

# Unity concept nothing new to Duke, N.C. Central

**Ties between schools go back decades**

**STANLEY B. CHAMBERS JR., Staff Writer**

History doesn't support the national media's portrayal of longstanding tension between Duke University and N.C. Central University in the aftermath of the Duke lacrosse rape case.

Cooperative ventures in academia, civic life and social events are nothing new between Duke -- a private research university -- and NCCU -- a state-supported, historically black school. The rape case, in which three lacrosse players are accused of sexually assaulting a woman at a March off-campus party, brought the leadership at both schools to work together in addressing a common issue, said John Burness, Duke's senior vice president for public affairs and government relations.

"I think one of the great tragedies of this national public distortion of what happened here was this sense that [N.C.] Central and Duke were enemies or that Duke and Durham were enemies," Burness said. "To people on the ground here in Durham, these are institutions who have worked well together for a long time."

Relationships that go back to when Duke was Trinity College and NCCU founder James E. Shepard was involved with his school. Duke and NCCU students have worked with each other since the 1960s to address community issues. That interaction is no different today with the planning of Sunday's Unity Fest at the American Tobacco Campus.

The event's impetus also came from a major transgression -- three cross burnings in Durham in May 2005. Last year's Unity Fest was an open mic at The Armory for city residents to express their thoughts, but Yvonne Penna, city department of human relations director, felt this year's event -- funded by a \$15,000 grant from State Rep. Paul Miller's office -- would be ideal in showing how students from Duke and NCCU can work together.

"There's good and bad in every place, but my experience with these students has been remarkable," she said. "Their sense of

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## THE FESTIVAL

The second annual Unity Fest will take place Sunday from 2-5 p.m. at the American Tobacco Campus, 318 Blackwell St., across from the Durham Bulls Athletic Park.

The free event will have food, entertainment, games and giveaways. Speakers, including state Rep. Larry Hall, NCCU Chancellor James Ammons and students from both schools, will also be present.

## OTHER COLLABORATIONS

\* The Duke Center for Documentary Studies will offer a course documenting Durham's history where students from both schools can enroll.

\* Beginning in summer 2007, NCCU students will be offered three scholarships per year to participate in the Duke in Ghana summer study abroad program.

\* The Women's Centers at both schools are discussing joint programming ideas such as holding a joint conference on a topic of mutual interest.

\* Student interns from NCCU worked in Duke's news communications offices over the summer.

## TALE OF TWO UNIVERSITIES

DUKE

Year founded: 1924

Founder: James Buchanan Duke

Type: Private

Number of students: 6,558 undergraduate; 7,329 graduate

Number of buildings: 217

Number of employees: 27,543 (including 10,105 affiliated with Duke University Health System)

Campus: 8,610 acres

Undergraduate tuition (excluding room and board):

leadership is undeniable, and their commitment to work on this together has been demonstrated."

Working together has been a long-standing tradition between the two schools. NCCU founder James E. Shepard was friends with Trinity College president John C. Kilgo, and former Duke president Robert L. Flowers was chairman of NCCU's (then the N.C. College for Negroes) board of trustees from 1925 to 1950, according to a 1991 Founder's Day address by Alex Rivera, who worked at the school for about 50 years before retiring in 1993.

Students from both schools didn't intermingle much until the civil rights movement of the 1960s, said Jake Phelps, 71, a Duke administrator for three decades before his 1995 retirement. Students from both schools gathered at Five Points for anti-segregation demonstrations. Then-Duke president Terry Sanford, who ridiculed the police for arresting protesters, held Sunday morning breakfasts with the community, including NCCU students and administrators, to discuss current events, Phelps said.

"Before that, people from [N.C.] Central would tell me that they felt awkward going to Duke," Phelps said. "[They] thought there was an invisible sign at Duke that said, 'If you don't play basketball, N.C. Central is on the other side of town.' "

Duke and NCCU students were involved with community groups such as the United Organizations for Community Improvement and the Durham Voters Alliance, said Ben Ruffin, a 1964 NCCU graduate who was active in both organizations during the 1960s and 1970s.

"Students at Duke and Central were a vital part of what we were trying to do," said Ruffin, 64, who runs a Winston-Salem consulting firm.

NCCU track athletes used to practice at Duke before the team had its own facility. During the '70s, both squads competed together as an Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) team, said Leroy T. Walker, former NCCU track coach and chancellor.

Walker, a member of Duke's Fuqua School of Business board of visitors since 1993, is another example of the many ties between both schools. A NCCU building bears the name of Benjamin N. Duke, a major benefactor to both schools. A partnership between Duke and NCCU netted a \$4.5 million grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 2002 to assist low-income children. And there has been constant interaction between academic departments at both schools, said Burness, Duke's senior vice president for public affairs and government relations.

In the lacrosse case's aftermath, both student government associations have met more often with each other. Duke SGA president Elliott Wolf believes this is the beginning of more interaction between Duke and NCCU.

"What we would like to do with our student groups is establish a dependency on one another, particularly the community-service organizations," Wolf said.

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