

A presentation by Arelia Smith Langhorne January 9, 2020 to SPHEX

The Look, A Savannah Girl's View

When you recall Governor Ralph Northam, what images do you see? Is it the more recent picture of him celebrating the election results for the Virginia General Assembly this past November? The sense of satisfaction or jubilation on his face, or do you see his reactions to the publication last February of his now infamous 1984 yearbook page from Eastern Virginia Medical School showing two men, one wearing blackface, the other wearing a Ku Klux Klan outfit, both drinking beer, having fun? Is your view Northam's initial press release or his video released apology? Is it the look of sorrow and vulnerability at the press conference following his description of blackening his face for a dance contest and his ability to do Michael Jackson's famous moonwalk in a contest? What do you see or feel when someone who loves him stops him from making matters worse? Do you see Pam Northam and her look?

The Madame Chairman Story: Someone is always WATCHING

In **July 1988** I was elected Chairman of the Lynchburg City School Board. **This was a break in the glass ceiling for women.** I had been Vice-Chairman of the School Board for the previous five years. At the time being Vice-Chairman simply meant I had a copy of Robert's Rules of Order in the drawer of the U-shaped table where my seat was next to the Chairman, Mosby Perrow. He knew I was deaf in my left ear. Perrow and I were first elected to these officer positions on the School Board in 1983. Among the women who had served on the School Board was Perrow's mother, Katherine Wingfield Perrow, Joan Jones and Pauline Maloney. They were distinguished women with significant credentials in leadership and support for public education, two white women and a black woman.

The Rev. Haywood Robinson, Jr., a black man was Chairman of the Lynchburg School board in 1981 when I began my service on the local school board. Robinson's election as the first black person as Chairman was deliberate and intentional. It was orchestrated by James Candler who for those of us who knew him, simply called him Jim. Tom Tiller was on the Board with Jim when this

act of “courage” for Lynchburg occurred. In 1981 you could have a one on one conversation with board members prior to a public meeting and have an expected count on matters requiring public consideration. The vote required a public meeting.

In July 1988 I made history break the glass ceiling of leadership in the title and position of Chairman of the School Board as a **woman**.

1988 was my final year on the School Board. Term limits, eligible to serve three 3 year terms if reappointed by “the powers to be,” the elected members of Lynchburg City Council. Unlike most counties, LCS has an appointed School Board rather than an elected board. My sponsor was M. W. Thornhill, Jr. Ward 2 Councilman who served his final term on Council as Mayor. Thornhill was the first Black Mayor of Lynchburg. In the summer of 1981 he called and asked if I still wanted to serve on the School Board, he went on to say an opening was coming up because the person who had been appointed and served about a year was ill, unable to make the meetings, and the appointment would be for the remaining balance of her term. In 1981 Valerie was 2 yrs old, Teresa not yet conceived. Teresa was born in 1983 and I may have been the first woman who was pregnant while serving on the Lynchburg School Board. The purpose of this talk is not about the men whose spouses ...

I served 8 years on the LCSB. I was on the Board when “all hell broke lose” at Bedford Hills School. The Principal, a white man, and the teacher, a black woman, got into it behind closed doors with no witnesses. Yes, I’m a lawyer. When you have supervision over an employee with whom you’ve had a previous serious disagreement about performance the rule is two on one, you need a witness. The results at Bedford Hills are physical injuries. Each took out misdemeanor assault warrants against the other. The cross warrants were dismissed in Court. Public news accounts were rampant. So, what does the School Board get after a Grievance Committee hearing, recommendations from the Superintendent for disciplinary action against the teacher. The Superintendent made no recommendations to the Board for disciplinary action against the Principal. I voted against Superintendent Spagnolo’s recommended disciplinary action against the teacher, so did Mary Pullen, another black woman on the Board.

The Bedford Hills story continued many months later. The Board was appointing a committee to provide leadership for what was then new career ladder and staff development programs. A name on the Superintendent's list included the Bedford Hills Principal. This time the vote was unanimous to remove the Bedford Hills Principal's name from the list, and approve the remainder of the recommendations. I later heard the Superintendent was shook to his core by this Board action. News travels.

