



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
SIXTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1946
POPULATION SCHEDULE



COMMITTEE ON
*Elon History
& Memory*



ELON
UNIVERSITY

REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS
FALL 2020

The following report includes words and images that could be triggering to some readers. Some of the terms used to reference material from the past include quotations that use oppressive language and descriptions of racial violence.

OCTOBER 2020

Committee on Elon History & Memory

Provost Steven House, in consultation with Catherine Chang and Prudence Layne of Academic Council, appointed a university-wide committee of 12 faculty, staff and students to carry out the work in August 2018.

Charles Irons (Chair)

William J. Story Sr. Professor, Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History and Geography

Brandon Bell (through January 2020)

Assistant Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education

Chrystal Carpenter

Coordinator of University Archives and Special Collections and Assistant Librarian

Denise Hill

Associate Professor of Strategic Communications

Tyrone Jean (from January 2020)

Assistant Dean of Students / Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education

Brad Moore

University Architect and Director of Planning, Design and Construction Management

Sandra Reid '85

Lecturer in Human Service Studies

Keren Rivas '04

Director of Publications

Detric E. Robinson-Miller

Assistant Director, Office of Student Conduct

Andrea A. Sinn

O'Briant Developing Professor, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Jewish Studies Program

Jeff Stein

Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Assistant Professor of English

Randy Williams (from August 2020)

Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence and Associate Professor of Education

Student Representatives

Jumar Martin '23

Undergraduate Double Major in Computer Science and Economics

Cameron Shirley '13 G'20

Masters of Higher Education Graduate Student (MHE)

Jewel Tillman '21

Undergraduate Major in Political Science

Special Adviser

George W. Troxler

The late university historian and professor emeritus of history served as special adviser to the committee until October 2019.

The formal portraits of Glenda Phillips Hightower, the first full-time Black student to attend Elon in 1963, and Eugene Perry '69, the first Black student to graduate from Elon, hanging in Moseley Center. (U. Communications)



UNIVERSITIES STUDYING SLAVERY/BLACK LUMEN PROJECT

A subcommittee of the Committee on Elon History & Memory, The Elon University Black Lumen Project: An Equity Initiative has been affiliated with Universities Studying Slavery (USS) since February 2019. It aims to acknowledge and address the university's history of anti-Blackness.

Tyrone Jean (Co-Chair)

Assistant Dean of Students and Director of the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education

Charles Irons (Co-Chair)

William J. Story Sr. Professor, Professor of History and Chair of the Department of History and Geography

Libby Coyner

Archivist and Assistant Librarian

Sandra Lawson

Associate Chaplain for Jewish Life and Jewish Educator

Buffie Longmire-Avital

Associate Professor of Psychology and Coordinator of the African & African-American Studies Minor

Cherrel Miller Dyce

Associate Professor of Education and Director of Intercultural Education

Randy Williams

Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence and Associate Professor of Education

A Note From the President

EVERY FAMILY HAS A SHARED STORY. Usually the retold stories focus on the triumphs, achievements and the good times. It is much more difficult to face the challenges, disagreements, and the moments when we made wrong choices or did not adhere to our family values.

The Elon family has a proud story — a community that overcame great obstacles to transform from a small local college to a distinguished national university. Generations of students, parents, faculty, staff and friends share the credit for creating the Elon model of excellence in higher education. And now, in this 131st year of Elon's history, we are ready to embrace a more complete and complicated story about our past — one that includes the contributions and the challenges faced by *all* members of the Elon family throughout our history.

This was the charge to the Committee on Elon History and Memory, to examine Elon's history in a more transparent and participatory manner. A 12-member committee of faculty, staff and students began work in fall 2018 to learn about and document untold stories from our shared past. They aligned their work with the Universities Studying Slavery consortium, a group of nearly 70 schools in North America and Europe working together to address both historical and contemporary issues related to race and inequality in higher education.

This report provides different perspectives and unexplored details about Elon's past. Through recommendations for action and stories that explore difficult moments in our history, the committee challenges us to see Elon's story through a wider and more diverse lens. This fuller understanding of the Elon family's story, and how we arrived at this moment in time, will create new awareness and inform our future actions as we write the next proud chapters in Elon's story.

— *President Connie Ledoux Book*

Foreword

IT IS OUR PRIVILEGE as members of the Committee on Elon History and Memory to offer this report to the university community. We hope the stories and the recommendations we present help make Elon a more just and inclusive place — and that they bring some measure of healing to people who have struggled to see themselves in the institution's story.

Some of the words and images in the pages to follow are hard to read and see. We have included them out of the conviction that growth and repair are impossible without a frank acknowledgement of wrongdoing. Indeed, the strong words and complex narratives may cause us to have different reactions, but the committee believes they are necessary to fulfill its charge and to underscore the humanity of all involved.

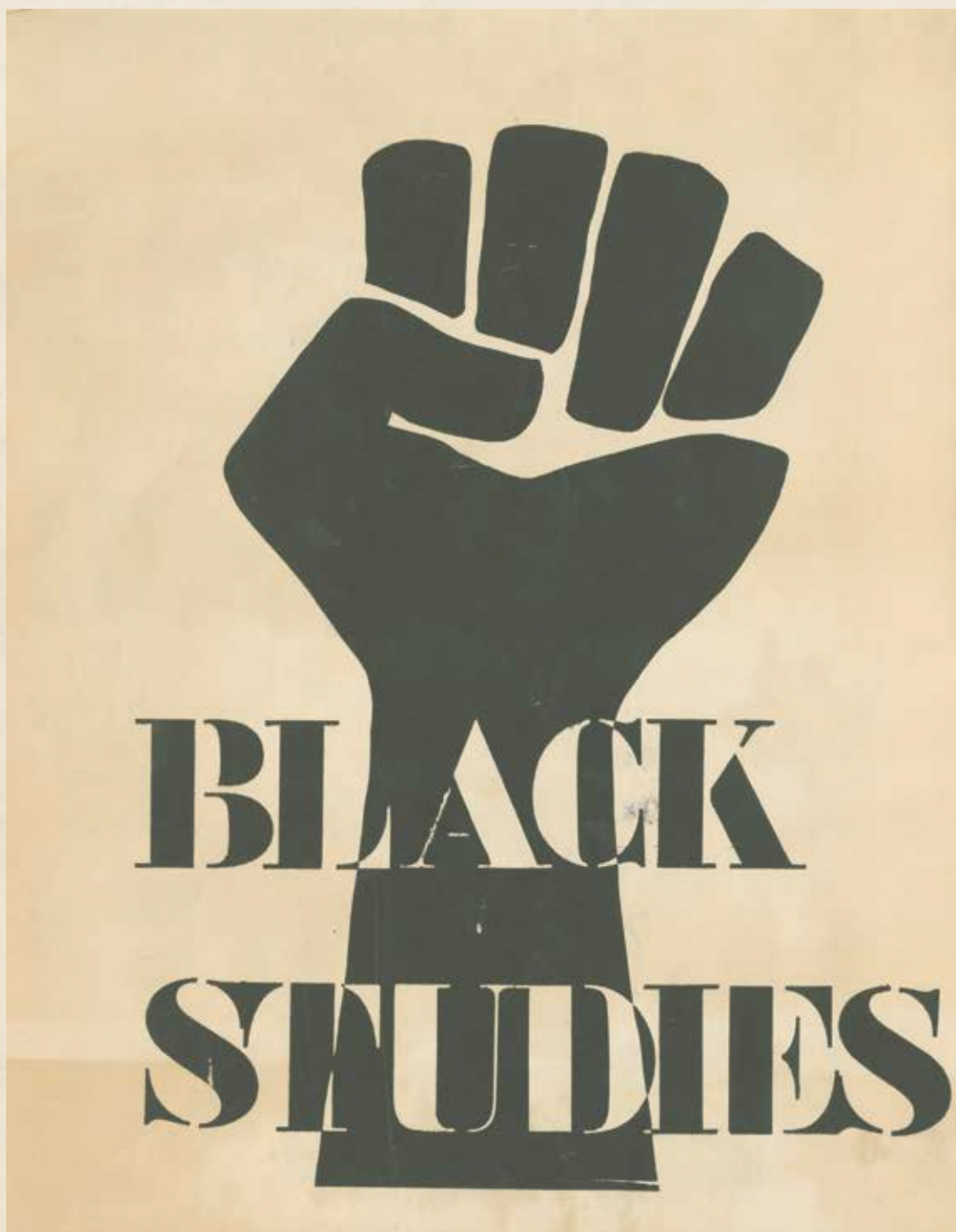
We could not have asked for a better committee. We learned as a group over these past two years to listen to one another and to be patient with one another as we have grappled with the material and its implications. The work

ahead will take determination and investment, but we are optimistic the time is right to take on such important tasks. While this report represents the findings of the committee, we hope the entire community embraces the recommendations presented here.

We are keenly aware that these are sensitive topics and this is sensitive work. Please take advantage of opportunities from the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education and elsewhere if you need support in processing any part of the report, and do not hesitate to contact any of us.

Finally, please remember that, like the work of inclusive excellence to which Elon is committed and the implementation of the Boldly Elon strategic plan, this work of reorienting one's understanding of the past takes time and must be a community effort. This report is but a beginning.

— *Members of the Committee
on Elon History and Memory*



*Black studies poster from the
African and African-American
Studies Collection, circa 1969.
(U. Archives, [EUA098/1](#))*

‘DECORATED IN WHITE ACHIEVEMENT’

— *An Introduction*

Alumna L’Tanya Richmond ’87, Elon Medallion recipient and former director of the Multicultural Center, recognized in 2005 the urgency to document the experiences of Black students “on a campus where walls are decorated in White achievement, White legacies, White donors and White pioneers.”¹ In her Duke University master’s thesis, she both called for and helped to create a history more inclusive of Black experiences at Elon, in which she represented both Black achievements and Black struggles.

Building on the work of Richmond, other staff, faculty and students have also been celebrating Black achievement and speaking against White supremacy for many years. Particularly notable have been the efforts of educators connected with the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education (CREDE) and with African & African-American Studies at Elon (AAASE). People affiliated with both programs and with the Elon Black Alumni Network (EBAN) have worked to lift up stories of Black achievement. The Committee on Elon History and Memory shares their insight that telling a more authentic version of the past offers the opportunity to create a more inclusive and just future.

Richmond and others who have focused on the experiences of Black people describe a sort of dual violence: past instances of injustice followed by accounts that exclude or revise these historical events. These less authentic retellings of history, often perpetuated by White narrators, compound the harm. One notable example involves Durward T. Stokes, professor of history and author of “Elon College: Its History and Traditions,” the foundational work of Elon history.



L’Tanya Richmond ’87 documented much of the experiences of Black students at Elon through the early 2000s. (U. Communications)

In 1969, Black students petitioned Stokes, then chairman of the Department of Social Sciences, for three things: “a course dealing with Black studies,” “the hiring of at least one Black professor” and “the immediate resignation of Professor Luther Byrd” for “overt bigotry.” Stokes denied all three requests. Over a decade later, in 1982, Stokes added an additional layer of injustice when he described the 1969 encounter for posterity in his book. Stokes ignored two of the three demands and recorded only the request for a class on Black studies. Furthermore, he claimed that “neither the proper material nor a qualified instructor” was available for the course (despite the fact that students had nominated a potential instructor) and that he had “satisfied” the petitioners by ordering “a number of books and periodicals pertinent to Black culture” for the library. Stokes transformed what could have been a story of Black students’ participation in a nationwide fight to democratize higher education into a story of his administrative savvy, erasing the names and aspirations of Black students in the process.²

November 19, 1969

TO: Dr. Durward T. Stokes, Chairman of the Department of Social Sciences
FROM: The Third Front of the Organization of Afro-American Unity of
Elon College
RE: An open letter requesting a course in black studies at Elon
College

Sir:

We as concerned and enlightened black students of Elon College realize the necessity for a curriculum relative to all students. Said curriculum should not only allow students to relate to their futures but to their social, psychological, and ethnic pasts. In a social environment where black people have suffered continuous degradation, both socially and psychologically, we see a need for educational institutions to provide their students with a means for gaining insight and truth.

We therefore request a course dealing exclusively with black studies, to be taught during the fall term of the academic year 1970. This course is to deal with black history, the problems of past and contemporary black men in America. We do earnestly feel Dr. Harper is both interested enough and qualified to professor this course.

Secondly, we request the hiring of at least one black professor by the fall of the academic year 1971. This professor should hold at least a Master's degree in Black History, and should be hired to teach within the Social Science Department.

Finally, we ask for the immediate resignation of Professor Luther Byrd, whose overt bigotry has proven detrimental not only to blacks, but to other minority groups as well. Professor Byrd has consistently exhibited the type of sentiment which in the past has led to negative stereotyping of minority groups, especially black people. It is this type of sentiment which robs students of quality education and causes blacks undue mental and social disenfranchisement. We make this request not against Professor Byrd, but for the betterment of intellectual understanding between black and white students of Elon College and in the world.

We would like your earnest and prompt consideration of these requests; with respect for your undoubtedly busy schedule we will expect a reply as soon as possible, at least by Monday, December 1, 1969.

Sincerely yours,

The Third Front of the Organization
of Afro-American Unity of Elon College

In November 1969, Black students petitioned unsuccessfully for "a course dealing exclusively with Black studies" and "the hiring of at least one Black professor." (U. Archives, [EUA098/1](#))

The Committee on Elon History and Memory has kept emphasis on both the original experiences of Black people as well as the subsequent ways that Elon officials commemorated those experiences. For example, William A. Harper, Elon's fourth president, is included in this report both because of the way he identified the maintenance of White supremacy as a key goal of the institution, and also because his name was on display on university buildings from 1968 to 2020.³ Mary Carroll-Robertson '81 is included both because she was elected the first Black Homecoming Queen in 1979, and also because there is no record of her milestone election — the customary Homecoming spread was left out of the 1980 yearbook.

Each of the 10 episodes the committee has included as part of this report opens multiple pathways for learning and opportunities for restorative justice. It is the desire of the committee that those connected with Elon today may not only endeavor to reconcile past wrongs, but also commit to telling a more authentic and inclusive version of the institution's story — through the way the institution names buildings, selects portraits and commissions monuments, constructs its curriculum and celebrates anniversaries and milestones.

CHARGE AND PROCESS

The committee is the fruit of a petition that three Elon historians — Peter Felten, Charles Irons and Andrea Sinn — delivered to then President Leo M. Lambert in the wake of the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017. The idea began to take shape, and President Connie Ledoux Book picked up on the work when she took office in March 2018. She announced the formation of the committee at the opening of the 2018–19 academic year, calling on the group to "examine Elon University's institutional history in a transparent, participatory and intellectually rigorous manner," and to assist in telling Elon's story in a manner consistent with Elon's values. Specific goals included to:

- > Engage the broader community in important conversations about our shared past;
- > Inspire those with relevant training and expertise to uncover hidden stories;
- > Advise those seeking to tell a more democratic and rigorous version of our history; and
- > Share more broadly the excellent work students, faculty and staff are already doing.

In order to achieve these goals, the committee was empowered to establish best practices, propose mechanisms for sustaining the work and solicit proposals for new initiatives. The group was to serve for two years, after which it would submit a report to the provost on ways to sustain the work.

The committee met at least monthly between fall 2018 and fall 2020 in an effort to fulfill this

charge, and this report represents the culmination of that work. As documented on [its website](#), in order to fulfill its charge the committee:⁴

- > Studied best practices nationwide;
- > Surveyed the existing written histories of Elon as well as named buildings, portraits and monuments on campus;
- > Sent representatives to join the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition to learn more about the murders of Wyatt Outlaw and John Jeffress [or Jeffries];
- > Solicited feedback from Elon students, faculty and staff in a well-attended Campus Conversation on May 3, 2019;
- > Collaborated with University Archives to learn about the resources available to tell a more inclusive story;
- > Consulted with myriad university offices to understand existing initiatives; and
- > Solicited input from individuals named in an earlier draft of the report.

The most significant decision of the committee was to concentrate on the experiences of Black people and the reality of anti-Black racism at Elon. The committee made this decision because they discovered a thriving community of practice related specifically to work on race and university history, and because national and local events have provided constant reminders of the endurance of anti-Black racism. The committee moved to focus first on the experiences of Black people and then explored ways to improve policies and procedures regarding Elon's commemorative practices more generally.

Consistent with the committee's resolve to focus first on race, Elon University formally affiliated with Universities Studying Slavery (USS) in February 2019. USS is an international consortium of roughly 70 colleges and universities that "allows participating institutions to work together as they address both historical and contemporary issues dealing with race and inequality in higher education and in university communities, as well as the complicated legacies of slavery in modern American society."⁵ Additionally, the committee also convened a new subcommittee to imagine what a permanent incarnation of USS

might look like at Elon. This subcommittee, later christened the Black Lumen Project: An Equity Initiative:

- > Multiplied the research of the full committee by conducting focus groups among students in the African Diaspora Living Learning Community and among Black residents of the county with a long history of connection with Elon;
- > Commissioned an analysis of data collected from Black-identified participants in the 2019 Strategic Planning Process and the Presidential Task Force on Black Experiences (2014–15); and
- > Sent representatives to the spring 2019, fall 2019 and spring 2020 semi-annual meetings of the USS Consortium.

Members of both the Committee on Elon History and Memory and Black Lumen Project were impressed in the course of their research by the example of the College of William & Mary, a peer institution that has invested deeply in this work since 2009. Recognizing the impossibility of resolving questions about institutional history in a single report, William & Mary launched The Lemon Project, "a multifaceted and dynamic attempt to rectify wrongs perpetrated against African Americans by William & Mary through action or inaction."⁶ Inspired by the example of sustainable, ongoing research on the experiences of Black people at William & Mary, the committee retained Jody Allen, director of The Lemon Project, to give feedback and advice at two different stages of the work.

The emergence of COVID-19 in spring 2020 disrupted the committee's process. While virtual meetings were held after the university moved to remote learning, minutes were sparse, and the committee requested an extension of the original May 2020 deadline in order to complete its work under the changed conditions. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others in the interval heightened the committee's resolve to finish the project by fall.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

There are at least two limitations of this report.

First, in the decision to focus on the experiences of Black people, the committee forfeited the ability to draw other identities from the margins to the center of Elon's story. Among the recommendations of the committee included in this report are two that should at least partially offset this first limitation. Most importantly, the committee urges that the work continue, and that a future iteration of the committee augment the work of members of the extended Elon community to focus greater attention on the university's relations with indigenous people; LGBTQIA faculty, staff and students; people from every ethnic background; people with faith commitments outside of Protestant Christianity; and others — as per the university's commitment to inclusive excellence.⁷

The committee also firmly affirms a key cautionary note from Provost House's initial charge, that the group “not serve as gatekeepers of Elon's complex and dynamic history or produce an ‘authorized version’ of events.” Indeed, people have experienced Elon so differently that it is hard to imagine a single strand, even a braided one, honoring all of their individual and corporate perspectives. Part of the ongoing work, therefore, should be the effort to capture as many of these diverse experiences as possible online, where the miracle of hypertext can hold parallel, overlapping and divergent threads in tension.

The second fundamental limitation of this report is that it captures only a small faction of the experiences of Black students, faculty and staff — the very people whose triumphs, disappointments and ongoing struggles give the whole thing shape. Not only must the work be ongoing, but the institution must also honor the labor of those who commit to following through on some of the most difficult of the recommendations, including the elaboration and maintenance of additional connections to communities outside of Elon.

