

**RAPPED
in
BLACK**



1979~80

An Introduction

The Association of Black Collegians wishes to welcome you into our world. We believe strongly in scholastic achievement, the pursuit of success, and we are committed to providing capable leadership to the black community. Our members chose Lafayette on that basis. By obtaining an excellent education, one develops the tools with which the platforms for successful careers and future leadership are built. Lafayette College, we feel, is an important step in that direction.

At Lafayette we pursue rigorous study in our respective fields. The college is an extremely fine institution in regard to its academic program and physical plant. It has an excellent endowment and is financially able to deliver the best in terms of quality of faculty and services to students. Lafayette, then, is four years of vigorous work, but also, just as important, it entails meaningful growth and maturity through a variety of experiences.

The ABC is an organization which attempts to embrace those students who want to augment the College's social and cultural offerings with activities and programs of special interest to black students. The goal is to keep the black experience alive at Lafayette. We actively seek participation in all phases of college life, while at the same time providing our members and the Lafayette College community with other offerings which ensure a broader insight into the human experience. Our members participate, for instance, in most varsity sports and, incidentally, captained this year's varsity basketball and wrestling teams. Also, ABC members are active in Student Government, associated committees and organizations, and college and community clubs and organizations. Among the organizations are various engineering societies, other academic groups, intramural sports, and service organizations and community-related projects such as the Easton NAACP's yearly voter registration drive. These activities keep us in the mainstream of college and community life as well as provide us with an education about other peoples and "What they're all about." Too often we seclude ourselves, cut ourselves off from people and events which would provide a better perspective of life and the pandemic concerns of human experience. We therefore daily strive not to develop too narrow a vision, but rather to move closer to that which encompasses a real understanding of people.

ABC sponsors activities which provide the entire Lafayette community with the experience of black art, history, and culture. This year we were able to sponsor, notably, a week in which we celebrated the accomplishments of black America and its continuing pursuit for equality and excellence. Entitled "Where's Freedom — A Search for Equality," it examined various aspects of black life ranging from "The Black Church — Pillar of Strength," to "Social Integration," "Special Admissions After Bakke," "Political Development," and "The Economic Situation for Minorities." Speakers ranged from Philadelphia's Alphonso Deal to the 60's Stokely Carmichael. It was a great success, applauded and enjoyed by all. The ABC also sponsors "Black Children Can," which weekly gives our members a chance to provide stimulating cultural and educational experiences for youth ranging in age from 7 to 10 years. These programs provide a glimpse into what we're all about.

We, the members of ABC, experience the satisfying wealth offered by Lafayette's many clubs, academic services, and organizations. But so too do we recognize and decry the shortcomings of being black in a predominantly white institution. Realizing we are basically here for an education, we stay and attempt to succeed during four arduous years through individual work and group participation. We realize the strain and stress of our unique situation, and attempt to expand the focus of Lafayette College on our special needs. We do this by promoting our activities and events, and also through participating in those areas of decision-making open to students. We look there, as in our classwork, for continued success.

Being black in a white college is an experience in the real world, and our paths as college grads and future leaders are in that direction. It is then this spirit with which we go forward that will determine our success as individuals and as contributors to those many others who will follow us.

As a prospective college entrant you will look toward that environment which shows consistently "where it's at." This publication is intended to provide answers that best give the sort of depth and insight that enables you to make a free choice towards that end — free to best choose that route which best tests, strengthens, and utilizes your talents. These are the talents that best exemplify where it's at — being young, gifted, and black. Much continued luck and success in your future endeavors.

*Kim Andre Fellenz, '79
Dawn Myers '81*





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WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST IMPRESSION OF LAFAYETTE? HOW HAS THE IMPRESSION BEEN ALTERED?

GIBSON: The thing that impressed me the most about my early visits to Lafayette was that everyone seemed to be having a good time. Since then I've learned that attending this school is indeed a very enjoyable experience, but that it's not all "fun and games." There is also a great deal of hard work.

