

Blacks

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... He called me stupid in front of the entire class." Morgan says this is the same professor who told one of her friends that "no black would ever make better than a C in his class." She says there have been other incidents but she'd "just rather not get to all of that."

Joan, who attended an inner-city high school, says she chose to study A&M because her high school principal said it had a good program in environmental design. Joan says it was difficult to adjust to a college that was predominantly white after attending a high school that was half black and half Hispanic, but an incident that occurred in her first semester made it even more so.

"My first two years I was in architecture, and I was the only black in my first environmental design class. . . . We did everything from free-view drawings to building little models, and I was there early in the morning, on the weekends and late at night working on my projects."

"At the end of the semester, the professor told me that I had earned an 'A' but he was going to give me a 'B.' I asked him why. He didn't really come out and say that he didn't want blacks making 'A's' in his class, but . . . I could tell he didn't want to give me an 'A' because I was black."

"I didn't know what to do. I thought, 'What did I do for this man to do something like this?' I didn't know where to go or who to talk to. This was the first time I'd ever experienced something like that. In high school, when I did my very best, I would get an A. . . . In this case, I had put my all and all into it, . . . and I knew I had earned an A, and that hurt me. . . . I'll never forget that."

But Joan says this incident didn't influence her decision to change majors. Instead, she switched to another department because she didn't feel challenged by her classes, and she also was interested more in math and science.

In her new major, Joan says she has had at least three run-ins with racist professors.

In one of the first classes she took in the department, Joan studied with a Hispanic student who sat near her. "If we had questions about the homework, we would ask our prof about it at the end of class. . . . We'd ask him why something was wrong, and he'd say, 'I can't answer that right now.' We'd ask, 'Well, will you be in your office later on?' and he'd say, 'No, I'm busy.'"

Joan says this happened to them a number of times.

"I'm just sick of the . . . department and the things that they're doing," she says. "You can go to the head of the department or the mentor, but they're never going to speak out against a prof. I know that because I've seen it and heard it."

"They make it seem as if it's your fault, as if you're not comprehending enough to make the grade, and I know that's not the case. They just give you the runaround."

Both students say that white students in their department have been reluctant in helping them to protest the things that have happened to them. Because of this, it has been difficult for them to prove a professor has not been grading their work along with the rest of the class.

Morgan says, "I can't blame them for being reluctant because that department is so small you're bound to run into every professor at least twice before you leave, but . . ."

The students say some of these professors have a history of discrimination against black students and that they were warned about them beforehand. But they say there's no way to avoid having the classes the professors teach.

Morgan and Joan say their department head has been reluctant to tangle with these professors and has given them little support.

But, Morgan says, there are professors who are fair.

"Their classes are very difficult," she says, "but when it comes to grading, they're fair. I mean, anybody will tell you that (this prof) is hard and you're really going to have to study to pass, but if you get out of his class, you're really going to know it (the material)."

In those classes, Morgan says, black students won't find professors telling African students that if they "spent less time practicing their tribal war dances and more time studying, they might pass" as one professor told a student in one of her classes.

Both students say that because of the things they've gone through, they wouldn't recommend the University to other blacks.

"I'd tell them to stay as far away from A&M as they can," Morgan says. "There are other universities that can give them the same education as they could get here, and they wouldn't have to go through all the hassles. I think they're very, very old-fashioned and very close-minded."

Morgan says this holds true for not only her department but other departments in her college.

Of the 14 students interviewed, only these two students felt they could say positively that someone had discriminated against them. Two others say they thought they could have been discriminated against, and three others say they

have heard what one student termed "the horror stories" from friends.

Still, seven students have been fortunate enough to not have experienced any prejudice.

Bobby Bisor, a senior sociology major and president of the Memorial Student Center Council, says he's had friends who have had problems but that he has been fortunate enough to only have been brushed by it.

"I walked in to add-drop, and I . . . got my printout and was on my way out when one of the ladies standing at the table said, 'Oh, is everything OK?' And I said, 'Uh-huh.' She said, 'You did get all your classes, didn't you?' and I said, 'Yes.' She said, 'Well, I just wanted to know if you hadn't because you all are supposed to get all your classes.' I said, 'I beg your pardon — you all?' And she said, 'Yes, you athletes.'"

"I said, 'No, I'm not an athlete.' She said, 'You don't play football or basketball?' I said, 'No, I'm tall, but I don't play basketball.' She said, 'You don't play football?' I said, 'No, I don't play football, either. No, I'm just a student.' And she said, 'Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that interesting?'"

"She probably really just had to take a break after that," Bisor says with a laugh.

"At first I was really upset by it," he says, turning serious, "but then I thought, 'Poor lady, she just doesn't understand.'"

"I mean how often does a tall, black guy walk in and is not an athlete?"

Unlike Morgan and Joan, Bisor has been able to dismiss what has happened to him, and he and Joselyn Anglin, a sophomore speech communications major, give A&M a good review. They and seven other students say they would recommend the University to other blacks.

