made by April 1967. The letter also displayed an advancing level of political analysis about the university’s use of segregated facilities as well as other significant issues faced by the Black students at Duke. Still, the open letter demonstrated caution and restraint. Armstrong characterized the tone of the letter as “strongly pleading.” The message, she said,

was “please do this so we won’t have to do something else.” “That’s not to say there weren’t people who felt much more strongly. . . . It reflect[ed] the overwhelming majority Black student view,” she explained, “that we ought to be a little more conservative about approaching this type of problem.” Even so, signing the letter was not taken lightly. “All of us came from pretty sheltered types of environments,” Armstrong noted, “and most of us were really afraid of what this represented. We knew this was just a first step—all of us realized that.”<sup>75</sup>

Knight was coming to the end of a very difficult school year. His leadership was under increasing scrutiny, not only by students. The “Fifth Decade Plan,” Knight’s ambitious roadmap for transforming Duke into a leading national university, had been announced to wide acclaim a couple of years earlier. Now, the \$187 million plan had started to generate opposition, especially from Endowment trustees. Race played a role. “Trustees who otherwise would have stepped up to the plate [to support the Fifth Decade Plan] were so . . . bothered by racial issues,” Knight reflected, “that one could no longer keep the lines clear.”<sup>76</sup>

Traveling constantly, the Duke president was exhausted. “Every day in the later sixties,” Knight wrote in his memoir, “I was burning more energy—more of myself—than I could replenish. . . . I was using up the capital of my mind and body, with no reasonable hope of protecting and restoring either one. Life had become relentless and I could do nothing to change it.” When Duke students returned for the fall semester, they learned that Knight had been hospitalized over the summer with a case of hepatitis and faced a “lengthy period of recuperation.”<sup>77</sup>

.....

In the fall of 1967, the sense of community among Duke’s Black students continued to grow. Their exploration of the cultural and political aspects of Black Power deepened, and the AAS began to develop strategies to force change at the university.

One important development was the arrival of forty Black freshmen. The larger number of Black students in the fall of 1967—now sixty-seven undergraduates—made fostering connections easier. “Once there got to be more and more of us there,” Brown observed, “you felt like there was someone there to reach out to.” “You couldn’t very well [develop your own society] with twenty people,” Howard explained. “You needed numbers.”<sup>78</sup>

With the influx of Black students, recruiting freshmen to join the AAS now became a priority. Beginning with the fall of 1967, Armstrong recalled, “we

took it upon ourselves to meet all of the new Black students . . . and to get them interested in what we were doing.” As a result, “it didn’t take six months for all of us to find each other.” Social events played a key role in the process. “I can remember distinctly,” Armstrong commented, “some kind of get-together in back of my dorm, the first week of my sophomore year [in September 1967]. From that time on, everybody knew everybody.”<sup>79</sup>

As they got to know the incoming freshmen, upperclassmen learned that these students were markedly different from those who had come before them. For Hopkins, who matriculated at Duke in 1965, the process of becoming politicized had been gradual and organic. “I was . . . indifferent to the whole thing [when I arrived at Duke],” Hopkins explained. “Duke’s racism and oppressiveness assaulted me and made me respond.” “The two or three classes that came in after me,” he recounted, “came to Duke angry . . . because stuff was happening by then.” Brown agreed. “The class that came after me was just a more militantly minded class than some of us who were ahead of them. They got here and they encountered some of the frustrations we had encountered . . . but they were [quicker] to react to them than we were.” One reason is that these freshmen arrived at Duke after searing national events, like the Watts Rebellion in 1965 and the Newark uprising in 1967, had drawn intense national attention. These members of the class of 1971 also came to Duke after the AAS had been established. “When they came in, all of these issues had accelerated so rapidly,” Armstrong explained. “They came in at a time when the slope of the curve was going up exponentially. . . . We came in at a time when things were brewing.”<sup>80</sup>

With more Black students on campus, better methods of intragroup communication were necessary. One approach was to schedule more frequent get-togethers. “There were regular meetings by the time the classes after us came in,” Brown recounted. “Kids just had the chance to sit down and really make an effort to talk about what this place was like, what was going down, and what we could change to make things better for the people who came after us.” Meetings were not the only setting for group interaction. “The classes that came after us,” Howard remembered, “were more socially oriented. They were into having a lot of parties so we saw each other more. That helped a lot,” she explained.<sup>81</sup>

As the pace of events accelerated, ways of sharing information between meetings and other gatherings were also needed. One approach was to establish a simple but highly effective communication network, the “Drum.” “You know what the grapevine is,” Armstrong explained. “We called it the Drum.”