BECTON: When I first considered Lafayette, I saw a good school that would give me the type of education I wanted. After a few visits to the school though, I began to wonder how I was going to be able to spend four years in a school that has only fifty black students. Within the first few weeks of the semester I found I could do quite well. Granted, the numbers are small, but the people are good. Since there are so few of us, it's easy to make and maintain friendships. I find that on the whole, the people stick together. And that's something you won't necessarily find at a larger institution.

WHAT ABOUT LAFAYETTE'S ACADEMICS? ARE THERE TUTORIAL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE IF A STUDENT SHOULD NEED HELP? WHAT TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP IS THERE BETWEEN THE STUDENTS AND THE FACULTY AND THE ADMINISTRATION?

ROBINSON: Academics at Lafayette are demanding but also rewarding. They require students to budget time efficiently to do well in class. There are tutorial programs available through the college to help students who are having academic difficulties. Regarding the faculty, it is difficult to make generalizations because the faculty is composed of individuals with varying personalities, but on the whole most students find the faculty open and willing to assist.

ANDERSON: Academics here at Lafayette are what they are supposed to be, somewhat harder than high school. This is the same for all students at Lafayette. If one spends most of the time studying, the work is not that hard. Everyone has difficulties. There is help available, but you must want it and seek it.

CLARKE: Academically speaking, the incoming Lafayette freshman's capability to deal with the workload here will depend on several factors. The first is his high school background, how well he has been prepared. This is true particularly in Engineering and the Natural Sciences, where it is taken for granted that the student has a good grasp of basic concepts. It is a little less so in the Social Sciences, but even there, a significant aptitude is assumed in terms of writing skills. Frankly, experience indicates that this places the public high school student at a distinct disadvantage with respect to the private school student. This usually has severe ramifications for the black student if, as in many cases, he comes from an inner city public high school. This is not, however, an insurmountable problem. The initiative, however, is on the student to put some work into it, and to insure that he is prepared to deal with the work here. I suggest contacting the Admissions Office, and asking to have the student referred to someone from their prospective major who can inform them of what areas they may need to bone up on.

Once fundamentals are taken care of, the most important thing is for the student to develop proper study habits. Although the work load is heavy, it really boils down to keeping on top of it. The most difficult thing about this is in the adjustment from living at home to being up here on your own. The freedom in terms of being able to do

whatever you want whenever you want without having mommy or daddy looking over your shoulder tends to take some people by surprise, and they "break" when they realize that there is no one to stop them. No one is going to keep up with their work when they get to bed at 4 a.m. and have an 8 o'clock class.

WHAT EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND ATHLETIC PROGRAMS ARE OFFERED? DO BLACK STUDENTS PARTICIPATE?

CLARKE: There is a vast array of athletic programs offered here, both on the intercollegiate and intramural levels. The varsity sports are open to anyone, but with the exception of fencing, beginners are discouraged — football, basketball, soccer, and wrestling actively recruit their players. However, intramural sports are open to everyone, and *everyone* is encouraged to participate. We have two gymnasiums which are open to students whenever they are not being used by teams for practice. Classes are taught free of charge in racquetball, judo, swimming, tennis, dancing, first aid, and physical fitness. Black students participate in most of these sports, but we would like to see black students participating in *all* sports. Lafayette also offers a vast panorama of extracurricular activities, but unfortunately the participation on the part of black students is low. The low level of black participation cannot be adequately accounted for by an examination of the clubs. Blacks are not discouraged from taking part; they just do not. This is a shame, because I feel that such participation is an integral part of a complete college education, and those who do not participate are losing out.

MYERS: If you have an interest there is bound to be some organization on campus with which you can become involved. If one doesn't exist there is also the possibility of starting a new club or activity, and establishing it as a viable campus organization. My opinion on black participation is that it all depends on a person's interest, whether or not they will get involved. It never hurts to take advantage of and experience something new. After all, isn't experimentation part of education? We, the ABC, encourage all our members to become involved in an organization they may be interested in.





WHAT IS THE CAMPUS SOCIAL LIFE LIKE?

