

MORGAN STATE MARKS ITS ROLE AS CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER

Childs, Walker

[ProQuest document link](#)

ABSTRACT

"[...] we're going to set some history straight," Gibson told a crowd of more than 300 alumni and dignitaries who packed the university's student center to watch the unveiling of photos, news clippings and a replica lunch counter.

FULL TEXT

Julia Davidson-Randall knew she was likely to be arrested. But as the Morgan State junior's second day in a Baltimore jail bled into a third, she began to wonder what she had gotten herself into.

"I honestly didn't know what was going to happen," she said 48 years later, reflecting on her incarceration for protesting segregation at the Northwood movie theater near Morgan's campus.

The Baltimore native was back at Morgan on Thursday to celebrate the unveiling of a permanent exhibit depicting the role she and hundreds of fellow students played in fueling the civil rights movement.

Morgan students stormed Annapolis in 1947 to demand equality in educational funding, and they were still demonstrating 16 years later, when the national movement had caught up to them.

For decades, said exhibit curator and University of Maryland law professor Larry Gibson, Morgan's crusaders failed to get their due for staging sit-ins and marching on Washington years before the more celebrated protests.

"Finally, we're going to set some history straight," Gibson told a crowd of more than 300 alumni and dignitaries who packed the university's student center to watch the unveiling of photos, news clippings and a replica lunch counter.

Memories in the room were thick. Many of the attendees had participated in sit-ins at 37 Read's drugstores or the mass arrest at the cinema. There were even three alumni who had helped with the 1947 occupation of Annapolis by 600 Morgan students.

"We wanted facilities and housing that were up to the standards of the white institutions," said Elaine Procter Blackwell, a 1949 graduate who helped organize the Annapolis protests. "I didn't think I would live to see this recognition, but I am so grateful."

Davidson-Randall, a 1964 graduate, ended up incarcerated for four days. She never did see a movie at Northwood, though the protests eventually led to its desegregation.

"These two were cellmates," Gibson said, putting his arms around Davidson-Randall and her old friend, Anita Turks Hunter.

"My mother asked me if I was crazy," Turks Hunter said, recalling her call home from jail.

The women posed for snapshots beside a large display of photos and news clippings depicting their deeds. They remembered how they were briefly celebrities on campus after their arrests.

"So many colleges were involved, and we just felt the passion of the times," Davidson-Randall said.

"We wanted to participate. It was easier because there were so many of us who felt that way."

A procession of speakers praised the Morgan graduates and said the exhibit should stir current students to continue fighting for social progress.

"Just sitting here, I've been deeply moved and touched by history," said U.S. Rep. John Lewis of Georgia, one of the most famous surviving civil rights leaders.

He remembered the signs for segregated seating that he used to see everywhere.

"Because of you," he said, "the only place this generation will see those signs is in an exhibit or a book or maybe in a video. They're gone, and they will never return."

Student body president DaQuan Lawrence said the history lesson will arm him with bragging rights when he talks to students from other historically black institutions. "I can say that my school officially started the civil rights movement," he said.

Alumni and elected leaders beamed as they sat on original stools from Read's that were part of the reproduction of a 1950s lunch counter. Earlier this year, Morgan leaders were among those who helped save two walls of the Read's store at Howard and Lexington streets that was slated to be razed as part of a \$150 million development.

Morgan President David Wilson drew a hearty cheer when he mentioned that preservation effort.

Of Thursday's unveiling, Wilson said it was time to celebrate a generation that sought real change instead of empty glory.

"What they had in mind was not recognition or notoriety," he said, "but simply the freedoms that you and I enjoy today."

childs.walker@baltsun.com

Credit: The Baltimore Sun

Illustration

Photo(s); Caption: Clarence Logan, a member of Morgan's Class of 1966, unveils three original Read's drug store stools that are now on display at the university student center. It is part of a new civil rights exhibit.

DETAILS

Subject:	College campuses; Civil rights movements
Publication title:	The Baltimore Sun; Baltimore, Md.
First page:	A.8
Publication year:	2011
Publication date:	Nov 11, 2011
Section:	Local
Publisher:	Tribune Publishing Company, LLC
Place of publication:	Baltimore, Md.
Country of publication:	United States, Baltimore, Md.
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--United States
ISSN:	19439504
Source type:	Newspaper
Language of publication:	English
Document type:	News
ProQuest document ID:	903205267
Document URL:	https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/morgan-state-marks-role-as-civil-rights-leader/docview/903205267/se-2?accountid=34685
Copyright:	(Copyright 2011 @ The Baltimore Sun Company)
Last updated:	2021-10-05
Database:	Baltimore Sun

Database copyright © 2023 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)