Through the Drum, information could be passed among Duke's Black students with remarkable speed. "No one could understand how all of us knew about each other . . . and could get word to each other in such a short period of time," Armstrong recalled.<sup>82</sup>

In addition to communicating through the Drum, Black students created a meeting place called the "Block." "Between classes, . . . where the [student] union is," Armstrong recounted, "there is a block of cement next to the garbage can. We used to call it 'the Block.'" As Armstrong described it, "all of the Black people would congregate there in between classes and around lunchtime. It used to be like a magnet. . . . That's how word got passed a lot of times." Meals were also an opportunity for group interaction. Continuing a practice started in the spring, Duke's Black students ate a majority of their meals together, meeting daily at the same designated table in the dining hall.<sup>83</sup>

As hostility over race seemed to increase both at Duke and in the country at large, Duke's Black students looked increasingly to each other for support. "We were frightened" when we came to Duke, Armstrong recalled. "There is no question about it. But it frightened us into a collective sense of needing each other. We needed each other more than anyone needed each other. We were such a cohesive group. . . . We were a community within a community," Armstrong described, "and we were a very separate community."<sup>84</sup>

This sense of collective separateness—of "community"—led directly to the development of the Black student movement at the university. In addition to providing friendship and emotional support, closeness afforded these students the psychological and emotional space needed to achieve, as historian Lawrence Goodwyn described in *The Populist Moment*, a "heretofore culturally unsanctioned level of social analysis."<sup>85</sup> As they adapted the ideology of the Black Power movement, Duke's Black students began to challenge assumptions not only of the dominant white culture at Duke but also of their parents and the communities that had raised them.

An interview with Hopkins published in September 1967 illustrates how the AAS had adopted key elements of the Black Power program. Emphasizing the need for "self respect" among Black students, Hopkins stated that the purpose of the AAS was to develop and maintain "Black consciousness" on campus. Hopkins argued that Black students at Duke "by and large [were] obtaining a white education" and cited as evidence the many history classes at the school where Black contributions to society were "noticeably neglected" and "black people are not emphasized." The purpose of the AAS, according to Hopkins, was to promote "Afro-American history and culture" as well as

a closer connection between Duke's Black students and the Durham community, especially in the area of open housing. Hopkins described the Black student at Duke as facing a choice between preparing to "go north, get a job and settle down into a comfortable living" or going back to his or her home community to "help his people." The AAS hoped to encourage Duke's Black students, Hopkins explained, to work in their own communities.<sup>86</sup>

Racial issues continued to be at the forefront in the fall. In September the university took action to eliminate segregation in off-campus housing. Duke required that the owners of all off-campus housing units listed by the university as available for students sign a nondiscrimination pledge. As was the case with the decision to desegregate and the requirement that fraternities and sororities eliminate discriminatory membership requirements, the immediate cause of the policy change was pressure from the federal government.<sup>87</sup>

In October 1967, the segregated facilities issue moved rapidly to the fore, with Duke's Black students playing a pivotal role. Soon, the issue divided the campus. Initially, ASDU was the primary actor. On October 17, 1967, after "long, sometimes heated debate," the ASDU legislature voted 27–15 to prohibit the use of segregated facilities by all university-related organizations. Debate focused on whether ASDU had the jurisdiction to prohibit private groups—such as fraternities and sororities—from holding events at segregated facilities. According to a report in the *Duke Chronicle*, most legislators who voted in favor of the resolution agreed with one student who said that ASDU had to "accept responsibility for the moral issue at hand." Although two motions demanding a student-wide referendum on the resolution were defeated, ASDU legislators asked that Duke undergraduates be informed of their right to force a student vote on the action.<sup>88</sup>

Immediately following passage of the resolution, Hopkins and McLeod issued a statement on behalf of the AAS "emphatically demand[ing]" that the university publish a clear policy on the use of segregated facilities. "The era of toleration of . . . lack of re-affirmation of policy is over," the statement read. "We as black students in this integrated community await a clear affirmation . . . from the University administration on this vital issue."<sup>89</sup>

Yet not only was there no statement of policy by the university, but different opinions arose among undergraduate constituencies. Almost immediately, two petitions calling for a student referendum on the ASDU resolution began circulating on campus. As petition signatures were being collected, the MSGA, voting 6–2, adopted a resolution proposed by Interfraternity Council representative Bob Pittman condemning ASDU's segregated facilities ban.

