

## Ending racism in all our interests



Felicia BROWN  
Columnist

Once I knew a white girl. She told me one day that white people did not owe black people anything, and that we should stop expecting white people to do everything for us. She believed that even though there used to be feelings of supremacy and domination from white folks, all that is over now. We should stop feeling sorry for ourselves and stop acting like the world is in debt to us. She didn't even know she was racist.

### COMMENTARY

On the campus of USC, there are a lot of people just like her, whether white, black, yellow, red, or whatever color their skin has been blessed to show. For so long they have believed that their way was the "right" way, that no other opinion mattered.

I just am not able to conceive the notion of judging someone because of the orientation of their body. Remember in high school or middle school when there used to be that one feature about you that made you cringe when anyone would mention it? You prayed nightly that it would correct itself while you were asleep.

My old best friend had a horrible overbite. People would whisper nasty remarks behind her back. But I realized that if she wasn't bothered by her teeth, that I hadn't a reason to be either. When there are so many flawed personalities, and so many other things that I am able to hold against people, the last thing in the world I judge people by is their skin color.

When you meet someone for the first time, what makes a good first impression? This is where we need to start work. Do you hold different standards for that fine, tall brother that you wouldn't mind kickin' it with in your dorm room after midnight? What about that cheerful, sparky sorority girl that just moved into the room next to yours? Do you just assume that Asian man can't speak English well enough for you to carry on a conversation? What about the obviously gay man that is standing behind you in the lunch line? What would he have to do to make a good first impression on you? Would it be easier for that fine brother than it would for that jumpy sorority girl? Why?

No doubt that there are certain people we feel more comfortable around. But should other people be ostracized because you don't know them? If you haven't exchanged a word with somebody, but you can already tell that you can't stand to be around them, you are prejudiced.

"She looks like she dates black guys," my friend once said about this white woman sitting at another table at the restaurant where we were dining. When I asked her how she could tell, she said that the woman was the type of white woman that black men look for. She had a big butt and lots of money that she could spend on him. I couldn't tell.

Race relations is a touchy subject, considering we are all humans fighting to survive in an ever-changing world.

What can I share with you to make you examine your own actions, to rethink the next derogatory message you send? It's admittedly hard to give everybody a chance who wants one.

But the man next to you against whom you are acting prejudiced just may be the same man to save your life one day. Who knows who will be there to help us through the bad times?

Isn't it usually the people who you would have never thought about?

# Self-segregation apparent at USC

## Students find racial comfort zones

asst. features editor  
KRISTIN FREESTATE

Walter Jackson, the director of multicultural student affairs, calls it "a broad term that, really, no one wants to define."

But regardless of preference, the word "minority" is one that must be considered, whether it refers to a racial group, to women or to the disabled.

Although enforced segregation is a thing of the past, self-segregation — the tendency of minority groups of people to stay within those groups — is, according to Jackson, "an issue, depending on your vantage point."

"Self-segregation, to me, exists everywhere in the country," Jackson said. "And I think (it) happens when, basically, people who like the same types of things congregate together."

"A congregation of likes is not uncommon in America."

Self-segregation can make itself most apparent in eating areas around campus or audience populations at public events. Indeed, according to Jackson, the typical scenario that comes to people's minds when they consider self-segregation is that of "black students in a cafeteria sitting together."

Many might cite such instances as evidence of a racial problem, but Jackson believes they become the focus simply because "to the naked eye, you can see the physical differences in terms of skin color and how certain pockets of certain populations may gather together in fellowship."

However, Jackson pointed out that white students as well as other "majority" students are guilty of the same.

"I think it's very important that we keep in mind that all students do that, whether they're minority or not," Jackson said.

Cleveland Sellers, professor of African-American studies, has a similar perspective, although he said he "[doesn't] detect a pattern of segregation (on campus), from the premise that segregation would be a kind of enforced,



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Self-segregation is apparent in many facets of USC. One such place is the dining area of Chick-fil-A and the Carolina Grill. Greek organizations seem to be segregated as well.

or a policy, or an implied withdrawal or exclusion of a group."

Sellers said he sees where social or ethnic groups of students have a tendency to eat together or sit together at an activity.

"But I don't think that is an exclusion of any other students," Sellers said, "so I don't view that as segregation and the definition of segregation as I know it. I think that, for all practical purposes, we have managed to rise above that."

Sellers said he believes USC has escaped the problem of self-segregation by means of programs through the multicultural department, the African-American Studies program, the kinds of forums that allow people to become more aware of "the positive attributes of cultural diversity" and other practices, such as designating Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a holiday and "the drive to provide more diverse faculty."

Although Sellers believes self-segregation is not a problem, he still encourages the student body to continue to learn more about other cultures and to interact with other minority students.

"I think that we are in the process of educating young adults at the uni-

versity, and we have a responsibility to expose them to the diversity of our environment," Sellers said.