Anglin says that by attending a predominantly white university, blacks learn to deal with white students and professors with a variety of attitudes. She says that's important to learn because blacks will have to deal with these same attitudes when they try to find jobs.

Bisor says he would tell prospective students that although A&M is slow to change and sometimes resistant to change, it is a good university.

"I'd caution them about the lack of entertainment programming," he says. ". . . and I'd tell them they're going to run into people who don't like them because they're black, but not to let that bother them. I'd tell them, 'Never throw in the towel.'"

Accident

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Daniel's legs were severely extended the accident by a combination of water pressure and his position under the kayak, and veins and tendons in Daniel's lower legs were destroyed.

Saatkamp said that while initially Daniel's legs were amputated low the knees, further surgery was required, and both legs were amputated above the knees.

"They tried to save as much of the legs as possible," Saatkamp said. "The first surgery was an attempt to save the knees, but when they went down to see the damage, they knew the knees could not be saved."

Both McDowell and Saatkamp praised Daniel's response to the situation, saying he is in good spirits, and coping well.

"His response has been admirable," Saatkamp said, "though he knows he's got quite an adjustment to make in his life."

Daniel intends to return to College Station, perhaps as soon as next week, and complete his rehabilitation here, Saatkamp said.

He emphasized that Daniel fully intends to teach again, as soon as he is physically and emotionally ready for that step, maybe this summer, but no later than next fall.

And Saatkamp said he is ultimately confident that Daniel will recover, because, he says, Daniel has a zest for life that won't be daunted.


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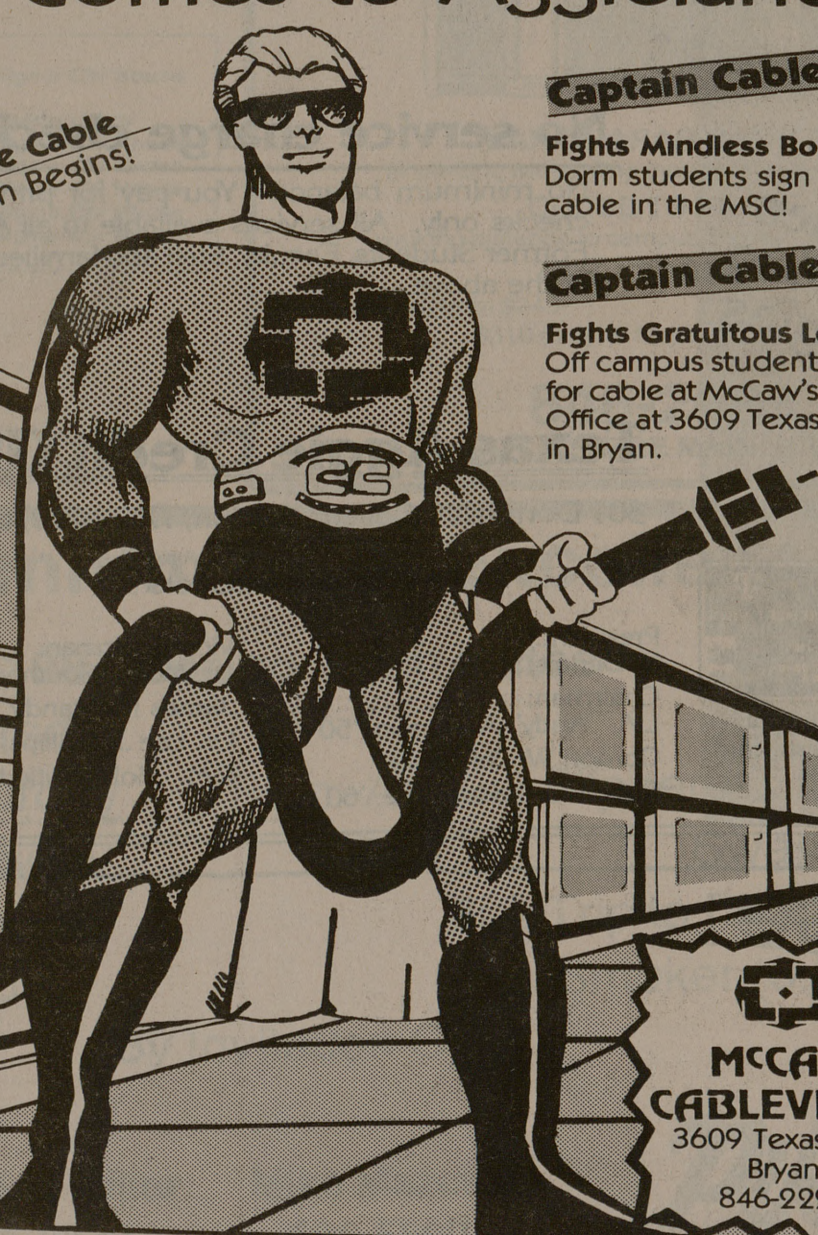
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