Pittman's primary concern, he said, was to affirm the "basic right of the individual organization to decide for itself on the matter." Days later, the WSGA cabinet voted 11-0-2 to support ASDU's stance and to prohibit the use of segregated facilities by all Woman's College groups.<sup>90</sup>

Other groups also weighed in. The Interfraternity Council voted 13-4 against banning the use of segregated facilities by its constituent members. The Men's Freshman Council voted to condemn the ASDU resolution as well, concluding that "while segregation is morally wrong, it is up to individuals and individual organizations to address the situation." Sigma Nu fraternity objected to the ASDU action as legislative overreach but also voted to prohibit the use of segregated facilities for future Sigma Nu events.<sup>91</sup> Women were generally more progressive than men and fraternity members more conservative than those men who lived in independent groups.

Meanwhile, university leaders seemed more indecisive than ever on the issue. In September the school released a policy that only confused matters further. The new policy, adopted by the University Policy and Planning Advisory Committee (UPPAC), prohibited the use of segregated facilities in connection with "official activities sponsored, financed, and controlled by University personnel and campus organizations." University administrators then seemed to contradict themselves, with the university Administrative Council stating that the policy was applicable only to Duke administration, faculty, and staff and not to students "except where there is overlap." Unable to answer questions on the precise scope of the new UPPAC policy, Cole explained that his public comments had been left "purposefully vague." When asked if the policy could be understood to prohibit student groups from using off-campus segregated facilities, Robert L. Price, dean of Trinity College, responded opaquely, "It may be interpreted that way."<sup>92</sup>

The segregated facilities issue had now taken center stage. Various student groups, citing, among other arguments, "freedom of choice," "moral considerations," and "legislative overreach," had come down on different sides of the issue. The administration had issued a seemingly expansive prohibition on the use of segregated facilities but excluded student groups from its reach. The final twist occurred when advocates for a student referendum on the ASDU ban announced that they had collected the seven hundred student signatures needed to force a campus-wide vote. The referendum was scheduled for November 7.

Faced with the upcoming student referendum, the AAS voted to boycott the vote. In a resolution addressed to the university, the AAS declared that it

would refrain from participating in a process “designed to determine whether the black student on this campus should be recognized as a human being.” As ballots on the referendum were being cast, twenty-five of Duke’s Black students stood in front of the voting table on West Campus in silent protest. At 1:20 p.m., they ripped up their ballots and walked off. “We oppose the fact that students are trying to decide something that is our inherent right as members of this University,” an AAS spokesperson commented.<sup>93</sup>

When the votes were counted, fully 60 percent of students voting came down *against* ASDU’s resolution prohibiting the use of segregated facilities by student groups. Asked for a comment, Kinney stated that the “vote was revealing to many people, and in many ways.” He also commented on the decision by the AAS to boycott the vote. “The fact that some Negroes did not vote is to be respected,” Kinney said, “yet is a potential sign of danger.”<sup>94</sup>

.....

The AAS met soon after the referendum. The segregated facilities controversy had now been escalating for twelve months with no clear statement of policy by the administration. With their fellow students having now rejected ASDU’s prohibition, there was little confidence that the university would make a policy change in the near term. Also, the AAS had by then been meeting for more than seven months. Interactions at these meetings caused a fundamental change in how Black students perceived the segregated facilities issue. The meetings of the AAS, Becton explained, had led to the “increased realization that . . . things [like a change in the segregated facilities policy] were things that were due us, rather than things we ought to be requesting.” As Becton described it, the changes sought were “rights, as opposed to privileges.”<sup>95</sup> With this perspective, Duke’s Black students decided to take action to force a policy change.

