



LENDING THEIR EARS—Swarthmore students cram into Parrish Hall and listen to reading of dissident students' demands for college reforms.

Daily News Photo by Sam Psoras

20 Seize Office at Swarthmore

By TOM FOX

You have to wonder what Billy would do if he were alive.

Billy was the night watchman at Swarthmore College.

He died at the turn of the century—in 1905, at age 64—but Swarthmore remembers Billy.

In the main corridor of Parrish Hall, the Swarthmore administration building, Billy is immortalized in bronze.

The massive plaque reads:

In memory of William Mullen (1841-1905)

Affectionately known as Billy, who during his 28 years as night watchman, faithfully safeguarded Swarthmore College and the lives and property of its faculty and students.

DOWN THE LONG hall, about 40 feet from the plaque, some 20 militant black Swarthmore students are holed up in the Admissions Office.

The militants — members of the Swarthmore Afro-American Students Society—seized the Admissions Office yesterday in

protest of what SASS terms "Swarthmore's racist admissions policy."

They say they're prepared to remain in the office for two weeks.

The protest seems to have stunned the Quaker school out in Delaware county, whose whole philosophy is based on the idea that the only valid form of discrimination is one based on ability.

The meat of the problem seems to be Swarthmore's exacting admission standards.

Of the 1024 Swarthmore students, 47 are black. The black militants of Swarthmore want more black students on the campus, more black instructors, more black administrators, more black counselors.

"AND SO DOES the college administration," said one Swarthmore official, who asked not to be identified. "We're looking for black administrators and black instructors, but we can't find them."

The dilemma falls on deaf ears in SASS circles. SASS

wants more blacks on the Swarthmore campus—NOW.

Walter Palmer, the black power advocate, was in the storm center of yesterday's protest. Palmer, a onetime hospital technician, is not a Swarthmore student, instructor, administrator or counselor.

"He's an outsider," someone said yesterday, "an outside agitator."

PALMER FIGURED prominently in a brouhaha that seemed out of place at venerable old Swarthmore. During a press conference he objected to Daily News photographer Sam Psoras taking his picture.

"Don't you dare take my picture again," Palmer snarled at Psoras.

When Psoras snapped a second picture of Palmer, someone attacked the photographer. The hoodlum, a college official said, was certainly not a Swarthmore man.

Later Psoras' car was forced off the road on his drive back to Philadelphia.

Palmer has taken an active role in numerous protests in the Philadelphia area. He was one

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WALTER PALMER

... in storm center

20 Militants Seize Office at Swarthmore

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of the participants in the black power rally outside the School Administration Building on Nov. 17, 1967, during which 52 persons were arrested and scores injured. He was one of the leaders in the Welfare Rights Organization sit-in at the State Office Building last November.

And now he's working Swarthmore College.

MEANWHILE, the 20 black militants remain holed up in the Admissions Office while Swarthmore administrators search for a solution to the crisis.

One of the SASS demands—"non-negotiable demands," according to Clinton A. Etheridge,

Jr., the SASS chairman—calls for the admission of black "risk students" who possess "other qualities likely to compensate for lack of strong academic preparation."

Joseph B. Shane, vice president of Swarthmore, said the Admissions Policy Committee had been working on the "risk students" proposal "for most of the past semester."

Shane also said that at a meeting on Tuesday the faculty agreed "in principle on: (1) seeking a substantial increase in the number of black students at Swarthmore; (2) favoring immediate interim steps to increase the number of black students in next year's entering class, including admission of 'risk' students; (3) recognizing the need for a more viable life for black students at Swarthmore, including the appointment of black administrators and counselors."

But, said Shane, before the proposals could be considered by the college community, "SASS issued its 'non-negotiable demands.'"

AND YESTERDAY, SASS took over the Admissions Office.

Among other SASS demands are the enrolling of 'risk' students in private secondary schools for a year in order that they may qualify for admission to Swarthmore—"with the students' total expenses for that

year paid for by the college"—and the "replacement" of the Swarthmore dean of admissions, Frederick A. Hargadon, who is charged by SASS with "callous use of power" against the Afro-American group.

The "general conclusion" of the SASS demands is that "the college is allowing its own view of academic excellence to rule out over 90 percent of potential black (student) candidates."

Meanwhile, the 20 SASS militants remain in command of the Admissions Office in Parrish Hall.

You have to wonder what Billy Mullen would do if he were alive.