Bell's extra chime signals racial strife

By David Jankowski
Lantern staff writer

When the bells of Orton Hall chime 13 times at noon today, it will not be by mistake.

The Black Graduate and Professional Student Caucus and the Black Law Student Association are using the bells, which will be followed by the playing of "Taps" and Chopin's "The Funeral March," to draw student attention to apartheid in South Africa.

Apartheid is a policy of strict racial segregation and discrimination.

John Jenkins, president of the black caucus, said ringing the bells 13 times parallels the "dehumanizing, vicious, illegal apartheid where the meaning of human rights and the right for all to vote has no meaning for the majority of the population."

"Taps" will be played to symbolize the deaths of the millions who have died under the oppressive South African regime. "The Funeral March" will serve as their funeral dirge, Jenkins said.

Jenkins said the day will also honor 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu who has campaigned to halt South African apartheid once and for all, Jenkins said.

There will be a continuously running film and slide show held in the Tavern Room of the Ohio Union beginning at 10 a.m. today. The day will end with a fundraising party at 9:30 p.m.

A rally will be staged from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. on the west lawn of the Ohio Union providing a forum for local and South African speakers.
Students hold rally protesting apartheid

Nothing short of total revolution will solve the problem of apartheid in South Africa, said William E. Nelson, chairman of OSU’s Department of Black Studies.

Nelson spoke Friday afternoon at a rally organized by the Black Graduate and Professional Student Caucus and the Black Law Students Association. The rally was originally to be held on the Oval but was held in the Ohio Union because of rain.

South African apartheid policies aim at racial segregation.

"It's going to come down to armed action," said Nelson. "It is now time to turn out the lights of the regime in South Africa."

"What happens in South Africa very much affects blacks here," said Nelson. "We can't get jobs here because American companies are employing people at slave wages in South Africa," he said.

Michael Coard, president of the Black Law Students Association, said that by their presence in South Africa, American companies solidify apartheid. If they pulled out, the system would break down, he said.

During the rally, petitions were circulated in support of Senate Bill 53, which aims at divesting investments of Ohio companies doing business in South Africa.
Civil rights conference, debate scheduled

A two-day conference on civil rights and affirmative action issues begins today in the Ohio Union.

The conference is free and open to all students, said Linda Ammons, program coordinator for the Black Law Student Association.

A debate on civil rights issues is scheduled for 3 p.m. Saturday between Mary Berry, professor of history and law at Howard University, and also a member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, and Steve Mathews, special counsel to the Assistant Attorney General in the civil rights division. The sessions will be held at the Memorial Room and Conference Theater in the Ohio Union.

Registration for the conference begins at 11 a.m. today.

Beginning at 1:30, four teams of panelists will present issues on racially motivated violence, employment, women's rights and housing discrimination. Among the panelists are Alex Shumate, legal counsel to Gov. Richard F. Celeste. Henry Ramsey Jr., presiding judge of the Superior Court of Alameda County, Calif., will be the guest speaker at a luncheon Saturday at 11:30 a.m.
Civil rights to receive examination

By Tom Spring

U.S. Rep. Louis Stokes of Cleveland and Patricia Russell-McCloud, an Atlanta, Ga., attorney, will be the featured speakers of the 1987 spring conference of Ohio State's Black Law Students Association.

The conference on civil rights and affirmative action issues will be held from noon-5 p.m. April 17 in the Ohio Union. Most sessions are free and open to the public.

This year's forum will focus on the interplay of law and politics in state and national governments.

Russell-McCloud, of Russell-McCloud and Associates of Atlanta, will speak at a 12:30-2 p.m. luncheon. She is a former chief of the Complaints Branch in the Mass Media Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission.

At 2:15 p.m., state Rep. Otto Beatty of Columbus will lead the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio in a discussion on a House proposal to divest state pension monies in companies that do business in South Africa. The group also will discuss other legislative initiatives it is sponsoring.

At 3:45 p.m., Stokes will speak on civil rights legislation in the 100th Congress. Stokes is serving his ninth term representing the 21st District.

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Two issues Congress is considering are a measure to strengthen the Fair Housing Act of 1968 and a bill to bar discrimination by entire institutions. In 1984, the Supreme Court limited the scope of anti-discrimination laws, holding that discrimination in one program meant that the program might lose federal funding but that other programs sponsored by the same institution would not lose aid.

Conference sessions are free, except the luncheon, which will cost $9 per person. Payment for luncheon reservations must be received by April 15 and should be mailed to the Civil Rights Week Conference, Ohio State University College of Law, 1569 N. High St., Columbus, Ohio 43210-1391.

The conference is supported by grants from the Office of Affirmative Action, Office of Minority Affairs and the College of Law.

