

ALUMNI ISSUE, MARCH, 1970

SWARTHMORE

COLLEGE BULLETIN



BLACK at Swarthmore

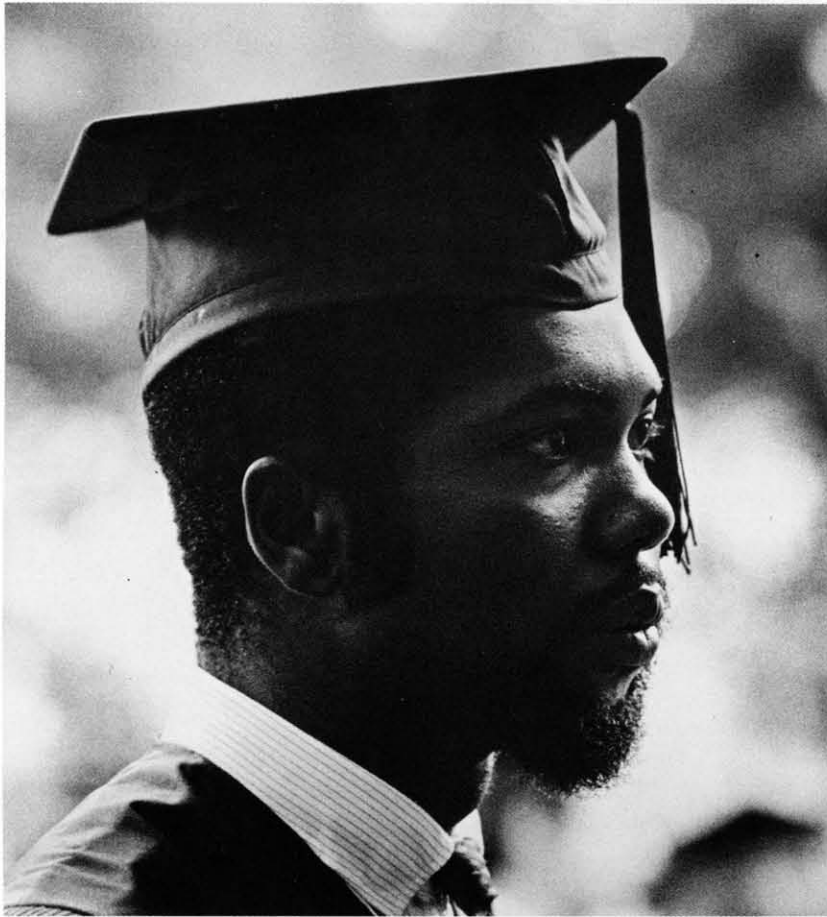
Swarthmoreana

LD 5186

.B9

v. 67, no. 6a

(c-2)



"Today, more than ever before, Black students have the opportunity to attend the college of their choice. This booklet attempts to assist you in determining which college might be most appropriate for you, as a Black student: It is an interpretation of what the Black experience often is at a white institution in general, and at Swarthmore College in particular."

The above paragraph introduces *Black at Swarthmore*, a 24-page booklet published by the College in December, which was conceived by the Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society and written and designed by Don Mizell '71. On the first five pages of this *Alumni Bulletin*, we are reprinting excerpts from the text and some photographs from *Black at Swarthmore*. On the following pages appear articles by ten members of the Black community at Swarthmore written for the *Alumni Bulletin*. Our acknowledgment and thanks to Ava Harris '72 and Franciena King '72, who helped us present this interpretation of the Black experience at Swarthmore.

BLACK at Swarthmore

LD5186
.B9
v. 67
no. 6a
(C.2)



Photographs from *Black at Swarthmore* by Ethan Prescott

Photographs on pages 7-12, 14, 16, and 18 by Ferdinand Warren '70

Cover design by Robert J. Copeland.

Editor: Maralyn Orbison Gillespie '49

Assistant Editor: Kathryn Bassett '35

The SWARTHMORE COLLEGE BULLETIN, of which this publication is Volume LXVII, No. 6, is published in March, May, July, September, October, and twice in December and January by Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania 19081.

March, 1970

1

335675





:rhythms & blues

Swarthmore, tho', is not all buildings and books and classes and financial aid. It is far more than that. It is a time in your life. You live and you learn and you wonder and it is exciting and depressing and it is college.

It is people, it is Brothers and Sisters jiving, booking and/or styling. It is rapping till sun-up about just anything and maybe getting your game blown away like it never was back at home, where you were the main man or the bossiest sister.

Swarthmore is fronting and trying to run down your program to somebody, synthesizing your rap ability and your intellectual qualities—and getting ranked all over the place. It is hoopin in the afternoon in the gym. Or playing cards. Or digging 'Trane on a Saturday afternoon between sporadic and loose-ended dialogue about the value-bias in the social sciences, with your tight man. It is checking out Philly and finding that it is not all that hip for a city of its size—but nothing a little creativity can't deal with. It is getting a C— or D+ on that very first paper and undergoing Instant Trauma (whatever happened to those A's and B's I was getting in high school?) but coming back strong next time around.

Swarthmore is getting turned on to a new dimension of experience—and maybe turning it off. It is an attempt to forget. Or re-think. It is an all-Black thing. Or a cross-cultural thing. Or a just do what you want to when you want to and forget about people thing. Swarthmore is getting tired and depressed and questioning the meaning of it all, and wanting to hang it up but knowing all the while how un-hip that would be. It is bursting into class, ready to relate some freaked out idea you just had in the bathroom. It is community organizing in the nearby Black communities.

Swarthmore is being confronted with new information, with new kinds of people whose convictions and life-style may be radically different from yours, and reacting. And being confused. And finally pulling yourself together. Then feeling mellow as a cello.

Swarthmore is papers, seminars, and essay exams. It is field work. It is reading one helluva lot, synthesizing and criticizing the information. The competition is tough. Really tough. The student body comes from among the top 2% of the nation's high schoolers . . .

Swarthmore is 9 o'clock at night and 300 pages to go and the Brothers and Sisters are down at the House partying back and you want to get into that, but you know why you are here so you stay right there, steady bookin'. It is dealing with some white liberal who wants you to solve 'the problem' for him or apologize for his existence. Or coping with somebody trying to run a Blacker-than-thou thing on you and forcing you to get your program together, whatever it is.