JOHNSON: For the black Lafayette student social life is limited. First of all social life in Easton alone is quite restrained. It all boils down to the type of person you are and what you like to do. Anyone from a large metropolitan area must realize that social life may become restricted to a great degree when coming to Lafayette. In a positive view, we the members of ABC manage to get together and share enjoyable moments. As far as black theaters, concerts, discotheques, and other social events, well, like the saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind."

THOMAS: The social life at Lafayette is what you make it. The options are limited so you have to deal with the available, or make something happen. There's always the opportunity to "get off," you know, break. When you see someone else pick up the slack you know the party is on.

HOW MANY BLACK STUDENTS ARE THERE AT LAFAYETTE COLLEGE? WHAT ABOUT BLACKS ON THE FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATION?

MYERS: Presently (in 1978-79) there are forty-seven black students attending Lafayette College out of an overall student population of approximately 2,000. However, 24 black students are expected to be part of the freshman class in 1979 and the total number of black students then will be 71. Lafayette is presently falling short of its expectations in recruiting black and other minority students. The students who apply and are accepted often turn down Lafayette for Ivy League institutions.

The number of blacks in the faculty and administration is also small. There are two blacks in the administration, the assistant dean of the college and an assistant director of admissions, and there are two blacks in the athletic department, the recreation coordinator and an assistant basketball coach.

The majority of black students here at Lafayette feel that the small number of blacks is a serious problem — one so serious that it is important to inform prospective black students of the situation, to truthfully discuss and present the advantages and disadvantages of attending Lafayette. There is not a passing day when most of us are not aware of the situation and are trying to effectively remedy this problem through our participation in contacting and recruiting blacks with the Admissions Office and on our own.

There are also at this time discussions and efforts on the part of the president of the College and the administration to consciously include qualified blacks in its search to fill vacancies on the faculty and other departments.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE PROBLEMS OF BLACK STUDENTS?

ROBINSON: Aside from the general problems of adjusting to college life, many black students face an additional job of adjusting to a predominantly white environment. Many also have to face the adjustment of living in a small city instead of a large metropolitan region.

SAWYER: The problems that affect most blacks are mostly social, considering the ratio of blacks to whites here. There are also academic problems, many of which are caused by the totally different social climate. More blacks would help alleviate this problem. If the population increases here, I feel it would affect the grades of black students considerably.

THOMAS: In the inner cities, most of us are not really faced with the race issue. We hear about it. We even experience it but we don't think about it. We live in black neighborhoods with black schools. Most of our encounters with it are brief and we really don't understand it. At Lafayette we are aware of the race issue and we feel it almost every day.

HOW ARE BLACK-WHITE RELATIONS ON CAMPUS?

MYERS: Black-white relations at Lafayette are just like anywhere else in America or the world. You could think of Lafayette as a microcosm of society. Everything is here, the good and the bad. You can't expect everyone to love each other, or even like each other — that's just the reality of life. However since I've been at Lafayette I haven't experienced or seen any overt conflicts between races. I don't think at the present time there are any strong racial tensions, but what happens here depends on what happens off campus and in the world around us. When you come here you may find yourself in the presence of a white person who has never met anyone black. This person may even be your roommate. This sort of experience can mean many things. Many stereotyped assumptions are ended and are replaced by knowledge of the uniqueness of the individuality in everyone. Some whites learn a lot about blacks and our experience, others go on as ignorant as ever, and the same is true for some blacks. Some people are able to form genuine friendships, others gain respectful colleagues and acquaintances.

GRIFFIN: Black-white relations on campus, from my point of view, are a random occurrence. There are numerous friendships, but there are very few close relationships. I have the impression that many whites at Lafayette, if they have anything to do with blacks, consider it for the sake of liberalism. I think many relations are forced, which make them phony and worthless.

THOMAS: The black-white relationship on campus has two distinct aspects. If you choose to accept the white perspective, you can easily and freely associate and interrelate. But if you choose a black perspective you find that people seem to be more distant from each other.

WHAT IS THE ABC? ARE ALL BLACK STUDENTS ON CAMPUS MEMBERS OF THE ABC?

