

# Malcolm X, the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and Morgan State College

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Judson L. Jeffries

Black intellectuals and the rank and file shared a common esteem for Malcolm X. A former convict and one who had been thoroughly familiar with the seamy side of life, Malcolm was a fiery symbol of black anger. His condemnation of white America was merciless. His magnetic personality was matched by a stirring oratory. “We didn’t land on Plymouth Rock, my brothers and sisters—Plymouth Rock landed on us!”—Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Making of America* (1987)

No African American public figure was more sought-after by America’s college students during the early to mid-1960s than Malcolm X. In fact, starting in 1960, following the 1959 documentary done by Mike Wallace and Louis Lomax entitled *The Hate That Hate Produced*, which introduced the Nation of Islam to America, Malcolm maintained an unrelenting schedule, traveling more than he ever had before, lecturing on college campuses, and at convention halls, delivering speeches and sermons at lodges and churches. His life was one of constant motion involving planes, trains, and automobiles. From 1960 to 1963 alone, Malcolm appeared on no less than 30 campuses, including some of the nation’s most prestigious institutions of higher learning, such as Harvard, Cornell, and Brown Universities. He spent so much time on colleges campuses in the New York Metropolitan area that one might have thought him the city’s roving scholar-in-residence. The college scene held a special place in Malcolm’s heart, perhaps because he placed a premium on education and regretted dropping out of school at such a young age. “Education is the passport to the future,” Malcolm was fond of saying. Fortunately, by the time Malcolm had been paroled in the early 1950s, he had educated himself far beyond the limits of any degree he might have earned at any of the highly regarded northeastern universities at which he spoke (Wilmore, 1986). Students, regardless of race, seemed to be

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drawn to him, even when they didn't agree with him. Word has it that Malcolm was always respectful, open-minded, and responsive to his young listeners. His young audience nearly always responded in-kind. Malcolm's Assistant Minister Benjamin 2X Goodman (later known as Benjamin Karim) remembers how students would rush toward Malcolm after a presentation, jockeying for position: "Students gathered around him like bees around honey in August. They asked him questions about their studies, they sought his advice on term-paper topics, they requested his autograph. Malcolm answered and counseled and obliged" (Karim, 1992, p. 127). In his autobiography, Malcolm himself says:

Except for all-black audiences, I liked the college audiences best. The college sessions sometimes ran two to four hours—they often ran overtime. Challenges, queries, and criticisms were fired at me by the usually objective and always alive and searching minds of undergraduate and graduate students, and their faculties. The college sessions never failed to be exhilarating.... It was like being on a battlefield—with intellectual and philosophical bullets. It was an exciting battle with ideas. (Haley, 1965, pp. 282, 365)

Much has been made of Malcolm's visits to many of America's highly regarded predominantly White institutions, especially those of the Ivy League variety. Even his December 1964 visit to Oxford University in England prompted two scholars to devote entire books to the matter (Ambar, 2014; Tuck, 2014). Few writers and scholars have, however, acknowledged Malcolm's visits to the country's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, perhaps because those invitations were few and far between.<sup>1</sup> Discussions with a number of older HBCU graduates over the years have revealed that many Black schools were in some ways just as conservative as their lily-white institutional counterparts.<sup>2</sup>

I can think of no African American freedom fighter who was considered more controversial, fascinating, and dynamic, by both Blacks and Whites, during the modern civil rights era than Malcolm X.<sup>3</sup> In 1969, Florida A & M University professor Marcus Hanna Boulware wrote, "as the spokesman of Black Muslimism, Malcolm X was worthy of comparison with Gamaliel of the Hebrews and Plato and Aristotle of the Greeks" (Boulware, 1969, p. 234). Even if students at Black colleges were predisposed to inviting Malcolm X to their campuses, securing the administration's approval would have proven most difficult. For example, when Malcolm was extended an invitation to speak in Columbia, South Carolina, on April 17, 1963, organizers of the event encountered pushback from both Blacks and Whites.<sup>4</sup> When the local mosque rented the Township Auditorium for Malcolm's visit, the county legislative delegation pressured the manager of the county-owned facility to tear up the contract. Then, when organizers attempted to move the event

to a Masonic lodge on the city's westside, local Black church leaders succeeded in undermining that effort (Holleman, 2013). At the time, Dr. J. A. Bacoats, the 72-year-old president of historically Black Benedict College, had this to say about Malcolm's impending visit: "the Nation of Islam group should be allowed to gather and hear Malcolm X under the Constitution's freedom of speech clause, but I am dubious and very hesitant to endorse or give cooperation to any extremist group" (Holleman, 2013). The trepidation exhibited by Benedict's African American president did not surface at Morgan State College, where Malcolm visited in the spring of 1962. Located in the blue-collar city of Baltimore, at the time, the nation's sixth largest city with a Black population that hovered around 35%, Morgan State College, the state's premiere Black college was, oddly enough, located in a predominantly White neighborhood on the city's North eastside.

Students at Morgan State were less conciliatory than those at some other Black schools. Although the four freshmen at historically Black North Carolina A and T College (later University) in Greensboro are credited with igniting the student sit-in movement in February 1960, students at Morgan State had begun challenging segregated facilities as early as January 1955 when several students stepped out of the frigid weather one winter morning as they waited on a bus to take them to campus and into a Read's Drugstore in the Lexington and Howard Street Shopping Center hoping to get something hot to drink.<sup>5</sup> As the students headed toward the lunch counter, the store's Black employees, sensing trouble, retreated to the kitchen. The White patrons did their best to ignore the intrusion, that is, until a manager came out and told the group that "niggers weren't allowed" (Cassie, 2015). Undaunted, the students stood firm. The standoff was brief, but the encounter had far-reaching consequences. Days later, the front page of the January 22, 1955, edition of the Baltimore *Afro-American* read "Now Serve All." Read's Drugstore, which boasted 39 stores, had, under its president Arthur Nattans, Sr., suddenly elected to desegregate, with the *Afro-American* article citing a "sit-down strike" at its "largest store in the heart of the city, the day before the change of policy was announced" (Cassie, 2015). This story was accompanied by a more expansive article, citing other coordinated Read's lunch-counter desegregation efforts by Morgan State students in tandem with the Baltimore chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Read's stores weren't the first to desegregate in Baltimore, but the challenge posed by Morgan State College, students was a pivotal moment in history, as it culminated in several more sit-ins in the years that followed, such as those at Arundel Ice Cream, resulting in the desegregation of its 17 stores in 1959, as well as the sit-ins by a new crop of Morgan State students that led to the desegregation of the Northwood Shopping Center's Rooftop Restaurant and its movie theater in 1963 (Cassie, 2015).<sup>6</sup> Charles Hall, a graduate of Morgan State College remembers, "us

students started picketing the Northwood shopping center in 1961 during my junior year ... it was a campus wide effort led by the student leaders on campus ... a whole bunch of students were arrested and driven to jail on a bus" (C. Hall, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, March 28, 2020). Elijah Toney, also an alum of Morgan State College, was quick to point out that Morgan's fraternities and sororities were right there in the thick of it, protesting and demonstrating at the shopping center: "We also had the support of the faculty" (E. Toney, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, June 6, 2020).