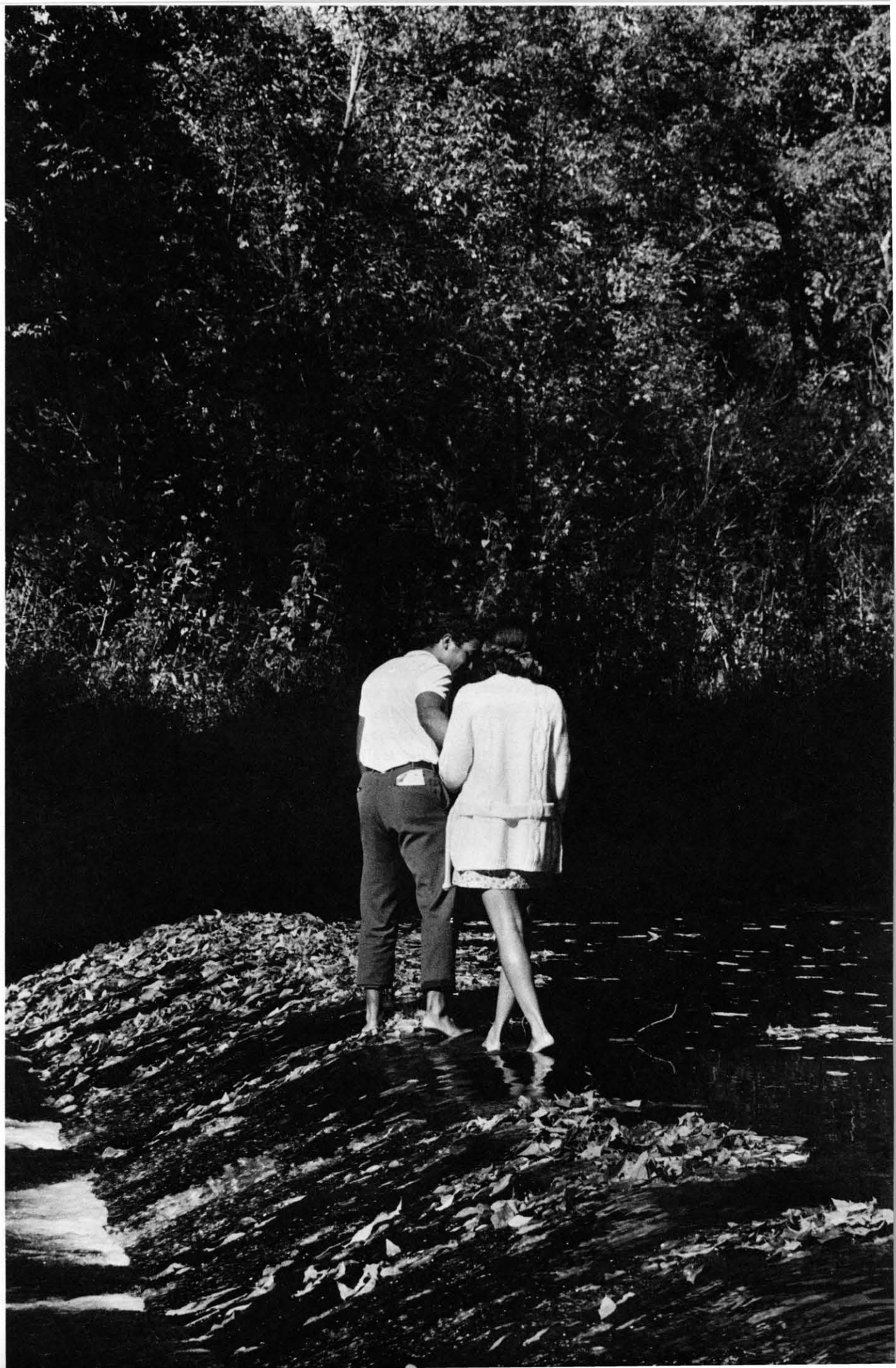
Swarthmore is spring or autumn (maybe even winter). It is a feeling inside. It is the fall rolling in and the greens, reds, oranges, browns, and yellows sprinkling the sky, sometimes dancing. It is strolling across the sloping front lawns barefoot, deep in thought about the dynamics of Black Aesthetics. Or just knocking out under a big oak. Swarthmore is spring, a stroll through the woods, perhaps with a loved one, closer to nature, to our roots and innermost thoughts: seeing beauty in the world and maybe moved by that beauty to a greater conviction that things have to change; that our people are suffering and things have to change.

Swarthmore is hard work and lots of it. It is 30-35 hrs. a week studying outside of class. Managing knowledge, juggling it and arriving at conclusions. No textbooks—they make it easy for you. It is getting diverse materials and working with them. And this is hip, this is definitely hip.

Swarthmore is getting hung up on not being right in an urban situation, but digging that the rural-type setting has its advantages. It is getting tired of the low-key mood and the scenic atmosphere round about vacation time, time to go home. (There are, however, 3 good-sized Black communities within 4 miles of the College—in the city of Chester, and the towns of Media and Morton). Make no mistake about it, tho', Swarthmore is not home—it is different, and some people dig it from that angle alone. But there is a Black cultural center and it is the place where the Brothers and Sisters hang so you know it's cool.

The booklet *Black at Swarthmore* is available upon request to the editor.





Jo Ann Jones '73

Some wise man, I believe St. Paul, said, "And this, too, shall pass." And so likewise, I often repeat that phrase as many times as there are minutes in one day to convince myself that freshman year is just that—one year. Don't misunderstand me, please! I'm perfectly content with Swarthmore; it's just that freshman year is a particularly unsettling, nervewracking, frustrating, but also exciting, new, challenging experience.

Another wise person (a chemistry teacher, having no Biblical connection) once remarked to me that one does one's hardest living during the first

thirty years. And based on past and present experience I would heartily concur. But what she failed to mention is something that I learned from Kahlil Gibran:

But if you love and must needs have desires, let these be your desires: To know the pain of too much tenderness.

To which you may ask, "How does this concern a black student's impression of Swarthmore?" Being a freshman, I find it difficult to plunge into something new, know what it's all about, run my life on an even keel, not to mention happily, and then be able to write about my impressions.

And so I have developed a somewhat shaky approach, but nevertheless an approach, to life at Swarthmore. Swarthmore

is a way of living—to be more specifically defined as relaxed/intense, tranquil/tense, free/restricted. Despite all the contradictions there is always someone who cares, whether it is the professor of the course one is having the most trouble with or the girl down the hall. Someone does give a damn. Because it is a new living experience, one suffers a few upsets, catastrophes, or traumas along the way, but I think you have to expect that in any college experience. Certainly Swarthmore is no different.

What makes Swarthmore different? It seems every campus is relaxed, active, and involved in discovering new things in academia. Perhaps it is the openness, the friendliness, and personal approach found here that produces

Swarthmore's unique atmosphere. Certainly it is a diverse, close community and functions accordingly, or so it would seem.

One must remember, however, that within the Swarthmore community there exists a black community, struggling to maintain its identity, while each black student struggles to develop his or her own life style. I find the black community a puzzling, yet beautiful entity. We are both close and yet disjointed. Sometimes I find it difficult to grasp its essence. As yet I have not had those experiences that have added to the insights of the older black students, and as a result I remain somewhat idealistic, and possibly unaware of exactly what is the black situation. The demand is great enough to function as a student; often this is compounded by being black. The black community has made me quite aware that we are all responsible to each other. Everyone is sensitive to the fact that only together can we establish a black identity within the larger white community. This is where the real solidarity, cohesiveness, and togetherness lie.

Ultimately this is a way of life. Gradually either Swarthmore, the black community, or I myself will teach me the right way to live. This is what I'm looking for; these are the hardest years of my life; but it all evolves from "the pain of too much tenderness."

Swarthmore Alumni Issue



Don Mizell '71

i am confronted as i write this, with the dilemma we are all faced with when operating under the trappings of our particular economic system: I'm going to try to slick you. but before i try, let me acknowledge that I am one of those genetically inferior, culturally deprived, socially disadvantaged, pathological, poor black dudes you read about somewheres that had the privilege of attending this college with the intention of becoming upwardly mobile; defender of the status quo, as it were. i must say thank you, i am eternally grateful. but not alienated: aggressive individualism, the white-liberal sword is a drag. Black

people simply have too much to do.

i'm going to try to slick you. But before I try, let me acknowledge that I am one of those wild-eyed, bushy-haired, crazy, angry, sexually-superior, nihilistic black (such a dirty word) militants.

are you a member of the Silent Majority? The face at the back of the lynch mob? But of course I am aware that Swarthmore turns out special *kinds* of Majority. The kind who understand.

"Those poor colored folk!"

now i'm hip to the fact that I am here as a result of Operation De-Fuse. i'm hip to that. my options: either school or the streets, and everyone knows what Atty. General Mitchell is prepared to do in the black community. i'm going to be an attorney one day. If you

allow me, of course, and if the end of the 2nd Reconstruction period is not upon us: is history a line or a circle?

i'm going to try to slick you, but let me acknowledge that I am aware that i can't because

- 1) you are too smart
- 2) you have found, since the last riot, new and more creative ways to rationalize your racism, and thereby repudiate guilt.

the country is falling apart; your kids are freaking out; american standard uniformity consumes you; just a drop of anxiety but I am pathological: and I have come to be saved by you, or that was the way the plot was running.

but somebody stopped the play.

can we be honest for a second?

dig it: we don't have to think, eat, sleep, walk, talk, shit, or laugh like you to be classified as bona fide, legitimate human beings. i am a nice guy. just ask my mother. we don't have to dig the things you dig in the way you dig them. honest injun. there is a culture in the black community, a lifestyle that finds its Form in pre-america Africa and its Content in american history. For those of us who have not died on the assimilationist path, our linguistic systems, religion, art and spatial interpretations—the only aspects of our culture allowed the opportunity to thrive in the american way of life—can most accurately be designated Afro-american. Not euro-

american. Can you get to that?

