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WE ARE ALL HUMANS: THE IMPACT OF THE INTEGRATION OF OLE MISS IN  
1962 ON THE WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
CAMPUS NEWSPAPER STAFF

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A thesis

Presented to

The School of Social Sciences, Education & Business

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

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by

Kelsey Snyder

May 2018

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**Higher Education and Student Development  
Taylor University  
Upland, Indiana**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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MASTER'S THESIS

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This is to certify that the Thesis of

Kelsey Ann Snyder

entitled

We Are All Humans: The Impact of the Integration of Ole Miss in 1962 on the White  
Racial Identity Development of the Campus Newspaper Staff

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the

Master of Arts degree  
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May 2018

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### Abstract

The Integration of Ole Miss in 1962 was an incredibly impactful event in the Civil Rights Movement. A contributing member to the impact of integration was James Meredith, a student determined to go to Ole Miss. The institution was forever changed by this event, as were the students who experienced the integration first hand. The students at the campus newspaper, known at the time as *The Mississippian*, had a unique experience of the integration due to their reporting of the events. The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the Integration of Ole Miss on the White Racial Identity Development of the students on the campus newspaper. Four alumni who shared this experience were interviewed in a phenomenological case study. Five themes emerged from the interviews: friendly campus, exposure to a new ideology, progress and change, awareness of environmental and societal factors, and coming together as humans. This study also examined how these themes factor into the participants' White Racial Identity Development; discussed as well are the implications for practice and future research and the limitations in the research process.

## Acknowledgements

First, it is because of god the father almighty that I am here and have this opportunity. By his strength and peace, I have made it through this journey and I am forever thankful.

To my thesis supervisor, Todd Ream, thank you for your care and intentionality in my research. Your joy and wisdom are inspiring, and I am thankful for the time I have shared with you. Thank you to my other professors, for your time and commitment to teaching and investing in the next generation of educators. I am thankful for the ways you have challenged and encouraged me. I will be forever grateful for what I have learned from you all.

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To my family, thank you for your continual support throughout my many years of schooling. Your support means the world to me because I knew you were always there for me and would do anything to help me along the way. Mom and dad, you have sacrificed so much so for me to go to school, I am forever thankful. Love you all very

much. “Thank you” will never be enough.

At the beginning of this process, Scott Gaier gave us a verse to put to memory. This verse is at the front of my thesis journal and was a constant reminder of what it means to do good work with god. Psalm 127:1 “Unless the lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
Integration at Ole Miss .....	1
Students at The Mississippian .....	2
White Racial Identity Development Model.....	3
Conclusion .....	3
Chapter 2 Literature Review .....	4
Ole Miss History .....	4
James Meredith’s Background .....	6
Integration at Ole Miss .....	6
Campus Newspapers .....	8
The Mississippian in 1962.....	9
White Racial Identity Development Model.....	9
Conclusion .....	11
Chapter 3 Methodology .....	12
Purpose and Design.....	12
Context .....	12
Participants .....	13



Procedures .....	14
Data Analysis and Validity.....	14
Benefits.....	15
Chapter 4 Results.....	16
Participants .....	16
Category 1: Time on Campus .....	17
Category 2: Identity and Communal Implications.....	23
Summary .....	28
Chapter 5 Discussion .....	29
Phase 1: Abandonment of Racism .....	29
Phase 2 Defining a Nonracist White Identity .....	31
Implications for Practice .....	37
Implications for Future Research.....	39
Limitations.....	40
Conclusion.....	41
References.....	42
Appendix A: Informed Consent .....	45
Appendix B: Interview Protocol .....	49

## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Walking onto University of Mississippi campus on September 1, 1962, one would think he or she had stepped onto a battleground. Overturned and burned cars, bullet casings, and scars of a violent encounter were evident. This painful violence ensued because of one student's desire to attend the college of his choice. That student, James Meredith, was the first African-American to enroll at Ole Miss. For Meredith, the college application process proved especially difficult. The governor of Mississippi refused to admit him because he was not white, and the situation escalated until the President of the United States intervened. Meredith showed remarkable courage and endured various trials. Then on October 1, 1962, he was finally admitted to Ole Miss, beginning the process of racial integration at the university (Wallenstein, 2008).

### **Integration at Ole Miss**

The 1962 integration of University of Mississippi was a defining moments in the larger civil rights movement. University officials and the Mississippi State government strove to make it impossible for James Meredith and other students of color to attend Ole Miss (Cohodas, 1997). Governor Ross Barnett, a committed segregationist, continually stated Ole Miss would never integrate (Cohodas, 1997). Nonetheless, James Meredith persisted, received help from other political leaders, and was admitted to Ole Miss. He endured many court cases, applications, phone calls and conversations with the registrar.

