

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Event will show how past civil rights protests helped America progress

Retrospective event aims to cull lessons from the past

GREENSBORO, NC (January 20, 2010) – From the vantage point of 50 years’ hindsight, what lessons do the 1960s offer us? That is the question Bennett College for Women students, faculty and alumnae will tackle **Feb. 1** in an event **entitled “A Retrospective on Bennett Belle Leadership in the 1960s Sit-In Movement.”**

At the event, which is pegged to the Feb. 1, 1960 student sit-in at a lunch counter at Woolworth’s in Greensboro that helped ignite a movement challenging racial inequality across the South, Bennett alumnae will discuss their roles in planning and taking part in that action and other civil rights protests of the early 1960s.

The event will be at **10 a.m. at Annie Merner Pfeiffer Chapel** on the Bennett College campus. It is free and open to the public.

Bennett president Dr. Julianne Malveaux said the event is important for today’s college students even though the events took place long ago.

“My hope is that people will walk away with an appreciation for the movement, hope for a better future – that we can change things that are not right – and a sense of responsibility; that they will take up the mantle and do what’s right,” Dr. Malveaux said.

Today’s students may not know much about these historic events, said Dr. Linda Brown, a student at Bennett during that era and currently the college’s Willa B. Player Distinguished Professor of the Humanities. “They might know that there were sit-ins, but that’s about all they know,” said Dr. Brown, who also is author of “The Long Walk,” a book that recounts the role of Bennett women in civil rights protests.

“It’s very, very important to renew one’s sense of history every few years and to know the legacy of what was done 50 years ago and how that contributed to America’s progress,” Dr. Brown added.

The event is being organized by Dr. Esther Terry, Provost of the college and a member of Bennett's class of 1961. Nine alumnae who took part in the protests movements have committed to attending and taking part in a panel discussion, Dr. Terry said. The panelists will also include two white Bennett alumnae who took part in the protests and can offer their own unique perspective, she added.

The event will be a "celebratory moment," Dr. Terry said, but at the same time will look ahead to remaining challenges to full equality.

"There are still barriers – the work is continuous," she said. "I hope this will inspire students to continue to do that work."

Note: To arrange interviews, use the contacts at the top of this press release.

Bennett College for Women, located in Greensboro, NC, is a small, private, historically black institution affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Bennett offers a liberal arts education conducive to excellence in scholarly pursuits; preparation for leadership roles in the workplace, society, and the world; and lifelong learning in a technologically advanced, complex global society. For more information, visit www.bennett.edu.