Weird: if the society continues to open up for "qualified" niggers, and if the repressed eroticism of white america continues its liberation, look for a reversal of roles: *your* kids will be the entertainers, the religious, the drop-outs. They are finding delayed gratification a drag. the lid is coming off. As for black people:

We die in the beginning
We have died that Death
in the beginning
And brought tomorrow
here;
The screams or sighs
disguised,
No cries accepted
In this leather-bound
tomb.

So how do you explain our survival? God knows I have tried. But the labels (Sweet cognitions) came They came canned and calling:

Liar!
Myth-maker!
Even at the womb of unrealizable frenzy.
O, how they came.
Abstracted from: shot out a gun.
Cultured,
And certainly not deprived, goodness No.
Not at *this* womb.
But we still come.
We are still coming.
Christ: and nasty, nasty, ooh SO nasty.

Come swinging on vines
Slinging ooze
Come shrieking from
rooftops
Primitive news:

Niggahs, Niggahs
Everywhere
Niggahs in d' air



A thin, bushy-headed Swarthmore student strides aloofly through a group of students as he makes his way to Trotter. It is 8:40 a.m. He writhes silently through a second group of stragglers, his gait effectively informing them that he is late for a class. He speaks to no one. No one except another bushy-headed student who calls to him from across the drive.

"What's goin', Smooth?" the student shouts as he thrusts a balled black fist into the air in salute.

"Nuthin' to it, Bro," he replies, returning the salute.

The student then recalls the warmth he briefly displayed to his "brother" and again sets his facial features into the cold, expressionless mask he usually wears around "them."

Minutes later he enters his class, which is already in session. The professor pauses in the middle of a sentence, the class glances in his direction, then the prof nods and the student tip-toes behind him to a seat in the far corner of the room away from the rest of the class.

"Damn, I hate that," he thought. "It's what they'd expect. I guess lateness goes with the rest of that bull."

Images of the "typical Negro" flashed through his mind. He fumed, but who was he angry with. Himself? Certainly not—he knew

why he'd been late.

His thoughts raced back to the previous night when he realized he'd have trouble sleeping. He repainted the scene in his mind.

"The ghost-like glow in one corner of the room," he remembered, "and the glare of the streetlight behind my head. I lay there hours watching them before realizing I was awake. Then the pain came. My tooth. I tried not to think about it, hoping it'd go away. If it wasn't for this damned dental plate, I would have it pulled. A new one costs so much I could never . . . Oh, why won't that nerve just die!"

"I concentrated on my other problems long enough to get a little relief, but that backfired too," he thought. He had always believed that many of the pains he felt were only in his mind and had been able to relieve many of these "mental pains" by concentrating. Sometimes the amplified aches were preferable to the mental anguish that followed.

"Think about anything else. Think! Think! Think . . . The rent is past due for this month," he had forced the thought. "They let us slide for twenty days last month, but they'll probably kick us out now. Man, Mrs. Rothridge sure is tight (meaning stingy). She's cold enough to throw us out too! Always huggin' and kissin' on me—talkin' about she feels as close to me as if I were her son. Ha! Mom wouldn't make me pay \$85 a month to live in this shack. And it cost \$40

a month to heat this damn place. Mike (her adopted son) said it is condemned. Probably is. Least she did have the place painted and most of the rat holes cemented over. Not that it helped. Wonder how they can scratch through cement like that. At least she (my wife) got used to their noise.

"Look at her, sleeping like a baby. When did she say it was due? March? April? Wow, how are we going to work that? Can't even afford winter clothes for Sonii now. He outgrows everything so fast. Sure hate to see the hurt in Marcie's eyes when she puts those summer clothes on him when it's cold out. I should drop out of school and get my old job back. We could get some oil then and all the other things we . . . She doesn't want that though. She said she'd rather struggle now . . ." His thoughts had rambled on until he noticed the room getting brighter. He sat up, looked around, then sagged back into the bed.

"It's getting light out. Better try to sleep. Got to clear my head and zeez before I can't." He tried to relax and force all thought from his mind, but . . . "Wow, I've got to check on that part-time job at the Camera Mart tomorrow. Wonder what it pays. Shame I couldn't work that social worker's job into my schedule. I could have really done my thing as a community organizer. The Fellowship House would have to be in the red. At least the Camera Mart job looks good. Hope I can

get it. Mmmm, behind in my studies. I'll have to average about six hours a day. Let's see, four and a half hours of classes Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Tuesdays and Thursdays I'll . . . Mmmm! Have to make at least \$80 a week to live . . . Oh hell, I'll do it somehow . . . Oh Oh! Forgot to count in travel time and meals . . ."

The sun was up.

Back in the classroom, he looked around at his classmates.

Did he hate them? "No," he thought. Then he remembered how he continually placed himself as far from them as possible without leaving the room and asked why. Was he afraid they'd hurt him. "Hurt?" he laughed. He was beyond that. At most, he finally decided, they could distract him, take up precious time which he'd devoted to acquiring skills to help change what their parents' parents, etc., had built with the help of labor extracted inhumanely from his parents' parents, etc. No, he didn't feel hate, just determination.

He wears a mask and a "white proof" shell perhaps for security—protection for his still limpid perception of his newly found black personality—and perhaps for spite—revenge for years of black subjugation. He wasn't sure whether or not he felt insecure or spiteful in "their" presence, but he was sure that he wanted to avoid the attention a black skin seems to draw from the white intellectual elite. He discriminates. He must, in

lieu of inviting relationships that may weaken his growing sense of black identity, or test new values that have not yet fully materialized. This "reverse discrimination," as it has been called by some scholars who perhaps imply that all forward motions are reserved for white society, is deemed necessary by many black collegians and scholars today who search for the true meaning of blackness.

We know, or can find out, what it is to be a man, but what is a black man? This society has said there is a difference, and it may well be that that difference is our realization that there is none, save skin color and hair texture. If this is so, black just may be superior.

Jean-Marie
Prestwidge '72

Dear Editor:

I have had tremendous trouble writing about being black at Swarthmore. I suspect this may be because I have never been black at Swarthmore. I'm not trying to be facetious, though I admit it sounds that way; I'm trying to explain a conception with which I have groped and grappled for the past few weeks. I guess the problem is that my heritage is so utterly different from the majority of the black students here. Because my Jamaican background has instilled in me a strong sense of my individuality, I do not really have room for that kind of insulated identity, or perhaps more accurately I do not feel the need for such an identity.

What I had wanted to say was that Swarthmore allowed a great deal more room for individuality than most places did, and that it seemed a shame not to take advantage of it. I guess the problem is that you can't be one person on campus and another off campus. Perhaps that is really why I have never experienced being black at Swarthmore. I have never really had any sense of being black anywhere. I feel bad that I was unable to articulate clearly the way Swarthmore has been for me, because perhaps knowing that one person had found one of the alternatives to a staunch black (and therefore group) identity would lead others

to try to insist more on their uniqueness and individuality than on the superficial characteristics which make them the same. Perhaps it is not possible here at Swarthmore. I suppose I have just been

very lucky in having started out with roots that are strong and go deep into a multiplicity of cultural pools; maybe it's just the stubbornness of a small-islander. I wish I could have said it.



The first thing that struck me about Swarthmore was the atmosphere of permissiveness and liberalism. Here I was attired in a conservative three-piece suit with my fledgling "Afro" trimmed to modest proportions, surrounded by freshmen in bell-bottoms, bare feet and shoulder length hair—normal attire for both sexes! Having lived in Jamaica all my life, I had never witnessed the "hip" wild youth of America except on television and in the newspapers. I was stunned and shocked, as this was totally different from what I'd expected and what had been depicted in

the brochures sent to me! My feelings of surprise gave way to pleasure, however; and as my Mother's smile dwindled and mine broadened, I was really looking forward to my years to come at Swarthmore.