Let me make it clear, I knew where Dr. Joseph Spagnolo was coming from and he knew where I was coming from, we respected each other and that respect made us friends long after my service on the LCS School Board was over and the many great things Spagnolo went on to accomplish for LCS, as Secretary of Education in Governor Wilder's administration for Virginia, and as Head of the Department of Education in Illinois and beyond.

The question is, was the election of a woman as Chairman affirmative action? In my view it does not matter, what matters is the door for female leadership was opened. When elected, members of the Board knew whom they were getting. They witnessed votes cast with the minority, majority and in unanimous actions. The election which broke the ceiling for women as Chair was through lenses which acknowledged to our community that she's been on this board a long time, been Vice-Chair a long time, conducted meetings when Perrow left the Chair early to attend his mother's 80th birthday party, and on the rare occasions when Perrow was absent. Perrow now had moved out of the city to the Perrow family farm on the Staunton River and it was her last year on the Board, so it happened.

When I rotated off the board in 1989, my Valerie was 10 and Teresa was 5. William (Bill) Long who served as my Vice-Chair was elected Chairman and he may have been followed by Julius Sigler as Chairman. Many years have passed and our community has seen continued female leadership. In this SPHEX group, Ellen Nygaard, and Julie Doyle have served as Chairman of the Lynchburg School Board. My friend and former SPHEX member, Gina Dolan Sewell and at least two other women, including the current Chairman, Susan Morrison.

We have a glass ceiling breaker in Dr. Crystal Edwards as the first woman Superintendent of Lynchburg City Schools.

Katherine Webb Cyphert, Middle School Science teacher extraordinary even teaching middle school students in the James River near one of my walking trails.

Upon election, several LCS staff people, all men who routinely report at School Board meetings, asked how they should address me. Suggesting in their question, answers like chairwoman, chairperson. I did not laugh but answered, Madam Chairman. I was not going to let those men change the title of the position. Today it is the standard in addressing a woman in leadership, Madam Chairman, Madam Speaker, and one day it will be Madam President.

In my view, our community is richer with diversity in leadership and influence by women.

It was a magical family time.

Now, Valparaiso.

The Mid West Racism Story: Valparaiso, Part I

In 1967 I left Savannah to go to college, it was located about 50 miles southeast of Chicago in Valparaiso, Indiana. It was my first time on an airplane. I flew from Savannah early in the morning where I saw the clouds and sun rise from my window view seat. The flight from Savannah to Chicago was nonstop. From O'Hare International Airport I took a bus downtown to the train station where I caught a train from Chicago to Valparaiso. I don't remember how I got from the train station to Valparaiso's campus but I know I did not walk. In the lobby of Alumni Hall, the dorm I had been assigned, were my two foot lockers sent by Truck transport from Savannah. It was the last thing my father did for me before he died on August 25. My plane trip and all transportation to Valpo had been arranged by him. My father was buried the day before I boarded the flight to Valparaiso. There were no visits ahead of orientation or virtual tours

like students have today before the choice for college is made.

What did I see upon my arrival?

The inhabitants of the city were all white. The university had about 3,000 students most of whom were Lutheran and white. The faculty was all white except for **Dr. Johnson**, an anthropologist, who had been with the University for some time. Can you picture this? **Dr. Johnson's** living quarters, an apartment in a University building. His living space had been specially made for him. It was beautiful, the result of considerable renovation in an old building on what was known as "old" campus. Why? Answer: there were no black residents of the City of Valparaiso, no place but the one made for him on old campus to lay his head. He was a world traveled distinguished man and a great professor. You had to meet all the prerequisites, sign up early and by the luck of the draw get registered in his class. It my junior year before I was able to take Dr. Johnson's anthropology class. This is what I saw.