Eventually, an agreement with the United States President was reached, but Governor Barnett disregarded that agreement. In response, the attorney general and the President sent U.S. Marshals to ensure James Meredith was brought to campus safely and enrolled. When Meredith was admitted, he never thought it would turn into a violent affair. He knew it would be a battle but not one where lives were lost. The integration of Ole Miss impacted education forever, creating opportunities for students of color.

### **Students at *The Mississippian***

Historically, campus newspapers offered the perspective of one of the most important groups of people on campus: the student body. The reporters for the campus newspaper, *The Mississippian*, had a unique perspective of integration, as they were not only on the sidelines of history but first-hand witnesses to it. *The Mississippian* faced some censorship of their work as well as pressure and threats from outside sources to silence articles about the integration (Armstrong, 2013). The students on the newspaper, however, chose to report exactly what was happening within the student body.

During the events of integration in 1962, Ole Miss' student body elected the editor of the newspaper. Shortly after the election, the editor offered her opinions in an editorial, and she believed the student body would agree with her opinions. She voiced the idea of non-violent protest to the integration, but not all students shared this idea, causing tension in the student body. Students called for her to step down because of her opinions on integration. Overall, the campus newspaper staff's experiences brought a unique perspective to understanding the integration of Ole Miss.

Integration was a pivotal event in Ole Miss' institutional history. Students working at the campus newspaper had a unique experience because they were on the

frontlines of the event, interviewing those directly involved. One is then left to wonder how the experience of the institution's integration impacted the White Racial Identity Development of the members of the campus newspaper staff.

### **White Racial Identity Development Model**

Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model is unique because it was the first to investigate "how Whites developed attitudes toward their racial-group membership rather than their *ethnic* group" (Helms, 1993, p. 105). This model has six stages that examine where individuals are in their development and the types of events that move them from one stage to the next. The six stages are contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion and autonomy (Helms, 1993). An important aspect of this model is where prejudice fits into this model, as "prejudice provides no information about how Whites feel about themselves as racial beings" (Helms, 1993, p. 105). White American culture transcends one's possible ties to separate ethnic groups due to a broad sense of what constitutes the white American culture. Helm's White Racial Identity Development Model offered a context for this case study.

### **Conclusion**

The impact of Ole Miss' integration on the students at the campus newspaper and White Racial Identity Development has not been previously explored. Therefore, a study was conducted to help fill the gap in the literature by investigating the impact that integration had on the students' White Racial Identity Development. In particular, this study sought to answer the following research question: How did the integration of Ole Miss in the fall of 1962 impact the White Racial Identity Development of students working at the campus newspaper?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

James Meredith's undergraduate experience at Ole Miss differed from that of most of his classmates. His journey to campus changed not only the world of higher education but also the entire nation. In 1962, when James Meredith applied to attend Ole Miss—a segregated institution—it became a national event. Students at Ole Miss were caught up in the integration process. Integration at Ole Miss was a traumatic event that left a lasting impact on students. For some Ole Miss students, this was not their first experience with segregation, as some had grown up in segregated communities. To understand more fully the context for the integration of Ole Miss, it is imperative to know the institution's history, the events involved with the school's desegregation, the history and role of campus newspapers, and details of White Racial Identity Development.

### **Ole Miss History**

Founded in 1844, Ole Miss was the first university established in Mississippi (Cabaniss, 1971; University of Mississippi, 2017; Works Progress Administration, 1949). Mississippians and alumni take great pride in Ole Miss, but the university has not always been worthy of the respect it garners today, as the university's roots run deep in white supremacy (Cohodas, 1997). The creation of Ole Miss was similar to other universities: they desired to educate future generations but also to teach them to preserve the status quo of the social order. Mississippians were weary of sending their children to another

institution where they could be taught ideas that did not align with their preferred status quo (Cohodas, 1997).

During the Civil War, Mississippi was the second state to secede from the Union. On campus, a literary student group burned two books that discussed abolition (Cohodas, 1997). As tensions mounted, students created a group called the University Greys who later fought as members of the Confederacy (Brown, 1940; Lord, 1966). Once battles began, the university closed its doors temporarily, with only four applicants for the fall of 1861; it reopened in the fall of 1865 (Cabaniss, 1971; Cohodas, 1997). University buildings, however, operated as Confederate hospitals. These buildings and the greater campus became a shrine to battles lost (Cohodas, 1997). As well, over 700 confederate soldiers died and were buried on campus. Though the grave markers were accidentally destroyed, a monument on campus commemorates their sacrifice. The Civil War left its mark on the institution specifically through how it memorializes fallen soldiers.

