

Members of Your Race Are Not Admitted

Pauli didn't mean to stir up a storm. All she wanted was to attend a good graduate school for social work so she could help those in need. "Members of your race are not admitted to the University,"ⁱ was the answer she received. Perhaps a parallel track for Blacks would be provided during the next session of the General Assembly, but for now, Pauli was out of luck. Pauli's fingers burned and flew. And the press found out about the Black woman who had the gall to apply to the University of North Carolina. Reactions ranged from unbridled bigotry to steadfast support.^{ii iii iv} From University of North Carolina students who wanted nothing to do with a Black student, to Blacks and whites who thought Pauli was the bravest person in the world. The most hurtful response was from the President of North Carolina College for Negroes who asserted that Black students actually do "their best work only in their own schools."^v He advocated the continuation of separate but equal. Was he trying to protect his job? Separate was never equal. Even Aunt Pauline was against the fight. She was afraid that Pauli's notoriety would rub off on her and she would be dropped from her job without a pension. She was afraid of the Klan setting fire to her house. Still, in 1938.^{vi} It would have made sense for the NAACP to take on Pauli's case. Pauli was a model student, with excellent grades and blood ties to the University. And this case would test the separate but equal doctrine.^{vii} But the NAACP declined. Pauli didn't live in North Carolina when she applied, although neither did many white graduate students that attended UNC. The NAACP needed perfect cases and Pauli was far from perfect. She suspected that her "boy/girl thing" was to blame for the NAACP not championing her case. The University finally lay the blame for refusing to admit Pauli on the Constitution of the state of North Carolina.^{viii} Pauli did not receive any personal benefit from the storm she raised, but her case publicized the decision which she had hoped would have opened the doors to her. Inspired by her courage and her grace, Black students applied to Southern colleges and universities and were accepted under the Gaines decision.

ⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 115

ⁱⁱ Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. "I think the state would close the University before they'd let a Negro in. I've never committed murder yet but if a Black boy tried to come into my home saying he was a "University student..." "Students hearing of the movement vowed that they would tar and feather any 'nigger' that tried to come into class with them." These are from the Daily Tar Heel, Around January 5, 1939.

Also a letter from an anonymous person saying "Your thinking has been sound and your bravery in daring to express yourself commendable." Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 120

Kennon Cheek, president of Janitors' Association at UNC said "...masses of Negroes have [not] had the background and time to develop to the extent of enjoying social equality with the white folk." (Black) Murray, Pauli.

Autobiography. P. 120

Howard K. Beale, positive letter in the Daily Tar Heel and Louis Harris (Harris poll) as well PM 121.

ⁱⁱⁱ Governor Hoey's speech to General Assembly: "North Carolina does not believe in social equality between the races and will not tolerate mixed schools for the races, but we do believe in equality of opportunity in their respective fields of service, and the white race cannot afford to do less than justice for the Negro." Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 118

^{iv} Newspaper stories from the *Durham Morning Herald*, *Daily Tar Heel*, *New York Daily News* (White) *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, *The Baltimore Afro-American*, *Durham*, *Carolina Times* pm 117

^v Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 119

^{vi} Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 126

^{vii} "We have opposed separate schools for the races since the beginning of the NAACP thirty years ago, because all surveys and statistics show conclusively that there does not exist in America a so-called equal school System. Murray, Pauli. *Autobiography*. P. 120

^{viii} Pauli's reply: The Constitution of North Carolina is inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States and should be changed to meet the ideals set forth by the first citizens of our country...We of the younger generation cannot compromise with our ideals of human equality. We have seen the consequence of such compromise in the bloody pages of human history, and we must hold fast, using all of our passion and reason." Murray, Pauli.
Autobiography. P. 123