Alumni Hall was on "new" campus and relatively brand- new, maybe a year old. I was a 18-year-old black girl from the segregated public schools of Savannah. I had read about Valpo. My final choices for college were Valpo and Hampton. I chose Valpo because it offered the better financial aid package. In any event here I am in Indiana with a roommate from Montana and we had zero in common, **cordial** is how I describe the semester we lived together. A university requirement of no change in roommates first semester, in the second only with approval of the dorm mother and resident assistant. I soon found **Anita Sims**, another black student who lived in my dorm. In orientation we heard there were **20** black students in the freshman class; the other 18 were scattered about in other dorms. We also learned that there were **18** women and two men in this number of **20**. We gradually met these students during orientation events like the all freshman trip to the **Indiana State Dunes Park**. I did not meet the black upper class students until some time after what seemed like a week long freshman orientation.

I want you to come with me so I want to talk about some published and unpublished Valpo history. It maybe too much (it was too long)but it may help with the context of some significant racist events experienced in the midwest.

Valpo was chartered as **Valparaiso Male and Female College** by **Methodists** in 1859. It was one of the **first coeducational**, four-year institutions in the United States. The Civil War took its toll. The college closed in 1871, reopened in 1873 as the Northern Indiana Normal School and Business Institute. In 1900 it was renamed Valparaiso College. In 1906 the college became a university. In 1907 Valpo was the second largest university in the country, second only to Harvard, and known as the **poor man's Harvard**. Students were enrolled in numerous schools including medicine and dentistry. Many immigrants, Germans and Russians, Catholics and Jews, people seeking skills to work in the growing steel mills of Gary, Indiana were enrolled.

A significant impact on enrollment followed with the establishment of other Universities, the wave of Catholics and Jews leaving the school and the first World War. **In the summer of 1923** the university was in dire straits, debt, close to closing, losing accreditation, and unable to meet the minimum State of Indiana's required endowment,

During this time, the Ku Klux Klan had become very powerful in Indiana. Through the sale of robes, newspaper subscriptions, and membership fees, the "Imperial hierarchy" of the Klan had amassed huge fortunes for itself.

The most dynamic year for the Klan in Porter County where Valparaiso is located was 1923. A local historian, Larry Clark, wrote in **2015** for the New York Times that in 1923 it was reported that over 10,000 people attended a Klan rally at the county fairgrounds. Further, that same year, a group comprised of Klan members tried to purchase Valparaiso University.

In another article, "Indiana Historic Newspaper Digitization Ku Klux U: How the Klan Almost Bought a University" The Times, **January 6, 2016** Stephen J. Taylor reports, "... a deal actually was made to sell the school to the Klan in August 1923, but D.C. Stephenson, the Imperial Wizard, squandered Klan money on liquor, women, cars, and a yacht. Even the \$350,000 needed to buy the Valparaiso campus — not to mention the \$1,000,000 offered for an endowment — was apparently beyond the ability of bumbling Klan leadership to come up with (or hang onto)." The digitized Indiana newspapers reported an agreement between the Trustees of Valparaiso and the KKK from mid-August,

1923 till September 5 and 11th when it was reported the deal fell through.

Older members of SPHEX will recall Julie Doyle's presentation, "**Here Come the Kleagles,**" the story of the clash in May 1924 of the KKK in South Bend with the "Men" from Notre Dame. The student taking a KKK uniform and flag as "souvenirs" of their initial success against the KKK arrival at the train station in South Bend. Also, discovery from older members of her family a lawsuit which challenged state legislation which could have closed her Catholic school education in Oregon. The KKK supported racial and religious discrimination and got elected to political offices to influence such policies.

The Valparaiso story was too long. The official history does not mention the agreement between the trustees and the KKK. **When I was a student, it was a rumor.** In preparing this paper I found myself distracted by the 2015 and 2016 national media stories that it was true.

Since 1925 Valparaiso has been a Lutheran University. When I was a student, it was affiliated with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Hoosier State Chronicles report under Lutheran guidance, Valparaiso University's fortunes gradually turned around, though it barely survived the Great Depression. By the 1950s, "Old Valpo" once again ranked among Indiana's and the nation's best colleges.