The marks of the Civil War appear in the early traditions of Ole Miss' Dixie Week, a school pride week, which has also changed much since the 1960s. In 1954, the headline of the student newspaper, *The Mississippian*, read, "Secession from Union, Slave Auction, Ku Klux Klan to Highlight Dixie Week," advertising topics, events and people celebrated at Dixie Week (Cohodas, 1997, p. 41). On the third day of Dixie Week, they reenacted slave auctions with Ole Miss cheerleaders and male campus political leaders as the people bid. These activities, at the time, were not seen as racist or insensitive (Cohodas, 1997). For students, this was an annual, fun event advertised by previous generations. Ole Miss' creation and history are marked with ideas of white superiority and a desire to educate white students with such an ideology (Lord, 1966).

## **James Meredith's Background**

James Meredith was born in Mississippi and spent nine years in the United States Air Force (Eagles, 2009; Meredith, 1966). Those nine years shaped his life forever and confirmed his identity as a soldier (Meredith, 1966). He later fought for the racial advancement of his home state of Mississippi. In his 1966 memoir, *Three Years in Mississippi*, he presented Mississippi as one of the only places he felt at home. For Meredith (1966), this home was filled with hope, joy, and love. However, amid his feelings slipped sadness as Meredith (1966) thought of the lives of African-Americans and the consistent discrimination and sense of inferiority enforced by the white majority.

Meredith (1966) took several college classes during his military career but not enough to finish his degree. Meredith wanted to complete his remaining degree requirements at Mississippi (Eagles, 2009), but Jackson State College was one of the few places he could attend as an African-American in 1960, with segregation laws fully in place (Clotfelter, 2004; Meredith, 1966). Meredith's determination to finish his degree was not only for his own benefit, but also for African-American societal advancement in Mississippi. Still, education available to African-Americans in Mississippi was not comparable to that available to white students, as teachers did not receive proper training (Meredith, 1966). With courageous determination, James Meredith (1966) applied to Ole Miss and made history as the first African-American student admitted to the institution.

## **Integration of Ole Miss**

The integration of Ole Miss started before the violent events of the fall of 1962. In January 1961, Meredith sent his room deposit and application, but it was returned to him (Hampton, Fayer, & Flynn, 1990; Hendrickson, 2003). The NAACP came to his aid

and brought his case to the public (Hampton et al., 1990). These court hearings and appeals took more than a year, but on September 10, 1962, one court ruled in favor of Meredith and granted his entrance to Ole Miss. Though he was granted entrance, Governor Ross Barnett continued to find ways to block his attendance.

Governor Ross Barnett was the one of the people most against Meredith's entrance. Barnett repeatedly stated that Ole Miss would never be integrated as long as he was governor (Lambert, 2010). The registrar at the time transferred his authority to Barnett so he could prevent Meredith from registering for classes (Barrett, 1965). During the registration process, federal marshals were present with Meredith, but he was still unsuccessful (Hampton et al., 1990). In the midst of this battle, many phone calls took place between Attorney General Bobby Kennedy and Ross Barnett (Hendrickson, 2003).

Tensions rose as the date of Meredith's entrance drew nearer. Finally, on Saturday, September 29, Governor Barnett and President John F. Kennedy spoke on the phone about the escalating situation in Mississippi (Mitchell, 2014). However, on this same day, he spoke at the football game and stated his love and devotion to Mississippi, its customs and heritage (Thompson, Meredith, & Mitchell, 2012). The negotiations between JFK and Barnett were intended to prevent any violent encounters during the process of bringing Meredith on campus (Hendrickson, 2003). Though measures were taken to prevent a riot or violent acts, students and outsiders still gathered on campus, and violence ensued.

The protests started on Sunday, September 30, 1962, and attracted people from the surrounding states, including groups such as the KKK (Eagles, 2009). At this time, James Meredith was brought to campus in an unmarked federal car and remained safe



during the riots (Eagles, 2009; Lambert, 2010). Highway patrol officers, U.S. Marshalls, reporters, students, and outsiders were scattered across the campus (Eagles, 2009; Silver 2012). In the midst of such chaos, the authorities resorted to teargas as the mob became unmanageable (Carson, 2003)—overturning and burning federal cars as they threw bricks, bottles, and pipes (Eagles, 2009; Lambert, 2010). At the peak of the riots, it was estimated the mob comprised over two thousand people (Lambert, 2010).

Just as the riots began, JFK made a television appearance updating Americans on the situation and hoping for the best at Ole Miss. Shortly after midnight, reinforcements arrived on campus (Eagles, 2009). The next morning, the campus of Ole Miss resembled a battlefield—two people died from gunshot wounds, three hundred were wounded, and more than two hundred were arrested (Eagles, 2009; Lambert, 2010). Finally, on October 1, 1962, Meredith started attending classes at Ole Miss with a U.S. Marshall escort (Lambert, 2010).