While I was spinning in total confusion what with signing in and moving into my room, I noticed the beauty of the campus. Not being a nature lover, as I prefer the lights of the city to the chores of the country, scenery has to be really something before I begin to feel its effect. However, I really liked the groves of tall, dark, silent trees and the broad smooth expanses of lawn which dotted the campus. I also liked the broad, smooth, expanses of the pool tables in Tarble.

The first week passed in

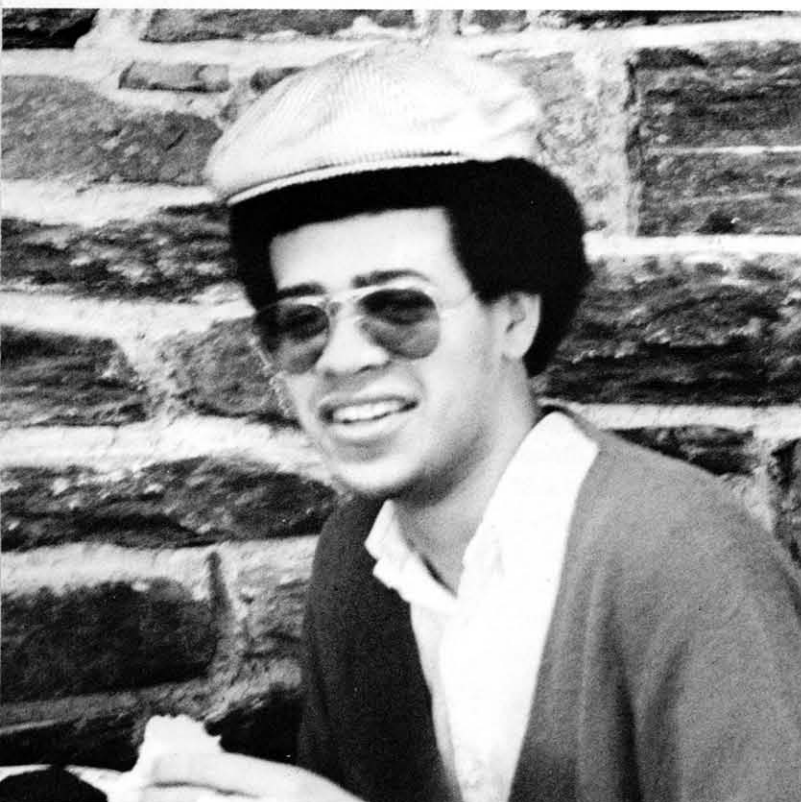
a whirl of mixers, parties, registration procedures, and meeting new people. I learned a lot in that first week about people, and my eyes were jogged open a little. I learned about people from different countries and about people from different parts of North America, and I also learned that the length of a person's hair doesn't really say a thing about him. I saw that long hair doesn't necessarily mean a person is so "hip" and as liberal as one would like you to think. This was perhaps the single most valuable lesson I learned in that first week I was at Swarthmore.

After I registered, I wandered around looking for some sport to take part in, because for as long as I can remember I've always been very active in sports, to my teachers' and parents' sorrow. However, everywhere I went I was told I had to take out accident insurance before I could start to play. At this point I thought prudence would definitely be the better part of valor so I stopped looking for a sport to play for a while. This was due partly to the sounds I heard coming from the football practice and the size of the varsity football squad. It was the first time I had seen football played that close and I was mildly upset. I took some Alka-Seltzer and went to bed. Eventually I met this strange personage whom everyone called "Rosie," who told me that they played soccer at Swarthmore. I was most

relieved to hear this, as I just couldn't see all 148 pounds of me trying to play football or basketball, and I didn't know the first thing about baseball. I happily settled in and made some good friends on the soccer squad and felt less lonely and out of place.

Gradually I got into the groove of things and after people began to understand my accent and decipher what I was saying, I met more and more people and made more friends. I grappled daily with lecture after lecture, and it took me a few weeks to adjust to the American system of education. Back home teachers used to pause during their lectures and allow us several minutes to make notes, whereas here in America one has to jot down notes and listen to the lecturer simultaneously. This posed a problem for a while, but in time I was even able to note down a quarter of the lecturer's sum content!

The switch from Jamaica to Swarthmore has not been as hard as I thought it would be. Of course on Friday and Saturday nights and on the colder days I miss the homeland sorely. This feeling also persists daily at every meal! All in all I think I made the right decision in coming to school here in view of the excellent way Swarthmore prepares one for a professional career. If I have not flunked out by the time this article comes to press, I shall look forward to more years at Swarthmore—at least till the next finals roll around!



James White '73

Is Swarthmore the "prototype of liberalism"? Let the reader make his own decision. I have mixed emotions about the acceptability of that reference. It is true that Swarthmore is indeed liberal in some aspects; yet it is also true that the school and the students who attend it are predominately conservative. It is my feeling that faculty and administration members want to preserve Swarthmore's image as it was years ago and thus are wary of change. I have reservations about white students here and, what seems to me, their apathy. It appears that the economic and political system which presently subjects blacks has rooted out much of the sensitivity in this younger generation. More than a few individuals here have been caught up in society's bag already and their situation seems irreversible. Some

people might get caught up in the utopian belief that the interaction between Orientals, blacks and whites on campus holds true in a real-life situation off campus. I hope that reality will "endarken" them in the near future. I must confess that there are some really cool and genuinely human people here.

I have been informed that this is the "liberal" place where black students were thought of as being "risk students" by certain egotistic persons. From what I understand, the question of black admissions was a hotly debated issue, because some individuals in the college community feared that increased black enrollment would sacrifice academic proficiency. I can see that some blacks have not had the preparatory training available to most whites in their white-dominated suburban and private schools, but this educational lag is evidenced among white students also. The implication that black students are not the equal

of white students is not justifiable, and I attack the euphemism "risk student" as a very naive and stereotyped description of any student and his educational background.

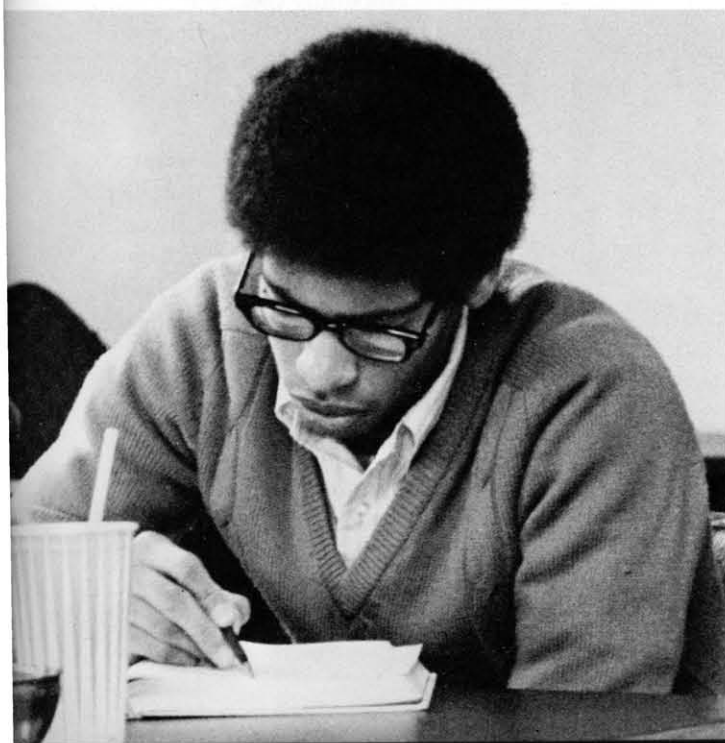
It seems to me that this College is definitely sincere in its policy to increase black admissions in spite of the puzzling controversy last year about "risk students" and the College's belief that finances were not available to support additional black students. However, it is very difficult to comprehend how squash courts can be erected at a price exceeding \$100,000 when the College needs funds for scholarships. Apparently a reworking of priorities is necessary. But, it is to Swarthmore's credit that this college has decided to make the size of the black population more realistic. I also am glad to see that admission policies have been liberalized in certain areas.