In Becton’s view, the Black students had more power than they realized. To illustrate his point, he described how university housing office personnel had reacted when he and Hatcher sought their help in finding suitable off-campus housing. Because almost all rental units near campus were available to white tenants only, Becton and Hatcher decided that “the university had an *obligation* to find us some housing.” Their approach was simple, Becton explained. “We walked into the housing office one day and . . . told them that we had spent two days down here looking for a house. . . . We indicated that we were [prepared to go public with the university’s failure] to find housing

for Black kids.” The results were dramatic, Becton recounted. “In one hour, we got a phone call and got a house right behind East Campus . . . just a great place to live.” This story helped the Black students “realize that the power was there,” Becton noted. Soon, most AAS members agreed with his assessment that “the more active we were, the more likely we were to have some of our demands met.”<sup>96</sup>

The students considered three strategies to put pressure on the university. “One, [we could] take over [a] building;” Armstrong remembered, “two, [we could] go and ask for a meeting with Dr. Knight; and three, [we could] do something that would not obstruct justice but would bring attention to the university.” The first option—a building takeover—was quickly dismissed. “At that time, we did not feel that the issues were sufficient to prompt that kind of action,” Armstrong explained. “We [also lacked the] political savvy to be able to pull that off. And most of us were scared at that time.” The second option, a meeting with Knight, would allow the students to convey the urgency of the issue directly to the Duke president. Such a meeting, however, would represent little more than “strongly pleading” for a policy change, a course that had already been attempted without success in the “open letter” published in the spring. Discussion turned to direct action. Armstrong remembered “everyone talking about the fact that Duke hated bad publicity.” The students began to consider forms of protest, she recalled, that would “bring attention to Duke without being violent.” In the end, the group settled on a “study-in” in the anteroom directly outside President Knight’s office as the “most politically expedient way” to accomplish these objectives. “We needed to bring some national attention to our demand,” Becton explained. “Basically, power concedes nothing without a demand. . . . That is what it was about.” Brown held a similar view. “We felt that this was the only thing that would have some impact,” she recalled.<sup>97</sup>

The strategy also garnered support from AAS members because it was seen as less threatening to the university than other options. Since the students would be studying, the protest would be orderly and quiet. “To ‘study-in,’” Armstrong explained, “meant in the process of us getting our education we were also trying to be heard. It was an acceptable thing because Duke students ought to be studying.”<sup>98</sup> The students came from families that had taught them to follow the rules. Notwithstanding agreement that direct action was necessary to force a policy change, they settled on a strategy that would apply pressure to the university while causing as little disruption as possible.



Before initiating the protest, Hopkins, Joyce Hobson, McLeod, and Becton presented the university with a resolution demanding that it clarify its policy on the use of segregated facilities and threatening disruption if it failed to do so. The resolution framed the segregated facilities issue as part of a broader pattern of university disregard for the needs of its Black students. “It is now obvious that a true sense of . . . responsibility towards us . . . as a part of this University community is lacking,” the resolution declared, “and that a willingness to defend our rights here . . . is even more lacking.” On behalf of Duke Afro-Americans, the resolution demanded that “our administration *IMMEDIATELY* announce and explicitly institute a policy of total prohibition of patronization of segregated establishments by *ANY* official University organization.” If the demand were not acted upon on or before 6:00 p.m. on November 12, the resolution concluded, “we . . . will enact . . . plans to disrupt the functioning of the University until our demands are met!” Looking back a decade later, Hopkins remained impressed by the urgency of the resolution. “Boy, I was crazy in those days,” he commented. “The sky was the limit evidently. . . . Telling people we were going to disrupt the university.”<sup>99</sup>

Knight’s response was unequivocal. In a memorandum dated November 12, the Duke president made it “absolutely clear that the University will accept no ultimatum” and threatened “major disciplinary action” if the Black students disrupted the campus. Knight also dismissed the demand for immediate action, noting that a review of the university’s use of segregated facilities was in process and “cannot be resolved hastily.” Making clear that Duke would not circumvent established decision-making channels, he suggested that the Black students express their “opinions to the appropriate deans,” so they may be given “consideration during discussions of the issues.”<sup>100</sup>

Knight was now precisely in the situation he had hoped to avoid. He had concluded months earlier that he “could never have approved of university groups using segregated facilities.” Yet attempts to resolve the issue without a confrontation had failed. Faced with the threat of disruption, Knight almost certainly recognized that any opportunity to resolve the issue without conflict was now gone.<sup>101</sup>