### **Campus Newspapers**

Campus newspapers have been part of college life since the beginning, and most campus newspapers have continued to be relevant to the campus culture amid technological advances (Armstrong, 2013). According to Armstrong (2013), “Student publications began as a way to provide information about the world, to fill needs of the students, to represent the college or university to the rest of the country and act as an agent for change” (p. 20). The campus newspaper is an important internal and external source for the institution.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, campus newspapers were not profitable ventures, but rather a way for students to see their own work in print and

continue the efforts of previous writers (Armstrong, 2013). Many early campus newspapers also served as places for students to share literary efforts with others. As newspapers grew, they not only shared news but also encouraged change at their institutions. Campus newspapers have a consistent presence within institutions and will continue to do so if students want to share news and search for change (Armstrong, 2013).

### ***The Mississippian in 1962***

The Ole Miss's campus newspaper, *The Mississippian*, played an important role during the integration process. *The Mississippian* first appeared on the campus in 1911 (Armstrong, 2013). In 1962, it was known for its accurate depiction of events, especially when local papers carried bias toward segregated views in their reporting (Armstrong, 2013). A majority of the reports were conducted by students taking journalism classes, depending on the students' standings in the journalism program. In 1962, as tensions rose on campus, the validity of news reporting was highly criticized by the student body and the wider community. As a result, *The Mississippian* staff heavily interacted with the event of integration as they reported on the events.

### **White Racial Identity Development Model**

Helms' White Racial Identity Development Model seeks to aid white people in seeing their role in American society and is rooted in how race has been a point of tension since the country's founding. In particular, Helms (1993) stated "that all people in the United States have a racial identity that is experienced within a framework of power and privilege" (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 260). The White Racial Identity Development framework has six stages that range from having no

awareness of race and racism to being very aware of race and racism. The first phase is the abandonment of racism, as one undergoes “the process of moving from oblivious or naïve conceptions of race” (Evans et al., 2010, p. 260). This phase pushes individuals to question what they have always believed and to what degree those beliefs have perpetuated society filled with racial tension (Helms, 1993).

As individuals move through the first phase, they feel stretched and challenged in what they held to be previously true about their identity. Those experiences lead individuals into the second phase: the evolution of a nonracist identity (Helms, 1993). In this phase, students explore their white identity through self-reflection of what they have already discovered, pushing them to interact with other racial groups (Evans et al., 2010). As individuals continue in their development, they undergo an individualized journey of discovering what it means to be racial beings and, more specifically, what it means to be White and hold the privilege that comes with White identity. In this phase, individuals strive for ways to combat white privilege because of the vast amount of influence it has on other racial groups (Evans et al., 2010).

Within these two phases exist six development stages (Helms, 1993). The first stage is contact, in which a person is oblivious to racial and cultural issues and sees the world with a degree of color-blindness (Helms, 1993). They do not see themselves as racial beings nor do they look at others in that way. The second stage is disintegration, an “awareness of the social implications of race on a personal level” (Helms, 1993, p. 68). In this stage, a person can feel conflicted between black and white cultures. They have trouble understanding their whiteness and how it impacts the black culture. The

third stage is “reintegration—idealization of everything perceived to be white and denigration of everything thought to be Black” (Helms, 1993, p. 68).

Stage four is characterized by a variety of emotions, especially anger. The fourth stage is pseudo-independence, the “internalization of Whiteness and capacity to recognize personal responsibility to ameliorate the consequences of racism” (Helms, 1993, p. 68). In this stage, a person gains increased knowledge of black culture and the privilege that comes with being white. The fifth stage, immersion/emersion, is the “honest appraisal of racism and significance of Whiteness” (Helms, 1993, p. 52). In this stage, an individual seeks to abandon racism and acknowledge a positive white racial identity. The last stage is autonomy, a “bicultural or racially transcendent world view” (Helms, 1993, p. 68). At this point, the individual feels positive about his or her white identity, cares about culture, feels close to those of other races, and seeks to bring justice to racial injustice (Daniels 2001; Helms 1993).