I feel that as a student I have an obligation to criticize certain aspects of the curriculum which I happen to feel are oppressive. The distribution requirements as they now stand are an archaic form of coercion. Students today are intelligent enough to realize that the better informed they are in various fields of knowledge, the more the established, exploitative, capitalistic system will reward them. These requirements are being overemphasized for their most significant purpose is to preserve Swarthmore's rank in academic circles. I advocate

a more "liberal" policy of subject and course selection where the student is able to choose courses that are relevant to him.

I believe that I have been truthful in my opinions about Swarthmore, and although the truth hurts, it is necessary to constructively criticize in order to correct something. I give Swarthmore credit for its attempts to achieve some sort of snail-like progressivism; Swarthmore is "progressive" (instead of liberal) compared with other institutions. I am definitely certain that Swarthmore was the best possible selection of a college I could have made. I would choose it again for its superior facilities and resources and also for its "intellectual atmosphere." Here you have to develop the ability to analyze, evaluate, and criticize work, knowing also the opposing view. At your old high school maybe you could "out-rap" any student; here you can get "rapped" down to the ground. You've got to be on your toes here when you articulate, and this helps a student's incentive to excel. I can truthfully say that my four months here have increased my self-confidence and added to my maturity. The faculty's concern for students learning is another great characteristic of this place.

Swarthmore, like all American institutions, has not cast off its unconscious racism; however, the mechanism for change exists, and the likelihood of its success is good.



Gary Williams '70

During my time here, Swarthmore and I have both felt the pressures for change. On most occasions, I felt the forces of the school acting on me; at other times the situation was reversed: it was I, among others, who was applying the pressure. This is not to say the school and I were continually at odds. The changes were caused by a variety of factors; some reflected the broader changes which were occurring elsewhere, and both of us felt the effects of the growing-up.

One of the most significant events which occurred for me was the coming of age of the black community on the campus. It has become for me a very real, positive and warm element of life. The black community, now enjoying the fruits of the relatively recent and widespread surge of black awareness around the country and more specifically at Swarthmore College, is a viable and important part of the College.

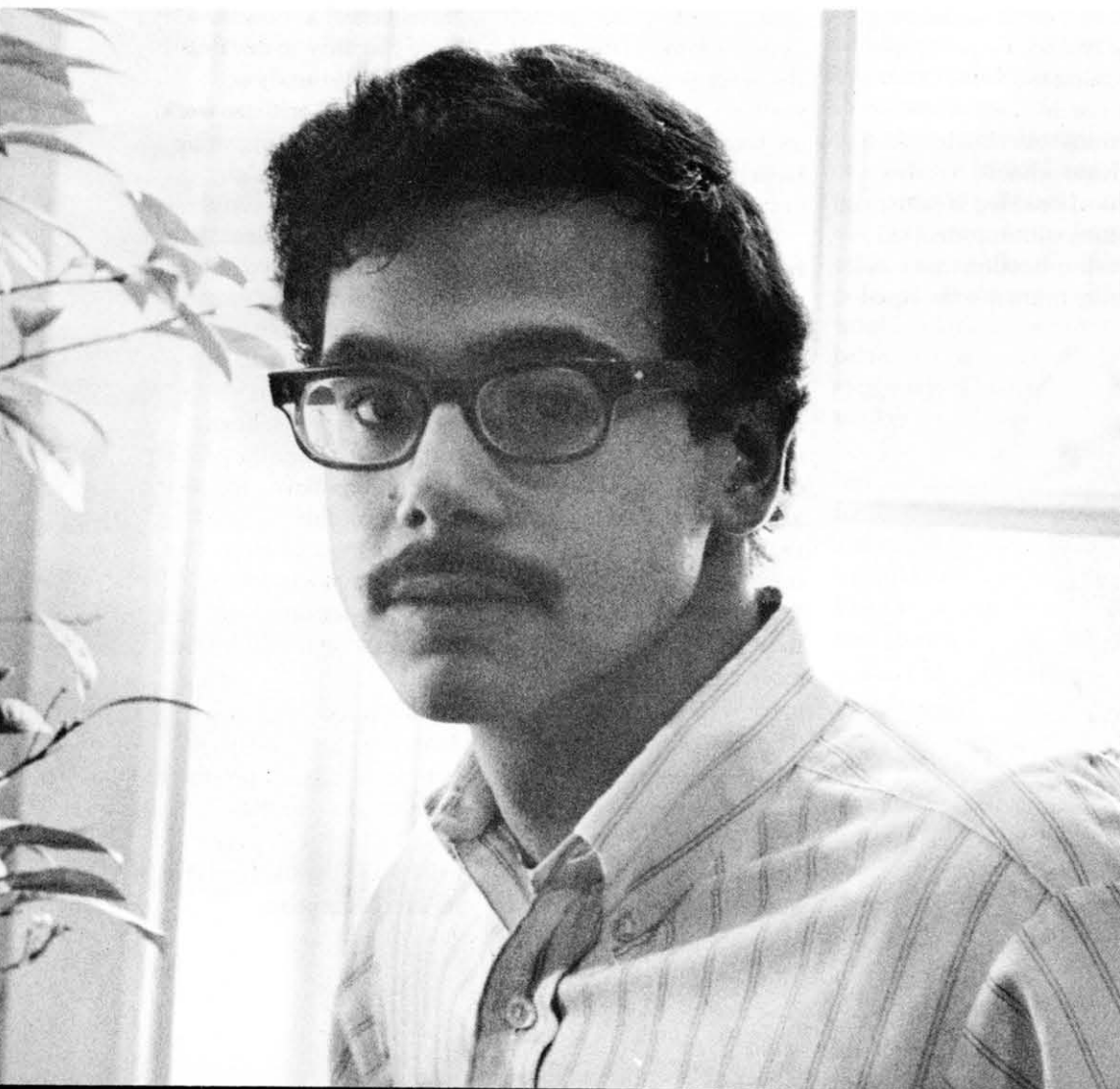
I and my fellow more-or-less impressionable colleagues in learning entered this mélange of changing times, new awarenesses, new pressures and unfamiliar

surroundings. Some of us extended a skeptical toe, tested the situation, and retreated permanently; some rushed in headlong and drowned; some stopped at various points along the way to return later with an improved sense of where they were going. Many, I think, found it worthwhile, at times difficult, at times great fun. There is a great deal that goes on at Swarthmore. You can become a part of as much or as little of it as you wish. The appearance of a strong black community on the campus has made Swarthmore broader in scope with another path of development open to it. After the College recovers

from the tragedy of the events which accompanied the acceptance and recognition of the black community, I believe that it will be considerably richer.

In a sense, a new college exists now, one which is trying to maintain itself with the flow of present events, yet one which is trying to preserve traditions of academic excellence, close ties between students, faculty and administration, and a willingness to continually examine itself, its purpose, and its success in the achievement of such goals. The "newness" of the College, in the sense of its maintaining itself with the changing times, is not something which is set against the College's traditions. The changes occur in the realities of the social and academic lives of the students and faculty and should aid the College in maintaining its most valuable standards of academic excellence and a helpful, not overbearing, concern for the welfare of its members.

Hopefully then, the students of the College's future classes will be the beneficiaries of all the efforts which preceded them. Although as usual there may be some number who leave temporarily or permanently, those students who do remain will, I hope, find Swarthmore fulfills the promise of its carefully thought out programs, and that they will be able to enjoy the talents, skills, productivity, and geniality of a remarkable faculty and student body.



Delmar Thompson '72

Last January, one year after its establishment, the Ad Hoc Black Admissions Committee (AHBAC) completed and submitted to President Cross its recommendations concerning black admissions policy at Swarthmore. An outgrowth of the January, 1969, admissions crisis, AHBAC was established by the Faculty and charged to review present admissions standards with regard to black applicants and to recommend new standards and procedures for evaluating future black applicants.