Extending Malcolm an invitation to speak at Morgan State College was in line with the climate there on campus. Malcolm's visit was highly anticipated. Coming to Baltimore was America's foremost Black militant, and the campus was all abuzz. Malcolm opposed the philosophy of nonviolence advocated by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and other civil rights activists. As a Black Muslim, he said that we are never the aggressor, but if anyone attacks us, "we will lay down our lives." He maintained that we Blacks should never start a fight, never look for trouble, never stir up confusion, but "if someone puts his hands on you, do your best to send them to the cemetery." Furthermore, Malcolm was, at that time, a staunch Black Nationalist in the mold of Martin Delaney, David Walker, and Henry Highland Garnet, while King was an avowed integrationist. Malcolm no more wanted to be around White people than White people wanted to be around Blacks.<sup>7</sup> No one was more critical of the White man than Malcolm. Early on, one of his favorite topics for sermons was his indictment of Christianity and the horrors of slavery, how the White man's religion functioned to enslave and subordinate Blacks. Malcolm never tired of holding White Christianity up to the test of its failure to make good on its promises of freedom, justice, and brotherhood for all human beings (Wilmore, 1986). And he never met an invitation to speak he didn't like.

Malcolm so loved verbal sparring that he would, under certain circumstances, initiate a debate where one didn't previously exist. Case in point: when noted professor and Pulitzer prize-winning author Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., compared the Nation of Islam to the KKK during a speech at Spelman College on January 17, 1961, little did he realize that Malcolm was seated in the audience. "In a brief but decisive exchange," the *Pittsburgh Courier* reported, "the fiery Mr. X 'victoriously crossed swords'" with Mr. Schlesinger, "forced [sic] the learned Harvard historian into a 'diplomatic withdrawal' of his earlier statement, and then maneuvered him into admitting he would have to seek further information before making any more statements about the Black Muslims" (Malcolm X Howard U, 1961, p. 3). In the words of political scientist Cedric J. Robinson, "Malcolm X, an eighth-grade-educated Malcolm Little, could successfully match and checkmate the most powerful minds set against him" (Robinson, 2020, p. 291). Following the exchange

with the good professor, Malcolm, always the gentleman, invited the sheepish Schlesinger to his upcoming lecture in Washington, DC, so that he might learn the truth about the Black Muslims (Malcolm X Howard U, 1961, p. 3). Malcolm's talent for obliterating his opponents with wit, humor, and logic was so notorious that Urban League director Whitney Young advised civil rights leaders against taking him on, lest they embarrass themselves or the movement, or both (Page, 1992). In that way, he was very much like the outspoken Henry McNeal Turner, whose spellbinding oratory and penetrating sarcasm many years earlier demoralized his opponents.<sup>8</sup> Manning Marable put it best in his 1981 book *BlackWater*: "The emergence of a highly charismatic, articulate Black nationalist spokesperson, Malcolm X, provided Black nationalism with a public figure who could be a serious alternative to the national Negro leadership" (p. 98). And contrary to popular belief, the initial source of Malcolm's Black Nationalism was not Elijah Muhammad, but his Garveyite lineage, courtesy of his parents, Earl and Louise Little.

Malcolm's speaking engagements were not limited to the Nation of Islam's mosques, college campuses, and street-corner audiences, for he was also a participant in countless radio and television panel discussions. Interviews of Malcolm revealed his personal magnetism and penchant for repartee, a skill he learned and honed while in prison as a member of the Norfolk Debating Society. By the early 1960s Malcolm was taking on all comers, debating anyone and everyone, anywhere. Malcolm traded wits with some of the country's leading thinkers, including two of the civil rights movement's principal architects, beginning in November 1960 with him debating Bayard Rustin, veteran civil rights activist and adviser to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., on WBAI-FM Radio in New York with John Donald hosting (Donald, 1960). One year later in October 1961, Malcolm and Rustin bumped heads again, this time, in Howard University's Cramton Auditorium.<sup>9</sup> Initially, the students invited Malcolm only, but the school's upper administration wouldn't hear of it. In *Bayard Rustin: Troubles I've Seen*, Jervis Anderson (1997) writes, "the college administration had objected to Malcolm's speaking on campus without rebuttal by an opposing point of view," thus Rustin arranged to be Malcolm's foil (p. 237).

That same year, Malcolm squared off against another King surrogate in CORE's James Farmer, in an hour-long radio dialogue on the "Barry Gray Show" in New York (Farmer, 1985). Months later, in early 1962, Malcolm and Rustin met for a third time in late January at the overwhelmingly White lower eastside Manhattan Community Church before an audience of 1,300. A little more than two weeks later, Malcolm and Rustin faced off yet again, in Chicago, Illinois. Then on March 7, 1962 Malcolm and Farmer locked horns for a second time, this time at Cornell University, an overwhelmingly White Ivy League school in Upstate New York. During the debate Malcolm dismissed racial integration as a pipe dream. The White

man was not prepared to accept the Black man as his equal. Furthermore, “we don’t want to integrate with someone who says one thing and preaches another,” Malcolm exhorted. Unlike many civil rights leaders, Malcolm had absolutely no confidence in the White man or his so-called democratic political institutions. When Malcolm spoke of the White man, he did not distinguish between the oppressor and those so-called White do-gooders who fashioned themselves as White liberals and allies to the Black cause. Malcolm viewed White liberals this way: “If you are for me and my problem—when I say me, I mean us, our people—then you have to be willing to do as old John Brown did” (as cited in Nelson, 1968, p. 3).

Although Malcolm later supported voter registration and massive Black participation in electoral politics, he insisted that such activities should be done outside of America’s two-party capitalist system. Any Black who registered as a Democrat or a Republican was, as far as Malcolm was concerned, a traitor to his race (Breitman, 1965). America was not a democracy; it was a hypocrisy. From Malcolm’s perspective, the Black man should not concern himself with integration, but rather the pursuit of freedom, justice, and equality.