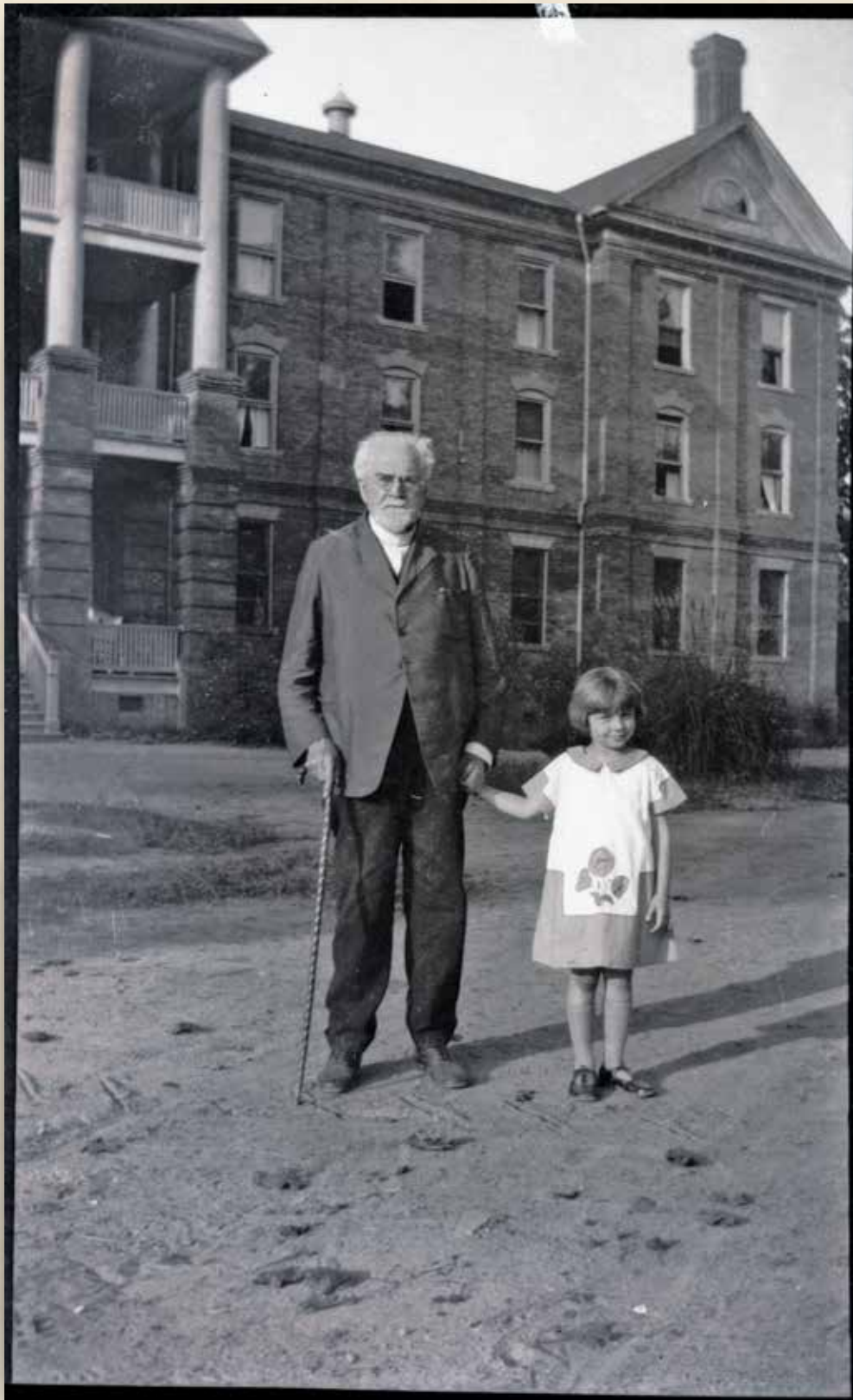
The Black Lumen Project: An Equity Initiative will continue its work and, the committee hopes,

will expand it in years to come with additional support. Still affiliated with USS, the Black Lumen Project will, as proposed in the appendix of this report, support and build upon existing diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives focused on the Black experience. Essential partners will be AAASE and the CREDE, twin anchors for the support of Black people and the study of anti-Blackness.

PLAINSPOKEN ACCOUNTS OF ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND BLACK ACHIEVEMENT

This report is a corrective to existing narratives on the history of Elon that tend to exclude or marginalize Black voices, but it is also incomplete. It does not dignify by naming more than a handful of the Black people who have made Elon home, for even a few years. In an equally serious omission, it does not include offsetting positive information about some of the perpetrators of anti-Black violence or prejudiced action. Even though many cite the fact that Elon College paid to rebuild Andrew and Hattie Morgan's home when it burned, for instance, or that William A. Harper affirmed the participation of delegates from historically Black schools in collegiate conferences as evidence of the school's fundamental progressivism on race, these stories do not feature prominently in this report.⁹

Instead of cataloging and weighing the relative “good” and “bad” contributions of the people involved, the committee decided to present plainspoken accounts of anti-Black racism and Black achievement. The committee has not tried to perform the complex moral calculus on behalf of the entire institution of evaluating “how far is too far” but instead has concentrated on bringing additional information to the discussion. Elon's story, like that of the United States, is complicated, with good and bad tangled together. Neither the current nor successive generations will be able to sift the silver from the dross or to pursue restorative justice without an honest account of injustices.



James W. Wellons, one of the founders of Elon College and a trustee until his death in 1927, lived in a room in West Dormitory, one usually reserved for women, from about 1910 to 1923. Pinkney Comer, a Black man from the county, looked after him during his stay. (U. Archives, [EUA028/22](#))

A MORE INCLUSIVE STORY

— *Ten Episodes*

OVERVIEW

Elon's story includes both shameful examples of anti-Black racism and inspirational accounts of Black achievement, neither of which the institution has, in the committee's estimation, sufficiently acknowledged in its history or culture.

The 10 episodes in this report constitute a small step in elevating those stories. Some of the details are familiar and some are the hard-won fruits of research by committee members or Elon undergraduate students, but most of the narratives

have been hiding in plain sight. They are roughly chronological and stretch from the years immediately preceding Elon's founding in 1889 to the present. Even taken together, however, they do not constitute anything approaching a comprehensive history of Black-identified people's long encounter with Elon. In one sense, then, they serve merely as an introduction to a vast field of potentially very fruitful research.

For the committee, these 10 episodes are nonetheless sufficient in several respects. On a most basic level, they unequivocally demonstrate that generations of Elon faculty, staff and students worked, intentionally or unintentionally, to preserve and reinforce White supremacy, though they employed different strategies to do so. These episodes also highlight the urgent need for more inclusive practices of commemoration and storytelling, research, conversation and teaching about Elon's past, and the articulation of accounts that move beyond the tale of institutional growth and a "strategic climb to national distinction."¹⁰ Finally, in their cataloging of harm done and achievement ignored, these

episodes document a need for greater institutional investment in restorative justice.

These 10 episodes are the result of extensive research and collaboration. Committee Chair Charles Irons served as the lead author, but every member of the committee played a role in shaping the accounts and fully shares the authorship.

THE SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN CONVENTION AND WHITE NORMATIVITY

The religious leaders who voted to support the Graham Institute and Graham Normal College, predecessor institutions to Elon, and in 1889 to establish the college, operated within a religious polity that affirmed White supremacy, rejected Black spiritual authority and supported only separate and limited educational opportunities for Black people.¹¹ While some of the spiritual forebearers of the Southern Christian Convention publicly held that slavery and White supremacy were wrong during the early days of the country, the denomination that established Elon College in the 1880s had strayed far from these egalitarian ideals. James O'Kelly, after whom Elon's founders named a street adjacent to the main campus (and that now passes right through the heart of campus), was the most forthrightly antislavery, arguing in his 1789 "Essay on Negro Slavery" that "For us to affirm that slavery harmonizes with the Spirit and religion of Jesus Christ, is—blasphemy!" He recognized and repented of his "prejudice in favour of mine own color"¹² and, while still a Methodist, carried out an active ministry among enslaved Virginians, more than a thousand of whom followed him when he left the

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO
PROVIDE ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION OR
REFLECTION ABOUT ANY
OF THESE EPISODES,
THE COMMITTEE INVITES
YOUR FEEDBACK AT
ELONHISTORY@ELON.EDU.



Methodist Episcopal Church in 1792 to protest its accommodation to slavery and embrace of ecclesiastical hierarchy.¹³

The Christian movement that O’Kelly helped to launch eventually abandoned its antislavery principles. After decades of trying to consolidate like-minded believers nationally, White Southerners abruptly withdrew behind sectional lines in the 1850s. By 1854, William B. Wellons, an early advocate of educational initiatives and leader of the Southern partisans within the denomination, acknowledged that almost all ministers in his connection owned slaves and that “the larger portion of our membership are either directly or indirectly connected and interested in slavery.”¹⁴ Wellons protested the efforts of Northern Christians at an 1854 convention to declare slaveholding sinful and insisted in a minority report that “the colored people are in a far better condition in slavery.”¹⁵ Rather than align themselves ecclesiastically with people who believed in Black equality, Wellons and other Southern White Christians converged on Alamance County in September 1856 to create the Southern Christian Convention. Southern White Christians, freed from the burden of compromise with White Northerners and heedless of the convictions of their Black coreligionists, supported slavery and secession wholeheartedly.¹⁶ When White Northerners went to war to bring the Confederate states back into the

A portrait circa 1875 picturing many of Elon’s founders. Back row from left: The Rev. W. S. Long, the Rev. C.A. Tillinghast, the Rev. M.L. Hurley, the Rev. J.P. Barrett, the Rev. A.H. Morrow and the Rev. W.W. Staley.

Front row from left: The Rev. D.E. Millard, the Rev. J.W. Wellons, the Rev. D.A. Long, the Rev. B. Weston and Col. Alexander Savage. (U. Archives, [MssCollo07/4](#))

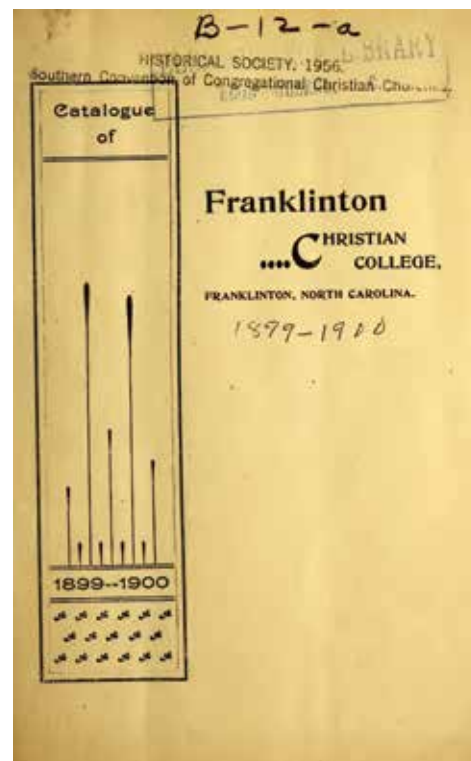
Union and, later, to end slavery, Southern White Christians were indignant. Delegates to the North Carolina and Virginia Christian Conference, the jurisdiction containing all of the churches in and around Alamance County, blamed the Civil War entirely upon Northern agitators. “The one ruling idea of abolition,” they declared, “unjust and unholy as it is, has urged them to this audacious, mad and fratricidal policy.”¹⁷

Once Confederates surrendered, White members of the Southern Christian Convention realized they needed to come to terms with emancipation within their jurisdiction. Some Black people had remained as members of Christian churches despite their denomination’s increasingly shrill pronouncements in favor of slavery and the Confederacy. Wellons and his younger brother, James W. Wellons, later to have a long association with Elon College, guided their denomination’s efforts to shepherd their Black coreligionists into a separate jurisdiction — in which



Above: Franklinton Christian College, a Black sister school to Elon College, was incorporated in 1891. (U. Archives, 378.75654 F854an)

Right: A catalog for Franklinton Christian College for the 1899–1900 academic year. (Internet Archive)



Black people would worship separately and Black ministers would never hold teaching authority over White members. The Wellons brothers and other White leaders hoped to retain control over Black Christians lest they “be brought under the influence of Northern White men, and ignorant and vicious colored preachers from the North.” In 1866, they counseled Black church members who were not numerous enough to form a separate congregation to remain under the control of White ministers, but that in other places “the colored people at once be encouraged wherever they can to secure themselves places of worship, and to have Churches organized, composed wholly (sic) of their own color.”¹⁸ White clerics expected that they would lead these churches until a new cohort of Black ministers would be able to take over and counseled Black people to hasten that date by “establish[ing] a school for the education of their [own] ministers.”¹⁹

Black Christians promptly established a school in Franklinton, North Carolina. In 1871 that school blossomed, with the support of both Northern and Southern Whites in the denomination, into Franklinton Christian College (incorporated 1891).²⁰ The maturation of Franklinton, a Black sister school to the new Elon College,

happened at the same time that White and Black Christians further severed ecclesiastical relations. Black churchgoers already worshipped in all-Black churches and all-Black conferences, but Black leaders from across the region met in 1892 and formed the “Afro-Christian Convention,” wholly separate from the White-controlled Southern Christian Convention.²¹

In sum, by 1889, when members of the North Carolina and Virginia Conference voted to establish Elon College as a four-year coeducational institution, they had already made their branch of the denomination almost completely White, and the parent denomination was on the road to the same outcome, having segregated Black members into a few, small conferences. Elon’s founders established the school for White people, as a matter of course, and the only Black people whom they expected at the institution would be those who labored for its benefit. In a dramatic embodiment of this dynamic, James W. Wellons, who had worked so tirelessly to help organize all-Black churches after emancipation, moved in about 1910 into a room in West Dormitory, one usually reserved for women. Pinkney Comer, a Black man from the county, looked after him during his stay.²²

THE LONG FAMILY, WYATT OUTLAW AND COMPLICITY

The Long brothers occupy a prominent place in the early history of Elon University, then Elon College. Clergyman William S. Long served as president and professor of natural science and history in the Graham Institute and Graham Normal College from 1871 until he assumed the presidency of Elon in 1889. He steadfastly lobbied the Southern Christian Convention to invest more in education and — as a denominational stalwart and proven educator — was the natural choice to serve as Elon College's first president (1889–94). Long, however, was not the only member of his family to invest time and treasure into Elon. His older brother, Daniel A. Long, was the chief fundraiser for the Southern Christian Convention's educational initiatives in the 1880s ("the General Soliciting Agent") and helped raise almost \$10,000 for Graham Normal College. W. S. Long's younger brother, Jacob A. Long, also devoted

substantial attention to the school. He lobbied hard to keep the convention's college in Graham and offered to put up \$2,670 of his own money if they did so. After the 1889 move to what is now the Town of Elon, J. A. Long resigned to the new location and purchased a lot as part of the original fundraising plan.²³

The Long brothers grew up in a slaveholding family in Alamance County. The 1860 census lists six people enslaved within the household of Jacob Long, Sr., along with his wife and seven of his children.²⁴ The social dynamics of the Long household are unknown but hint at some of the sexual violence that often accompanied the practice of slaveholding. In 1852, an enslaved Black woman in the household, aged 22, began bearing children whom the census taker enumerated as "Mulatto."²⁵ W. S. and J. A. Long were still in the household at this time and therefore finished their young adulthood with four enslaved children who likely had a White biological father.

Right: A scan of a memorandum written by Ralph Long for a Daughters of the Confederacy meeting, circa 1930. (U. Archives, [MssCollo07/B4](#))

Below: A portrait of William S. Long & Jacob A. Long. (U. Archives, [MssCollo07/B1](#))

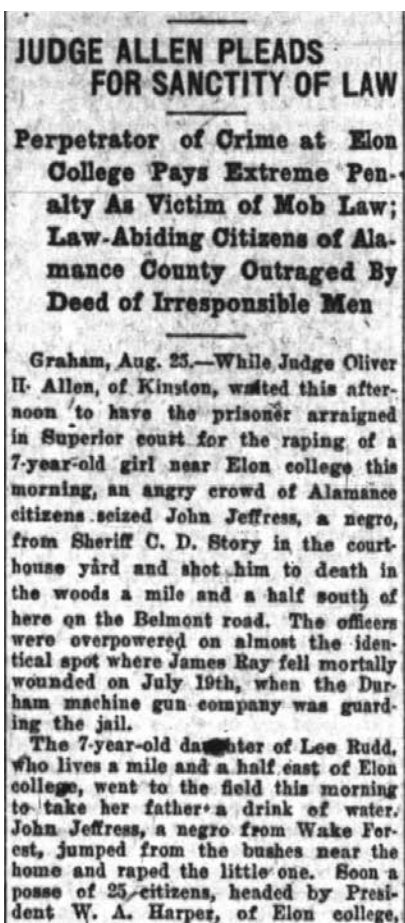


MEMORANDUM

Jacob Alson Long was born April 6, 1846, the son of Jacob Long and Jane Stuart Stockard. His Father and Mother had eight children and he was the sixth child. His Grandfather Long was named Jacob who married a Sheppard. His Great-Grandfather on his parental side, Conrad Long who married Katherine McKrin. Conrad Long came from the little town of Nord on the River Rhine. Katherine McKrin came from England, and they were married in Philadelphia, emigrated south and settled in Orange County on the West bank of Haw River which is now in Alamance County. The land was bought from the crown of England and the copy of this Deed and also Conrad's Will are on record at the Courthouse in Hillsboro, North Carolina. Jane Stuart Stockard, his Mother, was the daughter of Col. John R. Stockard who married an Albright.

His early life was spent on his Father's farm, a part of the original Conrad purchase. His preliminary education was taught mostly by his Mother, and then he attended the old Dr. Wilson School in Haw Fields. He and his brothers would go across the river and walk the four miles to Haw Fields every day. When the War between the States began he was too young to enter the service, and he was sent to a school at Staunton, Virginia, and during the last eighteen months of this War he and the entire school on one occasion were drafted into a fight to defend the bridge across the river at this point. This was called the Staunton River Battle and was the first battle he was engaged in. Shortly after this he left this school and by train left for Petersburg, and there joined Rights Battery a Virginia command, and he was in the trenches from then until the evacuation of Richmond fighting continually. When the battle of the Crater took place his battery was only 200 yards from where this explosion took place on the left hand side of this line. They were engaged from sun-up until 2:00 o'clock and then Mahone Brighade took the lines. When Richard was evacuated he reached Appomattox after a weeks march with his company, only drew ration twice enroute. At the time of surrender, he and one of his comrades asked Captain Wright's permission to leave if they could get away since the War was over and they were afraid of being in prison for several months. Captain Wright gave his consent but also warned them if they were caught trying to break through the lines they would be shot by the Yankees. They slipped out at night and kept in the woods by begging food and sleeping wherever they could find shelter, they got through the lines and came on into Person County, and from there reached his home in about one week after Lee surrendered.

The first year after the War was spent in trying to raise foodstuff. My recollection is that when all of the boys got back they plowed barefooted the first year as the county was so broke in the matter of food. His education having been interrupted by the War he decided to study law and did so under Judge Ruffin in Hillsboro.



Above: An excerpt from a 1920 story from the News & Observer about John Jeffress & Harper's involvement in his arrest.