The Association of Black Collegians (ABC) is the organization of black students and others who share the same interest set forth in the constitution of the organization:

- a) to provide for black students a social and cultural alternative to the atmosphere prevalent to the college.
- b) to provide a conducive atmosphere for academic achievement and intellectual growth.
- c) to enrich all of Lafayette College concerning the Black Cultural Experience.

But beyond this the ABC is something different to each member. Here are the views of a few of the members.

FORTES: Our purpose is to provide a cultural and social atmosphere for the black student at Lafayette. Inside the ABC are activities such as Black Children Can. Each Saturday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. underprivileged children are invited to the Black Cultural Center for arts and crafts, field trips and other activities. The Society of Black Engineers is a new organization that attempts to provide incentive and a tutorial program for the black engineers at Lafayette. Every student at Lafayette is welcome to join the ABC. However, not everyone wishes to participate.

ROBINSON: The ABC is a group of black and other students who get together to socialize and add a sample of the Black Experience to Lafayette College. While not all blacks are members of ABC, most are either members or participate in ABC sponsored programs. For example this year there were lectures by prominent blacks, symposiums, films, discos, an outreach program to local black children (Black Children Can), and regular social events and activities.

SAWYER: The ABC is the Association of Black Collegians, and here at Lafayette it is the glue that keeps the black population together. However, there are some blacks on campus who are not members, and who do not offer any input to the black experience at Lafayette. These students seem to have adapted to the new environment by assimilating into the mainstream, instead of innovating and adding new alternatives to the black community and Lafayette community as a whole.

MYERS: It's an organization concerned with issues important to black students. We are concerned with our academic success and achievement as well as other activities. Our diversions involve academic, societal, and cultural concerns. We also enjoy socializing at "The House" (Black Cultural Center). If you need to talk to someone about anything there's always someone who'll take the time to listen and who can relate to many of the same experiences you may have in and outside of school. Through our association we build many strong friendships and learn the value of individuals working together in a group.



WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF LAFAYETTE COLLEGE AND LAFAYETTE BLACK COLLEGIANS TO THE EASTON BLACK COMMUNITY?

THOMAS: The relationship between the ABC and the black Easton community has been a very loose one for some time. There was no real contact except through "Black Children Can." During the planning of the Civil Rights Symposium and our programs during Black History Month, members of the ABC and the Easton community pulled together to help it happen. In the process I think each became aware of our combined potential.

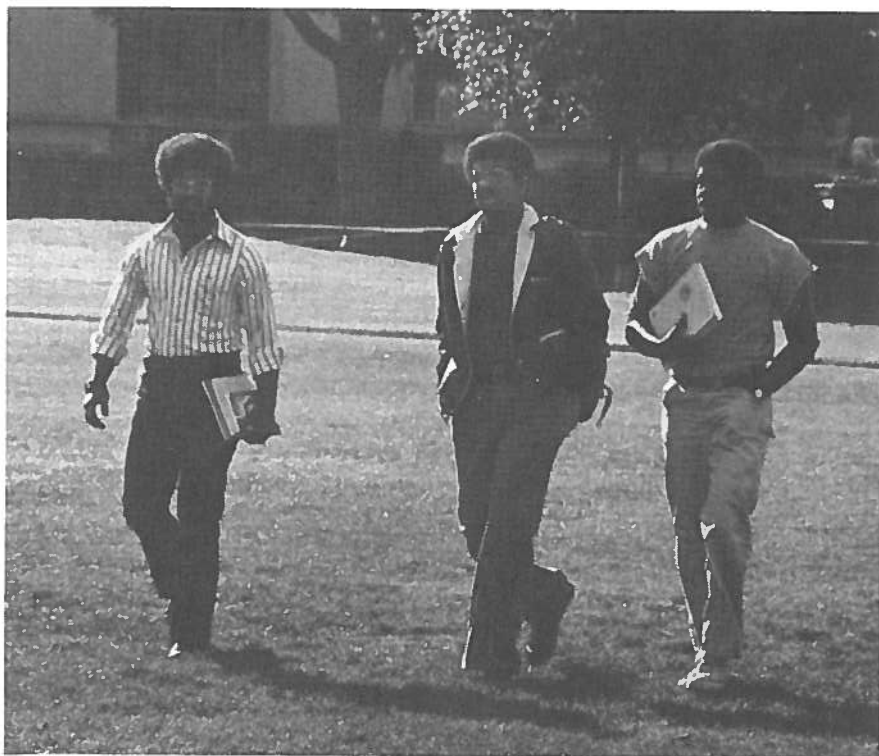
MYERS: The relationship between Easton's black community and the ABC is one that is becoming stronger. Members of the ABC and members of the Easton community groups like churches and the local NAACP Chapter, have again discovered each other. We are aware that our abilities together can make Easton and Lafayette more interesting. There are many people in Easton who are interested in the programs and activities that the ABC sponsors on College Hill, and in turn the ABC is interested in Easton community activities.

