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Schools' history preserved on the web

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By Neil Offen

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DURHAM -- The "elusive 1960" N.C. Central University yearbook isn't elusive any more.

An article appeared earlier this year in The Herald-Sun about the NCCU archives department searching for the one missing yearbook from its collection -- what archivist Andre Vann called "the elusive 1960."

The yearbooks, dating from the first one in 1929, were being digitized, by the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center, and put online. The absence of the 1960 edition -- published during the 50th anniversary of the school -- kept the collection from being complete.

But the newspaper report was seen by the university's former director of alumni affairs, Bill Evans, a member of the class of 1961 at the school.

"He saw the article, called me and said about the 1960 yearbook, 'Andre, I have that,'" Vann recalled.

The archivist asked Evans: "Would you mind bringing it over then?"

"Mind?" Evans responded. "I'm going to personally bring it over and give it to you."

The archive is now complete, and the digitization has been a great success, said Nicholas Graham, program coordinator at the heritage center, which is based at UNC Chapel Hill's Wilson Library.

The center also has digitized and put online copies of NCCU's Campus Echo student newspaper, from its inception in 1927 through 1969.

"The newspaper digitization went very well -- we were even able to get good images of those early, laminated issues," Graham said.

Because of the success of the project, Graham said he has written to other libraries at historically black colleges and universities in North Carolina, offering to digitize their student newspapers.

"We've had a few positive responses so far -- Bennett and Winston-Salem State are interested in participating, and St. Augustine's is also pulling together a set of papers," he said. "I hope this works out -- it's such valuable material and we are more than happy to help get it online and out to a wider audience."

Vann agreed.

"A program like this really helps to bring our history alive, and makes it available to the public," he said. "It's transformative. The more we have out about our history and culture, the more folks will understand that history and see its relevance."

All the yearbooks -- variously called, over the years, "The N.C.C. Eagle," "The Maroon and Gray," "The Campus Echo Review" and since 1952, "The Eagle" -- now can be viewed online, at web.nccu.edu/shepardlibrary/redirection/NCCUyearbooks.html. The newspapers can be viewed at digitalnc.org/collections/newspapers/north-carolina-central-university-student-newspaper.

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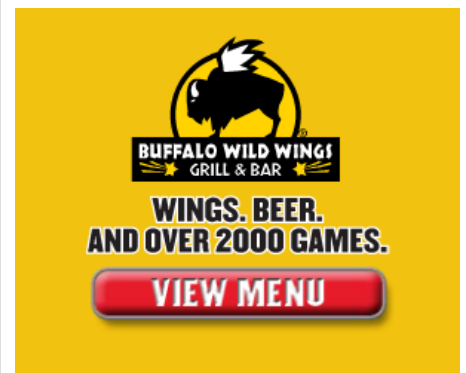
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