Despite Malcolm X’s popularity and the notoriety his speeches and debates brought the Nation of Islam, the NOI’s leader sought to reign in his prize pupil. On February 15, 1962, Muhammad wrote the peripatetic minister, reminding him not to focus his lectures and speeches so much on politics. Muhammad ordered him to talk about only what “you yourself have heard me say.” He insisted that Malcolm steer clear of political issues, a rather unrealistic directive given the kinds of people Malcolm X agreed to debate.<sup>10</sup> Surely Muhammad understood that the large audiences his star minister attracted came out to hear the fearless Malcolm expound on the issues of the day, not to sit through some long-winded lecture on the Nation of Islam’s unorthodox theology that would test the credulity of a ten year old. In *From Slavery to Freedom*, John Hope Franklin (1967) notes “from its modest beginnings in the mid-thirties, the Nation by 1960 had grown under the leadership of Elijah Muhammad into a vocal and vigorous religious sect” (p. 620). What Franklin failed to acknowledge is that much of the growth about which he writes was due in no small measure to Malcolm X’s nationwide recruitment efforts and proselytizing. No one articulated Black rage against so-called American democracy and its contradictions more vigorously than Malcolm. Although Malcolm never used these exact words, his diatribes against America made clear that he believed the US to be a failed state. This is the Malcolm people came to see, and so they did, at Morgan State College.

Whereas there may have been many Black campuses that were not receptive to a visit by Malcolm X, Herbert Fraser Abdul Raheem is of the opinion that “Morgan was not as conservative as some other schools” (A. Raheem, conversation

with Judson L. Jeffries, June 2, 2020). Morgan graduates maintain that the invitation to Malcolm was made less cumbersome due to the “forward thinking” of its president, Dr. Martin Jenkins (E. Toney, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, June 6, 2020; C. Hall, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, March 28, 2020). Jenkins was, according to one graduate, “very progressive” (O. Dixon, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, June 2, 2020). Unfortunately, the opinions thereof are not supported by the facts. Jenkins was considered by some to be no less conservative than many other Black college presidents. He did not support the idea that Morgan’s students should involve themselves in the civil rights movement nor did he involve himself or the institution in the struggle for racial equality. He also saw the limitations of a racially imbalanced student body, prompting him to recruit more White students. Jenkins was of the opinion that if Black students were going to successfully navigate the real world, they needed to start by learning how to interact with Whites while in college. Suffice to say, on this matter Jenkins encountered strong opposition from both faculty and students. Some even openly protested the decision (*Martin D. Jenkins*, n.d.).

A close look at Jenkins’s tenure as president of Morgan reveals that he was neither progressive nor conservative in the literal sense.<sup>11</sup> If anything, Jenkins was practical. He deliberately kept himself and the institution out of the movement so as not to draw the ire of the college’s primary funding source—the Maryland State Legislature. With Morgan being a public school, the state legislature determined its budget. It is also likely that the recruitment of White students, much to the chagrin of some students and faculty, was also done strategically. Charles Hall, a 1962 graduate, was quick to point out that while Jenkins steered clear of the movement, “he never once discouraged us students from protesting ... in fact I remember one occasion when the mayor visited the campus and in Jenkins’s introduction of him, the president made a conscious effort to mention that the mayor lived in the very community [Northwood] in which our students are protesting” (C. Hall, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, March 28, 2020). “Now, he didn’t have to say that, but he did,” said Hall.

Hall’s remarks about Jenkins are instructive, especially since there were any number of African American presidents of HBCU who were not as understanding as Jenkins when it came to student protests. For example, Rufus B. Atwood expelled 12 twelve students at Kentucky State College for their participation in protests. And in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, President Felton Clark of Southern University and A & M College suspended 18 students. Tennessee Agricultural and Industrial President Walter S. Davis once opined, “There is no question about it, mass demonstrations put the college president in a tough spot” (Bennett, 1960). Quite naturally, by college president, Davis meant “Black” college president.



As a college administrator, Jenkins's style may have resembled more Booker T. Washington at Tuskegee Institute than Dr. Benjamin Mays at Morehouse College. Washington and Mays had strong, but differing, opinions on the role of their students in the struggle for racial equality, yet both were, in their own way, highly effective administrators.<sup>12</sup> While Jenkins was mindful of the power that the state government wielded over his institution, unlike some other presidents, he did not have a reputation for caving to pressure. In fact, on September 28, 1960, President Jenkin's convocation address at Morgan State demanded that students "Stand Up." Jenkins declared that he would not instruct students to quit sitting-in and protesting because "this is a good movement, and it has surprisingly beneficial results" (Jenkins, 1960).

During the Great Migration, Baltimore was the destination for many who fled various towns, hamlets, and rural areas in Virginia and the Carolinas. As a major industrial steel town, the city offered Blacks the kind of employment opportunities that were almost nonexistent in many areas of the South. That coupled with the fact that it was a major seaport town appealed to some southern Blacks. Between 1940 and 1970, the Black growth rate in Baltimore was among the highest in the nation at 195%.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, as home to one of the nation's top-ranked hospitals in Johns Hopkins and the site of three major professional sports teams in the Colts, Orioles, and Bullets, service jobs were aplenty.<sup>14</sup> Those who fled the South presumed a better life awaited them in Baltimore in a whole host of ways, including the weather, where temperatures there seldom reached the insufferable levels to which southerners, especially Deep South residents, were subjected.<sup>15</sup>

March is a transitional month into spring, and Baltimore feels warmer as temperatures rise to a pleasant range of 38.8° to 54°. The nights are chilly and often windy, and snowfall occurs, although in small amounts, but March 1962 was different. From March 5 to 9, a storm known as the "Ash Wednesday Storm" hit the Mid-Atlantic region causing more than \$200 million in property damage and major coastal erosion from North Carolina to Long Island, NY. The storm is noteworthy for producing devastating tidal flooding along the Atlantic Coast as well as record snowfall along the interior of Virginia. Although Baltimore was spared any major damage, some of Morgan's students were personally affected, as they hailed from some of the towns, hamlets, and communities that were hardest hit by the storm. As the days in March passed, and normalcy was restored, some at Morgan State were expecting a storm of a different kind. Malcolm X was scheduled to visit Morgan State College, courtesy of the Brothers of Pi chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., on Wednesday, March 28, 1962, where he was to debate Dr. August Meier, a 39-year-old associate professor of history, who was finishing up his fifth year at the state's flagship Black college.



