

I AM TRUE BLACK: The Syllabus

Compiled by Albert Gore Research Center staff



OVERVIEW

In February 2021, the Albert Gore Research Center and James E. Walker Library opened an exhibit called *I AM TRUE BLACK: The History of Black Student Life and Activism*. The exhibit covered major highlights and achievements in MTSU's Black history from the 1960s to the present day. One focus of the exhibit was the long history of activism against Confederate imagery used on campus, which is a movement that continues today. Other sections of the exhibit covered important organizations, like the Black Student Union, C.U.B.E., and Greek life. It also explored the history of Black athletes and their role in helping integrate the university. Finally, the exhibit contextualized MTSU's Black history within the larger narrative of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County's twentieth century history.

This syllabus provides citations and links to primary and secondary sources related to this vital history. The list is not comprehensive but it gives learners a good start. This syllabus is intended for MTSU students, staff, faculty, alumni, and interested members of the public.

For comments, corrections, or questions contact Sarah.Calise@mtsu.edu or Donna.Baker@mtsu.edu.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Sylvester Brooks and Don Coleman Essays* - REQUIRED READING

Brooks, "The American Negro," *Sidelines*, Mar. 18, 1968. URL:
<https://cdm15838.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15838coll11/id/189>

Brooks, "Dixie: What Does It Mean?" *Sidelines*, Oct. 21, 1968. URL:
<https://cdm15838.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15838coll11/id/192>

Brooks, "Student Movement Cries for Independence, Pride,"
Sidelines, Mar. 20, 1969. URL:
<https://cdm15838.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15838coll11/id/751>

Coleman, "Traditionalists Perpetuate White Racism," *Sidelines*,
Mar. 24, 1969. URL:
<https://cdm15838.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15838coll11/id/205>

Archival Collections

Forrest Hall Protest Collection, Albert Gore Research Center,
MTSU. Available to search online through James E. Walker library's
digital collections. URL:
<https://cdm15838.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15838coll11>

Midlander yearbooks. Albert Gore Research Center, MTSU. Also
available to search online through James E. Walker Library. URL:
<https://digital.mtsu.edu/digital/collection/p15838coll3>

Sidelines student newspaper. Albert Gore Research Center, MTSU.
Also available to search online through James E. Walker Library. URL:
<https://jewlscholar.mtsu.edu/handle/mtsu/4>

Oral Histories and Video Interviews

Brooks, Sylvester. Interviewed by Erin Toomey. September 30, 2000. Albert Gore Research Center, MTSU.

URL: <https://youtu.be/1Z3F7xBmCz0>

Canty, Andre. Interviewed by Sarah Calise. *Interview will be uploaded to our YouTube channel soon.*

Gordon, Bart, Caroline Scarlett, and Phyllis Hickerson-Washington. Interviewed by Suma Clark as part of *Centennial Conversations*. Albert Gore Research Center, MTSU. A clip is available here: <https://youtu.be/LeEIPxjN3cw>

McDonald, Michael. Interviewed by Sarah Calise.

Part 1: <https://youtu.be/-BiZ6YZ7n3o>

White, Arionna. Interviewed by Sarah Calise. *Interview will be uploaded to our YouTube channel soon.*

Windrow, Vincent. Interviewed by Quentin Magee as part of MTSU's centennial celebration. February 2012. A clip is available here: <https://youtu.be/ai74nbtuEco>

SECONDARY SOURCES

Articles

Calise, Sarah. "Protesting the Confederacy on Campus." *The Activist History Review*. July 25, 2018. URL: <https://activisthistory.com/2018/07/25/protesting-the-confederacy-on-campus/>

Howard, Joshua. "A Confederate on Campus: Nathan Bedford Forrest as MTSU's Mascot." *Sport in American History*. August 24, 2015.

URL: <https://ussporthistory.com/2015/08/24/nathan-bedford-forrest-and-mtsu/>

Blog Posts from Gore Center's WordPress

“Racing Against the Color Line: The Integration of MTSU Track and Field,” Feb. 11, 2016. URL: <https://albertgoreresearchcenter.wordpress.com/2016/02/11/racing-against-the-color-line-the-integration-of-mtsu-track-and-field/>

“Movement ‘68: Honoring 50 Years of Black Student Protests at MTSU,” Oct. 24, 2017. URL: <https://albertgoreresearchcenter.wordpress.com/2017/10/24/movement-68/>

“Movement 68: Black Student Organizing,” Jan. 19, 2018. URL: <https://albertgoreresearchcenter.wordpress.com/2018/01/19/movement-68-black-student-organizing/>

“We’re Marching to the President’s House: MTSU’s Cross Burnings 50 Years Later,” Dec. 7, 2020. URL: <https://albertgoreresearchcenter.wordpress.com/2020/12/07/were-marching-to-the-presidents-house-mtsus-cross-burnings-50-years-later/>

Books

Biondi, Martha. *The Black Revolution on Campus*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2012.

Cohen, Robert, and David J. Snyder, eds. *Rebellion in Black and White: Southern Student Activism in the 1960s*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.

Halberstam, David. *The Children*. New York: Random House, 1998.

Kendi, Ibram X. *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Kinchen, Stephen. *Black Power in the Bluff City: African American Youth and Student Activism in Memphis, 1965-1975*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016.

Leone, Janice M, ed. *Middle Tennessee State University: A Centennial Legacy, 1911-2011*. Twin Oaks Press, 2011.

Lewis, John. *Walking with the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Maye, Marilyn Allman, and Harold S. Buchanan. *Seven Sisters and a Brother: Friendship, Resistance, and Untold Truths Behind Black Student Activism in the 1960s*. Coral Gables, FL: Books & Book Press, 2019.

Moore, Louis. *We Will Win the Day: the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Athlete, and the Quest for Equality*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2017.

Online Exhibits

Movement 68: Honoring 50 Years of Black Student Activism at MTSU, created by Sarah Calise, October 2019.

URL: <https://movement68.wordpress.com/>