For more information, contact Linda Ammons, Black Law Students Association, 292-4270 or (evenings) 471-7020.
Politicians to address civil rights

By Etsuko Motoki  
Lantern staff writer

Civil rights, affirmative action and the law and politics are some of the topics that will be discussed Friday at the second annual conference of the OSU Black Law Students Association, said Linda Ammons, former president of the association.

"This year our focus is on law and politics," Ammons said, "how politics influence law, law-makers and law-making," in the state and national governments.

U.S. Rep. Louis Stokes, D-Ohio; Patricia Russell-McCloud, member of the U.S. Supreme Court Bar Association and state Rep. Otto Beatty, D-Columbus, will speak on civil rights and affirmative action issues, Ammons said.

Leroy Pernell, associate professor in the College of Law, said he thought this conference very significant because it will be a follow-up to last year's conference. "The conference last year was the first time that a major civil rights conference has been held in this portion of the United States in 15 or 20 years," he said.

"The issues of civil rights are becoming very prominent again in terms of questions of racial equality and anti-discrimination," he said.

Russell-McCloud, former chief of the complaints branch of the Mass Media Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission, will speak at 12:30 p.m. on whether there has been an increase or decline of civil rights today in one ethnic group or another.

At 2:15 p.m., Beatty and members of the Black Elected Democrats of Ohio will have a workshop on state legislation. "One of the political and legislative issues we are talking about is divestiture from investment from South Africa," Beatty said.

They will discuss a proposal that state pension funds not be used to invest in stocks of any companies that do business with South Africa, Beatty said.

Stokes will speak at 3:45 p.m. on the 100th Congress.

Stokes is currently serving his ninth term in Congress and is the first black member of Congress from the state of Ohio.

Stokes will primarily discuss civil rights legislation in the 100th Congress, Ammons said. His speech will include the history and the mechanics of how the black congressional caucus works in the U.S. House of Representatives, she said.

"The conference is not just open to black people. It is open to everyone because information that will be shared is vital and important to the community at large," Ammons said.

Pernell said he hoped the conference would raise the level of consciousness concerning civil rights issues.

The conference, which will last from 12 to 5 p.m., is free, except for the luncheon session. The conference will be held in the Conference Theater at the Ohio Union. For more information, call 292-4270.
Black law students re-examine system

By Nicole D’Alonzo
Lantern campus reporter

The Black Law Student Association (BLSA) will present a working document to Dean Francis X. Beytagh today to reevaluate the grading system at the College of Law and help improve job placement for black students.

Beytagh and members of BLSA met Nov. 3 to discuss Ohio State and the College of Law, relative to race and affirmative action, Beytagh said.

“The history of our history, we need to take into account to get beyond it,” Beytagh said.

Greg Carr, president of BLSA, said he is not suggesting a specific grading system, but one proposal has been made to incorporate a pass/fail system which would eliminate class ranking except for academic awards.

“We are concerned with the image of and possible biases towards black students and would like to research it further and research other universities,” Carr said.

Several years ago, Harvard Law School experimented with an option to take a course as pass/fail or for a numerical grade for first-year students, but the system was changed back to letter grades after a couple years.

“We were wondering why we were doing all of this when we knew (grades) were calculated anyway,” said Annie Bombard, registrar at Harvard Law School.

Lee Mangia, OSU registrar, said a pass/fail system could be detrimental to the overall pool of applicants.

Only a handful of black students are in the top half and none are in the top 10 percent. Another concern is that there are no black students on The Law Journal, a publication that publishes law school research and current events. Only the top 15 students from each class can write for it.

Beytagh said he has been concerned with the job placement of black students long before this proposal was brought to him. “I have talked to black alumni and black graduates to obtain insight into the private and public sector employment,” he said.

Placement for all law students does not function as effectively as it should, Carr said. “Not to the exclusion of anyone, but we are concerned with our own placement,” he said.

Members of BLSA met with Law School placement director Darlene Brown a few weeks ago. Beytagh has asked Brown to look at past experiences with placement and seek employers with black employees or job offers.

Carr said that black students should be seeing more first and second interviews. “With a law school like OSU, on equal terms, they should be able to get us in the door; it is the responsibility of the law school,” he said.

Since black students are not represented in the top 10 percent of the class, BLSA is concerned they are missing out on important interviews, Carr said.

BLSA proposes that subsidies be set aside to reimburse the black law students for their expenses while interviewing out of town.

“If the interviews don’t come to us, we often times have to seek our own interviews at other placement consortiums,” Carr said.