Two weeks before Malcolm's visit, a letter on Morgan State College stationery dated March 13, 1962 was sent to Malcolm's East Elmhurst home in Queens from Professor J. Haywood Harrison confirming his participation in a debate with Dr. Meier hyped as "Operation Controversy."<sup>16</sup> To be clear, preparations to bring Malcolm X to campus began as early as December 1961, as evident by a letter from Morgan's president to Dean A. N. Whiting. At any rate, the ever-gracious Professor Harrison (1962) ended his missive with "May I again assure you that we are very excited about your projected appearance here and we are sure the Morgan Community will be enriched as a result of your coming." The meat of the letter laid out the time, location, and format for the debate. The debate was held in the Carl Murphy Fine Arts Auditorium at 7 PM; it consisted of five components. It opened with a 15-minute Introductory Statement by Malcolm X, followed by a 15-minute salvo by Meier. From there Malcolm was afforded 10 minutes for rebuttal, with Meier receiving likewise when his turn came. Given the personalities of the two men, sparks were expected to fly. A question and answer period followed the debate and was moderated by the esteemed Dr. Richard I. McKinney, Morgan's Ivy League-educated professor and head of the school's philosophy department.

Developments in the days and weeks leading up to the big day offered each man a certain number of talking points depending on the argument one sought to craft. For example, On March 26, the US Supreme Court ruled that no state could require racial segregation of interstate or intrastate transportation facilities. On February 2, seven Whites and four Blacks were arrested after all-night sit-ins at City Hall in Englewood, New Jersey. That same day four Black mothers were arrested after a sit-in at a Chicago elementary school. The mothers later received suspended \$50 fines. Protests, picketing, and demonstrations continued for several weeks against de facto segregation, double shifts, and mobile classrooms. Three days later, a suit seeking to bar Englewood, NJ, from maintaining "racially segregated" elementary schools was filed in US District Court.

Meier, a Columbia University PhD whom colleagues and friends called "Auggie," had taught at two HBCUs prior to landing at Morgan. He began his teaching career at Tougaloo—a small private college in Mississippi—from 1945 to 1949. From there he matriculated to Fisk University in Tennessee, staying four years, from 1953 to 1957. In 1957, he left Nashville and accepted a position in the history department at Morgan State College, where he stayed until 1964. Meier, a Caucasian fellow, went on to become a highly respected and distinguished scholar in the area of Black history with additional stops at Roosevelt University and later Kent State University, where he retired, emeritus, in 1993.<sup>17</sup> At the time of the debate with Malcolm, Meier was the author of a slew of journal articles on the Black experience but had yet to publish a book—the most treasured commodity

among historians. Still Meier was considered a rising star within the academy, a characterization not uncommon of young professors of a certain persuasion who demonstrate the slightest bit of promise.<sup>18</sup>

Meier's movement credentials, however, were commendable. On two separate occasions during the 1950s, he had been secretary of the Newark branch of the NAACP in New Jersey. From about 1959 to 1961, Meier participated in efforts to end the Southern Historical Association's practice of holding its convention at hotels that barred Blacks. At the time of the debate with Malcolm, he was a member of the Baltimore chapter of the SNCC (1960–1963). From there he joined the Baltimore chapter of CORE (1963–1964). He was also a former head of the local chapter of Americans for Democratic Action.

The idea of a White professor at a historically Black college debating Malcolm X where more than 90% of the faculty was African American seems odd, yet the two went head-to-head. The differences in Malcolm X's and Dr. Meier's appearance could not have been more stark. The bronze colored Malcolm stood 6'3" and was slim in stature. On the other hand, Meier, who according to one of his former students wore eyeglasses as thick as a coke bottle, stood no more than 5'8" and had a somewhat stocky physique (J. Brown, conversation with Judson L. Jeffries, September 2, 2020). In honor of Malcolm X's 95th birthday, *Spectrum, A Journal on Black Men* revisits that auspicious March evening by way of those who witnessed the event.<sup>19</sup>

In a news article published in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* on March 29, 1962, Peter Young described the show-down between Malcolm X and Dr. Meier. For nearly three hours before an audience of 1,000 plus, Malcolm X, "oratorical wizard" and minister of Mosque No. 7 in Harlem, and Meier, of the Morgan faculty traded barbs, "sometimes highly insulting and vituperative in tone" (Young, 1962). Malcolm called out the White racists for the devils that they are, chided Black leaders who erroneously believed that integration was possible in America, and attacked President Kennedy as a "political hypocrite in the worst order" (Young, 1962).<sup>20</sup> Not only was integration an undesirable goal for most Whites, Malcolm argued, but should be equally undesirable for any thinking Black person. In other words, why would Black people want to integrate into a burning house, Malcolm was famous for saying. Total separation was the key to Black people's survival, a separate Black state or states. Malcolm urged Blacks to stop looking to the White man for help. "Look to yourselves and not the white man. Once you have unity and harmony, the white man will jump off your back real fast," to which the audience rose to its feet in thunderous applause. Meier inexplicably compared the NOI to the Nazis "whose goals were utterly utopian and unworkable" (Young, 1962). Meier called for an integrated America, with Blacks using the nonviolent tactics of Dr. King "to achieve dignity, freedom and equal rights" (Young, 1962).

## THE QUES REACH OUT TO MALCOLM X

**Judson L. Jeffries:** Last year, while surfing the Internet I stumbled on a photo of Malcolm X surrounded by a group of young men wearing Omega Psi Phi sweaters. After a little digging, I learned that the young men were Brothers of the illustrious Pi chapter of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and that Malcolm X was visiting the campus of Morgan State College. Who exactly invited Malcolm to campus?

**James Watts:** We invited him.

**JLJ:** Who is we? The Student Government Association?

**James Watts:** No, we, meaning the Ques—the Brothers of Pi chapter!

**JLJ:** Oh, I see. How did that come about?

**Joe Joe Smith:** The Brothers met, probably at a chapter meeting, and were trying to figure out what type of event we could put on that would bring out the students and the community ... so we started brainstorming and someone came up with the idea of bringing Malcolm X to campus. I specifically remember us talking about this because I was the Vice Basileus at the time.