In 1967 when I arrived on campus, Otto Paul Kretzmann, more commonly known as O. P. Kretzmann was President of Valparaiso. He became president in 1940. Kretzmann was a Lutheran minister. His father, grandfather, and five brothers were all Lutheran ministers.

It was a well-known story that in 1947 O. P. Kretzmann personally met the train from Iowa that brought Inez Parker '51, the **first Negro** undergraduate student to Valpo. In 1947 before Parker could enroll, Kretzmann had to get the City of Valparaiso to designate Valparaiso University as a place where a Negro could spend the night. (Perseverance, Valpo Magazine, 02/02/2019) Kretzmann carried Parker's luggage and they walked together through the town to campus it is said for all the merchants to see that Valpo had a Negro student and was committed to

integrating the University's student body.

O.P. Kretzmann also established the University's deaconess program for women who wanted to work in ministries long before other denominations opened such doors to women. "I have had a personal interest in the deaconess program for a long time... I do not think we have yet found the answer to the question of the ministry of women in our Church." My freshman roommate from Montana was interested in majoring in the University's deaconess program.

But when I was an 18-year-old freshman, O. P. Kretzmann said, **"the 50 black students cause more trouble than the 3,000 whites."**

I did not try to understand him. I was offended. White students, trustees, and faculty were offended. In an atmosphere which affected all on campus, Kretzmann's twenty-eight year position as President ended with his resignation. The sentiment expressed in his public statement, cost his 28 year Presidency.

He was Succeeded by **Albert G. Huegli**. Nothing negative to report.

The Mid West Racism Story: Valparaiso, Part II

I was a resident assistant. My junior year I was assigned to Memorial Hall by the Dean of Women, Delores Rousch. Mrs. Effie Lindberg, was the Dorm Director and "house mother" of Memorial Hall. I had not met Mrs. Lindberg. Labor Day Weekend was the return date. A cousin from New Jersey came to Savannah for the weekend and I took her to the beach before I left on Sunday for my return to Valpo. When I arrived, Mrs. Lindberg said, **"Where have you been? We've been working like little niggers all day.**

I had a tan. I didn't know what she thought. She was elderly. I did not respond. I left her dorm apartment, went to my room, posted the welcome art work I'd brought with me on the doors for the students who were expected the next day. I couldn't sleep. The next morning as soon as I thought Dean Rousch was in her office I was there. I told her what happened and she just about died. Dean Rousch had issues with this dorm "mother" before I told her what Lindberg had said to me. Dean Rousch told me she would speak to Lindberg that day. She

also told me she had planned to retire Lindberg at the end of the school year and the story of how Carl Lindberg worked for the University virtually without pay during the war years. Dean Rousch, an extraordinary woman, thought the University owed Lindberg's widow a living. It was not what I wanted to hear but I heard her. I was only partly aware of the school's history and economic woes and the influence of the KKK in the ownership history of the school before the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod rescued the school. I was aware that two other black students would be living in that dorm, Ingrid Bradley and Loretta Elam. They later told me she followed them to the attic when they took their luggage for storage looking at them like they were thieves. **So they started watching her.** When I was a student, it was a rumor that the Ku Klux Klan had tried to buy the University.

I survived. But I was getting the hell out of there.

Looking back, I acknowledge I got an excellent education. It was a very tough time. I was there during the era of the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, 1968, and presidential candidate Robert (Bobby) Kennedy, June 5, 1968. Black power fists were raised in the Olympics 200 meter winners' ceremony October 16, 1968. Chicago police and FBI raided and assassinated 21 year old, Fred Hampton, a Chicago Black Panther leader December 4, 1969. The Ohio National Guard opened fire May 4, 1970, on college students at Kent State University killing 4, wounding 9. The students were protesting the expansion of the Vietnam War into Cambodia. The killing at Kent State led to student protest against the war at Valpo and all over the U.S.A.