AHBAC's membership consists of five students: Franciena King '72 (recently succeeded by Andrew DeGraffenreidt '73, Don Mizell '71, Alan Robin '70, Aundrea White '70, and myself; two administrators—William

Cline and Gilmore Stott (chairman); and three faculty members: Uwe Henke, Asmarom Legesse, and Jean Perkins '49.

AHBAC's report of policy recommendations is based on a working paper prepared last summer by Don Mizell at the request of the committee. The final report is the result of AHBAC's evaluation of numerous written materials in the area of black admissions and of discussions with the following black consultants: Dr. Donald M. Henderson, director, Experiment in Higher Education, Southern Illinois University; Dr. Andress Taylor, Department of English, Federal City College; Robert Kirkpatrick, assistant dean of admissions, Wesleyan University; and Harold Davis, Office of Admissions, Wesleyan University.

What follows is a brief summary of the report.

One major flaw with the present admissions

procedures at the college level is that all too often applicants are judged on the basis of their past records, rather than on their potential. This situation is a result of placing too much emphasis on traditional admissions criteria such as SAT scores, grade point averages, class rank, etc., that often fail to accurately predict the future academic performance of black students. What they do instead is measure the student's acquisition of certain skills thought basic to academic success. Should the student prove to be deficient in these skills, he would require specific remedial action in the form of pre- and post-enrollment programs as early as possible.

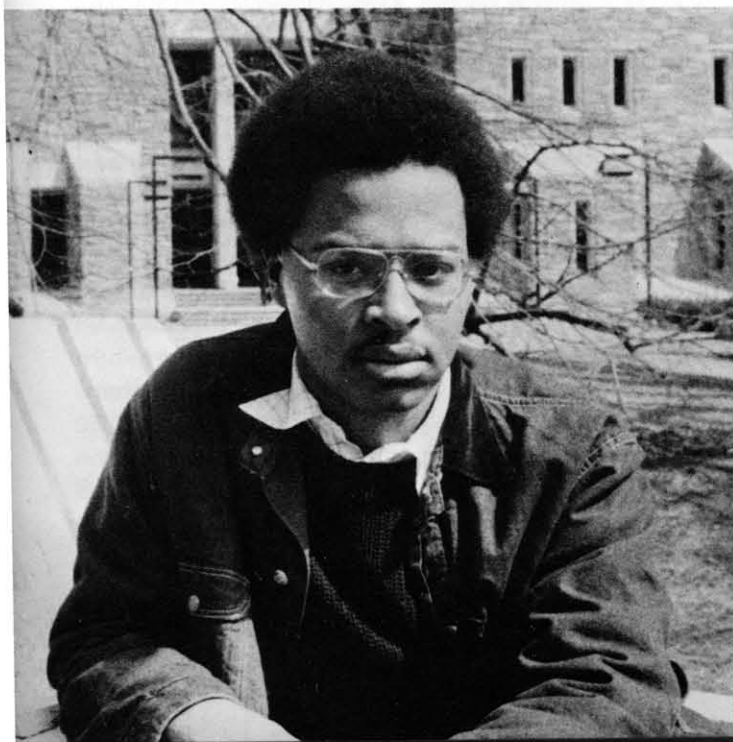
What then, over and above the traditional admissions criteria, should the College look for in black applicants? The committee concludes that it should seek candidates whose strengths point more in the direction of creative achievement, rather than just academic achievement. They should be judged by how well they achieved relative to the opportunities available to them, rather than by any uniform measuring standards of academic potential. Among the factors that should be considered are the candidate's self-image, his motivations and aspirations, his creativity and originality, and his intellectual inquisitiveness.

To implement this policy, AHBAC has recommended that the College should:

- Give priority to the aforementioned criteria with regard to black admissions
- Seek out unconventional qualified candidates and increase recruitment of black applicants, utilizing the services of present black students through the Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society whenever possible
- Establish a summer pre-enrollment program to be required of all students judged to be in need of it
- Initiate policy to facilitate the admission of black transfer students
- Increase scholarship funds to support these endeavors

Finally, Swarthmore, if it is seriously committed to the principle of educating black students, "must not ask of them a degree of change far greater than any [it] is willing to make to respond to *their* needs." The different perspectives, experiences, and goals that these students will bring to the College will provide it and the faculty with a new set of stimuli and challenges and necessitate the College's reexamination of its static standards of educational achievement, thus providing an opportunity for Swarthmore to revitalize its traditional standards of excellence and to better prepare its students, both black and white, to contribute to solving the problems confronting them today.

The AHBAC report is available upon request to the editor, Alumni Bulletin.



William P. Cline
Assistant Dean of
Admissions

The quest for increased black admissions is a problem that concerns practically every predominantly white American college and university today. As the competition to secure the most promising black students becomes more intense, each institution finds it imperative to examine carefully its commitment to black admissions.

What is the role of the black admissions officer? One of his most important functions is certainly that of representing the black perspective on the administrative level. He must be aware of the changing needs of all students and be especially attuned to the needs of black students. He must wade through and dispel the many educational and sociological myths about blacks that have been perpetrated by American society and direct attention to the real criteria that lead to academic success or failure. He must be instrumental in the development of new testing procedures which will provide a more adequate appraisal of the so-called "unconventionally qualified" student. Predictive criteria must go beyond that of previously demonstrated achievements; they must somehow include the creative potential of each individual to achieve. Such criteria must include how well each individual has fared with reference to the environment in which he has lived.

Before an adequate recruitment program can be set up, some very basic questions have to be answered: (1) Will the number of black admissions be minimal or will there be a genuine effort to secure a viable black community within the institution? (2) Are sufficient funds available for recruitment and scholarships? (3) What efforts will be made to help the black student adjust to the complexities of college? (4) To what extent will course offerings be adjusted to meet realistically the needs of and provide relevancy to the incoming black students, particularly those who are "unconventionally qualified"? and (5) What type of pre-enrollment and post-enrollment support programs are planned to help the unconventionally qualified black students make the difficult and often traumatic transition from high school to college?

Swarthmore for many years had achieved only a slight degree of racial integration because of its high selectivity and modest recruiting program for black students. Disagreement over black admissions policy prompted the take-over of the Swarthmore Admissions Office a year ago January by members of the Swarthmore Afro-American Student Society and their demands for changes in this policy. Action by the Faculty and Board of Managers taken in the ensuing weeks expressed their intent that the College

maintain "a viable black student community," that the College should "strive to enroll a minimum of 25 black students in each freshman class," and expressed the hope that this number can be increased to 35 after a three-year period. To attain this goal, the Faculty proposed the appointment of a black admissions officer and called for the College to "vigorously extend its recruitment of the best black secondary school graduates," recruit black students from community and junior colleges, and set as its goal the enrollment of a "significant number (approximately 10) of black students whose qualifications are outside normal admissions criteria for the year 1969-70."

A brief look at Swarthmore's record in black admissions shows that from 1953 to 1963 a total of 20 black students was enrolled. From 1964 to 1968, 61 black students (out of approximately 1100 students enrolled during this period) were enrolled. This increase followed a \$275,000 grant from The Rockefeller Foundation to underwrite the College's efforts to recruit and enroll black students. Subsequently two factors were mainly responsible for a drop in black enrollment figures for the classes of 1970, 1971 and 1972: on the one hand increasing competition from other colleges and universities to enroll black students, and on the other hand a pool of qualified high school students that



did not increase at a proportionate rate.

Last fall Swarthmore enrolled 31 blacks—17 men and 14 women—out of 340 freshmen, as compared to 8 a year ago and 10 two years ago. This increase was brought about by a positive approach to finding and attracting qualified black students, an increase in financial aid and scholarships, a re-examination of some of the College's admissions standards, and the general feeling among prospective black students that Swarthmore is serious in its commitment to admit more black students.