**JLJ:** Who was the Basileus?

**Joe Joe Smith:** George Fraser Williams. We called him Fraser Williams.<sup>21</sup>

**JLJ:** Who was the faculty advisor at that time?

**Joe Joe Smith:** Professor J. Haywood Harrison.

**JLJ:** Who exactly came up with the idea?

**Joe Joe Smith:** That I don't remember.

**JLJ:** Well, who extended him the invitation? In other words, who was the point person?

**Oliver Jackson:** It was me and Brother Sam McNeil (deceased).

**JLJ:** So, you and Brother McNeil called Malcolm up and asked him if he would come to Morgan to speak?

**Oliver Jackson:** No, we drove up to New York and asked Malcolm personally if he would come and speak at Morgan.

**JLJ:** Get outta here! You drove to New York and asked Malcolm personally?

**Oliver Jackson:** Yeah, you heard me. We drove up there and asked Malcolm to come speak at Morgan.

**JLJ:** Why didn't you just extend the invitation like people normally do?

**Oliver Jackson:** Meaning what? You mean, call him on the telephone or something?

**JLJ:** Yeah, that's exactly what I mean. Call him or write a letter.

**Oliver Jackson:** Nah, we wanted to personally ask him. So, one day we hopped into my 55 Chevy and drove up there. Route 40, all the way. See you make it seem like a big thing; it was no big thing to us. Both of us were from New York, so making that trip was not a big deal.

**JLJ:** Ok, set the scene for me. So, you drive up to New York City and you find Malcolm where?

**Oliver Jackson:** We went straight to the Mosque, if I remember correctly. When we got there some Muslim Brothers met us at the door and we told them why we were there. After checking us out, they took us to Malcolm, and we asked Malcolm if he would be willing to come speak at Morgan State and he agreed.

**JLJ:** And that was that?

**Oliver Jackson:** And that was that!

**JLJ:** Hey listen, Brother Smith, Brother Jackson is telling me that he and Brother McNeil just got in the car and drove up to New York. Why wouldn't he and Brother McNeil just pick up the phone or write a letter?

**Joe Joe Smith:** Well, Jack was kind of a free spirit. That's exactly the kind of thing he would do. I don't put that past him at all, not at all!

## DESPITE CONCERNS, THE ADMINISTRATION APPROVES OF MALCOLM'S VISIT

**JLJ:** I'm surprised that the university approved the invitation to Malcolm.

**Joe Joe Smith:** The president and others probably thought we'd raise holy hell if they didn't approve it. See, we had already demonstrated that we didn't take any mess. You know about us picketing the movie theater and stores in Northwood, don't you?

**JLJ:** I sure do. Still, I'm surprised because many Black college administrators were conservative back then.

**Joe Joe Smith:** You're right and Dr. Martin Jenkins was no different. He was a very conservative administrator. I can't recall any pronouncements from Dr. Jenkins in support of our efforts to desegregate the Northwood movie theater, but he didn't stop us either.

**JLJ:** What about the faculty, was it supportive of student efforts?

**Eli Toney:** I would say yes, none of the professors ever discouraged us from protesting or anything like that. The only time I remember anyone saying anything about our protest activities is when my ROTC advisor told us that we couldn't afford to have an arrest record if we were going to be an officer in the US military.

**JLJ:** Once word got out that Malcolm X was coming to campus, did you hear any concerns from faculty or administrators?

**Charlie Hall:** Oh yeah, there was a concern about holding the event on campus ... some thought there might be trouble.

**JLJ:** Why?

**Charlie Hall:** Probably because some people had a certain image in their mind about Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam.

## WHY MALCOLM?

**JLJ:** How did you guys decide on Malcolm X to begin with. You all were in the throes of the modern civil rights movement. Why didn't you go after one of the big-name Civil Rights leaders like Roy Wilkins, Dr. King, Whitney Young, or James Farmer—someone like that?

**James Watts:** The Brothers in Pi chapter—we were a bit more militant in our thinking than the average Morgan student I would say, so we wouldn't have gone for any of those guys you just mentioned.

**Leon Garrett:** This was a great opportunity for the Ques—to get Malcolm. Malcolm was it, man!

**Pineabrim McCullough:** We wanted to bring someone to campus that would help set the Ques apart from all the other fraternities. We felt we were the top fraternity on campus, and we intended to keep it that way.

**Eugene Byrd:** Malcolm was more to our liking ... we leaned, more to the militant side ... we wanted to get the baddest cat out there, Malcolm was it!

**Herbert Fraser Abdul Raheem:** We also wanted to expose students to a viewpoint other than integration. We wanted to bring a certain awareness to the student body.

## ENTER, DR. AUGUST MEIER ...

**JLJ:** Ok, so you had Dr. August Meier, a White professor, debate Malcolm. When I think about Morgan State College back then, I think about some of the highly regarded professors there on campus like the great Dr. Benjamin Quarles in history, Dr. G. James Fleming and Dr. Robert Gill in political science, and Dr. Frederick A. "Red Tie" Jackson in business.<sup>22</sup> How did you all come up with Dr. Meier?

**Walter Gill:** I heard that a number of the Black faculty were asked, but none of them wanted to do it, even those faculty members who were Ques. That's just what I heard, but I don't know if it is true or not.

**Osborne Dixon:** Meier was the only professor willing to debate Malcolm, that's how we ended up with him.

**James Watts:** This is my recollection. We didn't go around asking professors to debate Malcolm, that's not what we did. We were trying to figure out what would get us the biggest draw ... so we decided it would be best to have a White-Black dynamic. And since Dr. Meier had a reputation for being outspoken and knowing more about Blacks than we knew about ourselves, we decided we wanted him.

**Eugene Byrd:** Us ending up with Dr. Meier, turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

**JLJ:** How so?

**Eugene Byrd:** Well, he had a reputation as a know it all. He thought he knew everything there was to know about Black folk. Since he knew so much, we wanted him to get his tail whipped.

**Tyrone Baines:** There was nothing humble about Dr. Meier. Dr. Meier thought a lot of himself. I was enrolled in his class for about two to three weeks before I was put out. One day I arrived late to class and found the door locked. I knocked on the door, but Dr. Meier just ignored me, so I just kept knocking until he finally came to the door. I'll never forget, he said, "young man I cannot have you interrupting my class like this." I responded, "well, your class is already interrupted so you might as well just let me in." Then I walked in and sat down. I couldn't believe that he would try to keep me out of a class that I was paying for. Not too long after that the dean claimed that there were too many students in that particular class and the number of students had to be cut in half. When Dr. Meier broke the news, he gave everyone the option to stay or go. He called roll and asked for volunteers to drop and you could either say you wanted to stay or go enroll in a different class, but he didn't even give me that choice, he just told me that I had to go [laughter]. Dr. Meier struck me as someone who wanted to be a big fish in a small pond.

**JLJ:** I also heard that Dr. Meier was eccentric, is that right?

**Tyrone Baines:** Oh, absolutely he was ... he would come in the classroom, sit on the desk, take off his shoes, and cross his legs. He did stuff like that.

**James Watts:** Oh yeah, he did something similar the night of the debate. Upon taking the stage, Dr. Meier proceeded to take off his socks before starting the debate. I thought this was strange, it got a huge laugh from the audience.