ANDERSON: This year, the ABC was involved with the Easton community through the NAACP by providing transportation to the polls for the elderly and others without transportation. Young people from Easton often come to parties given by the ABC. This provides an opportunity to get acquainted and become friends.



"Black Children Can" is one of the most successful programs reaching out into the community sponsored by the Association of Black Collegians. Saturday morning arts and crafts is one of the activities planned.





WHAT WAS MOST DIFFICULT ABOUT YOUR ADJUSTMENT TO LAFAYETTE COLLEGE?

GIBSON: The first and most prominent adjustment that many freshmen have to make is getting used to the workload. The school work is much more difficult, in volume and complexity, than that of most high schools. However, most students make the adjustment quickly and do well academically. Many black freshmen at Lafayette must also adjust to the fact that the college is predominantly white. Although there is very little hostility between blacks and whites on campus, there are people of both races who are conscious of racial differences.

GRIFFIN: One of the most difficult factors in my adjustment to Lafayette College has been dealing with my free time. You find yourself with so much time on your hands that you are constantly putting things off 'til later. After a while things start to pile up.

MYERS: Adjustment to Lafayette has a lot to do with the kind of person you are, where you are from, "and where you are coming from." Both black and white students have similar adjustments to make in their first year at college. For some it's the first time they have been away from home, and they are in a new and different environment. For others it's the climate and weather. There are also some academic and social adjustments to be made. Most of us have never known challenging academic work until coming to Lafayette. One thing black students here must keep in mind is that they are here because they can achieve; another thing is that this is no longer high school so the work is going to be a lot more challenging. The social adjustment one has to make is that the social life at Lafayette is limited because of the small number of blacks.



Among the cultural and entertainment events at Lafayette are programs related to the Black Experience. Above, featured in recent programs were jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams, the George Faison Dance Company, and the Duke Ellington Orchestra conducted by Mercer Ellington.

HOW IS LAFAYETTE REWARDING? DISAPPOINTING?

ROBINSON: The single most rewarding part of my three years at Lafayette has been the opportunity for me to grow both academically and, more important, personally. Coping with the new situations of college life, especially at Lafayette, has taught me a lot about myself, and has helped me develop skills which I am proud of and which will serve me well in the future. The most disappointing aspect of my time here is the impression that some of the students, both black and white, do not use this unique experience to grow and develop. Instead many choose to stagnate, to not get involved, and therefore lose out on a once-in-a-lifetime chance.

BECTON: Lafayette has many rewards to offer. Probably the most significant is the knowledge that when you do well here you've got it made. But the disappointments often outweigh the rewards in terms of grades. I guess it can be a matter of priorities. I'm willing to struggle for four years and sacrifice some of the social life I could have had at other schools, because I know that I will get a quality education here.

ANDERSON: Lafayette is rewarding when you realize that you've been accepted to such a good school. You also know that you are getting a good education, and will have a better chance at getting a good job after graduation — your employers know that you have studied at Lafayette College. Lafayette is disappointing when you see all the social functions that are geared toward white students.