BLSA, along with the Columbus Bar Association, began a minority clerkship program three years ago. “The program has gotten fantastic reviews,” Carr said. The program allows law students the opportunity to work for a firm and find a job upon graduation.
Forum scheduled

The Black Law Student Association is sponsoring a Critical Issues Forum — Can We Talk? Topic — Capital Punishment: "Justice or Just-Us" today from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. in the Law Building student lounge as part of United Black World Month celebrations.

A forum, Issues of Sexuality in the Black Community, will be held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Frank W. Hale Black Cultural Center tonight. This forum is being sponsored by Black Graduate Students in Psychology, and it will give students the opportunity to raise questions and air concerns about sexuality and how it is expressed in the Black community. Members of the Black Graduate Students in Psychology will also facilitate the forum.

—Nanda Tewari
Attorney talks about racism in legal system

By Nanda Tewari
Lantern staff writer

African-Americans are more likely to receive the death penalty in capital crime cases, charges attorney S. Adele Shank.

Shank, invited by the Black Law Student Association, spoke to the College of Law Tuesday to discuss capital punishment. The forum was part of the United Black World Month celebration.

The purpose of the forum was "to educate the law school students about capital punishment with regard to racism that exists within the legal system," said Mark Whitaker, president of Black Law Student Association.

When the first decision is made as to whether or not to ask for the death penalty, if it is a white defendant, the prosecutor won't ask for the death penalty, but if it's an African-American defendant, they will, Shank said.

Frequently it is easier to obtain a plea bargain for a white defendant than for an African-American, Shank said.

"What I can tell you from having represented clients, both blacks and whites for the last nine years, is that if your client happens to be African-American, you have a much tougher job in getting a plea bargain," Shank said.

At every stage — in the jury selection, in the trial session, the sentencing — the most obvious discrimination occurs if the client is African-American, she said.

"If the victim is white and the defendant is African-American, he is far, far, far more likely to get a death penalty, than if the victim is an African-American," Shank said.

Shank answered students' questions about various aspects of the legal process, racism and the very question of whether there should be capital punishment in this country.

Shank also shared some of her experiences and the difficulties that she faced with the cases she has handled involving African-Americans.
Harvey Gantt addresses Black law students

Harvey B. Gantt, architect and former mayor of Charlotte, N.C., was the guest speaker of the annual banquet April 17 of The Ohio State University College of Law and Capital University Law and Graduate Center chapters of the National Association of Black Law Students. In 1990, Gantt was the first African American nominated by the Democratic Party to run for U.S. Senate in North Carolina. He lost to Sen. Jesse Helms in a campaign that drew national attention.

Gantt spoke to the law students on the topic, "Re-establishing Our Strengths: New Tools for Empowering Our Community."

During the banquet, the law students presented the annual Black Law Students Association Achievement Award to Judge Yvette McGee of the Franklin County Court of Domestic Relations. The annual BLSA Service Award was presented to Barbara Rich, associate director of admissions and financial aid in Ohio State's law school.
Speakers address minority concerns at law school rally

OSU students, faculty respond to letters

By Adena Washington
Lantern staff writer

They spoke powerfully and passionately. Stern voices of dismay, hurt and disappointment fueled the anger expressed Thursday afternoon on the steps of the Law Building.

Students, faculty and staff listened as members of the Black Law Students Association, along with OSU faculty members and African-American attorneys from Columbus expressed their concerns for the environment Ohio State provides for its minority students.

The outdoor news conference was sparked by two racist letters sent to a first-year law student who wishes to remain anonymous.

Applause was continuous as speaker after speaker charged Ohio State with an intolerance for diversity that they said is rampant with not just students, but with the administration, faculty and staff.

"Racism starts from that office in Bricker Hall, and filters down," said Charles Ross, professor of social work.

A perceived lack of action on behalf of the administration seems to have many people angry.

"The administration knows what to do bureaucratically and organizationally," said Dr. Frank Hale, professor of communications and former vice provost for minority affairs. "It's like we're getting freedom on the installment plan — when it's about time to knock over a tray of goodies and somebody says, No, don't knock it over, we'll give you a few."

"Our presence is being challenged," said Dimitrius Oliver, president of the Black Law Students Association.

Angeline Bonner, a third-year law student said, "All they give us is lots of lip service and empty promises. We're tired of it, we want something in writing."

A meeting with the administration brought comments about lack of money in the budget and promises to look into the problem, Bonner said.

"They have money to do everything else they want to do," she said. "They just don't want to make the well being of African-Americans a priority."

"We are tired of turning the other cheek; we have turned the other cheek long enough," added Cathleen Williams, vice president of the HLSA. "The problem is not going to go away because we aren't going anywhere, we are here to stay."

Williams said the support of the African-American community and lawyers in Columbus helps to keep them strong in the struggle for a fair shake.

Hale said he would like to see the university require students to take courses that focus on racial tolerance.

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