Below: A portrait of William A. Harper. (U. Archives, EUA028/11)



In their adulthood, the Long brothers acted in ways that supported White supremacy. Those who were of age fought for the Confederacy, as a matter of course. After the war, J. A. Long was the most strident White supremacist of the family and helped lead efforts by Alamance County's White leaders to turn back gains made by Black North Carolinians following emancipation. In 1868, he formed the "Constitutional Guard" in Alamance County, a local manifestation of the Ku Klux Klan. The Constitutional Guard committed escalating acts of White supremacist violence before murdering Wyatt Outlaw on February 26, 1870.²⁶ Outlaw was not only the most prominent Black leader in the county (he served as constable, town commissioner, Union League organizer and small business owner, among other roles) but also, in a way, a "Son of Elon." His father, Chesley Faucette, was a trustee of the Graham Institute. J. A. Long did not cease his White supremacist campaigning as long as he lived; in 1914, he presided over the dedication of a Confederate statue in Graham.²⁷ Likewise, D. A. Long remained devoted to the "Lost Cause" throughout his life. For example, he penned in 1921 a passionate defense of President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis, including the claim that the section of the country with the highest "percentage of native-born White people" necessarily boasted the most "true and loyal Americanism."²⁸

Elon's chroniclers have avoided the Long family's entanglement with violent White supremacy, partially because W. S. Long himself did not leave a clear record

of anti-Black racism. The family's record of racial violence and strident White supremacy, however, is part of the institution's story, and should elicit searching questions about the nature of complicity rather than relief at the absence of a "smoking gun." When, in 1871, J. A. Long was perjuring himself denying his involvement in Outlaw's murder, he turned to his elder brother for an alibi. J. A. Long claimed to have been asleep in his law office in downtown Graham when the assailants startled him from his sleep and to have "waked up [his] brother." "What was his name?" the Chairman of the U.S. Senate's Select Committee who was conducting the investigation asked. "W. S. Long, a minister of the gospel and principal of the high school," J. A. Long responded.²⁹ Years later, in 1930, J. A. Long's son, Ralph, recalled both the courage of his father in helping organize the Klan and the harmony of interests and ideas among the Long children. There was "not a semblance of a Black sheep in the half-dozen," he wrote.³⁰

WILLIAM A. HARPER: VIOLENCE, SEGREGATION AND PROGRESSIVISM

Elon's fourth president, William A. Harper (1911–31), embodied the paradoxes of White Southern progressivism in the early years of the 20th century. White Southern progressives believed in the power of education and expertise to bring about moral, political and economic progress for all, though they insisted that White supremacy was an essential characteristic of a well-ordered society. Harper was eager for his chosen denomination of the Southern Christian Convention to embrace a more systematic course of religious instruction and published a series of articles and books to equip them to do so, such as "Character Building in Colleges" (1928).³¹ Harper's enthusiasm for enhancing Christian education was constant. The tactics that he employed to protect White supremacy, on the other hand, varied.

In 1910, as dean of Elon College, Harper took the opportunity occasioned by Jack Johnson's famous victory as World Heavyweight Champion to argue for the role an Elon education could play in the maintenance of White supremacy. Citing widespread alarm among White Americans after Johnson trounced Jim Jeffries, "The Great White Hope," Harper assured readers of *The Christian Sun*,

A Continuation Committee.

The following resolution was submitted by Commission VIII, with the unanimous approval of the Business Committee:—

I. That a Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference be appointed, international and representative in character, to carry out, on the lines of the Conference itself [which are interdenominational and do not involve the idea of organic and ecumenical union]* the following duties:

(1) To maintain in prominence the idea of the World Missionary Conference as a means of coordinating missionary work, of laying sound lines for future development, and of generating and sustaining by coöperate action fresh stores of spiritual force for the evangelization of the world.

(2) To finish any further investigations, or any formulation of the results of investigations, which may remain after the World Missionary Conference is over, and may be referred to it.

(3) To consider when a further World Missionary Conference is desirable, and to make the initial preparations.

(4) To devise plans for maintaining the intercourse which the World Missionary Conference has stimulated between different bodies of workers, e. g., by literature or by a system of correspondence and mutual report, or the like.

(5) To place its services at the disposal of the Home Boards in any steps which they may be led to take (in accordance with the recommendation of more than one Commission) towards closer mutual counsel and practical coöperation.

(6) To confer with societies and Boards as to the best method of working towards the formation of such a permanent International Missionary Committee as is suggested by the Commissions of the Conference and by various missionary bodies apart from the Conference.**

(7) And to take such steps as may seem desirable to carry out by the formation of Special Commissions, or otherwise, any practical suggestions made in the reports of the Commissions.

II. That the work of the Continuation Committee be subject to the provision stated in the following paragraph from the report of Commission VIII:—

If the formation of such an International Committee is accomplished, the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference should be authorized to transfer to it, wholly or in part, the task which it has itself received from the Conference; but if an International

Committee be not formed, the Continuation Committee should, either wholly or in part, carry on the work allotted to it.

III. That the Continuation Committee shall consist of 25 members of the World Missionary Conference, distributed as follows: ten from North America, ten from the Continent of Europe, ten from the United Kingdom, and one each from Australasia, China, Japan, India, and Africa, respectively.

IV. That the Business Committee of this Conference be instructed to nominate the members of the Continuation Committee.

Sir Andrew Fraser, in moving the resolution, said one of the duties of the Committee would be to maintain the spirit and the practice of the Conference.

* The words in brackets [] have been proposed as an addition to the resolution, and have been accepted by the Commission.

** The principles on which the Commission are agreed constructive work could be built are stated in their report as follows:—

(a) It should from the beginning be precluded from handling matters which are concerned with the doctrinal, or ecclesiastical differences of the various denominations.

(b) This being assured, it would be desirable that it should be as widely representative as possible.

(c) Yet it should be a purely consultative and advisory Association, exercising no authority but such as would accrue to it through the intrinsic value of the services that it may be able to render.

I could give much more valuable matter from the thought of the Conference, but space will not permit it. My letter is already too long and yet I have told you so little of the great Meeting. It is a fact there was so much of it that the shortest sketch one could write of it would make a respectable book. This statement can be appreciated when it is known that the proceedings will be published in nine volumes. As I understand it to each of the eight Commissions and the discussion given to each will form a volume. The whole will certainly make the most exhaustive presentation of the Missionary problem which has been made in modern times, and most likely in the history of Christianity.

There is a mighty cry going up from nearly all denominations for Union. The World Conference was the greatest spectacle of modern times in this respect. Sixty denominations and organizations in one body with a mighty cry for the

union of God's people, and in the cry there was hardly even the sound of a discordant note. As a member of the Christian Church one thing impressed me much; viz., whenever reference was made to God's people, apart from party or denominational lines, they spoke of the Christian Church, and whenever they made reference to the Church in heathen lands they called it the Christian Church of India or of China or of Japan, as the case might be. Brothers, the Christian world is moving, not so much toward us as an organization, but toward our principles. They find give us heart and courage to press on.

J. Presley Barrett.

WHITE SUPREMACY ENDANGERED.

Since the awful prize-fight at Reno, Nevada, on July 4, there have been riots, bloodshed, and murder, because many shallow-minded men felt that white supremacy was endangered by the defeat of white Jim Jeffries by black Jack Johnson. Many even of our thoughtful citizens have feared the growth of a race war from this unfortunate affair. And many silly negroes have been led to feel that Johnson's victory over Jeffries, taking place as it did on our national independence day, heralded a real independence from white domination for the colored race.

I am alarmed not in the least over what extremists in either race conjure up as the fruits of that disgraceful performance. Jeffries deserved a thrashing and got it. Let us hope that is the end of his authority. We furthermore hope that the clamor from all over the country against this savage, beastly, inhuman survival from barbarism will make it impossible for a prize-fight ever to occur on American soil. We have no fears for white supremacy from the outcome of this conflict of brawns.

But we do have fears for white supremacy for another and a better reason. Let me give you the figures and they are typical: In a certain wealthy rural district in the staid old commonwealth of Virginia, mother of presidents and cradle of great men, a school census was in the month of May last duly taken, by an intelligent white enumerator. In the district were found in round numbers 1400 white children of school age, that is, from 7 to 21, and 500 negro children of school age. Of the 1,400 white children of this age, only three were found to be passing or able in institutions of higher learning, while out of the 500 negro children of that district eleven were found to be in attendance on institutions of higher learning.

(Continued on page fourteen.)

Excerpt from a July 13, 1910 editorial in the Christian Sun by Harper on an Elon education's role in preserving White supremacy. (U. Archives, 286.6 C4629)

"We have no fears for white supremacy from the outcome of this conflict of brawn. ... But we do have fears for white supremacy for another and better reason," he warned. "... The history of the world shows that education is essential to race leadership and the negroes are willing to sacrifice for it more than are our whites." As the solution to the specter of racial equality, Harper urged White parents to send their sons and daughters to Elon College. In closing, he invited readers to write him directly "for particulars and terms according to which [Elon] undertakes to foster individual and racial supremacy."³²

A decade later, in 1920, Harper was president of the college and played a different role when he led a posse that arrested John Jeffress [or Jeffries], a Black man passing through the county, on suspicion of rape. At the time, White editors did not always reveal the composition of lynch mobs, but the Raleigh News & Observer reported on August 26 that "a posse of 25 citizens, headed by President

W. A. Harper, of Elon college" led the hunt for Jeffress after hearing accusations against him. The paper reported that Harper then adjourned to the courtroom and agreed to serve as a witness in a hastily assembled same-day capital trial. Judge Oliver Allen was highly motivated to facilitate a fast trial and execution, because he feared a mob would intervene to kill Jeffress otherwise, as they had attempted to do at the same courthouse just one month earlier in a similar case. The trial never happened, however, for a second gang of armed White men seized Jeffress from custody and murdered him.³³

The paradoxes within Harper's vision of a well ordered society remained on display throughout the 1920s. On the one hand, he called on several occasions for an end to racial conflict and supported educational opportunities for Black Southerners. On the other, he expected educational institutions to be segregated and to assimilate Black people into subservient stations in American life.



A GROUP AT THE EAST DORMITORY

The young men who room here have every modern convenience—steam heat, electric lights, tub and shower baths, sewer facilities, servants' attendance, elegantly furnished rooms. They take their meals in the College Dining Hall, the young men's club, or in the village

TRUE AND UNTRUE PLAY IS PRESENTED AT ELON

Annual Entertainment Of Clio Literary Society In College Auditorium Greatly Enjoyed.

(Special to Daily News.)

Elon College, Feb. 23.—The annual entertainment of the Clio Literary society was presented this evening in the college auditorium. The program was a radical departure from the literary entertainments given heretofore and was thoroughly enjoyed by the audience which taxed the chapel to its utmost in spite of the inclement weather. The celebration this year consisted of a comic, black-face playlet in three acts entitled: "True and Untrue." The play throughout was one of originality, being composed by two of the members of the society, Messrs H. M. Lynch and E. H. Rainey, and presented by the talent of the society.

The play opened with a military setting representing one of the training camps during the war in which the funny side of the soldier's life was brought out.

The second act consisted of a mock trial with a local setting, in which the case of Pink Comer who was charged with beating his wife was tried.

The third act consisted of a dark-town jubilee in which there were many

In his 1921 book, "The Church in the Present Crisis," Harper revealed how he harmonized these two impulses into a formula for ending "racial hatred." "Suppose," he wrote, "that the White man should regard his coloured neighbor as a brother and determine to help him to larger life, the coloured man in turn regarding his White neighbour as a friend and sympathetic counsellor, what would be the result?"³⁴ Harper acted on his conviction that America faced "no more serious problem in the near future than the attitude of the negro" by serving as president of the board of control for Franklinton Christian College, the Christian Convention's North Carolina school for Black people, from December 1926 through April 1929. Harper poured years of

"sacrificial endeavor" into the work and helped get the school on a more firm financial footing, with the goal of inculcating White Christian values so that Black students would not become "astutely selfish and racialistic."³⁵

BLACK LABOR: PINKNEY COMER, ANDREW MORGAN AND PATERNALISM

Black people have contributed their labor to the success of Elon College from the institution's earliest days. White faculty, staff and students, however, did not always demonstrate appreciation for this service. Indeed, in some instances White members of the Elon community instead dishonored the humanity of those who provided it. Many Black people worked at Elon from the 1910s through the 1960s, before integration, but White commentators focused attention on just a few — most notably Pinkney Comer and Andrew Morgan. This attention was not positive, despite the efforts of some White contemporaries to characterize it as such. At best, it can be described as paternalistic and served to reinforce a racial hierarchy.

Top: A photo from the August 1913 Bulletin of Elon College of East Dormitory residents featuring Pinkney Comer. (U. Archives, EAU001/B1)

Above: An excerpt from a Feb. 24, 1920 article in the Greensboro Daily News about a blackface play Elon students put on, in which they mocked Pinkney Comer.



Elon's Dusky Midget

Above: A photo of Andrew Morgan used in the 1936 yearbook, showing the derogatory caption. (U. Archives, *Phi Psi Cli/1936*)

Right: A portrait of Andrew Morgan on his own terms, standing by his car. (U. Archives, *EUA028/16*)



Other Black people worked at Elon before Comer arrived sometime between 1906 and 1910 to assist in the care of retired clergyman James W. Wellons. Sam Haith, for example, operated a farm on behalf of the college in the first part of the 20th century.³⁶ Records do not exist to document the names and roles of these early staff members, though oral histories could fill in many of the gaps — especially from families with long, multi-generational connections to the institution like the Haith, Covington, or Miles families, for instance. Comer, though, stands out in the sources.³⁷ The nature of his early financial relationship with the college is unclear; in 1910 the census still lists “Pink B. Comer” as self-employed, doing “odd jobs” and renting a house near campus with his second wife, Pattie, three daughters and a grandson.³⁸ At some point, though, he began maintaining the athletics facilities for the college, including playing fields constructed in 1919 where the Station at Mill Point now stands. Just as they would have addressed other Black men with whom they assumed familiarity, White people called Comer “Uncle Pink[ie].”

White students in Elon’s Clio Literary Society made Comer the butt of a very public and ugly joke in early 1920.³⁹ They scripted an elaborate “Black-face playlet in three acts,” which they performed to the delight of their audience. According to the Greensboro Daily News, “The second act consisted of a mock trial with a local setting, in which the case of Pink Comer who was charged with beating his wife was tried.”⁴⁰ Six months after the play, Comer died in unknown circumstances while crossing the train tracks. School officials posthumously named the new playing fields after him, making “Comer Field” the first space on Elon’s campus named for a Black employee.⁴¹ Locals still remembered him almost 40 years later, and in a retrospective on the marching band, writers remembered Comer as an “interested and devoted fan” of the group.⁴²

In 1926, a few years after Comer’s death, Alamance County native Andrew Morgan joined Elon as a campus maintenance worker and received a similar level of attention. In yearbooks and reminiscences of the period, Morgan occupies a more prominent place than other Black em-

ployees. Among the many other people who also worked during those years were Morgan's wife, Hattie, and sister-in-law, Sallie Bett Morgan.⁴³ It was hard to miss Morgan, "Uncle Andy" to White members of the campus, who was a physically imposing figure. In general, yearbook editors did not publish images of Black people, and certainly not Black staff, but they made multiple exceptions for Morgan. In 1936, for instance, they ran a photo of him mowing the lawn, with the degrading caption, "Elon's Dusky Midget," and in 1958 they included another image of him at work and, eschewing a last name or title, labeled it simply, "Andy."⁴⁴ White students demonstrated a persistent fascination with Andy's size and demeanor. In a 1940 article in the *Maroon and Gold*, for instance, they discussed his weight (248 pounds) and diet, in addition to the way he fraternized with coworkers in the "Powerhouse Gang" and with male students.⁴⁵ Family and friends saw Morgan differently, as trustee of Arches Grove Church, for instance, or the self-sacrificial and generous foster parent for a household full of nine nieces and nephews.⁴⁶

Both in the years preceding and especially after his untimely death in 1964, White students, faculty, staff and alumni heaped attention on Morgan. Again, from their perspective the attention was all positive, but some of the pranks directed at Morgan sound difficult to endure.

In 1962, Mrs. W. W. Sellars painted a portrait of Morgan from a photograph, won a prize for her work in the Alamance Arts Festival, and then donated it to hang in Mooney Lounge. The portrait now appears in Belk Library, the oldest likeness of a Black person on campus. In a *Maroon and Gold* article celebrating the painting, the reporter documented many cohorts of Elon students "joking" with Andy by electrifying doorknobs, dumping water on his head, using him as a tackling dummy and creating Halloween messes for him to clean up.⁴⁷ Elon-affiliated White people nonetheless grieved when Morgan died in an accident at home, as if they realized after his death the extent of their community's loss. Then President J. Earl Danieley '49 delivered the eulogy at Arches Grove, entitled, "Andrew Morgan was a Big Man," and alumni sent in substantial sums for the Andrew Morgan Scholarship Fund.⁴⁸

BLACKFACE, THE CONFEDERATE FLAG AND EVERYDAY RACISM IN THE AGE OF SEGREGATION

The banality of anti-Black racism through the long years of segregation, stretching in terms of admission of full-time Black students until 1963 at Elon, does not make it less of a part of Elon's history or less painful for Black Americans. In common with White residents throughout the South, students at Elon entertained themselves at

*Students hold up the Confederate flag for a fraternity photograph in the 1985 yearbook. (U. Archives, *Phi Psi Cli/1985*)*



Black people's expense, celebrated stereotypes of Black people as picturesque laborers and openly venerated the Confederacy. Punctuated by occasional, almost apologetic calls for full citizenship for Black Americans, these strands of "everyday racism" changed subtly over time.⁴⁹

White students looking to entertain themselves, particularly in the 1920s, resorted frequently to blackface minstrelsy or to other forms of cultural appropriation. The 1920 skit the Clio Literary Society put on, mocking Elon employee Pinkney Comer, was only one of the blackface performances literary societies hosted. A scene of students in blackface from the yearbook that year does not appear to be the same performance, since the banner reads "Punkin Center Exhibition."⁵⁰ The Clio Literary Society again put on a blackface sketch in 1924, when their program also featured "vocal solos in negro dialect by G. A. Pearce."⁵¹ Indeed, vocal performances in affected "negro dialect" were as popular as blackface. President William A. Harper attended a 1921 event when "Mrs. L. M. Cannon read a negro sermon in the typical dialect of a negro preacher," and the Psykaleon Society hosted a special program on "The Negro" in 1923 featuring several renditions of poems and original skits in dialect.⁵² The 1940 yearbook ran a photograph of performers clad in blackface to celebrate the cultural offerings of the college.⁵³

Students trafficked in familiar stereotypes of Black Americans in other media as well. Yearbook editors used cartoon versions of Black characters as comic relief in a series of yearbooks through the 1920s and 1930s. Sometimes these offensive images stood alone, as in the closing illustration of the 1926 yearbook, depicting a "Little Black Sambo" character going swimming and speaking in imagined dialect.⁵⁴ At other times, White editors gratuitously inserted sketches for comic purposes in the midst of other scenes, as in the image of "Puny Pugh: Hot Chocolate Sponsor" in 1923.⁵⁵ All of this was prelude for the 1942 edition, which was built around the theme of "The Land of Cotton." With no apparent irony, students pledged that they were "willing to give [their] lives gladly to uphold the ideals of democracy" by fighting in World War II, while filling the yearbook with dozens of idealized plantation scenes.⁵⁶



A sketch depicting a "Little Black Sambo" speaking in imagined dialect that appeared in the 1926 yearbook. (U. Archives, Phi Psi Cli/1926)

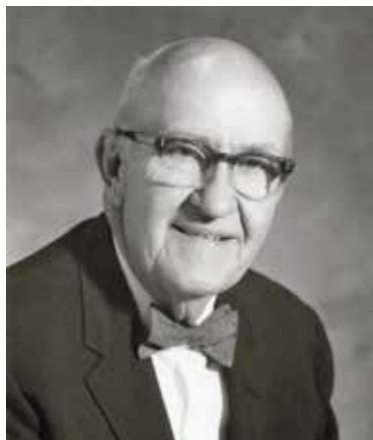
Just as White students casually invoked anti-Black stereotypes, they also honored the Confederacy. In 1952, in a collage of social activities in which students participated, there are two images of the Confederate flag: one featuring a student pledging allegiance to it while on a beach, and another showing a dozen young men, several of whom have rifles, poised in a mock charge behind the battle flag.⁵⁷ The "Stars and Bars," the original flag of the Confederacy, flew over East Dorm for Confederate Memorial Day in 1955, on a day when the strains of "Dixie" were piped across campus at frequent intervals.⁵⁸ Elon trustee Cliff Elder '25 heeded a call from the North Carolina Confederate Centennial Commission in fall 1960 and "reactivated" the 6th N.C. Infantry (the "Bloody Sixth") in order to represent the state in centennial celebrations. The regiment participated in Elon's 1961 homecoming parade, included in its ranks several Elon faculty and was featured in the August 1963 edition of Alumni News.⁵⁹

After the age of segregation, in apparent White backlash against the Civil Rights Movement (including the integration of Elon in 1963), documented use of the Confederate flag and Confederate symbols actually increased, at least in the yearbook. History professor Durward T. Stokes frequently dressed in his grandfather's Confederate uniform and posed in it for the 1969 and 1971 yearbooks, for instance.⁶⁰ Fraternities provided most of the other images, and many campus life spreads from the 1970s and 1980s include photos of White men holding a Confederate flag. The 1985 caption for Kappa Alpha's photo reads, "These Kappa Alpha's (sic) display their southern pride."⁶¹ Yearbook images tapered by the 1990s, when the student newspaper began to document intermittent debates over whether or not students should be able to fly the flag. These debates raged in 1991, 1994, 2005, 2007, 2017 — and, indeed, are ongoing.⁶²



Above: Durward T. Stokes often posed in his grandfather's Confederate uniform, as in this photo in the 1969 yearbook. (U. Archives, *Phi Psi Cli/1969*)

Right: A portrait of Luther Byrd, circa 1950s. (U. Archives, *EUA028/5*)



GATEKEEPERS: DURWARD T. STOKES AND LUTHER BYRD

Durward Turrentine Stokes and Luther Byrd each won the hearts and minds of thousands of Elon undergraduates as professors of history, though both appealed specifically to White students. The example of Stokes and Byrd is significant because, in addition to leaving divergent legacies among Black and White students, the two men also helped to cultivate Elon's image. Stokes authored the influential book, "Elon College: Its History and Traditions" (1982), and Byrd directed publicity for Elon for 20 years (1949–69) and served as longtime adviser of the student newspaper, *Maroon and Gold*. The historical record they cultivated reflected their identification with White students.