Eighty-five percent of the black students in the College receive financial aid from the College and outside sources, with an average award amounting to \$2,589; 31 percent of non-black students and 35 percent of all students are receiving financial aid, with an average award for this latter group of \$2,041.

At the end of January, figures for the class of 1974 looked like this: We can identify 160 applicants as black students—79 men and 81 women. About 50 percent of these I had personally contacted by letter or had seen during my fall recruiting trips to 85 predominately black high schools in twelve cities. On these trips I contacted 750 black students and 150 white students. Of the 750 black students, I feel that 250 to 300 could make it academically at Swarthmore. To reinforce these efforts, some of our black students visited their

own and neighboring high schools at Christmas vacation, and we have recently used the new brochure *Black at Swarthmore* as a follow-up with our present applicant group.

The admissions officer's concern does not end with the actual admissions process. Once the black students arrive on campus, efforts must be made to make them feel a part of the college community. The black student does not automatically acclimate himself to the college community in which he has traditionally been a foreigner. In like respect the college community does not automatically create an atmosphere which makes the black student feel "at home." Finding someone or something to relate to is an acute problem to the black student. Having more black students around isn't enough. There need to be more black teachers and administrators present to represent the black perspective and provide the young black students with models of academic success.

Swarthmore must show its faith in the potential creativity and the future contributions of its black students by realistically re-examining its curricula, making additions and modifications so as to interpret the "black experience" and give insight into the life styles of black folk.

The pre-enrollment and post-enrollment support programs for the "unconventionally qualified" students must be more than just fancy names

for meaningless projects. Each should be aimed at bringing the essence of Swarthmore academia into the black experience. Pre-enrollment programs are summer projects designed to help the incoming black student sharpen his basic skills of writing, reading and critical thinking. Along with learning how to deal with concepts, the student learns much about himself, about his strengths and weaknesses, and most of all, he develops a feeling of self-confidence and pride by dispelling the myths that have caused feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.

Whereas the summer pre-enrollment program should provide the incoming black student with "dry run" experience in handling the academic and social problems at Swarthmore, the post-enrollment support program should be more comprehensive in scope. This critical stage, the "preventive maintenance phase," should provide a tutorial program flexible enough to meet the needs of the individual student. It is the duty of the black counselor to supervise, coordinate and implement this program. The Ad Hoc Black Admissions Committee, which was set up by the faculty last spring to study the whole black admissions program at Swarthmore, has just issued its first report to President Cross, and Delmar Thompson '72 describes the report in his article in this issue. The specific recommendations

of the AHBAC report regarding pre- and post-enrollment programs for Swarthmore will now be studied and acted upon by the College. In the meantime the post-enrollment program at Swarthmore this year has been basically a tutorial one. Upperclassmen have volunteered to tutor students in need of help, and I have held informal training sessions for these tutors and have helped match up tutor and tutee. We have also added to the curriculum a course in basic language skills taught by Stephen Hitchner, Jr. '67. The most recent development was the appointment in early February of David Closson as assistant dean of students, whose primary responsibility is counseling for black students.

We see then that black admissions at Swarthmore is a complex, comprehensive undertaking. Nothing better explains the magnitude of the task which lies ahead of us than this sentence from the AHBAC report:

"We must recognize that a commitment to the principle of educating economically disadvantaged black students will necessarily mean some restructuring of the entire admissions procedure; it will mean a greater expenditure of money to be successful (if we are serious); and it will require a psychological readiness on the part of those at this college to deal with the new experience that is inevitable if we implement our plans."

SASS

by Wilbert Greenhouse '70



One evening in late October, 1966, a group met in Lodge 3 of Bond Hall. Some of the people there were good friends, others only casual acquaintances. They all had at least two things in common: they were all students at Swarthmore College and they were all black. The chairman, Sam Shepherd, a junior, explained that as black students at Swarthmore we played a role in the college community which seemed to him unsatisfactory. Others discussed that role and at length a resolve was made to change it. The group of about thirty decided that an organization of black students should be formed at Swarthmore. Discussion of the purposes of such an organization continued several weeks, factions formed and dissolved, committees convened and reported. Christmas came and with it a committee was appointed to draft a constitution. It was completed in January, 1967; in it goals were chosen and a general organization was outlined. Though much has changed since its adoption, the goals of SASS remain the same. They are threefold: (1) to further the cause of black people on Swarthmore's campus politically, academically, and socially; (2) to educate black people in their own rich heritage and culture; and (3) to promote the economic, political, and social advancement of black people in the rest of the world, especially in the communities adjacent to

Swarthmore. This paraphrase I hope conveys the spirit of the endeavor: it is one of love and hope, not of hatred. The new organization hoped to represent all of Swarthmore's black students, and for that reason chose the name Swarthmore Afro-American Students' Society.

With organization completed, SASS attempted to increase its membership by broadening its appeal to the black students on campus. Parties, lectures, meetings, and programs financed from our own pockets and open to the entire Swarthmore community began our program of education for Black Awareness. Many artists and performers agreed to visit with us at Swarthmore for no charge.

We worked with the Dean of Admissions to encourage more black students to come to Swarthmore. In the spring of 1967, we cosponsored with Dean Hargadon the first of what we called "recruitment weekends." All the black applicants who lived within easy traveling distance were invited to spend a weekend at Swarthmore, to see the campus, to meet the students, and to have an interview. The results of this first attempt were neither encouraging or disappointing. Seven black seniors graduated and eight new freshmen entered the following September, with a few black students departing for academic or personal reasons so that Swarthmore's black community decreased in size.

Admissions had always been a sore spot with SASS. Dean Hargadon pointed out that the results of three years' recruitment weekends did not demonstrate that the program was effective. In SASS's opinion the results neither affirmed nor denied its usefulness. Dean Hargadon continued to support the program. SASS at several points suggested and offered its assistance. Black alumni offered their assistance in recruiting black students, but the Admissions Office ignored their offers. Throughout 1967 and 1968 the number of black students at Swarthmore declined, and the prospects for 1969 were indeed very bad, since 24 of the 55 black students would be graduated or were leaving for other reasons.

SASS inquired why the criteria for admissions could not be lowered for a number of the black applicants so as to take into account the cultural differences, the white-middle-class bias of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the lower quality of the predominantly black big-city school systems, and the general differences in the values of the black community *vis-à-vis* the white community. Dean Hargadon answered that the faculty would not tolerate *any* lowering of standards, but that they would study the situation in the summer. Several SASS members offered to cut short their vacations to assist in the preparation of the study for the

Admissions Policy Committee. Hargadon welcomed their offers, but never notified any of the volunteers when the work started. The report reflected, in SASS's opinion, the fact that no black hand had touched it. There was much confidential information (which had been listed without names but hardly "anonymously" as claimed) on a sample of only 71 (the *total* number of black students who had attended Swarthmore by the end of '67-68). The report was marked "not for publication" but was available to students through the College library. Faculty and black students received copies.

SASS decided that some action had to be taken to improve the

recommendations made in the APC report. They first petitioned the administration with a list of proposals to which they received no response. A new attack on the problem was taken in the form of the proposals reframed as demands in a Christmas letter to President Smith. When President Smith replied that the institution would not be moved by demands, an agonizing decision had to be made by SASS members. Heretofore the College had dealt with the black students on an individual level only, recognizing SASS as an organization composed of the more militant members of the Swarthmore black community. Although all the black students were greatly concerned over the

issue, the individual approach of the College made the issue seem much less important than it really was. The black students decided that in order to focus attention on the issue some group action must be taken. The group action came in the form of a silent demonstration in support of the demands. Stronger action was threatened if the College remained unresponsive.

When a week had passed with no sign from the College that the demands would even be considered, SASS had to find stronger action. After much discussion it was suggested that SASS sit in at Parrish. The idea was not immediately acceptable to all parties, fearing institutional or parental retaliation, but eventually all but a handful agreed with that course of action. Before deciding to mount the sit-in, everyone was warned of the possible penalties and urged to be prepared to accept any punishment including being imprisoned for trespass.