On Monday, November 13, at 8:30 a.m., thirty-five members of the AAS walked into the Allen Building and sat down just outside Knight’s office for a “study-in.” Photographs of the event show smartly dressed student protesters sitting closely together on the floor. Some smoked, and a handful of the men wore dark sunglasses. All read quietly or did other homework. “People really did work,” Howard remembered. “We were all reading something about Black

history. I remember in the press picture, Stef McLeod had *Black Power* by Stokely Carmichael." Brown recalled "a very good sense of group cohesiveness." A poster propped against the wall declared, "We Are Studying In For: Human Dignity," and another said, "Black Sisters Together with Our *Soul Men* to the *End*." The students asked to speak to Knight but were told that he was in New York.<sup>102</sup>

Members of the administration talked to student leaders both before and during the protest to prevent a physical confrontation. "I was very interested in keeping some semblance of egress and ingress in the situation which then kept us from having to impose any kind of sanction," Griffith commented. "We didn't want to move on it," he remembered. "We were looking for excuses *not* to move on it in a hard-line kind of way." Although access to the president's office was completely blocked for almost three hours, no direct confrontation occurred. The administration, however, was prepared for any contingency. Nine Durham policemen equipped with helmets and nightsticks were "on-call" in the campus security office throughout the protest.<sup>103</sup>

Around midday, a group of white students arrived and asked to join the protest. The offer was rejected, and when several white students refused to leave voluntarily, they were forcibly carried out. "I think most of us felt like we had to go inside and stand up on our own, first," Becton explained. "At that point, it had to be about *us* getting together." "We always had a strong thing with the liberal white students," Hopkins recounted, "who just wanted to come over and support us. . . . We were uncomfortable with that. . . . We were saying, you got problems too. So let's all deal with our [own] problems and come together on that." For participants in the early civil rights demonstrations, the move away from multiracial protest was stark. "It was not 'Black-and-white together,'" movement veteran and Duke professor Jack Preiss recalled. "It was a self-identification by Blacks that was exclusive. Whites were not accepted as part of it."<sup>104</sup>

Students remained outside the president's office for seven hours. Discussions between the university and the AAS took place on and off throughout the day. An audio recording of internal AAS deliberations makes clear that the substance of Duke's segregated facilities policy was never addressed in the course of these discussions. Instead, the talks focused exclusively on the university's demand that the Black students suspend their protest until UPPAC had the opportunity to meet and consider a policy change. The university explained that UPPAC was not scheduled to meet for nine days and Knight

would need two additional days to consider any policy change the committee recommended. The university asked for suspension of the protest for eleven days.

On a divided vote, the protesters initially decided to accept the university's request for additional time. Just as they were notifying university representatives of their decision, however, the students learned that another significant university committee—the Student Faculty Administrative Committee (SFAC)—was scheduled to meet that very afternoon. Believing that SFAC should be able to make a definitive policy recommendation on an issue that had been in the spotlight for almost a year, the students reversed their earlier decision to stand down for almost two weeks. They demanded an answer from the university within two days. In a response that only a bureaucrat could comprehend, the students were told that their proposed timetable was unworkable, and the SFAC only had jurisdiction to make policy for Duke's undergraduate colleges. To change the segregated facilities policy for the entire university, the students were told, UPPAC action would be necessary. Why an emergency UPPAC meeting could not be convened in less than nine days was never explained.

The students met to consider a response. They found the university's rigid stance unacceptable. Recalling the decision by the AAS to refuse participation in the undergraduate referendum on segregated facilities, one student argued that “this is the same thing as . . . boycotting the polls. . . . No one has the right to vote on whether you are human.” A change in the university's segregated facilities policy, one student argued, would never happen if considered under the school's normal decision-making procedures. “It's like Stokely Carmichael says,” he explained. “We are hoping the university will act in good faith. But when push comes to shove, there is no such thing as good faith. They will give us the run-around as long as they can. You can put it off 10 days from now, you can put it off 20 days from now, you can put it off ‘ever’ from now.”<sup>105</sup>

In the end, all agreed that the university's request for an additional eleven days to consider a policy change was unacceptable. “Why should we have to wait for SFAC or UPPAC or any kind of ‘FAC’?” one student asked. “I'd like to hear a justification,” another declared, “for why UPPAC, in a matter of emergency—and this is obviously an emergency—cannot get themselves together in less than eleven days.” “These people can act when they get ready to act,” another student insisted.<sup>106</sup> Clearly, the university's efforts to use bureaucratic procedures as a way to delay action on a moral issue was no longer acceptable.

By a unanimous vote, the students decided to suspend further protest until 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 15. This would give Duke two days to respond. The scheduled SFAC meeting could convene later in the day, and Knight would have twenty-four hours to consider any recommended policy change.<sup>107</sup> The AAS representatives left to advise the university of the students' position.