**JLJ:** You know, Brother Watts, I asked the other Brothers about this incident and no one seems to remember it.

**James Watts:** Maybe they don't remember it, but I sure do!

**JLJ:** It really surprises me that a White professor on a historically Black campus had that kind of demeanor. I would think that a White guy in that position would show some humility.

**David Brantley:** Listen, Dr. Meier was an intelligent well-respected professor on campus, but he was arrogant.

**Charlie Hall:** I had him for World History 101 the very first semester of my freshman year. I can tell you for a fact that Dr. Meier wasted no time in letting everyone in class know just how smart he was. He wanted you to know that he knew more than you.

**Bill Goins:** I didn't see Dr. Meier as arrogant. I saw a man who was very bright and who felt comfortable around Black people.

**James Brown:** I didn't see Dr. Meier as arrogant, either. I took two classes from him during my freshman year. I think it was Western Civilization 58 during the first semester and Western Civilization 59 in the spring semester, if memory serves me correctly. I just saw him as someone who was very knowledgeable about the subject matter. But yes, he was eccentric, that I agree with. He would do something like walk into the classroom, take off his suit jacket and fling it over on a desk, but if his aim was off and the suit jacket landed on the floor, he let it stay there. He did stuff like that.

## ARRANGING MALCOLM'S VISIT

**JLJ:** Ok, let's change channels. So, you all invite Malcolm to come speak. Tell me something about the arrangements?

**Leon Garrett:** I remember Sam being on the transportation committee.

**JLJ:** Sam McNeil?

**Leon Garrett:** Right, Sam McNeil. He's deceased. He died not too long ago.

**JLJ:** I'm sorry to hear that. Well, what about Sam, Brother Garrett?

**Leon Garrett:** Well, I remember him telling us that we had to provide Malcolm round-trip train tickets for him and his people from New York to Baltimore. So, we did.

**JLJ:** What else do you remember about that?

**Leon Garrett:** That's all I can remember, try talking to Gene Byrd. Oh, I do remember that he didn't charge us a penny.

**Osborne Dixon:** He didn't charge us because Malcolm was really happy to come to Morgan; at least, that's the feeling I got from him.



**JLJ:** Dr. Byrd, what do you remember about the particulars surrounding Malcolm's visit?

**Eugene Byrd:** Oh, I remember we had to provide 100 tickets to the local Muslim Mosque there in Baltimore.

**JLJ:** That would be Mosque No. 6.

**Eugene Byrd:** Oh, ok.

IN THE DAYS LEADING UP ...

**JLJ:** What was the campus like in the days leading up to Malcolm's visit?

**Osborne Dixon:** The campus, or I should say the student body, was very excited because Malcolm was a high-profile person. People were talking about it, now! Oh yeah, they were talking about it!

**David Brantley:** Everyone was talking about it; it was like Malcolm was a rock star.

**Joe Joe Smith:** It was very much the subject of conversation, no doubt about that.



Figure 1: Malcolm X holds court with Brothers of Pi chapter.

## MALCOLM ARRIVES ON CAMPUS

**JLJ:** So, set the scene for me please? March 28th rolls around and what happens?

**David Brantley:** Malcolm arrives with a few of his guys from the Nation of Islam. We escorted him around campus.

**Leon Garrett:** I don't remember if we had lunch with Malcolm or not, but the Brothers marched into the refectory, also known as the cafeteria, with Malcolm so that all the other fraternities and sororities could see us with Malcolm.

**JLJ:** You all were strutting, Brother Garrett?

**Leon Garrett:** Oh yes, we were strutting!

**JLJ:** So, this was a feather in the cap of Que Psi Phi, so to speak?

**Leon Garrett:** Oooh yeeessss, definitely! [laughter]

**Tyrone Baines:** We were already the top fraternity on campus, the only real competition we had was the Kappas. But after we had Malcolm on campus, there was no doubt who the big men on campus were.

**JLJ:** I understand the debate was held in the Carl Murphy Fine Arts auditorium on campus. What do you remember about the venue, the size of the audience?

**Leon Garrett:** I remember members of the state police and the Baltimore Police Department lining the outside of the building, while the Black Muslims lined around the inside of the auditorium.

**Tyrone Baines:** I remember there was a lot of security, we had to be searched; not by the police but by Malcolm's people [laughter].

**Charlie Hall:** The place was packed. I had never seen the place with that many people before. I remember there were at least two rows reserved for members of the NOI.

**Osborne Dixon:** I remember the place was so crowded I had to sit in the balcony ... I couldn't get down on the floor.

**JLJ:** How big was the auditorium?

**Osborne Dixon:** There had to be between 1,000 to 1,400 seats.

**JLJ:** With that many people I would think the event would have attracted folk from all over the city.

**Bill Goins:** It did, in addition to students, the event attracted many community people. Had I known that many people were going to show up, we would have sold tickets for 25 or 50 cents. We could have made some money that night [laughter].

## INTEGRATION VS. SEPARATION

**JLJ:** What was the theme of the debate?

**Bill Goins:** I think it was Integration versus Separation.

**JLJ:** Yeah, that sounds about right. What do you remember about the debate?

**Bill Goins:** First off, I introduced them.

**JLJ:** Why did the Brothers choose you to introduce them?

**Bill Goins:** Well, I guess it only made sense that I introduce them because I had experience doing that type of thing. I made the announcements over the PA system in the cafeteria and I had radio experience. I also worked for WEBB [a radio station] in Baltimore, I was the Saturday and Sunday news announcer.

**JLJ:** What do you remember about the debate itself?

**Eli Toney:** Malcolm talked about racism and what Black folks should do to counter it. It was like he was teaching us [the audience] how to deal with racism. He was talking to us like a mentor.

**Bill Goins:** I remember both Dr. Meier making his points and Malcolm X making his points, but I don't remember it being a debate per se, it was more like a discussion.

**Pineabrim McCullough:** I recall it being a discussion too, but a heated discussion [laughter].

**David Brantley:** That's not how I remember it, I remember it being a spirited debate.

**Tyrone Baines:** I agree with David, Dr. Meier would put something out there and Malcolm would counter it. Meier pretty much stayed on the defensive. I remember Malcolm asking Dr. Meier, "why do you think I'm this color?" Before Meier could respond, Malcolm blurted out "because your ancestors raped my ancestors!"

**Eli Toney:** The audience was very receptive to Malcolm, but it was also receptive to what Dr. Meier had to say as well.

**Leon Garrett:** I remember that whenever Dr. Meier tried to make what he believed to be a good point; Malcolm would respond with something catchy.