Jackson has a similar belief regarding the importance of education to encourage diversity. "I think that knowledge is truly the variable in the equation," Jackson said.

"People who congregate together typically are homogeneous, and a lot of it may very well be that we don't see a healthy mixing, so to speak, because of a lack of information."

Charo Davis, the chairman of minority affairs for student government, agrees. While she believes that a misconception exists about self-segregation in that the situation "is not all bad," she does see the possibility for improvement.

According to Davis, the comfort that people feel by remaining in their specific cliques can lead to miscommunication and a lack of understanding.

"Once we get communication out there," Davis said, "the understanding will come."

The student body plays an integral role in the spreading of such information, Davis said. "We need (the students) to tell us what they need and what they want."

The communication between students and student government is especially important concerning the program planning. "We want to plan events for all minorities," Davis said.

By scheduling forums and speakers on a regular basis next year, Davis hopes that students will experience "interaction and understanding" so they will feel comfortable openly speaking to others, with the intention of learning more about a different culture or experience and without the fear of insulting anyone.

Creating a program schedule that will appeal to students from all walks of life is also paramount to Carolina Productions' Black Cultural Commissioner Keisha Mouzon.

Mouzon believes self-segregation is an issue on campus because "it's human nature for people to look for others similar to them because it's just comfortable."

"That doesn't mean that [self-segregation] is right, necessarily, or wrong either," Mouzon said. "People need to realize it's something we all seem to do unconsciously."

As commissioner, Mouzon sees the need to appeal to a broad audience

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## Are Greek groups split?

staff writer KENLEY YOUNG

The apparent racial segregation within USC's Greek system remains an ongoing source of dissatisfaction for many USC students.

However, Greek officials insist that such segregation merely is the result of tradition. According to Director of Greek Life Gena Staggs, most of the primarily white fraternities and sororities at USC were founded at a time when African-Americans were forbidden to attend universities.

"If you look at the predominantly black sororities and fraternities, you simply find that most were founded at predominantly black schools [during segregation]," Staggs said. "To be honest, it's kind of an indicator of being in the South."

Staggs also believes that a lot of Greek segregation is the result of the different recruiting processes between black and white Greek organizations.

Former Student Body President Jamel Franklin agrees that tradition plays a major role in Greek segregation.

"It's the same reason that we have somewhat of a self-imposed segregation on campus. People have found their social comfort zones based upon the backgrounds they were brought up in," Franklin said. "We cling to those comfort zones, and that's unfortunate."

SG Vice President Chris Dorsel does not place the blame on the Greek system. He claims that an individual is free to select any fraternity or sorority for possible recruitment.

"It's not like either organization specifically excludes the other. It's an individual decision," Dorsel said.

Many USC student leaders attribute Greek segregation to cultural differences between races. Alpha Phi Alpha President Kendrick Morton says discrimination is not the actual issue.

"It's not so much about discrimination but more about cultural differences. In South Carolina, there is still such a divide between these differences, and I think that it's seen even more within the Greek system," Morton said.

Sorority Council President Debby Hames also identified the differing interests of certain fraternities and sororities as a contributing factor to the structure of the Greek system.

"I personally would like to see more interaction between these [Greek] groups, but most of them simply place an emphasis on different activities," Hames said.

"I haven't heard directly about any problems, but I've heard people comment on the separation that exists on campus," Stringer said.

She believes that the most important thing for the student body to do as a whole is to address the problems and work together to change it. As multicultural affairs director, she wants to try to get the student body involved with working towards change as much as possible.