As they prepared to disperse, the student protesters checked the radio to see whether reports of the study-in had been picked up by local or national news outlets. Within moments of turning on the radio, they heard, "Protesting Negro students lay down in the hallway today in the office of Duke University President Douglas Knight. They said they were protesting a student body referendum which supported the patronization of segregated places."<sup>108</sup>

The goal of creating pressure on Duke to act by generating unfavorable publicity for the school had been achieved. Before leaving, the protesters had one additional matter to attend to. "Let's leave this place just like we found it," one student admonished. Although participants in the study-in would now be seen as "militants" by many in the university community, their parents had clearly taught them to never leave a mess behind.

Soon after learning of the students' position, a university representative delivered a prepared statement. Formal in tone and substance, the statement spoke only to "process" issues and failed entirely to communicate any sensitivity to the feelings of hurt, frustration, and urgency that had prompted the students to protest. "The University cannot and will not take action under the threat of an ultimatum," the statement said. "Serious efforts were made today by appropriate officials of the University and by spokesmen of the group of students here today to agree on a procedure" for the university's reconsideration of its segregated facilities policy. "Unfortunately," the statement concluded, "agreement on these questions of procedure could not be reached."<sup>109</sup> Thus, the university's statement made clear that the school—not the students—would determine how and when any change in the segregated facilities policy would occur.

The SFAC met that afternoon. The segregated facilities issue consumed the entirety of the committee's four-hour meeting. Working with SFAC representatives to craft the resolution to be voted on at the meeting, Knight had competing goals. He wanted to show movement by the university on the issue while avoiding the appearance that the study-in had forced him to act. To downplay the impact of the protest, Knight wanted any change in the university's stance on segregated facilities to be framed as a "clarification" of the current policy, not

a new pronouncement. The SFAC did as the president desired. The committee recommended that the university “promptly” reiterate its existing policy with respect to segregated facilities and, “if indicated, rephrase the statement so as to include student organizations and groups.” With this recommendation, Knight concluded that he had the internal authorization to announce a policy change, even without UPPAC input.<sup>110</sup>

Between his strong letter to the Afro-American students on Sunday night and the university’s refusal to make any policy change in the face of an ultimatum, Knight could fairly claim by Monday evening that the university had gotten the better of the student protesters. Local papers the next day carried headlines like “Defeat of Sit-In” and “Dr. Knight, Not Protesting Group, Still President of His University.” Responding to a story on Knight’s strong actions in the *Charlotte News*, trustee Edwin Jones wrote, “This is wonderful and is the sort of stand I have been hoping you would take. . . . Congratulations!”<sup>111</sup>

But events had yet to play out fully. On Wednesday evening, Hopkins took the step Knight had insisted upon. He withdrew any AAS ultimatum. “At this point we have not planned any further action,” the AAS chairman announced. “We are waiting peacefully for a couple of days for a statement from the administration.”<sup>112</sup>

Now that the threat of protest had been removed, at least temporarily, Knight felt that he could announce a new policy without violating his pledge “to accept no ultimatum.” On Friday, November 17, less than four days after the study-in ended, Knight announced that Duke’s “stated practice on discrimination and the use of segregated facilities, which has applied to faculty and staff organizations since late September, will in the future apply also to student organizations.” Knight said that the announcement would have been made “in the normal course of events,” even claiming that the consideration of the ASDU resolution, along with the “threat of disruption” made by the AAS, had delayed action. “To have accepted such an ultimatum would have been a major step toward anarchy,” Knight said, “and it is now clear . . . that decisions cannot be based on ultimatums and disruptive action, rather than . . . principle.” A few days later, the Duke Alumni Association announced that it would no longer hold events at segregated facilities.<sup>113</sup>

For the moment, the AAS was satisfied. The policy gives “Negro students something that should have been there” all along, Joyce Hobson commented, “something necessary.” Hopkins saw significance in the policy change. “The action of Dr. Knight has shown that Duke has accepted its role of responsibility to all members of its community,” he commented. “The statement means

that black students can now have a meaningful identity with Duke as their school.” In private, members of the AAS saw the study-in as a major victory. “It made us realize the power we had,” Becton recalled, “because it was the first massive thing . . . that produced some action. [It] showed the kids what coming together was all about.” “What it represented to us wasn’t the end; it was the beginning,” Armstrong remembered. “We felt like if we could get them to listen to us on that issue, then it was time to get them to listen to us on other issues.”<sup>114</sup>

