Centennial Memory Capsule - Interview #174

Interview Date: February 16, 2012

Participants: Quentin Magee (MTSU student) and Vincent Windrow (MTSU staff, Director of Intercultural & Diversity Affairs Center)

Transcript of clip:

Magee: How would you say the atmosphere of campus life—you were on campus?

Windrow: Oh, yes I was!

Magee: How was the atmosphere like back then compared to now?

Windrow: It was excitement in the air when we were here. It was excitement. It seemed like the students were more engaged then, than now. It seemed like the causes that were lifted up—students more easily identified with the cause, and were more ready to protest, were more ready to be, uh, to put some energy, to put some resources behind this particular cause. For example, I think it was in 1989—my memory slips me—but I wrote a column in the Sidelines. I was a Sidelines columnist. I wrote a column about the Nathan Bedford Forrest statue that was then on the Keathley University Center. Nathan Bedford Forrest is generally accepted to be the first Grand Master of the Ku Klux Klan; also, a very great strategist, a great military mind during the Civil War for the Confederacy. And, later on, at the end of that semester, President Dr. Sam Ingram had the statue taken down. Well, when we lifted that cause up, black students, white students, progressive-minded students of all ilk and colors and kinds rallied to support that protest because they saw it as an injustice not just to black folk or black students or black staff or black administrators, but they saw it as an injustice to the entire student body. So, uh, interestingly enough, back in 1968, Sylvester Brooks, Jr. lifted the same cause up. And, as a matter of fact, there is literature that states that he used to stand outside the Keathley University Center and throw rocks at the statue in protest of it being there. Sylvester Brooks, Jr. went on to become an attorney, very successful, recently retired in Ohio. But he was very instrumental in lighting the fire that eventually caused that statue to be taken down, and rightfully so. It was the end of not only of an era, in terms of e-r-a, but the end of an error, in terms of e-r-r-o-r.

End of clip.