Stokes, born in 1908 in Alamance County, grew up with two grandfathers in the home, both of whom were Confederate veterans. He learned from them the conviction that debate over slavery was only incidental to the Civil War, and that White Southerners had not felt real racism until an overbearing federal government "maligned [White] southerners thinking and created the hate that was so evident toward the Negro."⁶³ Indeed, one of Stokes' earliest memories was placing a time capsule inside the Confederate monument in downtown Graham upon its dedication, at a 1914 ceremony presided over by Jacob A. Long.⁶⁴ As a professor, Stokes dramatized his support for the Confederacy by wearing one of his grandfather's Confederate uniforms to class, and he delighted in being photographed in the ensemble.

Few Black students overlapped with Stokes, but those who did remembered how unwelcome he made them feel in the classroom. Eugene Perry '69, Elon's first Black graduate, recalled that he was an "old sort of Ethnocentric White society pro-advocate to say the least," and that he was "very much intent on reliving the Civil War."⁶⁵ A White writer for the unofficial student paper, the *Veritas*, echoed Perry's characterization and took a thinly veiled jab at Stokes when discussing Stokes' 1969 refusal to allow a Black studies course: "It seems there is ample room for a course at Elon in which the professor advocates slavery and cracks 'Nigger' jokes but not for a program that might promote an understanding of one of the more pressing social problems of the day."⁶⁶

Black students had similar concerns about Byrd. He followed a circuitous route to Elon, joining the faculty in 1949 after almost 20 years at Westfield High School in Surry County, followed by one year at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to earn his master's degree. He started as a journalism professor and publications director but pursued all the while his interest in history and devoted an extraordinary amount of time researching the genealogy of old, White families from Virginia and North Carolina, conveying in his teaching his admiration for their lifestyle.⁶⁷ Ultimately, in fall of 1969, Byrd poured himself into teaching history full time. In this capacity, Black students considered Byrd even more objectionable than Stokes. They petitioned unsuccessfully in 1969 “for the immediate resignation of Professor Luther Byrd, whose overt bigotry has proven detrimental not only to Blacks, but to other minority groups as well.”⁶⁸

Both Stokes and Byrd helped shape Elon's memory in a way that centered White people. Stokes pledged to present “a true picture of the history of the school” and not “just a public relations image” when writing the definitive history of the college. Given his identity and interests, however, it did not occur to him to notice Black people, except insofar as their integration to Elon represented an “achievement” of the school.⁶⁹

L'Tanya Richmond best captured the surprise and hurt of Black people when she noted in 2004, “that book is 500 plus some pages and only two pages speak to African American history here at the university. It was, it was just appalling.”⁷⁰ Byrd's role in shaping the archival record upon which Elon's history rests was less direct. Student reporters for the *Maroon and Gold* did not write about the Civil Rights Movement or the integration of Elon on his watch, for example.⁷¹ Stokes may have had Byrd in mind when he noted of integration at Elon that “the news media made no mention of the incident.” Byrd also kept the *Maroon and Gold* clear of activist editorials during his tenure, so much that students founded the *Veritas* in 1968 to create space for alternative views.⁷²

TRAILBLAZERS AND BUILDERS: THE FIRST BLACK STUDENTS

Elon's first Black students arrived at Elon without a formal support system. Glenda Phillips Hightower (née Phillips) became the first full-time Black student in fall 1963, though Paul DeMontaigne, a faculty member at the nearby Palmer Memorial Institute, had taken some evening classes the prior spring in preparation for graduate study. Neither Phillips, nor Eugene Perry, the first Black student to graduate in 1969, nor any Black student for almost three decades after desegregation, received *formal* support from the institution on the basis of their identity. The African American Resource Room did not appear until 1992, followed by the Office of Minority Affairs in 1993. These trailblazers navigated the racial politics of a slowly desegregating university and built new institutions on their own.⁷³

Black students then, as now, had a diversity of experiences in their confrontations with systemic racism. Compared to other venues in American life, most remembered overt incidents of anti-Black prejudice to be relatively rare—but that did not mean things were easy. “At Elon,” remembered Donna Oliver '72, “there was no name calling, there were no threats, but it was the other extreme. You were totally ignored. It was as though you were invisible.”⁷⁴

With very small numbers, most of the first Black students fought lonely battles. Gwendolyn Manning '78 M.Ed.'89 (née Crawford) remembered how the woman in charge of her dorm locked her out every night at the beginning of school, whether or not she made curfew.⁷⁵ Each account of individual experiences, some of which are preserved thanks to the extraordinary work of L'Tanya Richmond '87 but many of which are still unheard, brings a more nuanced understanding of the time. “We were really a diverse group, we were as different as we were alike,” reflected Bryant Colson '80 in a Black History Month interview in 2005.⁷⁶

In order to connect with one another across lines of difference and to press the institution to begin acknowledging their presence, Black students began to build enduring institutions in the 1970s.⁷⁷ The founders of the Black Cultural Society (BCS), organized during the 1974–75 academic



Students organized the Black Cultural Society (BCS), during the 1974–75 academic year. (U. Archives, Phi Psi Cli/1976)

year, pledged first in their new constitution “to promote understanding and a sense of unity among Black students,” and second “to encourage this College to a greater awareness and appreciation of the culture and achievements of Black people.”⁷⁸

A relatively small number of Black students, still numbering about 200 throughout the 1970s, built additional organizations for mutual support. Black students formally organized the Gospel Choir two years after the BCS, with Zebedee Talley ’78 and Wes McLaughlin ’78 the first co-presidents (and warm support from Mary Jane Ireland, Norma Jean Ireland and John Miles of Elon First Baptist Church).⁷⁹ Manning recounted that the meetings became times of profound fellowship, with perhaps 20 people singing and 20 more watching.⁸⁰ The GENTS (Genuine Exuberant Natural Togetherness) arrived on the scene in 1983, just as Black Greek letter organizations began to appear, and both organizations provided additional outlets for socializing and solidarity.⁸¹ The respective niches each of these groups filled remain difficult to discern at a distance of 40 years.

Richmond directed the Office of Minority Affairs from its creation in 1993, through its evolution to the Multicultural Center and until her departure in 2008 for Smith College in

Massachusetts. Even as she worked to build additional supports for Black students and others from diverse populations, such as SMART (Student Mentors Advising Rising Talent) and DEEP (Diversity Emerging Education Program), she also sought to memorialize the actions of those men and women who had gone before and had made their own way. The “Wall of Fame,” which she put together and now hangs in the African American Resource Room, captures many of the non-athletic firsts of Black students on campus and lifts up those who carved out a place for themselves and succeeding generations.⁸²

The focus in this episode on the first cohort of Black students inspires but also obscures two important storylines. First, Black students continued to blaze new trails and build new institutions after 1993 — collaboratively with majority students, independently and with the advice and support of the successor to the Multicultural Center, the CREDE. Moreover, Black faculty and staff also had to make their own way for years without formal support based on their identity. Faculty members like Matthew Clark in biology, who arrived in 1999, have borne the burden (and honor) of being the first too many times, have offered counsel and mentorship to countless students, have seen many initiatives to amplify Black voices fizzle, and have served with

distinction at an institution that has not consistently demonstrated its gratitude. Their stories of persistence must also be told.

BLACK STUDENT-ATHLETES: ACHIEVEMENT AND ACTIVISM

In the years after integration, athletics provided an important route for Black students to attend Elon. In the 1970s and 1980s, for instance, between one-quarter and one-third of Black students at Elon played a sport.⁸³ Emery Moore, a standout running back, had forged the path when he arrived in 1966 to play football.

Emery, as well as his older brother Ralph Moore, who transferred to Elon from Notre Dame to follow his brother, arrived precisely when sports commentators were calling attention to the struggles Black athletes faced at predominantly White institutions.⁸⁴ In a four-part series in *Sports Illustrated*, for instance, Jack Olsen reported that “Black collegiate athletes say they are dehumanized, exploited and discarded.”⁸⁵ The first Black student-athletes at Elon appear to have encountered some of these frustrations and to have responded by turning to activism — at first as individuals but ultimately in solidarity with other Black students. In the late 1960s and very early 1970s, despite the small numbers, many of the early Black students who did not play a sport “knew of” but did not know their athletic peers.⁸⁶

There is much more to learn about the first generation of Black student-athletes at Elon, but the available information suggests they fought for inclusion as Elon students while representing their school. The Moore brothers exemplified this pattern of performance on the field and advocacy off of it. Ralph played football, ran track and wrestled — a rare talent. His younger brother, Emery, led the football team in rushing for three consecutive seasons (1967–69), while Ralph set school records in discus and javelin.⁸⁷ At the same time, the brothers gave indications that they did not feel fully welcome. Emery did not once have his portrait taken for the yearbook, for example. Ralph took to the pages of *Veritas*, the unofficial student paper, to educate his fellow students about Black Americans’ claims to full equality. The “Dear Beverly Axelrod” column, which he published for several months in 1968 and 1969, was

easily the most direct assault on White supremacy any student paper published during the period. In February 1969, for instance, he called out the unconscious fear of Black male achievement that animated many of those opposed to Civil Rights: “The White egoist will not only resent the use of the word fear, in reference to his relationship with Black men, but he might be totally unconscious of its presence. It is this subconscious fear that must be dealt with, for it weakens the minds of its White slaves. It warps and breaks any humanitarianism within its reach.”⁸⁸ Neither Moore brother graduated. Ralph, at least, was hurt enough that he did not list Elon in his bio in later years, though he did list Notre Dame, where he did not play a snap.⁸⁹

Other Black football players in the years that followed took part in or led most major protests against anti-Black racism on campus. Rodney Evans ’75 and Don McLaughlin ’76, both players, co-chaired the Black Cultural Society after helping form it in 1974. Yearbook photos of the



Emery Moore was among the first Black student-athletes at Elon. (U. Archives, Athletics Collection/Moore)

nascent group show four football players and the first Black cheerleader, Gwendolyn Manning '78 M.Ed.'89 (née Crawford), in its ranks for 1976.⁹⁰ The formation of the Black Cultural Society appears to have helped close the distance between Black student-athletes and other Black students. Later, many athletes risked their scholarships to protest the exclusion of the first Black homecoming queen, Mary Carroll-Robertson, from the 1980 yearbook (read more in the next episode).

Black student-athletes at Elon in the 1960s and 1970s overcame many of the barriers to academic success that their peers at other institutions experienced.⁹¹ Star athletes such as women's basketball standout Vanessa Corbett '82 overcame both gender- and race-based challenges on and off the court to make extraordinary contributions in intercollegiate competition. Corbett played

women's basketball from 1978 to 1982 and set just about every record possible, including several enduring career records (among them points, points per game and field goals made).⁹² Black student-athletes in Corbett's cohort graduated at or above the rate of White students. There are no published graduation rates for Black students during this period, but media guides identify at least 22 unique Black student-athletes from the 1975–76 academic year whose names may be cross-referenced with published graduation lists for the next five years. Between 1976 and 1980, 10 (45 percent) of Corbett's Black peers appeared on the official gradu-

ation lists. While this seems like a discouragingly low number at first glance, it exceeds the overall five-year graduation rate for students entering in similar years by several percentage points.⁹³

Corbett finally received a long-overdue honor in February 2020 when Elon retired her jersey, but

other Black pioneers have fallen from memory.⁹⁴ Restoring the memory of these pioneers can be complex. Not all athletes who gave their blood and sweat to the institution want to return or to claim their place in Elon's history, suggesting that for some the cost of persistence was high. There is not one grand event for which Elon can atone, such as Wyoming University's expulsion of 14 football players for protesting overt White supremacy, but Elon can do more to document these student-athletes' legacy of achievement and activism.⁹⁵ Durward T. Stokes did not mention any Black student-athletes in "Elon College: Its History and Traditions," and George Troxler featured the success of Emery Moore as a trailblazer but did not fully explore the unique struggles of Black student-athletes in "From a Grove of Oaks."⁹⁶ Rich resources exist, including scores of former athletes who have never had a chance to tell their stories, with which to offer a more complete account.

MARY CARROLL AND THE PROBLEM OF ERASURE

Mary Carroll-Robertson '81 (née Carroll) recounted in a 2004 interview how she felt when she first looked in the 1980 Elon College yearbook but could not find the annual homecoming spread, which should have featured her coronation as the first Black homecoming queen. "It was as if I didn't even exist on campus," she remembered. It was as if Elon was saying that they didn't want to reveal that the school had finally let a Black girl win homecoming. "What is this world coming to?" she imagined White editors asking themselves, "We don't have to document it in a book. It will just go away quietly."⁹⁷ While exclusion from or marginalization within Elon's documentary record is a near-universal problem for Black people during this period, Carroll-Robertson's particularly acute case highlights the harm this can cause, its insidious nature and the immense difficulty of repairing the damage.⁹⁸ The episode also has another dimension, however, one of Black resistance. Indeed, the offense was "so obvious and so blatant," as Carroll-Robertson later recalled, that over 200 Black students "dared to say something," though in doing so they risked their very future at the school.⁹⁹



Vanessa Corbett '82, who played women's basketball from 1978 to 1982, received a long-overdue honor in February 2020 when Elon retired her jersey. (U. Archives, Athletics Collection/Corbett)

THE SEXES

Black Queen Left Out; Students Burn Yearbooks

About 40 Black students at Elon College recently burned their yearbooks to protest the omission of a photograph of the school's homecoming queen—the first Black queen in the North Carolina college's 91-year history.

The omission was not intentional, but just a matter of circumstance, said Tim McDowell,

the college's director of public information. He said the photographer who covered the homecoming activities merely failed to get the photo in by the printing deadline, as was the case with several other group shots which also were left out.

While he says the incident was "regrettable to all of us since we all look forward to homecoming," McDowell says the protest over the situation was "very orderly," and under fire department supervision at the 2,500-student college.

The June 1980 edition of Jet Magazine covered the yearbook burning at Elon.

This example illustrates that when "official" spokespeople or gatekeepers of Elon's image or history fail to include certain people or groups in their narratives, they do harm not only to the individuals involved but also to others with the same identity. Carroll-Robertson struggled so much after the overlapping traumas of everyday racism,



Mary Carroll-Robertson '81, the first Black homecoming queen at Elon, was not included in the 1980 yearbook. (U. Archives, [EUA028/12](#))

being booed at homecoming and being left out of the yearbook that she thought about leaving — but drew strength from her father's exhortation that "if you quit, if you come home the people who don't want you there, win."¹⁰⁰

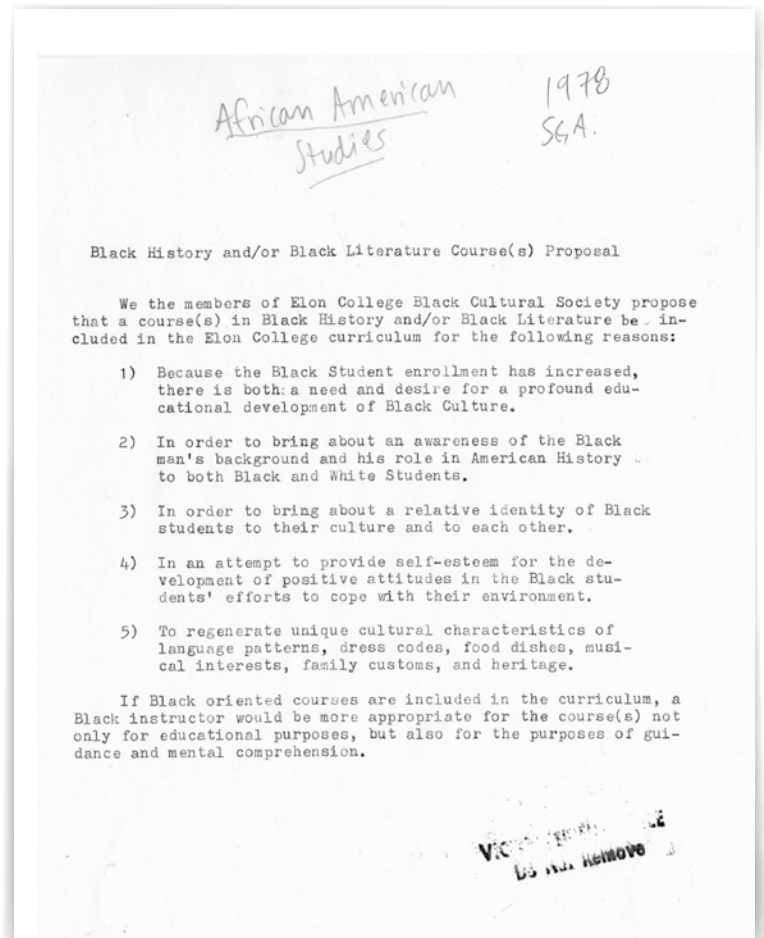
In this incident, though, Black students did not let the insult be the last word. A huge groundswell of Black students, led by football players Alonzo Craig '81 and James Strickland '82, risked forfeiting scholarships and their very academic standing to protest. Students marched down by the dozen to the administration building and burned their yearbooks in one of the boldest student protests in Elon history.¹⁰¹ The effects still echoed in an editorial students Robin Adams '81 (now Robin Adams Cheeley) and Joy Hamilton '82 wrote in March 1981 in the student-led newspaper, *The Pendulum* (*The Veritas* was defunct by 1970, and *The Pendulum* had become the main student newspaper after its establishment in 1974), in which they observed: "One of the minority groups that works very hard but receives little or no recognition is the black students. ... What would happen if all black students stopped giving their support to campus events? There are fewer than 200 black students on this campus, but if they pulled together, they could make history as they did last year during the yearbook burning."¹⁰²

Black students did not let the incident define them and continued to study, organize and socialize, as well as to vote for members of the homecoming court. In a sign of progress, the 1981 yearbook included a photo of first runner-up Nish Bynum Jackson '81 and escort Raymond



Above: Wilhelmina Boyd in the Department of English began to expand the African American studies offerings in the 1980s and served as the first coordinator of African & African-American Studies at Elon. (U. Archives, [EUA028/3](#))

Right: A scan of a formal 1978 petition for a more diverse curriculum by the Black Cultural Society. (U. Archives, [EUA098/1](#))



Jackson '80. In a sign of the distance yet to go, editors listed Raymond's name as "Ramon."¹⁰³

One of the frustrating aspects of sins of omission is that they cannot be proven conclusively, making it harder for those left out to get closure and making one second guess other encounters. In June 1980, *Jet Magazine* covered the yearbook burning and reported Elon's denials of wrongdoing: "The omission was not intentional, but just a matter of circumstance, said Tim McDowell, the college's director of public information. He said the photographer who covered the homecoming activities merely failed to get the photo in by the printing deadline."¹⁰⁴ Carroll-Robertson did not receive any greater satisfaction in person and does not "remember anybody of an administrative position including the then president Fred Young ever coming to me apologizing for what happened with respect to leaving my picture out of the yearbook."¹⁰⁵

In fall 2019, Carroll-Robertson returned to Elon for the first time since her graduation. Elon administrators, at the suggestion of Black alumni, publicly honored her with a bouquet and named her part of that year's homecoming royalty during a football game. Ultimately, however, the whole experience highlighted the difficulty of righting historical wrongs without a proper process in place.