Some trustees and many alumni reacted to the events on campus with anger and dismay. For them, the study-in showed that Black Power had made its way to the Duke campus. They feared that the racial violence engulfing many parts of the country would soon follow. Perhaps even more concerning, trustees and alumni saw the change in the university’s segregated facilities policy as capitulation to Black student protesters. Trustee Edwin Jones, who had written initially praising Knight for his strong stand, was not happy about Duke’s “clarification” of the segregated facilities policy. “Regardless of prior statements in the newspapers the Administration of Duke University gave in to the Afro-American students and gave them all they asked for,” he wrote. “I suppose they are to be criticized for not asking for more. This, of course, shows who is running the University.” Board member George V. Allen particularly rejected the “revolutionary methods” used by the protesters. Other alumni were equally critical, urging Knight to expel the protesters, calling the study-in “repugnant,” and warning that support for Duke was fast diminishing “in light of the apparent appeasement attitude of Duke officials . . . in allowing the continued actions by these ilk.”<sup>115</sup>

Knight responded to every letter. He defended his actions by explaining that he had successfully established two principles: “1) to settle the question of ultimatums, which we did, and 2) to verify the University’s position on non-discrimination.” To those who said he had given in to the students, he countered that “only after the threat of destructive action on campus was retracted did we take our firm position against discrimination.” The university had “no intention of giving in to any group of students,” he said, “no matter what their color, if they try to make their point by disrupting the operation of the University.”<sup>116</sup>

Despite these explanations, Knight knew that the segregated facilities controversy had further damaged his standing with conservative elements of the university community. “People on both sides were getting so strenuous on these issues that there was no way to get to any kind of reasoned position that

wouldn't be assailed," he explained. During the entire period, Knight saw a "series of alternations between the pressure on the 'left' and the unyielding resistance of the 'right.'" "The left delivers the ultimatum, the right ignores it," the Duke president explained. "And then if you happen to be caught in the middle where you have to make real decisions in what the computer people call 'real time,' why you are faced with impossible issues." Asked if he tried to resolve conflicts by moving those with widely divergent views to more reasonable positions, Knight responded soberly: "with everybody, and unsuccessfully all the way around."<sup>117</sup>

Knight was certainly correct in believing that the segregated facilities controversy presented him with an impossible political dilemma. His political capital would be diminished no matter what course he took. Hence, he saw himself as the victim of larger historical forces playing out at Duke in the late 1960s. Caught in the middle of colliding parties that would not act "reasonably," the Duke president became a lightning rod for fear, anger, and mistrust. But in fact, Knight himself was a key actor in the segregated facilities controversy. Indeed, the actions he took—or failed to take—reveal a great deal about his capacities as a leader when faced with racial conflict.

Knight knew that Duke's continued use of segregated facilities was untenable. "If you forced yourself to the ultimate issue," he said, "there was no doubt about where the university would need to be." Yet he did everything he could for as long as possible to avoid taking a principled public stand on the issue. "I hoped for some months," he recounted, "that we wouldn't . . . be forced to the ultimate issue . . . because, frankly, I didn't think that [was] good enough ground to do real battle on."<sup>118</sup> Despite escalating protests by Duke's Black students and expressions of deep concern by others in the university community, Knight concluded that it was not worth investing his political capital in a battle over the university's segregated facilities policy.

How did he reach these conclusions on an issue where his view of the "ultimate issue" was clear and required a change in university policy? One answer lies in how Knight viewed his role as the leader of an academic community. For him, the university was a place defined by mediation, critical discourse, and civility. In such a setting, disputes are resolved through rational discussion with the "leader" gently pressing opposing sides to reach consensus. This approach had worked spectacularly well at Lawrence. In a controversy such as the one over the use of segregated facilities at Duke, however, Knight confronted a dispute that was considered "existential" by both sides. For Black students, Duke was either committed to embracing them as equal members of the university com-

munity or it was not. For conservative elements, on the other hand, Duke was either committed to the right of white members of the university community to exercise “freedom of choice” in deciding where to socialize and with whom or it was not. There could be no consensus reached on these opposing positions. As Knight acknowledged, “reason and moderation no longer defined the forces you were working with.” He came to feel that “whatever you did was wrong” in such a situation “because the constituents were so divided among themselves.”<sup>119</sup>