### **Conclusion**

Ole Miss’ integration forever impacted higher education for all students and advanced the fight for equal rights forward for African-Americans. James Meredith’s courageous journey was the catalyst and beginning of this integration. His determination to be a student was relentless until he was granted admission. Ole Miss’ scarred history is important, as it exemplifies the impact of desegregation on the campus. As this event unfolded, members of the campus newspaper staff were amid the action as they had more direct experience with the events surrounding the integration.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Purpose and Design**

A qualitative phenomenological case study approach was utilized to explore how James Meredith's integration at Ole Miss in the fall of 1962 impacted the white identity of students serving on the campus newspaper staff. A qualitative study best suited this research as this methodology focuses on examining "a problem and developing a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2012, p. 16). This design is most suitable for discovering the experience of integration and how these students experienced it. In particular, it explored the essence of an experience (Creswell, 2013). The study sought to discover the impact of the integration of Ole Miss on the white identity of the students at the campus newspaper. This case study was within a "bounded system because it is bound by time and place" (Creswell, 2013, p. 97). This research provided an in-depth understanding of the impact of integration on the identity of a group of students who had first-hand experience of integration.

#### **Context**

This study began by exploring Ole Miss in 1962 when segregation was still present across the south. The university has ideas of white superiority in their history that impacted the functions and values of the university until they were challenged in 1962 (Cohodas, 1997). The university and Mississippi government officials worked to make it

impossible for non-white students to attend Ole Miss (Cohodas, 1997). Despite these officials' efforts, the regulations and admission requirements were proven in court to deny giving equal opportunity to all students, especially students of color (Cohodas, 1997). This injustice was brought to light because of the courage of James Meredith.

Meredith believed dismantling segregation was his divine mission, which could be completed through attending Ole Miss, a symbol of white supremacy. Meredith's application process led to court cases, as well as negotiations among Governor Ross Barnett, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, and President John F. Kennedy. It heightened when U.S. Marshalls occupied Meredith to campus and riots broke out, claiming two civilian lives. Still, James Meredith was finally admitted to Ole Miss.

Amid desegregation, the campus was kept informed of these events by their campus newspaper, *The Mississippian*. In 1962, the students were tasked with reporting on integration—an event not supported by all on campus. The newspaper staff was not under pressure by the university administration, but they still had faculty, a group of townspeople, and other students influencing and criticizing their work. Those on staff were ready and willing to report on such an important event, and one of their editorials was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Overall, *The Mississippian* worked to bring accurate news to the student body amidst bias local newspapers (Armstrong, 2013).

## **Participants**

The four participants in this study were Ole Miss alumni who served on the newspaper staff in 1962. Their experience is unique because they reported the events of desegregation as they were experiencing it. This group of alumni was a small population of the campus, but they brought understanding of how their shared experiences differ

between one another. These alumni are from diverse backgrounds but are all white males or females. In addition to their firsthand accounts, archival information was used to research the participants' written works to better inform the participants' experiences. Lastly, the participants gave consent for their identities to be made public as they had also previously discussed or published the details of their experiences

### **Procedures**

The researcher contacted the Ole Miss alumni office to inquire about contact information for the alumni of the newspaper staff in 1962. After acquiring contact information, the researcher asked alumni to participate in the study. The researcher then set up interviews with alumni willing to participate. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted over the phone. The protocol (see Appendix B) developed by the researcher was based on the stages of white identity, and questions were informed by other studies on White Racial Identity Development (Helms, 1993). Interviews lasted 30-45 minutes and were recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Primary source documents were used for the research to better inform the interviews. The researcher read and collected newspaper articles and other materials written by the participants. Those articles were accessed through the Archives and Special Collections at Ole Miss Library and other materials utilized by the researcher. Those materials further informed the researcher of the essence of integration.

### **Data Analysis and Validity**

Once all the interviews were transcribed, the researcher coded the interview data for themes. Through the coding process, the researcher identified any possible themes articulated by the students concerning their experience at Ole Miss during integration.

This data informed the researcher of how the students' identity was impacted through the shared experience. This data also informed the researcher concerning how the students' identity was impacted through the shared experience.

To ensure accuracy, the researcher utilized member checking. This practice is designed to ensure that the researcher has interpreted the interviews correctly and that the themes are the accurate representation of their interviews. Creswell (2012) explained, "You ask participants about many aspects of the study such as whether the description is complete and realistic, if the themes are accurate to include, and if the interpretations are fair and representative" (p. 259). Participants were given the opportunity to examine the data—including the themes pulled from the data—and decide if it was valid and reliable in light of what they shared in their interviews.

### **Benefits**

This study assisted in filling a gap in the literature concerning the event of integration at Ole Miss. This study provided a deeper understanding of students' experience at Ole Miss during integration and how it impacted their white identity. Through this research, more in-depth insight emerged of what race relations were like and how the campus newspaper handled these situations.

Race relations continue to be an important issue on college campuses. This study can thus inform scholars and practitioners of how such occurrences were handled in the past. Additionally, the study provides insight into the impact of such experiences on students. This study offers a deeper understanding of how this shared experience impacted the lives of the students at the campus newspaper.



## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

The integration experience at Ole Miss in 1962 continues to impact the participants' lives, specifically their White Identity. Five themes were found: friendly campus, exposure to a new ideology, progress and change, awareness of environmental and societal factors, and coming together as humans. The five themes found within the data also have corresponding sub-themes. In addition, to better understand the five themes, they were separated into two categories: time on campus and identity and communal implications. Category 1, time on campus, seeks to identify the “essence” of the Integration of Ole Miss in 1962 (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). Category 2, identity and communal implications, seeks to understand the impact on the participants' identity development and understanding of society.

### **Participants**

Mrs. Sidna Brower [Mitchell] grew up in Memphis, Tennessee, and chose the University of Mississippi because of its location and cost. She served as the managing editor on the campus newspaper during her junior year and as editor during senior year. As the editor during integration, her editorials were also nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. Currently, she is retired and lives in an adult retirement community where she has the opportunity to interact with others from diverse backgrounds.

Mr. John Corlew grew up in Mississippi and had a variety of options of colleges to attend. He attended a summer camp in Oxford, Mississippi, that led him to choose Ole Miss. As a sophomore, John served as the news editor. John later served as editor during his junior year. Currently, John practices law in his home state of Mississippi at Corlew, Munford and Smith, PLLC.

Mr. Ed Meek grew up in Charleston, Mississippi. His family did not have much money growing up, and they did the best they could. At the campus newspaper, Ed served as the photographer and a feature writer. Later, he worked at the institution in multiple roles for almost forty years. He has been highly successful in business and helped create the Meek School of Journalism and New Media at Ole Miss.

Mr. Ellis Nassour grew up in Vicksburg, Mississippi, and he also did not have much money growing up. While with the campus newspaper, he wrote reviews on the entertainment on and off campus. Currently, he is a writer, reviews theater productions, and works in a variety of entertainment areas.

### **Category 1: Time on Campus**

**Theme 1A: Friendly campus.** All four participants described Ole Miss' campus as friendly. Participants stated the campus was small and allowed students to get to know a lot of people. Mr. Corlew stated campus had put up a lot of signs that read, "Everybody Speaks." He believed these signs reflected a truth held on campus and felt it added to the friendly campus atmosphere. The three sub-themes that emerged were the demographics of campus, the journalism department and newspaper staff, and the integration process.

**Sub-theme: Demographics of campus.** As stated previously, Mr. Meek came from a poorer background and believed students at Ole Miss were from upper social

levels, making them elite in his estimation. Mr. Nassour said it was likely many students grew up with African-American help in their homes. In response to the question, “How would you describe the campus climate while you were a student, in relation to race?” Mr. Meek offered, “It was all white all segregationists. Clearly racially divided there was no interest in having an African-American attend the University of Mississippi. And that was opposed by virtually everybody at the time.” During his time on campus, Mr. Meek perceived campus to be racially divided and not open to integration.

***Sub-theme: Journalism department and newspaper staff.*** All four participants were either journalism majors or were actively taking courses in the major. In a few of Mr. Corlew’s responses, for example, he referenced the community he found in the journalism department and the newspaper staff. Mr. Meek, Mr. Corlew, and Mr. Nassour said they were a very tight-knit group and spoke highly of the journalism professors. Mr. Corlew believed the journalism department and newspaper staff members were sending the right message on a number of levels. For instance, Mr. Corlew stated,

Well I guess just to think about you know just don't focus on these things when you're 18, 19 years old but you know to think back on it and know that the student newspaper was speaking out in favor of sanity and opposing this closed society mentality.

Overall, the journalism department and newspaper staff were integral in the friendly campus described by the participants.

***Sub-theme: Integration process.*** The campus was considered friendly by all four participants, but this view changed once the integration process began. Mrs. Mitchell witnessed and experienced the environment change into a not-so-friendly place because

integration brought out students' deep-seated values and beliefs on race. On campus, one could be overwhelmed by the other side's argument. Mr. Nassour mentioned an underground publication, *The Rebel Underground*, referencing a student who enjoyed stirring the pot. The publication promoted the idea of segregation and condemned the ideas discussed in the campus newspaper. Despite its potential impact, this publication lasted less than a year. Mr. Meek mentioned how James Meredith experienced a lot of prejudice and assault, including rocks being thrown at him. During integration, Mr. Corlew recognized the "backwoods agitation" attitudes compared to the campus newspaper's moderate views on race. After Meredith's first year, less aggression was displayed toward him on campus. The integration process impacted the culture of campus and revealed deep-rooted convictions amongst the campus community.