Cheeley, who had written insightfully in *The Pendulum* about campus racism 38 years earlier, both celebrated Carroll-Robertson and highlighted some of the limitations of the recognition in a column that appeared in the *Greensboro News & Record*. Cheeley noted how Carroll-Robertson had "no time to invite her children and grandchildren or other family members," nor any "time for classmates to arrange to be there and celebrate with her." Moreover, the university did not have time to tell the whole story — to publicly ac-

knowledge the omission from the yearbook, to repent of the formal denials of wrongdoing or to lift up the witness of the Black student-athletes who protested.¹⁰⁶ Goodwill, in other words, proved to be an essential but not a sufficient ingredient for reparative justice.

AFRICAN & AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDIES AND THE FIGHT FOR CURRICULAR INCLUSION

Black students demanded courses in Black studies immediately after integration in the 1960s, though Elon's academic leaders did not support the requests and did not establish the African

& African-American Studies program until 1994. In concert with simultaneous protests at the University of San Francisco and across the nation, "concerned and enlightened Black students of Elon College" demanded in November 1969 for the school to offer "a course dealing exclusively with Black studies" and "the hiring of at least one

Black professor," with "at least a Master's degree in Black History."¹⁰⁷ Joe Foley, a history major, was among contemporary White students who echoed this call and expressed disappointment he could not take courses on either Black history or Asian studies. Not only did the college not offer a course, but it did not rehire the professor, Charles Harper, whom the petitioners had recommended to teach it.¹⁰⁸

Black students continued to push for Elon to commit to the scholarly study of the lives and experiences of Black people — examples can be found in one of the Black Cultural Society's formal petitions from 1978, which survived and is in the university archives — but the college moved slowly.¹⁰⁹ Andrew Angyal in the English department finally offered the first course in African American studies in 1979, "Modern Black American Literature" (ENG 371). In 1987, Fellow English faculty member Wilhelmina Boyd became the institution's only full-time Black faculty member and began to expand the offerings. Boyd collaborated with Brian Digre in history to bring additional courses on Africa to Elon through a major grant from the U.S. Department of Education to develop international and African studies



Associate Professor of Psychology Buffie Longmire-Avital, the current AAASE coordinator, has strategically positioned the minor not only as an anchor for Black thought and experience at Elon but also as a locus for campus-wide diversity discourse and work. (U. Communications)

programs at Elon. Recollections of faculty involved in the founding of both programs differ about whether AAASE's formation was contingent upon the success of the 1993 proposal or not, but the grant (award period 1994–96) did bring new classes to campus, such as African Literature.¹¹⁰ Boyd took the helm of African & African-American Studies from its inception in 1994 and built a program characterized by outstanding breadth and depth.¹¹¹

Sowande' Mustakeem '00 worked with Boyd to become the first student to graduate with an independent major in African & African-American studies in 2000. She subsequently authored the award winning book, "Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage" (U. Illinois, 2016), and at the time of this writing, is an associate professor of history and African & African-American studies at the Washington University in St. Louis.

Mustakeem remains the only AAASE major, because Black studies still exists at Elon only as an interdisciplinary minor, notwithstanding the efforts of its coordinators to diffuse African & African-American studies into the curriculum. Prudence Layne joined Elon's Department of English in 2005 and, following Boyd's retirement that year, took the reins of AAASE for nine years. Layne consolidated support for AAASE from faculty in many disciplines beyond the anchors of English and history, including dance, geography, anthropology, education, music and more. She also expanded the study abroad offerings in Africa in 2007 by establishing "The Call of South Africa." In addition, she sponsored more community-focused events than most majors, though with a fraction of the budget, including an author-of-the-month series that featured scholars from on and off campus.

These events and many others are all well documented in the Black Oaks newsletter, launched in 2006 to chart the accomplishments of the program. Yet, outstanding students such as Omolayo Ojo '15, who came to Elon as a Kenan Scholar and won prestigious Boren and Fulbright Fellowships, had to pursue their scholarly interests about the African Diaspora through international studies and take only an AAASE minor.¹¹²

Efforts to focus greater attention in the Elon curriculum to the lives, experiences and contributions of Black people are ongoing. Following the release of the Black Experiences Task Force report in 2016, the newly appointed AAASE coordinator, Associate Professor of Psychology Buffie Longmire-Avital, in collaboration with the reconfigured advisory board, strategically positioned the minor not only as an anchor for Black thought and experience at Elon but also as a locus for campus-wide diversity discourse and work. Longmire-Avital nurtured an idea that surfaced during Black Solidarity Day and coordinated with Damion Blake, an assistant professor of political science, to offer a timely course on "The Black Man in America" in 2016, following the Michael Brown murder. Despite the origin of the course in AAASE and the close alignment with AAASE goals, however, Blake had to offer the course with an independent studies prefix.¹¹³ Other courses focusing on Black Americans have run as Core Curriculum capstones. It wasn't until the 2017–18 academic year that alumna and lecturer in human service studies Sandra Reid '85 offered the first course with an African & African-American Studies prefix, "Foundations in Black Studies."

In summer 2020, as Black Lives Matter protestors called attention to historic inequalities, many associated with the university began to wonder why Elon did not offer more courses on Black history. Alumna and Broadway star Barrett Wilbert Weed '11, for instance, asked "Can you imagine the impact that a required accurate Black history class might have on Elon Graduates? They could actually change the U.S. with that knowledge."¹¹⁴ AAASE, along with a few other programs on campus, has been trying to expose as many students as possible to critical race theory for a generation, with increasing intensity in recent years. In 2016, for instance, Longmire-Avital both solicited new AAASE offerings from several departments and inaugurated the campus-wide Layne Critical Race Consciousness essay competition, featuring the work of philosopher George Yancy. Since its inception, students throughout the campus have had an opportunity to read, reflect and interact with leading scholars, activists and artists who center the Black experience.¹¹⁵



Top: Wilhelmina Boyd, bottom left, poses with a group of Elon students and staff in 2003. In 1987, Boyd became Elon's only full-time Black faculty member. (U. Archives, [EUA028/3](#))

Bottom: Prudence Layne joined Elon's Department of English in 2005 and took the reins of AAASE for nine years, following Boyd's retirement. (U. Communications)

A PATH FORWARD

— *Recommendations*

The 10 episodes included in this report illustrate persistent anti-Black racism within Elon's history, as well as examples of unheralded Black accomplishment. The Committee on Elon History and Memory understands that confronting this legacy is an essential step in the creation of a more inclusive future and offers the following recommendations. Furthermore, the committee affirms and supports the recommendations outlined in the Black Lumen Project (see appendix C), ongoing work by key partners such as AAASE and CREDE, and the campus initiatives announced by President Connie Ledoux Book and Vice President and Associate Provost for Inclusive Excellence Randy Williams in summer 2020 (see appendix D).

LEARN: REMEMBERING OUR PAST

1. **Acknowledge the complexity of the past and publicly commit to engaging it in a manner that is inclusive, equitable and restorative.** The study of Elon's history and memory is an essential component of diversity, equity and inclusion work more generally. Part of the university's mission is to foster "respect for human differences, a life of learning, personal integrity and ethic of work and service," and studying how people from diverse backgrounds have experienced the institution over time will better enable members of the Elon community to fulfill this goal. Moreover, the concept of restorative justice explains why addressing past injustices is a prerequisite for current and future flourishing, and Elon should take concrete steps to repair harm that

people acting individually or corporately on behalf of the university have caused.

Action Steps: We recommend the president and provost, on behalf of the university, commit fully and publicly to a program of study and repair and make appropriate budgetary commitments to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report. The proposed statement by university leadership should not, at least at this early stage, consist of an apology; tangible commitments to telling a more inclusive story should precede such a gesture.

2. **Disseminate the committee's findings widely, both through publication of the report and the creation of a website to anchor ongoing history and memory work at Elon.** Publication of the committee's final report will both mark a commitment to future work and provide an educational tool to use in conversations on campus and with alumni, donors, members of the local community and other stakeholders. As the committee's work expands, the university will need to establish a new, more robust website to align its digital presence with that of peer and aspirant institutions. The website should be used to pull current and future materials together in one place (student work, archival materials, resources for teachers, etc.); host digital scholarship; announce events and activities; and provide opportunities for formative feedback. Ultimately, as a longer-term goal of "Boldly Elon," the site will also host grant-funded digital humanities projects on university history.

Since 2016, the Office of Alumni Engagement, EBAN & the CREDE have been celebrating the achievements and African roots of Black seniors as part of the Donning of the Kente Ceremony. (U. Communications)



Maintaining the website will be time-consuming and will ultimately be the responsibility of a new staff person, indicated below.

Action Steps: We recommend that, following the successful collaboration with the committee in the preparation of this report — and in consultation with University Archives & Special Collections, the Black Lumen Project: An Equity Initiative and other stakeholders — the Office of University Communications create the architecture of a website and provide continuous support to its administrator, when needed.

3. **Create opportunities for Elon students to confront Elon history through their coursework.** We affirm it's important to create opportunities for Elon students to confront the institution's history and attendant stories of White supremacy and Black resilience, in and outside of the classroom. This must be a multi-pronged approach and should include multiple pathways, so that no student may avoid discussions of race and those especially interested in the material may engage it in a more rigorous, comprehensive manner. As per the recommendations of the Black Lumen Project and the subsequent call by President

Book this summer to infuse anti-racist content and pedagogy throughout the curriculum, some faculty training may be necessary to equip teacher-scholars to address these issues, in addition to the potential hiring of more faculty to support this work.

Action Steps: We recommend, specifically to:

- a) On the most general level, facilitate a conversation involving the Core Curriculum, AAASE, CREDE and other stakeholders about making a course part of the Core Curriculum that examines race through a critical perspective. Faculty who have already created and taught courses that fall into this description should be a part of this conversation and future realization;
- b) Create an "Elon and Race" module that instructors of COR 110 (The Global Experience) could implement as part of their courses;
- c) Post online resources regarding history and memory, including a digital repository of syllabi and assignments as well as primary sources, that faculty from a variety of disciplines could use;
- d) Develop and offer on an annual basis a class on Elon History and Memory, which will serve as an engine of ongoing research.

Such a class might have a variety of departmental or programmatic homes but would fit most naturally within the Department of History & Geography or as an interdisciplinary COR Capstone;¹ and

e) Identify faculty and fund research opportunities for students to engage in Elon history and memory work through the undergraduate research program.

4. Establish an Institutional Repository to enhance history and memory work at Elon.

A digital platform known as an Institutional Repository would provide the connection between the history and memory website, archival materials, and work generated through an enhanced history and memory curriculum, including syllabi and assignments as well as primary sources, that faculty from a variety of disciplines could use. Moreover, such a repository would be instrumental in creating a more reliable record of institutional history for future generations, while also supporting the Black Lumen Project by facilitating initiatives linking CREDE, AAASE and Belk Library. The Institutional Repository would be managed by Belk Library and University Archives and serve the entire campus in addition to history and memory work by increasing the capacity to handle large data sets, managing open educational resources and disseminating scholarly work created by Elon University faculty and students.

Action Steps: We recommend that, in fiscal year 2020–21, Belk Library and University Archives identify, price out and provide documentation on three potential Institutional Repository products that would support ongoing history and memory work and a comprehensive records management solution for permanent records. As soon as practicable

¹ There is an existing course on Elon, IDS 234, “Elon Past, Present, and Future.” If this course is to be offered in the future, instructors must examine institutional history in an intellectually rigorous manner and explore diverse aspects of Elon’s past. A new course is scheduled to pilot in spring 2021, HST 131, “Race, History, and Memory at Elon University.”

and in consultation with appropriate stakeholders a product should then be selected, purchased and supported long term.

- 5. Establish an ongoing post-baccalaureate fellowship on Elon history and memory in the university archives.** The institution currently lacks designated faculty or staff to do in-depth primary research into its history or to carry out the research agenda of the committee. We recommend the creation of a fellowship designed to do this work and to promote diversity and equity in the archival profession by introducing recent Elon graduates to a career in the archival field and to support history and memory work at Elon University. The fellowship would be a paid one-year recurring position under the guidance of the Elon University Archives. During the year, the fellow would support ongoing history and memory work and would gain valuable experience in various professional activities that would lay the groundwork for a career in the archival field.

Action Steps: We recommend that University Archives in fiscal year 2020–21 consult best practices nationally, most notably the [Mosaic Diversity Program](#) at William & Mary, and create a description and application process for the program, as well as identify all associated costs. University Archives should also assess demand among Elon students and evaluate the possibility of opening the program to graduates of other North Carolina schools. Following consultation and evaluation by University Archives, Elon will create a post-baccalaureate position to be established in the Archives.

SUSTAIN: RESTORING OUR PRESENT

- 6. Make a permanent iteration of the Committee on Elon History and Memory to provide support for current and future recommendations.** The current iteration of the committee has been able to identify some best practices and greatest needs while concentrating on the experience of Black people in Elon’s history, but there is much more to



Now known as the Phillips-Perry Black Excellence Celebration, the Black Excellence Awards were established in 1993 to celebrate the academic accomplishments of Black students at Elon. (U. Communications)

be done — both in implementing the current recommendations and in continuing and expanding the work. This new committee will work collaboratively with the Black Lumen Project, other campus organizations and community partners as the university discovers and shares a more complete history of Elon. The committee should include faculty, staff and students representing multiple departments and divisions across campus, with attention to those people and positions with direct connection to this work. It will be the role of this new committee to set a research agenda, prioritize and advocate for specific recommendations and projects, and keep the community informed about how the work is progressing. This committee will also replace the now vacant university historian position. The chair of the new committee, drawn from the faculty or staff, will have a dual report to the vice president and associate provost for inclusive excellence as well as the vice president for strategic initiatives, and will serve as the leader in executing reports, consulting with administrators and managing multiple levels of work associated with the position. The chair will also have fiscal responsibility for the committee's budget, which should be sufficient to maintain normal operations without constant recourse to the Office of the Provost.

Action Steps: We recommend the president and/or provost name a new and permanent Committee on Elon History and Memory in consultation with the chair. Terms, including for the chair position, should be two years and renewable for one additional term. In order to guarantee continuity, there should be some overlap in membership with the current group, and terms should be staggered. We recommend the chair receive at least one course release per academic year or other time release (for staff) to underscore the needed capacity to carry out this work.

7. **Hire a full-time staff member to manage day-to-day operations of history and memory work on campus.** The day-to-day operations of history and memory work will become increasingly demanding as more projects come to fruition and the web presence matures. Ultimately, a full-time staff member will be needed to coordinate campus-wide initiatives and projects from the committee and, as an essential job requirement, to manage the extensive web presence. In addition to the day-to-day maintenance of the website, this position will serve as the point of contact for other university committees, campus organizations and community partners and will support the Committee on

A portrait of Andrew Morgan hangs on the first floor of Belk Library. It was the first and remains one of the few portraits on campus honoring Black members of the Elon community. (U. Communications)



Elon History and Memory in identifying new areas of work. This position will also plan and execute campus events, conferences and symposiums in consultation with the chair of the Committee on Elon History and Memory and Black Lumen Project.

Action Steps: We recommend that the new committee, once constituted, collaborate with University Communications and the Black Lumen Project to draft a job description and that the university install a staff person as soon as practicable.

8. **Develop new commemorative practices around a more inclusive version of Elon's history.** Whether acknowledging historical injustice or celebrating Black achievement, Elon's history is inert without commemorative practices to provide regular opportunities for community members and other stakeholders to discuss it. Creating or revitalizing commemorative practices will require the active participation of and coordination between different university offices already engaged in the work of representing Elon, notably the Traditions Council. A key objective should be inviting Black residents of greater Alamance County to participate more fully.

Action Steps: We specifically recommend to:

- a) Create a digital and/or self-guided tour focusing on the experiences of Black faculty, staff and students and on the evolution

of policies and practices of the university vis-a-vis Black people;

- b) Add historical content to the festivities surrounding Elon Day, so that the occasion marks not only an opportunity for giving, but also an opportunity to learn about and mark those who have gone before;
- c) Sponsor ongoing oral history projects during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend to serve and commemorate Black alumni, in cooperation with University Archives and the Elon Black Alumni Network; and
- d) Revise admissions tours and first-year orientation to include specific material about the Black experience at Elon.

9. **Create a more inclusive commemorative landscape.** Elon's physical plant embodies the institution's values and both reflects and shapes its collective identity. In its present form, however, the university's physical plant does not reflect the diverse, equitable community Elon aspires to become. Ultimately, similar to the work of the Office of Sustainability at Elon, we expect the process of adding Black voices to Elon's built environment to take time but to yield meaningful opportunities for teaching and community engagement on the journey. Short-term tasks include the facilitation of sensitive conversations about naming and renaming university buildings, discussed below, and the addition of portraits and landmarks to acknowledge the longstanding involvement of Black and Brown people in the life of the university. The most urgent of these projects is the creation of a monument to Black laborers. A long-term goal consistent with the "Boldly Elon" strategic plan is the creation of an interdisciplinary museum space on or adjacent to the campus, which would not only house historical and archival material, as well as interactive study installations and temporary exhibitions of student work, but also provide opportunities for members of the local community to share their own stories.

Action Steps:

- a) Reach out to Black members of the local community, many of whom have family connections to Elon through employment

dating back for generations, regarding the creation of a monument to Black laborers. Set a process for determining the design and location of the monument with maximum input from Black stakeholders and create a vehicle for fundraising; and

- b)** Create a digital platform that will transform the campus into a living classroom, where members of the Elon community and visitors may use smartphone technology to learn about university history. This will involve enhancing the brief biographical sketches currently available of donors and of building namesakes.