Knight’s approach to leadership was rooted in his personality. “Doug always wanted to go to bed at night thinking that he had pleased 100 percent of the people he had dealt with during the day,” Anlyan commented. “Unfortunately, this was not possible in that era (or in any other).” Knight was also accustomed to deference. “He was completely unprepared by background and temperament,” Bob Ashley, managing editor of the *Duke Chronicle*, commented perceptively, “to have his authority challenged.”<sup>120</sup>

Knight was not passive on all issues. Indeed, where leadership was required to protect a value he considered “core” to the university, he could act with alacrity. Academic freedom was one such core value. In 1966, for example, trustees and alumni were highly critical when Marxist historian and political activist Herbert Aptheker was permitted to speak on campus. Knight was unapologetic. To one trustee, he wrote: “At the level of principle we have to defend the unpopular opinion; at the level of politics we have to be smart enough to expose gentlemen whom we would make more attractive if we denied them the chance to speak.” Knight saw the exploration of unpopular ideas or political positions as “an essential university duty” and not an issue that can be avoided when raised. In addition to communists, he defended the right of Black Power leaders, antiwar activists, and atheists, among many others, to speak on campus.<sup>121</sup>

Unlike academic freedom, however, Knight saw the segregated facilities issue as one that could—even *should*—be avoided when raised. He did not see racial inclusion as a value that was “core” to the university. This was because of his attitudes on race. The Duke president held racial views that some would call “progressive,” but he did so without deep personal conviction. He was fine with Black students attending historically white universities as long as they were “qualified” and played by Knight’s notion of the “rules.” But he did not see it as his responsibility to investigate, understand, and address the problems Duke’s Black students encountered on campus. Hence, the Duke president could not grasp the growing outrage Duke’s Black students felt about the school’s strong connections to Hope Valley, including his own personal



membership in the club. “Country club issues and the like couldn’t have been less important to me,” Knight said in 1988. “I looked on [the students’] point as very well taken. [But] politically [resignation] was a very unwise thing to do because it offended a lot of people in the community.”<sup>122</sup>

Whatever the cause, Knight paid a huge price for his failure to lead on the segregated facilities issue. Not only did his passivity prolong the controversy, but it also impaired his ability to lead on controversial issues that would arise in the future. Perceived as reactive on all sides, and challenged over a myriad of issues, he was increasingly marginalized in future decision-making.

By the end of 1967, Duke had been desegregated for more than four years and the first class of Black undergraduates had graduated in the spring of 1967. Against the backdrop of national events, even a benign protest like the November study-in was deeply threatening to conservative elements of the Duke community. The gap in perception on racial issues was growing, not narrowing. Two differing views on the segregated facilities issue illustrate the point. “Once they decided to have Black people there, they should have known they didn’t need to be having things at segregated facilities,” study-in participant Brown reflected. “What are they going to do with their Black students if one of them belongs to one of these [organizations] and they want to have something at a segregated facility? That’s just common sense, but nobody thought about what it meant to have us [at Duke] and [nobody] cared.”<sup>123</sup>

Knight, of course, saw matters differently. Asked if the men who ran Duke “should have known” that the continued use of segregated facilities following the arrival of Black students was an obvious contradiction, Knight responded, “I’m not sure they are quite right to say, ‘They should have known.’ . . . That’s too simple.”

If they would say instead, “How tragic that they didn’t know. How sad that they didn’t know. Why don’t human beings understand these things?” I would agree. I don’t think they can say, “They should have known.” Because . . . you’ve got to remember where these . . . folks were coming from. . . . It would be quite unrealistic to assume that . . . the university, in that location, with those characters playing their roles, could remotely have understood that if you meant to admit Black students you meant there should no longer be segregated facilities related to the university, and no longer a president that belonged to that [segregated] country club.

According to Knight, “People didn’t remotely think of that.” He acknowledged that these failures of insight are “no exoneration.”<sup>124</sup>

By the end of 1967, Knight finally recognized that any hope of finding a path forward for his administration and the Black students required opening a direct line of communication with them. Just a week after the segregated facilities controversy was resolved, Knight wrote to Griffith, asking, “When would it seem wisest to you to try to sit down with that group of Negro students? I am sure you have a good many thoughts about it, and I’ll welcome your judgment.”<sup>125</sup>