**Theme 1B: Exposure to a new ideology.** All four participants stated they were not exposed to and had no personal experience of the views expressed by the rioters until coming to campus. Mr. Corlew referred to it as "backwoods agitation" and called the Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett "a buffoon." Mr. Meek referred to Ross Barnett as "insane." Each participant described the racist views differently because this ideology is such that cannot be narrowed to just one way of thinking. The two sub-themes that emerged were an unawareness of overt racism and a revelation of own community.

**Sub-theme: Unaware of overt racism.** The four participants said they were unaware of or did not witness racism until enrolling as students at Ole Miss. The overt racism displayed on campus toward James Meredith was evident because of how people vocalized their disagreement with the integration. Mr. Corlew stated,

I never was exposed to the culture that some of some people in Mississippi were exposed to with the rabid racial views. I just wasn't exposed to that growing up so I wasn't emotional at all about the entrance of James Meredith at Ole Miss. You know it seemed much ado about nothing to me.

Mr. Nassour, similar to Mr. Corlew, had not experienced a racist culture and stated, "I never knew a bunch of crackers or hillbillies or people who were violent." Due to a lack of overt racism in his own community, Mr. Nassour had never experienced it. The overt racism witnessed on campus revealed an ideology with which the participants were not familiar but would never forget.

*Sub-theme: Revelation of own community.* Mr. Meek grew up in a segregated society but did not know of the challenges around him. He explained that serving on the campus newspaper at Ole Miss was a highly impactful experience for him:

The newspaper was an enlightening experience for me because there was a different culture of openness and fairness and responsibility. And so that helped me change my attitudes that I grew up as a segregationist. My whole community was we just didn't know any different.

Mr. Meek's realization was difficult but led him to change his attitudes and his life.

Mr. Nassour never really knew people like the rioters. He recognized he and most of his classmates grew up with African-American hired workers. For Mrs. Mitchell, many people were against her after her editorial called for non-violent responses to integration. Her father taught her to accept people for who they were, not their skin color, their religion, or where they live. The community in which she grew up differed greatly from her classmates', which was evident in the integration process. While she

was editor, the campus senate tried to censor her due to her moderate views on race and integration. Through the course of these events, the campus revealed to the participants how the community impacted their beliefs and ways of thinking in relation to race.

**Theme 1C: Progress and change.** The theme of progress and change came through the interviews in a variety of ways. All four of the participants experienced change. They witnessed progress happening on campus and in the South, demonstrating how quickly the overall culture and environment change. Similarly, there was a greater acceptance of people of color. The two sub-themes refer to the places where change and progress occurred and how ideas and values changed there.

*Sub-theme: Campus and the South.* Two participants mentioned change and progress present both on campus and across the South. Mr. Meek recognized rapid progress and change on campus and in the South because of James Meredith:

He [Meredith] broke the barrier there is no question about it. That was his intent, that's what he stated as a young man, he stated that if I could break the barrier at Ole Miss then I could break the South. He did . . . I tell my children and grandchildren I never thought in my lifetime I would see a fully integrated campus in Mississippi.

Mr. Meek mentioned how many young people say there has been no progress; however, he brings a different perspective on this respective issue, viewing the change and progress made on campus and in the South as extraordinary.

Mr. Meek also said young people do not have perspective, being removed as they are from the civil rights movement. Mr. Nassour believed the changes on campus would stun some people, and the campus continues with these advances today:

It's a whole different atmosphere in most of the South anyway and that's not to say that a lot of people haven't changed. But I think that there is change on the surface enough of a change to make a difference.

For the participants, it was remarkable to see campus and the South change so quickly after the integration because it was not something they expected in their lifetimes.

***Sub-theme: Acceptance.*** The idea of acceptance was discussed by all four participants. Mrs. Mitchell's father taught her to accept all people for who they are and not for the color of their skin or their religious convictions. Those attitudes are evident in her editorials. Mrs. Mitchell's feelings on being white were positive and did not include a guilty conscience. Mrs. Mitchell stated, "I don't feel guilty because I'm white and again because of the way my parents brought me up to accept people. So, I'm not quick to judge folks and to me that's a real blessing." Mrs. Mitchell values the idea of accepting people for who they are and credits her upbringing as the proponent for these convictions.

While still a student, Mr. Corlew remembered a few other African-Americans attending the institution without a problem, as it had become more accepted. For Mr. Meek, it was hard to believe this type of acceptance was even occurring at Ole Miss or in the South. Mr. Meek said this about the years following and what today looks like:

But you can't tell the difference. I never thought I would see Black kids, Black girls sitting in a White boy's lap or White boy sitting in a Black girl's lap in the student union. But it's just a mixture nobody knows the difference.

Mr. Nassour believed, once the National Guard and U.S. Marshalls left campus, things went back to normal. People eventually learned to accept this new culture of acceptance.