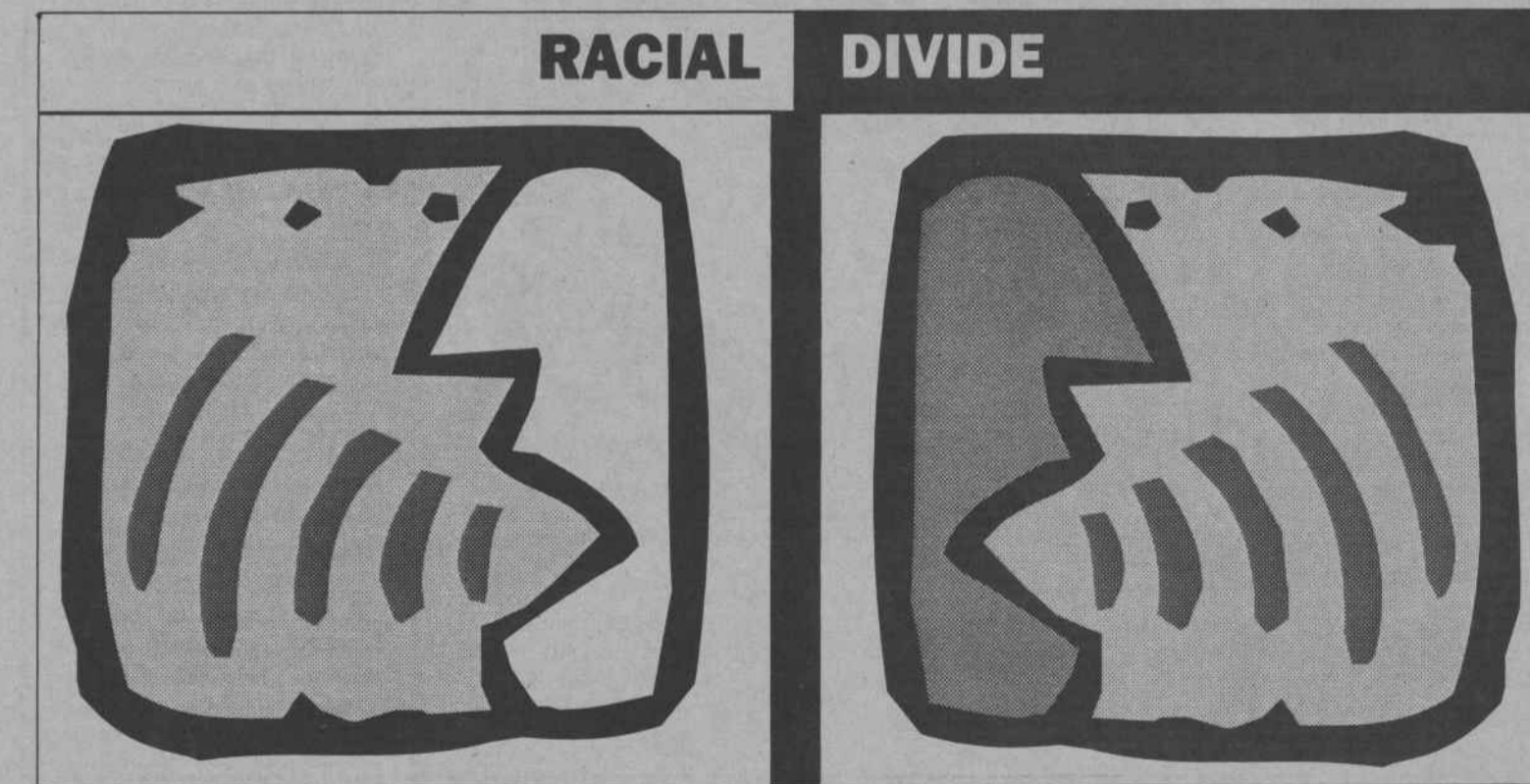
"I have a lot of plans and ideas for next year," Stringer said.

One of her proposals is to distribute surveys to get the student body's opinion about the situation of race relations and to hear their ideas. In this way, she hopes, "students will realize it's okay to be involved."

She said that honesty, communication and open-mindedness among all students are some of the keys to working towards finding permanent solutions to the racial problems that persist on campus.

"If you're not a part of the solution, then you're part of the problem," Stringer said.

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## SG looks to contribute to race relations solutions

senior writer BRAD WALTERS



The status of race relations on campus has recently been a topic of concern among students at USC, and Student Government leaders have been pressed to find solutions to the problems and complaints they have heard as this issue continues to develop.

SG president Kim Dickerson thinks that there is a lot of work to be done, especially now, with race relations problems on campus. She does, however, feel that positive steps are being taken.

"I think there are a lot of students who are ready to do something about it, which is very positive and exciting," Dickerson said.

She said every branch of SG, especially Senate and Cabinet, has been working to find ways to improve race relations on campus.

"We'd like to put on some programs and co-program with other organizations to bring awareness and education to students," she said.

One of the biggest problems she sees right now is that "so many people are talking and not really listening."

"We're all at USC wanting the same things, learning and living together, and I think we need to get to know each other better before making judgments," Dickerson said.

SG vice-president Chris Dorsel says that a key in tackling this issue is for students to first address the fact that there is a problem and then find solutions from there.

Charo Davis, chair of the Multicultural Affairs senate committee, says she feels the different races on campus are more together than separate, but that there are definitely race relations problems that can't just be overlooked.

"My committee and I discuss solutions to try to improve race relations on campus," she said. "We will try to have a forum every month to talk about some solutions."

Davis said that one thing the committee would like to do is "set up programs where different races can interact more and understand each other."

She feels that, even though there are some problems, the issue of race relations has been blown out of proportion in many ways.

"I think the major problem is a lack of communication and some misunderstanding... race relations on campus are good, but they can be better," she said.

During student government elections in February, many accused *The Gamecock* of giving certain candidates unfair coverage, while *The Gamecock* contended that it represented all the candidates fairly.

Davis said this was "a perfect example" of the misunderstanding in communication that seems to be prevalent between whites and blacks on campus.

Martina Stringer, director of multicultural affairs in the Executive Cabinet, agrees that lack of communication is a large problem. She says that all races, whether they be white, African-American, Asian-American, Latin American, Native American or any other group, should be more

open to understanding and appreciating the unique blend of different cultures on campus.

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