

## Preface and Acknowledgements

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In 1990, I published an illustrated history of Whitworth College on its centennial. Twenty years later, I wrote an addition to that first book covering the period from 1990 to 2010. Over the thirty-five plus years that I taught at Whitworth, I published several more scholarly articles on various aspects of Whitworth's history including World War II, the war in Vietnam, and Whitworth's place in the larger context of Christian higher education. Frequently, I spoke to incoming students, faculty, and new employees about Whitworth's history including episodes that featured issues related to race. These episodes varied widely, from Blackface performances, to the college invitation to twenty Japanese Americans to study at Whitworth to escape internment during World War II, to students' participation in civil rights marches during the 1960s. However, I knew from the very beginning that there was much more to learn about ways in which race and race relations were intertwined with Whitworth's history.

This project is intended to fill in many of the holes in that story. It is intended to document the role that race and race relations have played in shaping experiences, attitudes, values, practices and policies of those who have studied, taught, and worked at the institution over these many decades. Few, if any other institutions of higher education have a written history of this nature. Nevertheless, this remains an incomplete history in that surely many readers will have more memories and questions about events or individuals in Whitworth's past.

The impetus for this study came from President Beck Taylor, who alerted me to a grant opportunity sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC). Entitled, "Reframing the Institutional Saga," the grant offered money to hire a student interviewer as well as funds for making the study available on the web and in printed form.

I am grateful for the work of an African American student from Harlem, New York, Mr. Ibrahim Diop, a Whitworth student (class of '22) and selected speaker at his commencement. Mr. Diop interviewed more than twenty current and recent alumni of color regarding their experiences at Whitworth. These interviews generally lasted more than an hour and focused on reasons participants had come to Whitworth, their concerns about moving to Spokane, their challenges finding a cohort of friends, their experiences with faculty and staff, and their evaluation of Whitworth's efforts to address issues pertinent to students of color.

I am also deeply appreciative of the nearly fifty other individuals whom I interviewed over the last eighteen months. These included alumni extending back to the 1950s as well as students, faculty, staff, administrators, and members of the board of trustees. Nancy Bunker, Whitworth's archivist, provided excellent help in locating files of faculty and former administrators who were involved with policies and practices related to race relations at

Whitworth. I have read every issue of the student newspaper, the *Whitworthian*, as well as the college yearbook, the *Natsihi*.

I am grateful for additional support provided by Whitworth's provost, Dr. Gregor Thuswaldner. I am also deeply thankful for the comments and conversation with Dr. Arlin Migliazzo, my long-time colleague in the department of history at Whitworth. In addition, former colleague Dr. Jim McPherson, professor emeritus in journalism, and well as my spouse and partner Dr. Kathy Storm, provided additional copy editing and perspective. I am grateful for the help provided by Dr. Joshue Orozco for this project. He read the manuscript carefully and provided a number of helpful suggestions.

A word about language is important: I chose to capitalize Black although the scholarly community remains divided over whether "Black" should be capitalized. I use the terms Black and African American interchangeably. The word "Negro" appears in quotations when necessary for accurate historical record, but I have chosen to use [N] to signify historical use of the much more offensive term was used.

A study such as this raises numerous issues regarding perspective and unconscious bias. I have tried to be aware of my limitations, and as such I have included numerous student comments, often in their entirety, that were published in the *Whitworthian* or available in Whitworth's archives in order to provide as much first-person reflection as possible.

Whitworth's story is embedded in the highly complex history of race in America as well as race in the Pacific Northwest. Trying to understand the changing contexts and currents of race in America are essential to understanding what has transpired at Whitworth. At the same time, Whitworth's particular history has much to do with individual decisions of countless people.

This is an effort to try to weave those stories together for the purpose of not only understanding Whitworth's past, but to help individuals shape decisions in the future.