

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION

JOHN F. KNIGHT, JR., and ALEASE S. SIMS, et al., individually and on behalf of others
similarly situated, *

Plaintiffs and Plaintiffs-Intervenors, *

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *

Plaintiff-Intervenor, *

v. *

Civil Action No.
2:83-cv-1676-HLM

THE STATE OF ALABAMA, et al., *

Defendants. *

**KNIGHT-SIMS PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
WHY DEFENDANT AUBURN UNIVERSITY AND ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SHOULD NOT BE HELD IN CONTEMPT**

EXHIBIT H: Editorial, "*Discriminating about racism*," BIRMINGHAM NEWS, March
8, 2005



The Birmingham News

Discriminating about racism

Tuesday, March 08, 2005

To discriminate, the Random House Webster's College Dictionary informs us, is: "to make a distinction in favor of or against a person on the basis of the group or class to which the person belongs, rather than according to merit."

Auburn University's athletics department is guilty of racial discrimination against two black athletics administrators it fired in a shakeup of the department, according to some blacks in positions of influence. Last month, new athletics director Jay Jacobs reorganized the department and eliminated the jobs of Stacy Danley and Eugene Harris.

That, according to the Alabama Legislative Black Caucus and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, proves Auburn discriminated against Danley and Harris. Both groups have called on black athletes who are considering going to school at Auburn to boycott the university until Danley and Harris are rehired. SCLC President Charles Steele, at the 40th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday" in Selma, said racism is alive and well at Auburn. In announcing the boycott Saturday, Steele suggested "we may have to extend the Selma-to-Montgomery march on toward Auburn."

Before everyone laces up their marching shoes, there's one small matter to consider: Nothing about the firings of Danley and Harris remotely suggests they were discriminated against because of their race.

Lost in all the rapidly escalating racial rhetoric is that when Jacobs fired Danley and Harris, he also fired a white man, Marvin Julich. Even more important, Jacobs promoted a black employee to senior associate athletic director for student services, the first time a black has held such a high position in the athletic department. A second black employee was promoted to assistant athletic director for compliance.

Auburn President Ed Richardson, in a recent memo to the Legislative Black Caucus, pointed out that since he has been president he has made a number of job changes away from the athletics department, "and those changes have resulted in the dismissal of 15 individuals, 11 white males, one African-American female and three white females."

That hardly sounds as if Auburn discriminates against blacks.

Yet the caucus voted for a boycott. Caucus member Rep. Alvin Holmes, D-Montgomery, said the group also has discussed withholding state grant money to Auburn but delayed voting on that move.

Granted, Auburn in previous years hardly was a beacon of racial tolerance, and even today it is struggling in efforts to bring about a more diverse campus. As Richardson acknowledged, "There is no question that we have work to do. Neither is there a question about Auburn's commitment to do that work."

Another definition for the word discriminate, according to the dictionary, is "to note or observe a difference; distinguish accurately."

It would be nice if the groups urging a boycott and threatening Auburn's funding would distinguish accurately what really happened in the athletic department shakeup. It wasn't racism.

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