- 10. Develop and implement a new procedure for naming and renaming spaces.** At Elon and across the nation, stakeholders are asking whether individuals honored on named buildings reflect the values of the communities they serve. As an institution that emphasizes inclusive excellence, the university must have a clear process for deciding whether and how to rename buildings, as well as specific criteria for future decisions about naming. Controversies over building names have eroded trust at many peer and aspirant institutions.² Elon should proactively provide a fair and transparent process for adjudicating these inevitable discussions, thereby addressing problematic names and creating an equitable pathway to honor all members of the community.

Action Steps: We recommend:

- a)** The articulation, approval by the trustees and publication of a process through which the university may discuss possible name changes, to include (as per the Duke and Yale models) both criteria for decision-making as well as the formal process.

² On June 17, 2020, trustees at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill finally conceded to years of sometimes bitter lobbying to revisit a moratorium on name changes. University Communications, “UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees lifts renaming moratorium,” University News, 17 June 2020, <https://www.unc.edu/posts/2020/06/17/unc-trustees-lift-moratorium/>. There have been similar battles at many nearby schools, including University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Duke University, Guilford College, and Wake Forest University.

The process must involve opportunities for public comment from current faculty, staff and students, as well as alumni and members of the local community. As a first application of this proactive process, we recommend the university continue to develop programming surrounding the William A. Harper building renaming and initiate discussions on the building named after William S. Long.

- b)** The articulation of best practices that individual units of the university may follow that are consistent with the university-wide process and values, since we recognize that not all naming decisions are made at the university level, such as deciding whom to honor with a portrait or naming awards or lectureships within one’s department, for example.

THRIVE & RISE: COLLABORATING INTO THE FUTURE

- 11. Convene an advisory board to supervise ongoing history and memory work at Elon.**

The stakes are high for history and memory work at Elon. In recognition of the importance and national scope of the work, we propose that the university convene an advisory board to offer external feedback and guidance to the Committee on Elon History and Memory. This board shall include not only regional and/or national experts, but also members of the communities in and around Elon whose stories have long intersected with that of the institution.

Action Steps: We recommend that a newly constituted committee nominate potential members of an advisory board to the president and provost by the end of the 2020–21 academic year.

- 12. Establish and equip the Black Lumen Project for the ongoing support of Black Phoenix.** The Black Lumen Project will enhance the Black experience at Elon in pursuit of equity and move the institution further in its commitment to inclusive excellence. By acknowledging and strengthening the



As part of the “Take Back Our Streets” demonstration organized by Elon’s Black Student Union, hundreds of students, faculty & staff marched around campus in October 2020 to demand institutional investment in anti-Black racism & to speak out against racism and hate. (U. Communications)

partnership between African & African-American Studies at Elon and the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education it will support existing work for diversity, equity and inclusion, develop new and effective ways to memorialize and teach about the experiences of Black people at Elon, and find creative ways to address systemic racism. The Black Lumen Project will exist separate from the Committee on Elon History and Memory, though its director will serve ex officio on the committee as a permanent liaison.

Action Items: We encourage the Black Lumen Project team to discuss the proposal with all potential stakeholders, including Black members of the local community, the Elon Black Alumni Network, the Black Student Union, Black Life Advisory Council, Black Employee Resource Group, etc., and to revise the proposal in light of any feedback. Thereafter, we recommend the immediate implementation of phase one and, as soon as practicable, the naming of a director to coordinate the implementation of the project.

13. **Build partnerships around history and memory work.** The “Boldly Elon” mandate to “develop partnerships to advance healthy, prosperous and socially just communities” is an essential part of history and memory work. Indeed, the Committee on Elon History and Memory is extremely well positioned to help the institution accomplish this goal. There are a number of opportunities to build connections in a more collaborative fashion through which Elon faculty, staff and students might

simultaneously learn about Elon’s history and help move toward restorative justice. Elon ought especially to prioritize making connections with Black people within the greater Alamance County area who share values of centering Blackness, telling fuller histories and being in partnership with Elon University, including creating meaningful pathways for involvement in every initiative — from inviting people to events, to including Black voices on the advisory board and to supporting the Black Lumen Project’s goal to build deeper connections off campus. In addition, we strongly endorse collaboration with organizations that are already doing similar work, including The Franklinton Center at Bricks, The Equal Justice Initiative’s Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition, The African American Cultural Arts and History Center, and The Elon Community Church.

Action Steps: We recommend that the new Committee on Elon History and Memory articulate in writing, in partnership with the Kernodle Center for Civic Life, pathways for members — especially Black members — of the Elon and local communities (including historic Mill Point and Ballpark) to get involved and establish formal connections with the above named institutions, as well as others suggested to them in the course of the work. This broadens the scope of the university’s recent commitment to engage in a sustained partnership with a racial equity organization “to support and optimize both internal and external anti-racist and racial equity work (see Appendix D).

Endnotes

¹ L'Tanya Richmond, "Elon's Black History: A Story to Be Told," Master's Thesis (Duke University, 2005), 63; Jaleh Hagigh, "L'Tanya Burch Richmond '87 receives Elon Medallion for outstanding service to the university," *Today at Elon*, Elon University, April 28, 2009, <https://www.elon.edu/u/news/2009/04/28/ltanya-burch-richmond-87-receives-elon-medallion-for-outstanding-service-to-the-university/>.

² For the students' demands see The Third Front of the Organization of Afro-American Unity of Elon College to Dr. Durward T. Stokes, November 19, 1969, African and African-American Studies Collection, Carol Grotnes Belk Library Archives, Elon University, (Belk Library) [EUA098, Box 1/Folder 21](#); for Stokes' response, see Durward T. Stokes, *Elon College, Its History and Traditions* (Elon College: Elon College Alumni Association, 1982), 363-64. Emily Lang described this episode in "Black Studies Protests: Elon University's journey to an African and African-American Studies Program," Belk Library, Fall 2019, <https://elon.libguides.com/archives/BlackStudies#s-lg-box-22554470>.

³ A residence complex named in William A. Harper's honor, Harper Center, served generations of Elon students since opening in 1968. It was demolished in 2012 to make way for the Global Neighborhood. In 2011, the Board of Trustees approved the name of "William A. Harper Hall" for a new residence hall in the Colonnades. President Connie Ledoux Book announced the removal of the name on July 8, 2020. See Owen Covington, "President Book announces new action steps for diversity, equity and inclusion," *Today at Elon*, Elon University, July 8, 2020, <https://www.elon.edu/u/news/2020/07/08/president-book-announces-new-action-steps-for-diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>.

⁴ "Committee on Elon History and Memory," Elon University, <https://www.elon.edu/u/history-memory/>.

⁵ "Universities Studying Slavery," President's Commission on Slavery and the University, University of Virginia, <https://slavery.virginia.edu/universities-studying-slavery/>.

⁶ "The Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation," William & Mary, <https://www.wm.edu/sites/lemonproject/>.

⁷ "Inclusive Excellence at Elon," Elon University, <https://www.elon.edu/u/inclusive-excellence/>.

⁸ Transcribed interviews with President Emeritus J. Earl Danieley and Janice Ratliff by Prudence Layne's ENG 110 College Writing Class, Spring 2012, Elon University Biographical Files, Andrew Morgan file, Belk Library, [EUA040, Box 13/Folder 63](#).

⁹ For a discussion of this event and an example of how it was used as evidence of Elon's progressivism, see Keren Rivas, "The Long Road," *Today at Elon*, Elon University,

May 4, 2016, <https://www.elon.edu/u/news/2016/05/04/the-long-road/>.

¹⁰ Cf. George Keller, *Transforming a College: The Story of a Little-Known College's Strategic Climb to National Distinction* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

¹¹ For the best overview of the ecclesiastical background to the formation of Elon College and its predecessor institutions, see Durward T. Stokes and William T. Scott, *A History of the Christian Church in the South* (Burlington, N.C.: Southern Conference UCC, 1975). For additional details, including named officers of the Graham Institute (1851), Graham College (1859) and Graham Normal College (1881), see Stokes, *Elon College*, 12-25.

¹² James O'Kelly, "Essay on Negro Slavery" (Philadelphia: Prichard & Hall, [1789]), 23, 19.

¹³ Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 74-78.

¹⁴ Please note the double meaning of "Christian." It generically means a person who professes Christianity, but it had a more narrow 19th century meaning as a member of a specific denomination. In this more narrow sense, "Christians" took the name to set them apart from other denominations and to symbolize their efforts to get back to the historic roots of authentic Christian belief and practice. For William B. Wellons' involvement with the Southern Christian Convention, see Stokes and Scott, *Christian Church in the South*, 79-89, quotation 81.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁷ *Minutes of the Thirty-Sixth Annual Session of the North Carolina and Virginia Christian Conference* (Suffolk, Va.: Printed by the Christian Sun, 1862), 10.

¹⁸ *Minutes of the Forty-first Annual Session of the North Carolina and Virginia Christian Conference* (Danville, Va.: James Raines, Book and Job Printer, 1867), 7.

¹⁹ *Proceedings of the General Convention of the Christian Church, Including the Sessions of 1866, 1867, and 1870* (Suffolk, Va.: Christian Board of Publication, 1870), 26.

²⁰ J. Taylor Stanley, *A History of Black Congregational Christian Churches of the South* (New York: United Church Press for the American Missionary Association, 1978), 62-74.

²¹ Stokes and Scott, *Christian Church in the South*, 135.

²² Stokes, *Elon College*, 109-11.

²³ *Ibid.*, 26-43.

²⁴ All census information from Ancestry.com [database

online], Provo, Utah, Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2009. Long family 1860 information from the *1860 United States Federal Census*; Census Place: Alamance, North Carolina; Page: 105; Family History Library Film: 803886.

²⁵ Rachel Feld '20 made these initial discoveries in the course of an independent study in spring 2019. In addition to the 1860 population schedule above, please see the population schedule for 1850 and the slave schedules for 1850 and 1860. *1850 United States Federal Census*; Census Place: North District, Alamance, North Carolina; Roll: 619; Page: 86a. 1850 Slave Schedule: The National Archive in Washington DC; Washington, DC; NARA (NARA) Microform Publication: M432; Title: *Seventh Census Of The United States*, 1850; Record Group: Records of the Bureau of the Census; Record Group Number: 29. 1860 Slave Schedule: NARA, *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860; Series Number: M653; Record Group: Records of the Bureau of the Census; Record Group Number: 29.

²⁶ Walter E. Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County, 1849-1949* (Burlington, N.C.: Alamance County Historical Association, 1974), 125-29.

²⁷ For an excellent treatment of Outlaw's life, including his paternity, see Carole Watterson Troxler, "'To look more closely at the man': Wyatt Outlaw, a Nexus of National, Local, and Personal History," *North Carolina Historical Review* v. 77, n. 4 (October 2000): 403-33; on the paternity and link to Elon, also Richmond, "Elon's Black History," 12; for the dedication, "Major London's Address," *The Alamance Gleaner*, May 28, 1914, accessed on "Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina," https://docsouth.unc.edu/static/commland/content/newspaper/The_Alamance_Gleaner_1914_05_28_Major_London's_Address.pdf.

²⁸ Daniel Albright Long, "Jefferson Davis: An Address Delivered at Concord, North Carolina, June 3, 1921" (Raleigh, N.C.: Edwards & Broughton, 1923), 20.

²⁹ *Report of the Alleged Outrages in the Southern States by the Select Committee of the Senate* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1871), 260.

³⁰ Ralph Long, Essay, 1930, William Samuel Long Collection, Belk Library, *Mss.Coll.007, Box 1/Folder 18*.

³¹ W. A. Harper, *Character Building in Colleges* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1928).

³² W. A. Harper, "White Supremacy Endangered," *The Christian Sun*, July 13, 1910.

³³ Thanks to Professor Emeritus of History Jim Bissett for rediscovering Harper's role in the Jeffress lynching. On July 19, Durham troops defending three "Negro prisoners" in the same jail killed James A. Ray when members of a mob said to number greater than 1,000 attacked. For details, see "Report of the Investigative Committee on its Findings of the Attempted Lynching at Graham, 16 August 1920," in MosaicNC, *The War Governor: Thomas Walter Bickett*, 1917-

1921, DNCR Historical Research Office, 2019, <http://mosaicnc.org/document/657>; "Judge Allen Pleads for Sanctity of Law," *Raleigh News and Observer*, August 26, 1920; "Negro pays penalty for brutal lust," *Alamance Gleaner*, Aug. 26, 1920.

³⁴ W. A. Harper, *The Church in the Present Crisis* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1921), 253.

³⁵ Details on Harper's involvement from "Report of the Board of Control Franklinton Christian College," in *The Official Proceedings of the General Convention of the Christian Church and the Christian Publishing Association*, 1929 (n.p.: [1929]), 116-19, quotations 119.

³⁶ Stokes, *Elon College*, 103.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 110, 189.

³⁸ *1910 United States Federal Census*; Census Place: Boon Station, Alamance, North Carolina; Roll: T624_1095; Page: 13B; Enumeration District: 0004; FHL microfilm: 1375108.

³⁹ For an orientation to literary societies at Elon, see George Troxler, *From a Grove of Oaks: The Story of Elon University* (Elon, N.C.: Elon University, 2014), 20-21.

⁴⁰ "'True and Untrue' Play is Presented at Elon," *Greensboro Daily News*, February 24, 1920.

⁴¹ Neither Stokes nor Troxler make any mention of Comer's tragic death in the published histories, but Troxler did indicate the timing and nature of his passing in a newspaper interview, Don Bolden, "Wanted, images of old Comer Field at Elon," *Burlington Times-News*, July 23, 2016.

⁴² "Elon College Band Has Long History," *Maroon and Gold*, January 16, 1957.

⁴³ Janice Ratliff, interview by Charles Irons, October 14, 2020.

⁴⁴ *Phi Psi Cli* [1936], 43; *Phi Psi Cli* [1958], 131.

⁴⁵ "Introducing! Powerhouse Gang Andy, Arthur, and Buck," *Maroon and Gold*, October 5, 1940.

⁴⁶ Transcribed interview with Janice Ratliff by Dr. Prudence Layne's ENG 110 College Writing Class, Spring 2012, Elon University Biographical Files, Andrew Morgan file, Belk Library, *EUA040, Box 13/Folder 63*.

⁴⁷ "Veteran Elon Employee: Andy Morgan is Honored By Portrait," *Maroon and Gold*, May 4, 1962.

⁴⁸ President Emeritus J. Earl Danieleu eulogy of Andrew Morgan, Elon University Biographical Files, Andrew Morgan file, Belk Library, *EUA040, Box 13/Folder 63*; Luther Byrd, "Andy Morgan is Killed while Working on Plumbing Underneath his House," *Elon Alumni News*, September 1964, 7.

⁴⁹ In a February 24, 1948 piece, "The Race Question," John Watson, the editor of the *Maroon and Gold*, noted after calling for "the negro" to enjoy "the rights of a citizen" that his words would "not please most of the student body and faculty."

⁵⁰ *Phi Psi Cli* [1920], 186.

⁵¹ "Clio Annual Entertainment is Presentation of Three Act

Drama with Other Features," *Maroon and Gold*, February 27, 1924.

⁵² "Clio's Have Honorary Members as Guests," *Maroon and Gold*, October 28, 1921 and "The Negro is Subject of Psykaleon Society," *Maroon and Gold*, November 7, 1923.

⁵³ *Phi Psi Cli* [1940], 102.

⁵⁴ *Phi Psi Cli* [1926], 206.

⁵⁵ *Phi Psi Cli* [1923], 200.

⁵⁶ *Phi Psi Cli* [1942], quotation 15, images passim.

⁵⁷ *Phi Psi Cli* [1952], 106.

⁵⁸ Gary Thompson, "The Quidnunc," *Maroon and Gold*, May 24, 1955.

⁵⁹ "Homecoming Weekend is Highly Successful Event," *Maroon and Gold*, November 3, 1961. "North Carolina Sixth Regiment Reactivated for Centennial" and Pat Bailey, "Elon Alumnus Colonel Cliff W. Elder Wins Fame," *Elon Alumni News*, August 1963, 12-18; Richard W. Iobst, *The Bloody Sixth: The Sixth North Carolina Regiment, Confederate States of America* (Durham, N.C.: North Carolina Confederate Centennial Commission, 1965), 487-93.

⁶⁰ *Phi Psi Cli* [1969], 19 and *Phi Psi Cli* [1971], 38.

⁶¹ *Phi Psi Cli* [1985], 96.

⁶² The 2007 flare-up is a good example. See Brett Sciuletti, "The confederate flag continues to create controversy," *The Pendulum*, February 22, 2007; Alex Sewell, "One should not be forced to feel shame for their heritage," *The Pendulum*, March 8, 2007; Whitney Hamilton, "The Confederate flag is a sign of oppression," *The Pendulum*, March 15, 2007; Ben DeLoose, "Racism, go home," *The Pendulum*, April 5, 2007; *Elon News Network*, February 20, 2017, Paul LeBlanc, "Confederate flags cause uproar on campus," *Elon News Network*, February 20, 2017.

⁶³ Mark Sauer, "Dr. Stokes Tells of Varied Past," *The Pendulum*, March 10, 1977.

⁶⁴ Isaac Groves, "Alamance County Mounument's History a Common Southern Story," *Burlington Times-News*, October 14, 2017.

⁶⁵ Eugene Perry, interview by L'Tanya Richmond, March 18, 2005, in "Elon's Black History," 110.

⁶⁶ Rick Burnell, "Up-dated Course Shelved," *Veritas*, October 8, 1969.

⁶⁷ Don Metcalf, "Journalism Professor and Publicist Has Busy Life," *Elon Alumni News*, January 1953, 3, 11; Roy Avery, "Luther Byrd, 26 Years at Elon, Makes Plans to Retire This Summer," *The Pendulum*, February 18, 1975.

⁶⁸ *The Third Front* ... to Dr. Durward T. Stokes.

⁶⁹ "Stokes to Write College History," *The Pendulum*, April 28, 1977.

⁷⁰ L'Tanya Richmond, in context of December 7, 2004 interview of Mary Carroll-Robertson, "Elon's Black History," 172-73.

⁷¹ As one metric for gauging this, a search for "segregation" yields one hit for the *Maroon and Gold* from 1954-1975, an incidental mention in a parody. Larry Barnes, "Sound Off," *Maroon and Gold*, January 25, 1956. The paper did not cover the sit-ins, March on Washington, or other seminal events of the Civil Rights Movement.

⁷² Stokes, *Elon College*, 362; *The Veritas Liberated Press* circulated from 1968-1970 and included in its brief span more articles promoting Civil Rights than did the *Maroon and Gold* during Byrd's entire tenure. The best example, discussed in more depth below, was the "Dear Beverly Axelrod" column.

⁷³ Troxler, *From a Grove of Oaks*, 169-70; "Evolution of the CREDE," The Center for Race, Ethnicity, & Diversity Education, <https://www.elon.edu/u/crede/about-the-crede/evolution-of-the-crede/>.

⁷⁴ Donna Hill Oliver, interview with L'Tanya Richmond, February 15, 2005, in "Elon's Black History," 183.

⁷⁵ Gwendolyn Crawford Manning, interview with Charles Irons, September 30, 2020.

⁷⁶ Krista Naposki, "Former student shares his experiences from the 70s," *The Pendulum*, March 3, 2005.

⁷⁷ The best overview of these institutions is Troxler, *From a Grove of Oaks*, 190-92.

⁷⁸ *Black Cultural Society Constitution*, 1974, Elon Files (General and Administrative), Black Cultural Society/Black Student Union file, Belk Library, [EUA041, Box 1/Folder 48](#). See also Lange, "Black Studies Protests."