**JLJ:** Can you give me an example of what you mean?

**Leon Garrett:** For instance, near the end of the debate, Dr. Meier said something about being able to work with different classes of people. Malcolm responded with, "while Dr. Meier is busy relating to different classes, I'll spend my time relating to the masses."

**JLJ:** Yeah, Malcolm was famous for that sort of thing, how did the audience react?

**Leon Garrett:** The people in the audience stood up and clapped.

**Osborne Dixon:** Malcolm wasn't half-stepping.

**JLJ:** What do you mean by that?

**Osborne Dixon:** I mean he was on it; it was obvious that he didn't come there to play around. At one point, Dr. Meier tried to take a cheap shot at Malcolm that the audience didn't take to kindly to, I do remember that.

**JLJ:** Do you remember what Dr. Meier said?

**Osborne Dixon:** I don't remember what he said to Malcolm, but it was something smart. He was trying to be clever.

## AND THE WINNER IS

**JLJ:** Who won the debate?

**Eugene Byrd:** Dr. Meier got his ass kicked. Malcolm ate him up. Chewed him up and spit him out!

**James Watts:** Malcolm won the debate, hands down.

**Bill Goins:** I remember it differently. I don't remember it being contentious. I thought Dr. Meier handled himself well. Dr. Meier made his points and Malcolm made his. I don't remember Malcolm saying anything particularly controversial that night.

**Charlie Hall:** I don't know if there was a clear cut-winner. Folks celebrated both sides, Malcolm and Dr. Meier.

**Pineabrim McCullough:** Malcolm wore the professor out!

**James Brown:** I'd say it was a stand-off.

**JLJ:** Why do you say it was a stand-off Brother Brown?

**James Brown:** You see, Malcolm was debating people all around the country and going through them like a laxative. He was just destroying people, but that didn't happen with Meier, from what I remember. Malcolm would make like a sensational statement and Meier would counter it with facts. Meier defused a lot of what Malcolm said. Malcolm did not clean Meier's clock.

**David Brantley:** Trust me, Malcolm cleaned Dr. Meier's clock!

## REMEMBERING MALCOLM

**JLJ:** What did you take from that night? What do you remember about Malcolm?

**Leon Garrett:** He said something to us I'll never forget. He said, "Never trust white people, you can respect them, but never trust them."

**James Watts:** He was very stately. He was no-nonsense. He didn't engage you in any chit chat, no small talk. He was about business.

**Eugene Byrd:** He made a big impression on me. I guess I was in awe of him. He was very self-assured, but cordial. It was quite a night.

**Oliver Jackson:** You see, that wasn't my first time seeing or hearing Malcolm speak in person, it was my first time meeting him, but not my first time seeing him. My father would take me to see him give those soapbox speeches in Harlem on 125th Street or was it 116th Street and Lenox. Anyway, Sam had seen him speak as well, he grew up somewhere around 119th Street, I believe. Plus, Sam's father was a Baptist minister in New York, so he was even more familiar with Malcolm than I was. But to answer your question, Malcolm stood tall that night. Do you know what I mean when I say stood tall?

**JLJ:** I know exactly what you mean. You mean he personified manhood. He was confident, he held his head high, he exuded Black pride, and he told it like it was.

**Oliver Jackson:** Yeah, that's right.

**JLJ:** How do you think that night will be remembered? Word has it that George Fraser Williams, Pi Chapter's Basileus at the time, believed that March 28, 1962, would surely be remembered as one of the most memorable events in the history of Pi chapter and Morgan State College. Do you agree with that sentiment?

**Eugene Byrd:** Oh, yes, we talked about Malcolm's visit for days after he left.

**Tyrone Baines:** I agree with Gene; the campus was still buzzing days after he left.

**James Watts:** One thing I really appreciated about Malcolm X is that he was always trying to educate us. He was always teaching, trying to get us to open our eyes and see what was really going on.

**Oliver Jackson:** No one from what I remember had brought anybody to campus of the caliber of Malcolm X. We were proud of that.

**JLJ:** What went through your mind, three years later, when you heard Malcolm was assassinated? How did you react?

**Joe Joe Smith:** I was definitely in shock.

**Eugene Byrd:** I cried.

**James Watts:** It was one of those jaw-dropping moments. I was appalled and saddened. I felt it was a big loss to the Black community.

**Bill Goins:** I wasn't surprised that he was assassinated, what surprised me was that he was assassinated by other Black men. That kind of betrayal really bothered me.

**Oliver Jackson:** I was at Fort Benning, Georgia, when I heard that Malcolm got killed, the Brothers were sad, personally I was very upset. We [meaning, Brothers] loved Malcolm. You have to understand, this was Malcolm X ... Malcolm was the man!

**JLJ:** Yes, I know, it had been said that Malcolm was, at the time, the only Negro in America with the power to either start a race riot or stop one.

**Oliver Jackson:** I don't doubt it.

**JLJ:** One last thing. Do you realize that Malcolm's speaking engagement at your alma mater represents the only invitation he accepted that was extended to him by members of a Black fraternity?

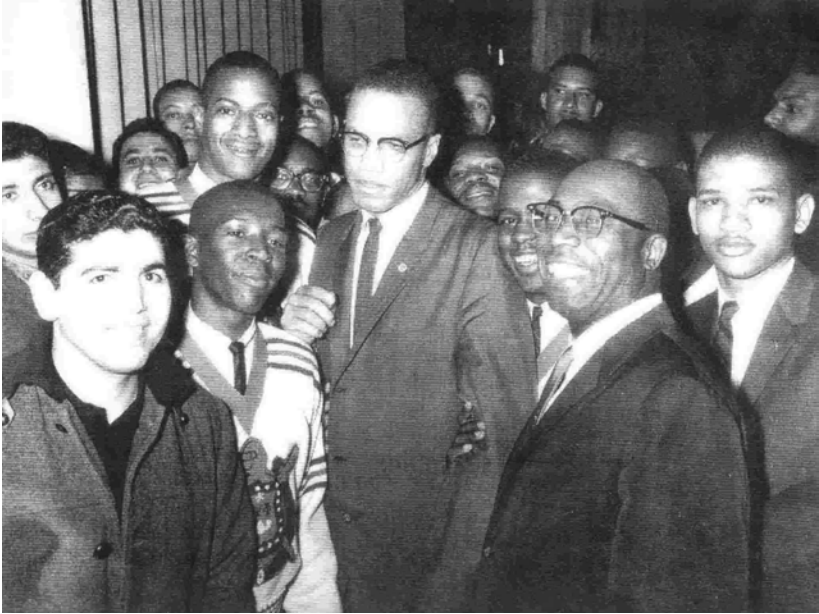


Figure 2: Morgan State students pose for a photo with Malcolm.