Northam's 1984 Yearbook Scandal: History and Time Will Tell

Now back to the beginning, a little bit of Northam today.

The photo from his 1984 Eastern Virginia Medical School yearbook page was published February 1st, 2019 by Big League Politics, a right wing organization backed by GOP operatives. It was picked up by all media outlets, the image was repeatedly broadcast and continuously printed by the print media. The picture in the yearbook was blatantly racist and hurtful to most who saw it.

At the press conference February 4, 2019, Pam Northam, someone who loves him, stops him from making matters worse, imitating Michael Jackson. Northam apologized for the hurt caused then and now.

Just about every Virginia state and federal elected official called for Northam to resign. Politically powerful organizations like the League of Women Voters also asked Northam to resign.

At the time, I was president of the Lynchburg LWV. The LWV of the USA was calling the shots, Sue Lewis, president of the Virginia LWV followed the national organization's position and called for the Governor's resignation, the call was released to the press and posted on the Virginia LWV website. It was quite a moment for a local LWV president. The situation was moving fast.

On February 21, 2019, Brett Murphy of USA Today wrote, "In one of the most extensive searches of college yearbooks ever, we found blackface and Ku Klux Klan photos like Ralph Northam's far beyond Virginia." **Review of 900 yearbooks, finds "blatant racism."** The review resulted in an apology from Nicole Carroll, editor of USA Today for approving a racist picture for publication on her watch in the Arizona State University yearbook 1988-89.

The article is worth the read for anyone who is seriously interested in how widespread the practice continued after the "hard-learned lessons of the civil rights movement" which produced the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Black students on "integrated" college campuses were routinely excluded from blackface activities being practiced on campuses by future "leaders" and tolerated by the colleges.

Northam kept his head down and went to work on healing the scars exposed. He appointed a task force called the Commission to Examine Racial Inequity in Virginia Law. The commission identified 98 laws written from 1900 to 1960 for the General Assembly to consider **striking** from the Code of Virginia. "If we're going to move forward as a Commonwealth," Mr. Northam said on Twitter, "it's time that Virginia takes steps to right old wrongs and remove the racially discriminatory language that's still on our books."

Many of the laws stem from the state's segregationist past, including Jim Crow laws, Virginia's Massive Resistance policy and effort to thwart federally mandated laws to integrate schools, public transportation and neighborhoods. Still other laws prohibited interracial marriage and imposed a poll tax to prevent black Virginians from voting.

Northam promised to do the work necessary to improve racial justice in the Commonwealth.

Northam says his whole life has been about service. I met him twice. First, at a Lynchburg Democratic party function in Humbles Hall, the other occasion, at First Baptist Church South Hill in Chesapeake Virginia, where he was well know, revered and welcomed like a home boy. Northam was comfortable in the black church. A life of service is what I saw in the two encounters.

So on November 5, 2020 when the election results were in, the Governor who apologized for the hurt exposed then and now, kept his head down, went to work on improving racial injustice in the Commonwealth Northam said Virginians "supported me through this, . . . And they supported what our agenda has been on Tuesday and now we need to deliver."

The Lynchburg Museum and the Confederate Flag: Timing is Everything

June 17, 2015 Charleston, S.C., Dylan Roof, white supremacist, 9 dead.

June 17, 2015 Dylan Roof, killed Nine African Americans in Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1817. Roof posted his photo with the Confederate battle flag and espoused racial hatred in his website before the shooting, and in his journal from jail after the killing. The shooting triggered debate on modern display of the flag and other memorialization of the Confederacy. Following these murders, the South Carolina General Assembly voted to remove the flag from State Capitol grounds.

August 11-12, 2017 Charlottesville, pretext Confederate statues' white supremacists protest, Heather Heyer, Va. State Troopers, Lt. H. Jay Cullen, and

Berke M.M. Bates, dead, 28 injured.