⁷⁹ On the role of Elon First Baptist, Ratliff interview, October 14, 2020.

⁸⁰ Manning interview, September 30, 2020.

⁸¹ For the GENTS, see *Phi Psi Cli* [1983], 67 and Vicky Jiggetts, "'Gents' promote respect, new concept of love," *The Pendulum*, February 17, 1983.

⁸² "Evolution of the CREDE," Richmond, "Elon's Black History," 54-81; Hagigh, "L'Tanya Burch Richmond '87."

⁸³ These statistics are approximate, since institutional research did not maintain these figures. There are two data points used here. For 1979-80, the figure used is based on yearbook rosters for athletic teams and Stokes' estimate of Black students by 1979 (n=49/174), *Elon College*, 363. For 1975-76, figure based on media guides and Richmond's calculation of total Black students (n=37/103), "Elon's Black History," 45.

⁸⁴ Jim Hodges, "Emery and Ralph Moore: The Story of How They Would Up at Elon College," *Burlington Times-News*, November 13, 1968.

⁸⁵ Jack Olsen, "The Black Athlete: A Shameful Story," *Sports Illustrated* Quotation from "Part 1: The Cruel Deception," July 1, 1968, 15.

⁸⁶ For examples of social distance, see the Eugene Perry

Interview in "Elon's Black History," 105. Speaking of Ralph Moore, on campus at the same time, Perry recollected, "He was the starting fullback or halfback he was good. So I seldom saw him so it was like I was the only one, really."

⁸⁷ See, for exp., "Year-by-Year Rushing Records," Elon Phoenix: The Official Site of Elon Athletics, <https://elonphoenix.com/sports/2020/3/19/record-book-year-by-year-rushing-leaders.aspx> and "Sets Discus Record and Breaks Javelin Mark," *Maroon and Gold*, May 17, 1968.

⁸⁸ Ralph Moore, "Dear Beverly Axelrod," *Veritas*, February 22, 1969.

⁸⁹ As an example of the omission of Elon but inclusion of Notre Dame, see Ralph Moore's obituary, published in the May 4, 2013 *Albany Daily Gazette* and reproduced on Legacy.com, <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dailygazette/obituary.aspx?n=ralph-e-moore&pid=164601011&fhid=22121>.

⁹⁰ Troxler, *From a Grove of Oaks*, 190-91.

⁹¹ John Matthew Smith, "Black Power in Green and White: Integration and Black Protest in Michigan State University Football, 1947-1972" (2006). Master's Thesis. 3357. https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/masters_theses/3357

⁹² Elon's Women's Basketball Record Book, Updated through the 2019-20 Season, available online at https://elonphoenix.com/documents/2020/8/31/combinepdf_1_.pdf?id=6691.

⁹³ Analysis of Media Guides from Elon Athletics collection, Belk Library, EUA012, Athletic Publications (1975-76); Commencement guides in Commencement collection, Belk Library, EUA011, Box 6/Folders 9, 11, 13, 15-16. By comparison, the overall five-year graduation rate for the institution was 41percent for students entering in the two earliest years for which the committee could obtain data, 1982 and 1983. Office of Institutional Research, *Elon College Fact Book, 1990-91 (1991)*, II.B.6.

⁹⁴ "Elon Athletics to retire women's basketball standout Venessa Corbett's jersey," *Today at Elon*, January 24, 2020, <https://www.elon.edu/u/news/2020/01/24/elon-athletics-set-to-retire-womens-basketball-standout-venessa-corbett-jersey/>.

⁹⁵ Wesley Lowery and Jacob Bogage, "Fifty years after the 'Black 14' were banished, Wyoming football reckons with the past," *Washington Post*, November 30, 2019.

⁹⁶ Troxler, *From a Grove of Oaks*, 170.

⁹⁷ Mary Carroll-Robertson, interview with L'Tanya Richmond, L'Tanya Richmond, December 7, 2004, in "Elon's Black History," 173.

⁹⁸ While Carroll-Robertson may not have appeared in the Phi Psi Cli [1980] as homecoming queen, *The Pendulum* did have minimal coverage (a photograph with caption, but no article), November 15, 1979.

⁹⁹ Mary Carroll-Robertson, interview with Charles Irons, October 12, 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Carroll-Robertson interview, December 2004, in "Elon's Black History," 163.

¹⁰¹ For a recent retelling of this story, see Robin Adams Cheeley, "Yes Elon, you can fix this," *Greensboro News and Record*, November 17, 2019, https://greensboro.com/opinion/columns/robin-adams-cheeley-yes-elon-you-can-fix-this/article_1f4c41aa-8af8-5e07-83d6-1724d7e60874.html.

¹⁰² Joy Hamilton and Robin Adams, "The Unspoken Prejudice," *The Pendulum*, March 5, 1981. On Elon's various newspapers, see Troxler, *From a Grove of Oaks*, 171.

¹⁰³ Phi Psi Cli [1981], 30.

¹⁰⁴ "Black Queen Left Out; Students Burn Yearbooks," *Jet*, June 19, 1980.

¹⁰⁵ Carroll-Robertson interview, December 2004, in "Elon's Black History," 164.

¹⁰⁶ Cheeley, "Yes Elon, you can fix this."

¹⁰⁷ *The Third Front* ... to Dr. Durward T. Stokes.

¹⁰⁸ Stokes, Elon College, 363-64 and, for a full treatment of the event, including the Foley quotation, Lange, "Black Studies Protests."

¹⁰⁹ *Black Cultural Society Course Proposal Petition*, 1979, African and African-American Studies Collection, Belk Library, EUA098, Box 1/Folder 23.

¹¹⁰ *Program Proposal*, 1993, African and African-American Studies Collection, Belk Library, EUA098, Box 1/Folder 28.

¹¹¹ "History," African & African-American Studies at Elon, <https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/arts-and-sciences/african-american-studies/about-our-program/history/>. On Boyd's legacy, please see the commemorative edition of *The Black Oaks Newsletter*, fall 2009, http://www.elon.edu/docs/e-web/academics/elon_college/African_AfricanAmerican_Studies/BlackOaksNewsletterFall2009.pdf.

¹¹² The best source for AAASE activities under Prudence Layne are the *Black Oaks Newsletters*, online at <https://www.elon.edu/u/academics/arts-and-sciences/african-american-studies/the-black-oaks-newsletter/>.

¹¹³ Perla Salazar-Rangel, "'The Black Man in America' course helps bring diverse students together in classroom," *Elon News Network*, February 4, 2017, <https://www.elonnewsnetwork.com/article/2017/02/black-male-in-america-elon-course>.

¹¹⁴ Barrett Wilbert Weed to Connie Ledoux Book, Personal Communication, June 9, 2020.

¹¹⁵ Recent AAASE program details from Buffie Longmire-Avital to Charles Irons, Personal Communication, September 15 and 16, 2020.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the course of more than two years of work, many people lent their expertise and goodwill to the creation of this report. This partial list of those to whom the committee is indebted serves to give a sense of the scope of the work.

1. Provost's Office and President's Office

President Connie Ledoux Book and Provost Steven House established the Committee on Elon History and Memory in August 2018, and they and members of their staff have supported it steadfastly. Provost Aswani Voley, from his arrival in September 2019, has been as supportive as his predecessor. He and President Book offered formative feedback in November 2019 and July 2020, demonstrating extraordinary commitment during a season of intense external challenges to higher education. Beyond that, the president's office funded participation in Universities Studying Slavery meetings; the retention of an external adviser; a community listening session and covered other incidental expenses. No effort to tell a more inclusive story can be successful without leadership from an institution's senior staff.

2. Office of University Communications

Throughout the process, the staff in Elon's Office of University Communications was instrumental and turned the committee's prose into this report. They understood the committee's vision for a high-quality report that would serve as a resource for future work, and their cooperative spirit and professionalism have been remarkable. Keren Rivas, a member of the committee, bore double duty and helped both to do the research and to communicate its results. Her editorial prowess and constructive spirit were both vital. Many members of Keren's team also played import-

ant roles. For example, Alexa Boschini introduced the report to alumni through The Magazine of Elon, Chris Spires helped to produce a supplementary website and Dan Anderson coordinated the report's release.

3. Office of Alumni Engagement

Deidra Smith in the Office of Alumni Engagement offered wise counsel and administrative support. In particular, she helped orient committee members to new and ongoing initiatives, including the 1963 Club, connected the Black Lumen Project team with representatives from the Elon Black Alumni Network, and assisted in contacting individuals named in the report.

4. University Archives & Special Collections

University Archivist Chrystal Carpenter has served on the committee, but she and her colleague, Libby Coyner, so far exceeded the call of duty in their efforts to research specific aspects of Elon's history and provided the committee with essential documents relevant to Black history at Elon that they deserve special commendation here. Dean of the Carol Grotnes Belk Library and Associate Professor Joan Ruelle supported the archivists and their commitment to the work of the Committee on Elon History and Memory.

5. Other Partners across Campus

The committee's work overlaps with DEI work considerably, and many faculty and staff who have committed themselves professionally and personally to building an inclusive community warmly supported our work. It is impossible to acknowledge every debt, but we would like to recognize some of those who offered specific and concrete feedback on the structure or language of the report.

At the outset, Becca Bishop, Matthew Antonio Bosch and Sylvia Muñoz helped imagine how an initial focus on Black experiences could still be consistent with meaningful future work on LGBTQIA and Latinx people. In the same vein, Paula Patch, Kiah Glenn and Jan Fuller helped to brainstorm strategies and build relationships for future collaboration with the Saponi Band of the Occaneechi. In terms of the specific recommendations, some people gave of their time to help shape the action steps and harmonize them with existing initiatives.

Amy Johnson, Naeemah Clark and Stephanie Baker gave formative feedback on ideas for curricular interventions. Alexis Roberts and Bridgette Agbozo did a qualitative analysis of data submitted by Black faculty, staff and students to identify themes for the Black Lumen Project to address. Faith Shearer helped to think through issues unique to student-athletes, and Melanie Bullock and Mary Morrison discussed intersections with existing off-campus programs. Jim Piatt consulted on naming and renaming policies and did research on peer and aspirant institutions. Rob Springer did critical last-minute research on historic graduation rates, and Peter Felten read carefully a nearly completed draft.

We are sincerely and profoundly grateful for all of those named and unnamed who contributed to the joint work. There will be endless opportunities for additional collaboration, and it is meaningful to have so many willing partners on campus.

6. External Partners and Advisers

Colleagues in Alamance County, in North Carolina and at institutions across the country are engaged in similar work. The committee is grateful for their commitment and partnership, benefited from their advice in the creation of the report and learned how essential collaboration will be moving forward.

Colleagues in Universities Studying Slavery have offered formal and informal support since Elon joined in February 2019. Jody Lynn Allen, Assistant Professor of History and Robert Francis Engs Director of The Lemon Proj-

ect at the College of William & Mary proved an especially important resource. She shared the expertise she has gained in leading the pathbreaking Lemon Project, asked probing questions in the early stages of the committee's work, reviewed the initial minutes and had planned a campus visit only to be foiled by COVID-19.

Off campus, the Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition, an affiliate of Bryan Stevenson's Equal Justice Initiative, proved a valuable partner. This group is attempting to help residents of Alamance County confront anti-Black violence in its history, making the work congruent and the lessons in collaboration relevant.

Senior Pastor James H. Wilkes of Elon First Baptist Church cooperated with Elon's Marilyn Slade to plan a listening session with members of the local community. The advice from this listening session was critical in framing the recommendations and hopefully represents a starting place for further work.

Garry Wiley and Shineece Sellars of African-American Cultural Arts and History Center discussed with the committee the possibility of marking the sesquicentennial of Wyatt Outlaw's murder with an on-campus event. The committee ultimately decided it was not far enough along in its work to be able to organize such an event but established a working relationship with the AACAH that ought to bear fruit in the future.

APPENDIX B

DISCUSSION OF SOURCES

1. Essential Texts

Anyone interested in studying the history of Elon University will find certain sources indispensable. A glance at the notes for this report will reveal the central role of three sources:

Durward T. Stokes, "Elon College, Its History and Traditions" (Elon College, N.C.: Elon College Alumni Association, 1982) — Stokes paid careful attention to Elon's progress and offered a detailed account of many key mile-

stones in the institution's history. Even though the student body had become more diverse by the time he wrote, Stokes did not give substantial attention to Black students. He instead kept his focus on the school's maturation, as indicated by the extended tree metaphor around which he organized the material.

George Troxler, "From a Grove of Oaks: The Story of Elon University" (Elon, N.C.: Elon University, 2014) — Troxler offered an account as sweeping as that of Stokes, lavishly illustrated with photographs and materials from the University Archive and taking the narrative into the 21st century. He added to Stokes' basic narrative new information about both individual students from diverse populations and institutions serving Black-identified students. Particularly notable was his revision of Stokes' account of integration, in which he used an interview collected by L'Tanya Richmond to show some of the challenges Glenda Phillips Hightower faced.

L'Tanya Richmond, "Elon's Black History: A Story to be Told," Master's Thesis (Duke University, 2005) — Richmond's work proved especially valuable for this report, for she focused specifically on the experiences of Black students in the first four decades of integration. Significantly, she recorded, transcribed and attached as appendices to her thesis extraordinarily detailed interviews with 11 students which are essential for any future study. Notably, Richmond did not include student-athletes in her study.

2. The University Archives

The University Archives & Special Collections holds physical copies of most of the material cited in this report and was indispensable in its creation. Those interested in pursuing further research have access to the vast majority of these sources, and many others, as a result of an aggressive effort to digitize archival material. Most of the relevant material may be found online in either the extensive Elon University Collections or the Church History Collections. A cursory glance at the immense volume of materials available online indicates the scope of additional work that could be done.

This report benefited in particular from Elon University's partnership with DigitalNC. Almost 100 editions of the Phi Psi Cli, the Elon yearbook, are available online and text searchable. The same platform also makes it possible to search every extant copy of a student newspaper at Elon, from the Elon College Weekly to the Pendulum.

3. In-Process Interviews

After completing a preliminary draft, the committee chair reached out to individuals named in the report who had contact information on file with the Alumni Office. The resulting conversations and email exchanges were all meaningful, and some of them (cited *passim*) produced substantial changes to the text. Others corrected errors of fact or judgment, confirmed other oral histories or helped shape the final project in more indirect ways. A special and very sincere thank you to, in alphabetical order: Mary Carroll-Robertson, Robin Adams Cheeley, Matthew Clark, Bryant Colson, Vanessa Corbett, Brian Digre, Gwendolyn Crawford Manning, Marvin Morgan, Janice Ratliff and L'Tanya Richmond.

4. Student Researchers

> Lauren Eleuteri Thornhill '08 —

Lauren Eleuteri conducted independent research in spring 2008, in which she wrote about "The Black Exodus from the Christian Church in Virginia and North Carolina." Her work informed the first episode, "The Southern Christian Convention and White Normativity."

> **Rachel Feld '20** — Rachel completed two, separate independent studies on different aspects of Elon history. In spring 2019, she researched the Long family, and her census discoveries feature in the section on "The Long Family and Complicity." Subsequently, in spring 2020, she explored best practices among other colleges and universities doing this work and, in the course of designing a website to help students explore Elon history, learned — and taught the committee — more about Andrew Morgan and Franklinton Christian College.

- > **Anthony Lester '20** — In winter 2020, Anthony worked to complement L'Tanya Richmond's research by adding research on the first Black student-athletes at Elon, especially the Moore brothers. He will recognize some of his work in the section on "Black Student-Athletes: Achievement and Exploitation."
- > **Martha Selph '20** — Martha researched William Harper in spring 2019, helping fill in holes about his biography and calling greater attention to his relationship with Franklinton Christian College, helping set the stage for later research on "William A. Harper: Violence, Segregation and Progressivism."
- > **Emily Lange '21** — Emily, in cooperation with Libby Coyner in the University Archives, completed in fall 2019 a beautiful digital humanities project, "Black Studies Protests: Elon University's Journey to an African and African-American Studies Program." There are several places echoing her work, especially surrounding the 1969 and 1978 letters from Black students and the 1994 birth of AAASE.
- > **Elizabeth "Lizzy" Weber '21** — As the student worker in the Department of History and Geography, Lizzy not only joined Kayla Spalding in scouring yearbooks for images of blackface and the Confederate flag, but she also helped bring order to the citations.
- > **Kayla Spalding '23** — In fall 2020, Kayla bravely helped fill gaps in the report through an independent study in history, looking for information on the graduation rates of Black student-athletes, the first organizations Black students formed, images of blackface and the Confederate flag in the yearbook and Luther Byrd.
- > **Conor Cassidy '23, Hunter Lakey '23, Lauren Singles '23: Mary Carroll Work-ing Group (COR 110, Fall 2019:)** — In fall 2019, five groups in a section of COR 110 (The Global Experience) put together resources about key episodes in

Elon's history. The "Mary Carroll Group" collected in one place much of the surviving documentation of the homecoming event, yearbook slight, and subsequent protest. They will see their work, including the title, reflected in "Mary Carroll and the Problem of Erasure."

APPENDIX C

BLACK LUMEN PROJECT PROPOSAL

Universities Studying Slavery (USS) is an international consortium of nearly 70 higher education institutions dedicated to organizing multi-institutional collaboration as part of an effort to facilitate mutual support in the pursuit of common goals around the core theme of "Universities Studying Slavery." USS allows participating institutions to work together as they address both historical and contemporary issues dealing with race and inequality in higher education and in university communities, as well as the complicated legacies of slavery in modern American society. USS hosts semi-annual meetings to discuss strategies, collaborate on research and learn from one another. Each member institution dedicates resources to examining this important work with the goal to address and acknowledge the role and legacy of slavery.

The Elon University Black Lumen Project: An Equity Initiative has been affiliated with Universities Studying Slavery (USS) since February 2019. It aims to acknowledge and address Elon University's history of anti-Blackness, which it defines as the systemic marginalization and devaluation of Black people through both overt racist actions and seemingly innocuous yet insidious university policies, practices and actions. Although Elon University was founded in 1889, after the official end of slavery, it is necessary to acknowledge that the legacy of systemic racism, as a result of the institution of slavery, lies in the fabric of the institution. It is imperative that Elon acts responsibly and swiftly to recognize the historic and ongoing anti-Black experiences of Black students, staff and faculty. The Black experience at Elon is nuanced and has deep roots that extend throughout the evolution of the university and into the

surrounding community. The Black experience deserves preservation and cultivation. The Black Lumen Project, with a commitment to abolish and atone for anti-Blackness, will move the university towards achieving its commitment to unprecedented inclusive excellence. Its establishment will also position Elon to be a leader in higher education by achieving the following outcomes: social justice, equity, the recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented minoritized students, faculty and staff, dynamic community partnerships, and a model for anti-racist policies. There is uncertainty that is facing this institution as well as all higher education. However, it is nonetheless timely, given chronic and systemic anti-Black violence and aggression, to boldly initiate practices that establish Elon as a beacon for inclusive, equitable and innovative education.