**James Watts:** No, I didn't realize that.

**JLJ:** Oh yeah, that's an important piece of history right there that merits a special place in the history of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.

**James Watts:** I guess you're right about that. Well, we knew it was a big deal back in 1962 when we invited him, but I hadn't thought about it in the way you just laid it out.

**JLJ:** This is a distinction of which the Pi chapter should be very proud

**James Watts:** Oh, we are. Believe me, we are!

## NOTES

1. Other than visits to Howard University, Atlanta University, Morgan State College, and Tuskegee Institute, one would be hard pressed to identify other HBCUs at which Malcolm spoke. While at Tuskegee in February 1965, Malcolm spoke to an audience of a few thousand people, according to his estimates. While there, students, some of whom were members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), insisted that Malcolm follow them over to Selma the next morning, which he did (Perry, 1989). On that day of February 4, Malcolm spoke to throngs of more young people, behind a rostrum at Brown Chapel AME Church. Sociologist Rod Bush argued, "For many young people,

Malcolm X was a model of Black dignity, standing up to the racist system, telling it like it is. He was viewed as a prophet who articulated their righteous anger against white society's racism and hypocrisy" (1999, p. 229).

2. By older I mean, men and women in their 70s, 80s, and 90s. For example, the story of Robin Gregory, a student at Howard University and its Homecoming Queen, and the upheaval caused by her decision to wear the Afro hairstyle is well-documented.

3. The words African American and Black are used interchangeably throughout according to sound and context.

4. By the time of Malcolm's visit, civil rights activists in South Carolina had made their presence known by challenging Jim Crow laws in many corners of the state. One of the most noteworthy demonstrations occurred in Rock Hill in 1961, when nine Black Friendship Junior College students took seats at the Whites-only lunch counter at a downtown McCrory's and refused to leave. After they were arrested, the judge gave them the choice of paying \$200 fines or serving 30 days of hard labor in the York County jail. The Friendship Nine, as they were called, chose jail, thus garnering national media attention as a result of their decision to implement the "jail, no bail" strategy.

5. Even today, the January 1955 incident involving students at Morgan State College is still little known among the general public and has been given short shrift in the scholarly literature. In a recent conversation with Retired Air Force General Joseph McNeil, one of the four freshmen who waged a sit-in at the lunch counter in Woolworth's department store in Greensboro, North Carolina, he admitted to being unaware of the goings-on in Baltimore when he and his friends embarked on the sit-in that sparked a massive student sit-in movement.

6. Students from Johns Hopkins University and Goucher College joined in as well.

7. In his famous "Address to the Slaves of the United States" in 1843, Garnet also exhorted Blacks to use arms against racists: "rather die freeman than live to be slaves."

8. When Georgia's political and intellectual leaders met in Macon in 1906 to form the Georgia Equal Rights Association, Turner was chosen to head the group. At the convention he bellowed these memorable words: "I used to love what I thought was the grand old flag, and sing with ecstasy about the Stars and Stripes, but to the Negro in this country the American flag is a dirty and contemptible rag. Not a star in it can the colored man claim, for it is no longer the symbol of our manhood rights and liberty.... Without multiplying words, I wish to say that hell is an improvement on the United States where the Negro is concerned" (as cited in Dittmer, 1988, pp. 253–274).

9. For more detail, see "The Hilltop-Archives: 1961—Malcolm X at the Mecca" (1961).

10. Every lecture and/or sermon delivered by Malcolm or any other minister, for that matter, had to have Elijah Muhammad's approval. The same goes for any debate in which Malcolm participated. Malcolm accepted no invitation to debate anyone without it first being approved by Elijah Muhammad.

11. Morgan State College, Morgan State, and Morgan are used interchangeably throughout to avoid repetition.

12. Dr. Benjamin Mays, Morehouse's scholar-activist president, was an intellectual who not only believed in social justice, but imbued in the school's students the value of leadership as service. Mays was an outspoken critic of segregation and an active participant in the modern civil rights movement.

13. Only Cleveland and Los Angeles's Black population grew more quickly in that same period. See Jeffries (2006, p. 188).



14. While many Blacks secured entry-level service jobs at Johns Hopkins hospital, so did they at Provident, a well-known Black hospital on Baltimore's westside.

15. Although many historians consider Maryland a southern state, Baltimoreans have historically viewed themselves as northerners.

16. The "Operation Controversy" committee consisted of Hayes Banks, James Brown, Eugene Byrd, Oliver Jackson, Samuel McNeil, John Myles, and Arnold Redmond. Banks, McNeil, Myles, and Redmond are deceased.

17. Emeritus means retired with distinction. One who has had a distinguished career.

18. Meier would go one to have an impressive career as a scholar and academic, but at the time, his record could be aptly described as "solid."

19. This writer owes a debt of gratitude to the men of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., who gave generously of their time and agreed to share their stories during multiple conversations over a period of several months. They are Brothers Tyrone Baines, PhD; David Brantley, JD; James Brown, Eugene Byrd, DDS; Osborne Dixon (Pi Omega); Leon Garrett; Bill Goins (Zeta Psi); Charles Hall (Mu Rho); Oliver Jackson (Zeta Psi); Pineabrim McCullough, M.S.; Herbert J. Fraser Abdul Raheem (Zeta Psi); Joseph "Joe Joe" Smith; and Elijah Toney, MBA. Especially helpful were Walter Gill, PhD, and James Watts, JD, as both men read multiple drafts of this work and spent countless hours on the telephone with me fielding questions at all hours of the night over the course of several months. The Rev. Charles Fletcher, PhD, and Edwin Johnson, PhD, also proved helpful, coming through with important documents at just the right time. All of these men are graduates of the great Morgan State College (now Morgan State University), the majority of whom crossed the burning sands at the illustrious Pi Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention Brother Beverly W. Burks, Sr., (Gamma Alpha) who helped the project gain lift-off by putting me in contact with the aforementioned Dr. Walter Gill.

20. Malcolm's characterization of Kennedy as a "political hypocrite" may have been somewhat premature, but over time proved to be a criticism worth considering. For example, while the Kennedy administration was portraying itself as a friend of the Negro, at the same time, Attorney General Bobby Kennedy was, in the wake of the March on Washington, giving FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover the go ahead to place wiretaps on Dr. King's Atlanta office and home.

21. George Fraser Williams went on to become a physician. Tragically, he died young, from a heart attack.

22. According to a 1947 Morgan State College yearbook, Jackson held an AB, MA, and PhD in economics.

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