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notes

Editorial Staff

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From the Editors Notebook

Cosby Honored



At an impromptu ceremony in the College of Fine Arts gallery on March 3, the university awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws degree to Bill Cosby.

Cosby, who has made his mark as a phenomenally successful comedian, actor, producer and author of books on the best-seller list, has done more than any other single African American to support Black institutions of higher learning.

He and his wife Camille, who in 1987 received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree from the university, have contributed more than \$23 million primarily to Black colleges and universities, including Howard. The most publicized example of the Cosbys' generosity, though, was their record-breaking \$20 million gift to Spelman College.

Howard University President James E. Cheek presided over the impromptu ceremony on a day the campus became the setting for a '60s and '70s style student protest. . .

Protest '89

The protest involved more than 2,000 people, mostly students, who took every available seat and standing space in Cramton Auditorium, thereby necessitating the cancellation of the traditional Charter Day Convocation and preempting Cosby's anticipated address.

The student protest was *NOT* directed at Cosby, for whom the students said they have high regard.

The students who staged vociferous but peaceful protest in and outside Cramton and at the Blackburn Center and who subsequently held the university's administration building for three days were concerned with a number of issues, the foremost being the appointment of Republican National Committee Chairman Lee Atwater to Howard's Board of Trustees. The protestors viewed Atwater, in their words, as "consistently opposed to the agenda of African American people." Also, the protestors said they were deeply concerned with the negative racial overtones of the Republican Party's 1988 presidential campaign, which Atwater skillfully managed.

As a result of the student take-over of the administration building, Atwater chose to resign from the board (to which he was appointed in January), citing his fears that "someone could be injured in the protest." In his letter of resignation to board chairman John Jacob, Atwater said: "I leave with no bitterness; and while I will have no official connection with the university, I want you and the other members of the Board to know that I stand ready to help you, the faculty, and the student body in any way I can in the future."

With the Atwater issue behind them, the protesting students and university officials came to terms on the remaining issues. As set forth in "A Covenant between Howard University and the Coalition of Concerned Howard University Students," the issues and their resolution were as follows:

- 1) That no disciplinary action of any kind be taken against the protestors;
- 2) That the protestors be discharged from liability for any damages to university property;
- 3) That student trustees have the right to participate on committees of the Board of Trustees, including the Nominations and Degree Committee;
- 4) That the class withdrawal date be extended from March 10 to March 17, 1989;
- 5) That students may develop and present for consideration proposals for the establishment of a graduate African American Studies Department and for academic credit for community service;
- 6) That the university establish a comprehensive program to renovate existing dormitories and construct new ones and that a schedule of this work be published in the weekly student newspaper, *The Hilltop*;
- 7) That the university take appropriate measures to increase campus security to better protect students, faculty, staff and guests; and

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