The Black Lumen Project amplifies the work of two anchors of the Black experience at Elon: African & African-American Studies at Elon (AAASE) and the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education (CREDE). These two keepers of the Black experience offer refuge, support, curriculum and advocacy for Black students, faculty and staff, and sustain the presence of informed discourse, high quality scholarship and learning that centers the Black voice. AAASE and the CREDE are essential to the continued pursuit of dispelling anti-Blackness at the University and have been since the early 1990s. The Black Lumen Project also acknowledges that developing and implementing anti-racist practices and policies is a shared university goal and seeks to engage several university departments. To acknowledge, reinforce and support the ongoing scholarly, curricular, professional and student life contributions of AAASE and CREDE, and in a manner consistent with the Boldly Elon strategic plan, the following recommendations are proposed:

Phase I: Amplify Existing Work

1. Reinforce the partnership of AAASE and CREDE through collaborative programs, such as the African Diaspora LLC and Black Solidarity Day. These programs will be primarily facilitated by the assistant director of the CREDE.
 - a. Maintain the linked COR 110 course focused on the African Diaspora for incoming students in the community to help facilitate community development.
 - b. Strengthen the partnership between AAASE, CREDE and the Black Student Union to support informed student civic engagement.
2. Develop and reinforce the strength of the Black voice at Elon through collaborative partnerships among AAASE, CREDE, Elon Black Alumni Network, Black Employee Resource Group, Black Life Advisory Council, Black Student Union and National Panhellenic Council, by maintaining an annual or semi-annual summit bringing all Black affinity groups together.
3. Expand and reimagine the annual Phillips-Perry Black Excellence Awards to include Black graduate and professional students. Specifically, work with graduate and professional school representatives on the Black Excellence Awards Planning committee to re-envision a more inclusive process for honoring Black students' scholarly contributions and achievements.
4. Create a COR Capstone that would also serve as an AAASE elective course, utilizing Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). The goal of this class is to address the unique historic needs and experiences of the local community through a curricular and co-curricular approach. This class would not only support the COR (student requirements in the core curriculum such as ELR and capstone) but it would provide an opportunity to commit to engaging with Alamance Black community members and leaders. The goals of this course align with anti-racist and equity pedagogy, which is curriculum priority.
5. Create a University anti-racist syllabus mapping out select courses and co-curricular activities that recognizes and centers AAASE curricular offerings, CREDE's Intercultural Learning Certificate program, and the undergraduate racial equity course developed by Stephanie Baker and Vice President Randy Williams.

6. Enhance programming and support of wellness for Black faculty and staff through intentional collaborations among the wellness task force, CREDE, BERG, AAASE and the Office of Leadership & Professional Development all rooted in the Act-Belong-Commit wellness model. This should include support specifically focused on strategies for the ongoing navigation of predominately and historically White spaces.
7. To specifically promote positive mental health and holistic well-being for Black students through collaborative programming and infusion of the Act-Belong-Commit wellness model into the Black Solidarity Day.
8. Develop a partnership between Athletics, CREDE and AAASE to generate opportunities for Black student-athletes to engage in programming centering the Black student athlete experience. This includes activities that align with practice/workout and game schedules. Topics that are specific to the experience of being a student athlete of color will be the primary focus.
9. Expand the membership of the Black Life Advisory Council to include representation from AAASE, CREDE and the Black Employee Resource Group.
10. Create experiences for Masters in Higher Education students to engage with and support the work of the CREDE and AAASE in support of their DEI skill development.

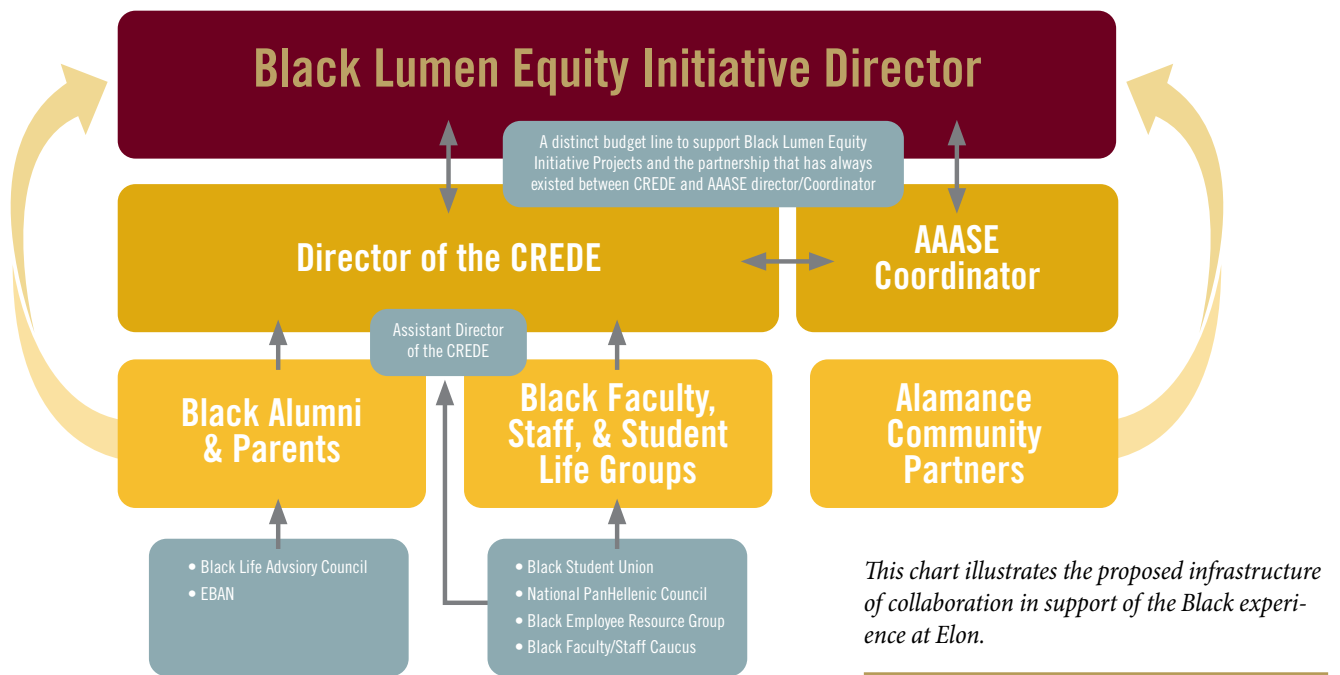
Phase II: Framing for Equity

1. Obtain a budget line to support curricular and co-curricular programs and events that help tell the story of Black voices. This budget line would be specifically for AAASE and CREDE co-sponsored initiatives and programs.
2. Appoint a director of the Black Lumen Project, drawn from the faculty. The director will have a reporting line to the senior administrative staff through the vice president and associate provost for inclusive excellence. Since the director will work so closely with the AAASE and CREDE, the appointment

must meet the approval of the AAASE coordinator or a designated representative from the AAASE advisory committee and the director of the CREDE. Moreover, since the Black Lumen Project evolved from the Committee on Elon History and Memory and involves confronting anti-Black racism in Elon's past as well as its present, selection of the appointed director should be done in partnership with the director of the CREDE, the AAASE coordinator or a designated AAASE representative drawn from the advisory committee, and the chair of History and Memory. The director should receive stipend and support, in the form of course releases, commensurate with other directorships on campus.

The appointed director will ensure the primary objectives of the project are met by doing the following:

- a. Writing and delivering an annual report on the Black experience at Elon.
- b. Maintaining Elon's membership with Universities Studying Slavery (USS).
- c. Working closely with History & Memory initiatives to ensure the Black experience is represented.
- d. Re-examining prior task force reports on the Black students, faculty and staff and ensure recommendations are continued to be advanced.
- e. Collaborating with the director of the CREDE and coordinator of AAASE to ensure shared objectives are met.
- f. Working closely with various persons, programs and departments on campus to ensure the Black experience is represented.
- g. Creating a partnership with the office of Undergraduate Research, the Center for Engaged Learning and the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning that would focus on the experiences of Black students and faculty. This partnership will focus on supporting, preserving and, when appropriate, coordinating faculty and student research on the Black experience.
- h. Set the agenda and facilitate the annual or semiannual summit for AAASE, CREDE, Elon Black Alumni Network, Black Em-



employee Resource Group, Black Life Advisory Council, Black Student Union and National Panhellenic Council.

- i. Creating a community coalition with local Black community members to better understand issues and needs and make recommendations for stronger and sustained engagement with Elon/Burlington/Alamance County Black residents.
- j. Mentoring and supporting Black faculty. Supporting both the CREDE director and AAASE coordinator in expanding their mentorship of Black staff.
- k. Supervising the development of an interactive media Black Lumen web space.
- l. Facilitating the creation of a digital repository for all initiatives and linking the repository to CREDE, AAASE, and Belk Library.
- m. Collaborating with the University Archivist in the creation and preservation of oral histories from Black people connected with the University.
- n. Leading and organize signature Black Lumen Equity Initiative projects and events.

Phase III: Illuminating the Future

The Black Lumen Project will create signature programs, featuring initially:

1. The Wyatt Outlaw Leadership Institute, in collaboration with Elon's Center for Leadership, the School of Education and Black leaders in Alamance County.
 - a. The Black Community State of the Union would be shared at this event.
 - b. Attendees should be primarily Black student leaders, broadly (e.g., student-athletes that serve as captains for the teams, resident advisers, student government, club leaders). Topics will center Black leadership, specifically at PWIs.
 - c. Working through the Equity committee at ABSS and the School of Education, a junior leadership group comprised of Alamance County high school student leaders should also be invited to attend.
2. The establishment of a consortium of Elon faculty and staff with expertise to serve as external consultants for other higher education institutions. This consortium would be led by the appointed director of the project and create a set of standards in line with the Elon model for dismantling

anti-Blackness in higher education. We believe this consortium and facilitated trainings will become a signature program for not just the project but for Elon, cementing the university's reputation as an access and equity driven institution.

Finally, the Elon Black Lumen Project calls on the University to both commit and make the following actions **immediately**:

1. Follow through on recommendations from the Committee on Elon History and Memory to change the built environment, and the way we orient visitors to it, in ways that honor Black people and the Black experience at Elon, specifically:
 - a. Establish protocols for naming and renaming buildings, monuments and areas on campus that includes past Black faculty, staff and students.
 - b. Create a memorial to Black labor at Elon that is visible, prominent and communicates the untold history and stories of the people who helped form Elon University.
 - c. Partner with the Office of Admissions to offer a Black History and Culture Tour as a specialized tour for visitors.
2. Hire an external reviewer/consultant to evaluate the effectiveness of our current bias reporting system and determine additional recommendations.
3. Increase training and education for campus safety on engaging with Black community members.
4. Require professional development for department chairs, P&T chair(s) and its members regarding cultural competency and implicit bias.
5. In acknowledging that often Black faculty and staff serve in departments by themselves, equip the Black Employee Resource Group (BERG) with resources, encourage strategic partnerships and recognize participation in the facilitation of BERG initiatives as institutional service and meeting the qualifications of merit-pay DEI work. Specifically, we propose in partnership with BERG, to:

- a. Provide cross-campus/interdisciplinary/department mentorship, guidance and support through a formalized mentoring network.
- b. Create and support a Black Faculty-Staff coalition that would be recognized by the university as a pipeline for recruiting and sustaining Black faculty and staff representation on various shared governance initiatives and committees.
- c. Create positions on Academic Council and Staff Council that center the needs and voice of Black faculty and staff.

APPENDIX D

CONTEXT OF ELON'S WORK ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

The work of the Committee on Elon History and Memory is a subset of DEI work more generally, and it fits within the context of other efforts to serve Black-identified students, faculty and staff. The lists below are far from comprehensive but provide an indication of how the recommendations contained in this report fit in with the progress of DEI work at Elon over the past decade and the new initiatives for diversity, equity and inclusion announced in 2020.

Absent from the lists is the founding of African and African-American Studies at Elon (AAASE), whose founding in 1994 predates the period covered here. The positive impact of this key initiative for the experience of Black-identified students on Elon's campus cannot be overstated as highlighted in one of the 10 episodes introduced in this report.

Students have also advocated for Black students at Elon over time in ways that are difficult to enumerate on a list. In recent years, for instance, students have spearheaded numerous powerful protests, including the 2015 Rally for Respect and Racial Equality and the 2016 silent march for Black Lives Matter. On September 1, 2020, members of the Black Student Union hosted a Black Solidarity night to amplify Black voices in the struggle against systemic racism.

***The Elon Commitment – Examples of Progress
on DEI Work at Elon Over the Past Decade***

1. In 2010, Elon established the Intersect Diversity and Leadership Conference, a partnership between the Center for Leadership and CREDE, and supported the Black Student Union in the development and enhancement of the Black Solidarity Conference for students and Black allies. Intersect Conference is an annual conference that happens in the Fall Semester.
2. In 2010, the Elon Black Alumni Network Scholarship was endowed and the first award was given to Janelle Bennett '14 at the African-American Commencement Reception in May 2011. Intended to help make an Elon education available to deserving Black students, the Elon Black Alumni Network Scholarship fund had been established three years prior, in 2007. Thanks to pledges and gifts from EBAN members and friends of the university, the EBAN endowment is currently valued over \$300,000.
3. In 2013, then Elon University President Leo M. Lambert called for the start of the Presidential Task Force on Black Student, Faculty, and Staff Experiences Implementation and Assessment Team (IAT) to be established. The task force, which consists of Elon faculty and staff, works to assess the experience of African-American students, faculty and staff and write recommendations on how to improve them.
4. The Center for Access and Success was established in 2014 to help students from all backgrounds have access to and succeed in higher education. The Center includes three programs:
 - a. The Odyssey Program is a highly selective merit-based program for talented students who are academically strong, civically engaged, action-oriented leaders in their communities, who will benefit from an Elon education and demonstrate financial need. To date, the program has produced 270 graduates, and Elon looks forward to enrolling 43 new Odyssey Program scholars this fall. This program continues to expand, and the university looks forward to further growth over the next decade as new Odyssey scholarships are added.
 - b. The Elon Academy is a college access and success program for academically promising high school students in Alamance County with a financial need and/or no family history of college.
 - c. The “It Takes a Village” Project is a literacy and tutoring program, pairing Elon students and community volunteers with hundreds of children in the Alamance-Burlington School System.
5. In 2014, Elon merged the former Multicultural Center and El Centro to create the Center for Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity Education (CREDE), with a renovated and expanded footprint on the second floor of the Moseley Center, a specific focus on race and ethnicity, and additional staff and programming. The CREDE provides a vibrant home in Moseley Center and expanded support and programming for Elon’s African American/Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, Alaskan Native and multi-racial communities. The CREDE includes the DEEP Social Justice Education Program, El Centro, the S.M.A.R.T. Mentoring Program, the Phillips-Perry Black Excellence Awards and many other initiatives.
6. Elon enhanced faculty and staff professional development to tackle bias and racism through CREDE initiatives like the annual Race-nicity Series beginning in 2014 and in 2015 the Race, Reflections and Discussion Series in partnership with the Office of Leadership and Professional Development.
7. In 2015, Elon adopted the goals of a Presidential Task Force on the Black Student Experience and worked to realize those benchmarks.³
8. Since 2016, the Office of Alumni Engagement has led a partnership with CREDE and AAASE to present the Donning of the Kente event—a traditional ceremony where graduating seniors receive stoles made of Kente cloth imported from West Africa. The Kente cloth’s

- intricate designs are a visual representation of the story, legacy and values of persons within the African Diaspora. The cloth also symbolizes and celebrates prestige in many African societies. Students have the opportunity to select someone, often an Elon faculty or staff member, to present them with their Kente cloth and acknowledge their accomplishments.
9. In spring 2017, Elon established a Black Life Advisory Council (BLAC) composed of Black parents, alumni and friends of the university with a focus on the university's initiative to enhance opportunities and engagement in the Elon experience for Black students, faculty, staff and alumni. The council aims to model leadership in philanthropy, support Black student recruitment efforts and provide strategic advice that promotes an inclusive climate and better outcomes for the Black hence the entire Elon community.
 10. In the fall of 2017, Elon founded the Black Employee Resource Group (ERG) to support Black faculty and staff, who are vital to the success of students and community building. Their vision is to serve, advocate, and preserve the history of Black history at Elon.
 11. Jean Rattigan-Rohr, vice president for access and success and professor of education, became the university's first Black vice president in 2018. In her role she provides essential leadership on the university Senior Staff, leads Elon's partnerships with the Alamance Burlington School System, and provides oversight for the nationally- and internationally-recognized Odyssey Program, Elon Academy and Village Project.
 12. In 2018, President Connie Ledoux Book appointed a Committee on Elon History and Memory to find and tell the untold stories of Elon, help us learn from a comprehensive history of the university and advance a more inclusive environment. A subcommittee of the group is focused on examination of race and anti-Black racism and Elon has joined the Universities Studying Slavery initiative.
 13. Elon supported the development of a curriculum to teach students intercultural competencies, including an Intercultural Learning Certificate Program coordinated by the CREDE. In 2018, all entering teacher education students must complete the program as a requirement for the major.
 14. Since 2018, DEI values have been embedded in the learning outcomes for the university Core Curriculum, including the Common Reading program, and that work has been consistently enhanced under the leadership of Amy Johnson, executive director of the Core Curriculum and associate professor of history. Naeemah Clark, professor of communications, is in a new role as coordinator for diversity, inclusion and equity initiatives in the Elon Core Curriculum with a specific charge to continue to strengthen the focus on these efforts throughout the student experience with the Core.
 15. Elon diversified counseling services to ensure Black students can visit with professionals dedicated to their mental health and well-being that fully understand their experience.
 16. Elon has hired and continued to increase the number of staff who support Black students and first-generation students at Elon. For example, Elon hired additional admissions counselors to support enrollment of Black students and joined the Common Application to lower the barriers to applying to Elon. This action has resulted in a 100% increase in applications from Black students, and in the fall of 2020 the university welcomed the largest number of new Black students since 2011.

³ A 2019 update of those ongoing efforts is available here: https://www.elon.edu/u/diversity-inclusion/wp-content/uploads/sites/823/2018/05/BlackExperiences_SpringUpdates2019.pdf

Boldly Elon: 15 Action Steps

Over the summer 2020, the university launched 15 diversity, equity and inclusion actions steps to better stage the success of Black students and promote a richer and most just intellectual community more effectively.

1. Leadership appointment of Randy Williams to the new position of vice president and associate provost for inclusive excellence to drive progress.
2. Revision of the curriculum so students in all majors are required to take courses that drive deeper understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion.
3. Removal of the name of former Elon President William A. Harper (1911–31) from the residence hall in the Colonnades Neighborhood for his role in advancing racist ideas (read more on page 15).
4. Redesign Elon's bias response system to be as effective and transparent as the law allows, providing regular updates about incidents of racism as well as the actions taken.
5. All future merit pay increases for faculty and staff will be based in part on their commitment to professional development related to diversity, equity and inclusion.
6. Provide anti-racism education for all new students as part of New Student Orientation and student leader training.
7. Infuse anti-racist content and pedagogy throughout the curriculum by examining processes and practices across the university with a goal of remedying areas where inequities exist.
8. Engage in a sustained partnership with a racial equity organization to support and optimize both internal and external anti-racist and racial equity work.
9. Revamp and promote Elon's existing Diversity Course Database to include substantial content related to social identity and social justice related to systems of oppression in the U.S.
10. Develop equity-minded hiring protocols for all university divisions to better identify a diverse pool of excellent candidates for open positions to be completed by December 2020.
11. Implement harassment and discrimination prevention and anti-bias training for all employees to be completed by December 2020.
12. Re-establish the pre- and post-doctoral program to promote hiring of exemplary faculty in areas that align with institutional needs.
13. Enhance recruitment efforts for underrepresented students through its new test-optional admissions policy and partnerships with programs that prepare K-12 students for college.
14. Expand aid for Black students to attend and experience Elon by creating 200 new scholarships, tripling the endowment of the Black Alumni Scholarship fund and expanding internship support.
15. Expand the Black Life Advisory Council, which advises the president and senior staff, to include faculty, staff and students besides alumni and parents.