FARRINGTON: As a freshman it is difficult for me to see all of the rewards that Lafayette has to offer. However, I have felt some of the rewarding effects already. Lafayette is a place to grow — perhaps all colleges are. As a black woman in a predominantly white environment, I've become much more aware of my blackness. I have also learned what I am capable of doing and what I am not — grade-wise. As a student at Lafayette, one must set one's own priorities. No one here will do that for you — again there is an opportunity to find out more about yourself. Books and classes should be tops on your list.

RICHARDSON: Lafayette has been a great learning experience for me. I've learned about dealing with different types of people. But even more so, I've gotten to know myself better. Knowing my own limitations and strengths I feel I am better equipped to relate to others.

I didn't have a lot of disappointments when I came because it wasn't my first encounter with the school. Through talking with and visiting my brother Earl, Class of '77, I became acquainted with both the disadvantages and advantages of attending Lafayette. For this reason, I would encourage all students to visit the campus. (Note: Earl Richardson is currently a senior at Harvard Law School).

"Where's Freedom—A Search for Equality" was the theme of a series of programs and symposium sponsored by the ABC during National Black History Month. (1979) There were programs focusing on black cultural heritage ("The Black Church—Pillar of Strength" in which Easton's Shiloh Baptist Youth Center performed, and "The Black Literary Experience—Stereotypes and the American Imagination"), black history ("Face of a Nation—Pride of a People"), and black political development ("Black Political Leadership— Retrospect and Prospects" and "NAACP: Bastion of Freedom" with guest speaker Mr. Alphonse Deal, Philadelphia policeman and president of the Philadelphia Action Branch NAACP.) The symposium entitled "The Civil Rights Movement: How Far Have We Come—Where Are We Going" opened with an address by keynote speaker Stokely Carmichael, followed on the next day by workshops and panel discussions.



In Conclusion ...

The most frequent questions I am asked by prospective black students are why I chose Lafayette, and what I think of it now that I'm here.

When I'm asked, I try to remember how I felt as a prefreshman with such a heavy decision to make. It was a very important decision, where to spend four significant years of my life. I applied to Lafayette because it was and is an excellent school. I also applied and was accepted at other colleges as good as Lafayette. How did I ever choose one? Well since I had to, I tried to choose the one best suited for me. Lafayette had what I wanted, location, size, courses, etc. But what made my decision easy was that I visited the different schools and met the faculty, administration, students and asked as many questions as I could. I also attended classes to see what they were like. I liked what I saw and heard at Lafayette, and I felt that I could handle the work. After comparing the different schools I made my decision — I chose Lafayette. Whether or not Lafayette is the place for you can only be determined by yourself. Too many people choose a college for the wrong reasons, based on second hand knowledge. No matter where you decide to go, the best way to decide is to visit the school, go to classes, meet the students, faculty, and members of the administration. It will make your decision a lot easier, obtaining first hand knowledge of what the school is like.

Now that I am at Lafayette I can say that the school has its pluses and minuses just like any other college. But to me it is worth the ups and downs. Many of us complain about the social life at Lafayette, but we realize that socializing is not the reason why we came to Lafayette. We came to obtain a quality education.

Lafayette is challenging. There are many opportunities waiting to be taken advantage of that offer very rewarding experiences. I can say that I am pleased with my choice. The things I don't like about Lafayette are few and can be changed by students who are concerned and willing to get involved, to take advantage of the many opportunities that Lafayette has to offer.

If you are wondering whether Lafayette is, or might be the college you are looking for, come and check us out. On behalf of the ABC and the Office of Admissions I would like to extend an invitation to you to visit Lafayette.

It is our hope that this publication will be of some aid in formulating your decisions about college. Whatever your decision is, we wish you much luck and success with your choice.

*Dawn R. Myers '81
Chairperson ABC
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Recruitment Committee*

LIFE WITHOUT DREAMS

*Common sense is spreading
A contagious mind disease
Facts are the cause
Things not proven false
To believe in just cold realities*

*A heart that aspires no longer
Is one symptom, for there are more
Find out about these
If you lack fantasies
They are something worth looking for*

*The effect is a fact-filled head
But attribute your life to that?
Let some dreams lure you
It might just cure you
Life is bad without dreams
That's a fact!*

Traci Lennon '82

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