August 11, 2017, the night before a permit-planned rally, white supremacists marched through the campus of the University of Virginia encircled Thomas Jefferson's statue, surrounded the Rotunda and a small group of anti protestor students. The marchers holding lit Tiki torches shouted "blood and soil" and chanted "Jews will not replace us."

The Confederate statues in the city parks were a pretext. The protesters came to Charlottesville because they were **afraid** their white supremacy ideology was being displaced and replaced by black Americans, Catholics, Jews, immigrants, naturalized USA citizens, and first generation Americans.

Methodology of the Lynchburg Museum, Confederate Battle Flag Souvenir

The Lynchburg Museum announced in December 2018 it would borrow the Five Forks Confederate Battle Flag from the American Civil War Museum for a display. After a year of authenticating, reviewing other museums' displays of controversial exhibits, focus groups and surveys, the day came. The Lynchburg Museum opened its exhibit of a Confederate Flag, entitled **Five Forks Battle Flag: A Community Perspective** Sunday, **January 5th**.

I went immediately after church with my friend Vivian Camm. More than 40 years ago, as Principal, she removed portraits of Confederate Generals from the halls of Garland Rodes school. Vivian's picture was featured in the News and Advance looking at a permanent exhibit which included a Court Street Baptist Church minister instrumental in the early work of the Virginia Seminary and the establishment of the 8th Street Baptist Church. By then, Vivian was ready to go.

I was looking through **Kevin Shroyer's** notebook of documentation for the flag he'd raised \$12,000.00 to restore. He had pictures of key figures to proclaim that the flag was captured by a Union Soldier (as a Souvenir) in the battle near Petersburg fought by the **11th Virginia Infantry Regiment** prior to the surrender by Lee to Grant in Appomattox in 1865. I saw it was important to Shroyer that the infantry was organized in Lynchburg in 1861 and included men from Lynchburg and surrounding counties. It took a decade for Shroyer to

raise the money. He is invested by his time, energy and money in getting this flag displayed to the public in the Lynchburg Museum.

Kevin Shroyer conversation

My conversation with Shroyer started with reference to the length of time it took to get the flag displayed. He thought it took two years and was too long. I said I thought it was about a year long process, referenced the quote of Lonnie C. Bunch, III about the purpose of Museums and further that it had taken a long time for the National Museum of African American History and Culture to open on the National Mall.

Then this question: Do you know whether slaves were sent with Confederate soldiers to be what today we call body men to go, cover, and bring them back home to the slave master? I also said, It's ok if you don't know. He replied that he did not have any documentation of that but opined it happened in Virginia.

I asked because I am not a Virginian by birth. My heritage includes history that my paternal grandfather, **Shedrick Smith**, was the body man for what today would be his half-brother. My grandfather went to the Confederate war battles in South Carolina with Plantation owner, James Smith's son, and yes, he brought his "brother" back injured, but alive. Then my grandfather went and joined the Union Army Colored Soldiers where he served for four years before his honorable discharge and return to Pineland, South Carolina.

Yes, I am Shedrick's youngest grandchild born to his 16th of 17 children, my father was 49 when I was born and my mother 32. As adults my sister and I called my mother, an old man's darling. He was proud to have her as his wife.

The presentation concluded with an invitation to the Lynchburg Museum Exhibit, Five Forks Battle Flag: A Community Perspective, and to witness a new citizen's Naturalization ceremony, and to visit the National Museum of African American History and Culture which opened September 16, 2016 in Washington, D.C.

Thank you.

From the NMAAHC Website:

The National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) is a Smithsonian Institution museum located on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It was established in **December 2003** and opened in **September 2016**. Early efforts to establish a federally owned museum featuring African-American history and culture can be traced to **1915**, although the modern push for such a museum did not begin until the 1970s. After years of little success, a much more serious **legislative push** began in 1988 that led to authorization of the museum in **2003**. A site was selected in 2006, and a design submitted by Freelon Group/Adjaye Associates/Davis Brody Bond was chosen in 2009. Construction began in 2012 and the museum completed in 2016.

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