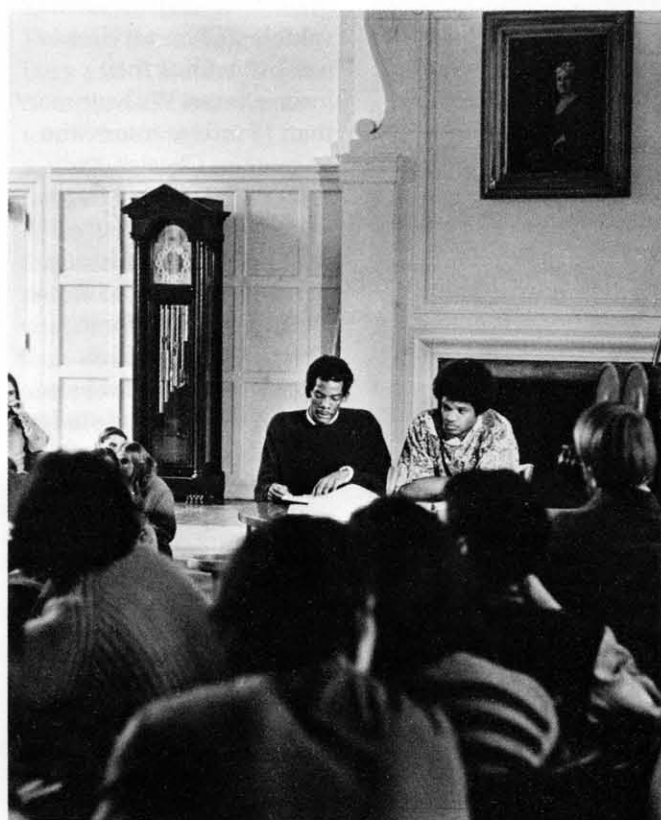
I believe that all who participated were prepared to accept such penalties, since we had all agreed that if any one person were punished we should all be punished . . .

The sit-in opened the hoped-for negotiations with the faculty and administration. A committee (the Ad Hoc Black Admissions Committee or AHBAC) was set up to deal with standards for the admission of black students and programs were agreed upon

to bring these students up to the customary Swarthmore standards. The group had decided to leave the Admissions Office. When word of President Smith's death came, the shocked group hurried its preparations and left that same afternoon, January 16, 1969.

SASS has been working hard since that time on the implementation of the agreements. The admission and enrollment of thirty-one freshmen last fall has kept SASS busy helping them become acquainted with Swarthmore life. SASS members serve on a number of student-faculty committees involved with issues concerning black students. They also participate in the two community involvement programs: Chester Tutorial Program, which works with elementary and junior high school children in Chester, and Swarthmore Upward Bound, which works with high school students from Chester and Morton.

SASS has been for me a very enriching and enlightening political, social, and educational experience. It has given me a pride in my people that I never thought I could have. It has given me direction and career incentive. My parents told me that I should look out for myself first and only, but SASS has shown me that I have obligations to all my black brothers and sisters. It has had similar effects on all the black students at Swarthmore.



Edwin A. Collins
Director,
Swarthmore College
Upward Bound

Friendliness, flexibility, and faith are the most suitable words for describing the ingredients of the Swarthmore College Upward Bound program. More than 300 American institutions host similar programs across the country, serving some 26,000 students. Upward Bound is a pre-college program with the collective goal of motivating high school students from economically and socially deprived environments to obtain advanced education beyond high school. Although these kids possess college potential, their lack of academic motivation often results in poor school achievement. Upward Bound students are faced with fantastic odds just trying to overcome the drop-out syndrome and the demoralizing Chicken-Little syndrome that the whole sky is falling down.

The students in our program primarily come from nearby Chester, Pa. Most could go either way. Their grades are usually falling in ninth and tenth grade. They could drop out for downright hostility, for the lack of motivation, for need to add to low family incomes, etc. (and few teachers would know why they left), or they could drift along until they graduate. They might never learn or use their potential to escape the vicious cycle of poverty and ignorance to which generation after generation of poor people have been condemned from birth.

Recent Swarthmore College alumni are probably more familiar than I am with one of the forerunners

of the present national Upward Bound, their own program known as the Swarthmore-Wade House Summer Studies, the 1964-65 cooperative effort to tutor and counsel Chester boys and girls. A formal application to host Upward Bound was made in 1966 to the Office of Economic Opportunity and the program continued under four successive grants. In July, 1969, Upward Bound was transferred to the Office of Education, and we are now under the Health, Education and Welfare Department of the national government.

In an early autumn talk to the Swarthmore Alumnae Discussion Group, Gilmore Stott described the Swarthmore Upward Bound program as one with "consistency and change." As the first full-time director for Upward Bound, I see my role as furthering that combination: keeping all the elements of friendship and summer studies alive and well, while changing our focus a bit so that we become fully relevant to student growth and motivation throughout the entire year. The quality and depth of understanding that develop between counselor and counsellee who see and work meaningfully with each other all year long should have a far-reaching effect on the very object of this program—getting into college.

Upward Bound was never too clearly defined to its collegiate friends as a pre-college program. While one recognizes and respects all the reasons for giving and encouraging youngsters to

seek all sorts of vocations, it doesn't take long to realize that you spread yourself thin if you try to substitute this program for the guidance department of a large inner-city high school. Thus our student recruitment will consider only those academic risk students who have some chance at successfully entering and completing a post-secondary school.

Our academic year has begun as a strong one with Patrick Connell '71 and Alan Robin '70 as student directors and with Sheryl Sebastian '71 as college counselor. Equally concerned counselors include Prudy Brown '70, Myra Rose '70, John Stevens '70, Paul Shechtman '71 and James Batton '72. Wilbert Greenhouse '70 has ably handled the completion of 30 Parents Confidential Statements and has already volunteered his services to parents in filing their income taxes. We have more than 75 college tutors who go into two Chester study centers and one in Morton three nights a week to offer tutoring help during the academic year to any student who asks for it. There are always high schoolers waiting for help. The Upward Bound student brings his sisters and brothers and friends.

While Upward Bound is essentially counselling and tutoring, it is so many other things that don't lend themselves to news articles, mainly because it's a program aimed at helping young people work through to satisfactory solutions the many problems that



accompany their impoverished situations. The social service needs are legion. The medical-dental expenses are great. But our major concern is with the self-images of our enrollees. With a more intensive winter effort, we are able to make the one change that doesn't escape the student's or his teacher's eye—the improvement of grades. We don't push grades as an end to themselves, but they become the means by which we can help a kid into college. And the not-too-surprising fact is that no matter how low their grades have been before entering UB, these students do want to get higher marks.

Another interesting phase of Upward Bound is its thirteen students who are attending preparatory schools: The George School, Shipley, Oldfields, Westtown, Germantown Friends, Dana Hall, Solebury and A Better Chance Schools (ABC) in Appleton, Wisconsin, and Maumee, Ohio. Upward Bound, no matter how sincere, doesn't have the resources for the complete social renovation some of our students need. Their problems do not end with acceptance; for some they intensify in another direction. But we are looking long and hard at (and constantly talking to) those who are now away so that future preparatory school students may have as much support as we can possibly give—financially and personally. Prep schools have many frills and costs; and with an already trimmed-down budget, we are reluctant to

be instrumental in placement if we aren't certain that a prep student will have adequate money.

And then there's college placement . . . We are looking for total—or pretty inclusive—scholarship packages for thirty seniors this year. We are also determined that all students will see the schools of their choice during the next three or four months. We know it

will be costly; but it's absolutely necessary for non-college oriented people. We plan a full swing through Pennsylvania colleges from here to Erie. Other scattered destinations include the Midwest and the South.

A complete report regarding our summer 1969 program is available upon request and we are always pleased to talk to interested alumni (Parrish, Room 16)

who might want to know more about the excitement that is Upward Bound. There is a mutually rewarding experience in working with Upward Bound youngsters as they struggle to get a deeper-than-conventional understanding of their own identities and their own capacities in order to have some control over their own destinies.