Also, Mr. Nassour felt the campus began to interact with James and saw him as a human being. Additionally, he mentioned the idea of all people being accepted in society:

If you look at things today and you see that Hispanics and Asians and blacks they're all interwoven into society today. It was really the same way back then, the Chinese were in some of the little supermarkets, the Blacks were the domestics and they worked for the railroad.

Overall, acceptance on campus and in the South could be seen through the progress and changes made by James Meredith's courageous actions at Ole Miss. Building on the foundation of the themes discussed above, Category 2 describes the identity and communal implications on the participants' lives. This category had two emergent themes: environmental and societal factors and coming together as humans.

### **Category 2: Identity and Communal Implications**

**Theme 2A: Environmental and societal factors.** The theme of environmental and societal factors was evident in all four interviews. This theme stems from participants' experience of integration and, specifically, how it further impacted their identities and how they interact with society. The participants' environments growing up and the greater society both impacted on their identities. In this theme, two sub-themes emerged: background and recognition of divided society.

**Sub-theme: Background.** Background refers to the community or environment in which the participants grew up. Their communities growing up are where individuals received some of their values and understanding of human life. Mrs. Mitchell explained the importance of knowing someone's past experiences and environments to better



understand a person holistically: “Maybe we have different backgrounds and different religions, different habits even—there is no reason why we can't get along and why we can't accept one another.” Similarly, Mr. Corlew recognized that each person was raised with different philosophical understandings of race.

Mr. Meek grew up in a segregated community. He was changed by interacting with people of different backgrounds and experiences, especially on the campus newspaper staff. In particular, Mr. Meek made the following statement:

I came from a poor background where I think I could say now that slavery still existed. Very racially divided—I didn't realize it at the time. I mean Blacks were Blacks and Whites were Whites and Blacks had their place and I had my place. Though there was no animosity—some of my best friends were Black people, but they stayed on the other side of the tracks and I did too. It was just a separate society. I remember water fountains for Whites and water fountains for Blacks and so forth and so on.

At the end of the interview, Mr. Meek reiterated his point of growing up in a very different environment than his children. He recognized the difference between these two experiences. Understanding the environment as an important factor in a one's development, he offered, “So I think environment is [the] most important thing.”

Mr. Nassour grew up in a community where African-Americans were integrated into society but recognized there were communities who did not live that way. As evidenced by the participants, the environment in which a person was raised heavily influences on how they will or will not live in the future.

*Sub-theme: Recognition of divided society.* Each participant recognized societal divisions are still present. All four participants stated that racism, fringe groups, and the ideas expressed at Ole Miss in 1962 still exist today. All participants also conveyed varying descriptions and experiences of this divided society but were reflective of their awareness of what occurs in society. Mrs. Mitchell recognized an existing problem with race in this country and its division of people based on politics. Furthermore, she said this division is good neither for the individual nor the country.

Today, Mr. Corlew still lives in Mississippi and recognized opinions still differ on a variety of national issues. For example, he offered,

But I think that we know, you got the other side of the coin and the anti-immigration, let's not spend any money on any kind of social program. You know it's a philosophical difference that is there you know in some ways can equate to what has come out of racial division. . . . We see it [racism] all day every day here, we know there's poverty, lack of opportunity and you know just things we don't do a very good job with.

Mr. Meek recognized where he was wrong as a college student and is now able to contribute to the world in a positive way. However, he knows there are still people who grew up in similar situations as he did and who continue in the beliefs of white supremacy and a separate society. Mr. Meek stated, "There are clearly lots of people in your area and my area both that still don't embrace the diversity of interracial marriage or whatever." These types of ideas are still present but not as widely believed as they were forty or fifty years ago.

While in New York, Mr. Nassour observed a different kind of prejudice compared to what he witnessed in the South. At the end of the interview, he had a hopeful thought on race relations: “I think now most people look at people and they accept people as human beings. That's the way I think of the world anyway.” All four participants recognized how division remains present in the nation and is experienced in a variety of ways.

**Theme 2B: Coming together as humans.** All of the participants agreed the human population needs to come together as a people and mentioned the idea of coming together as a nation or as Americans as well. Participants noted that, for this idea of coming together as a human population to actually happen, there needs to be both an understanding of how it could happen and a desire from society. For example, Mr. Corlew remarked, “I mean we ought to be doing everything we can as a society to support all races, all creeds because we are going to rise and fall together.” This theme had two sub-themes: ownership of change and all humans.

*Sub-theme: Ownership of change.* The idea of ownership of change emerged in all of the interviews. The participants called society to daily action in racial reconciliation. Mrs. Mitchell acknowledged the prominence of political correctness and how it makes critical conversations harder to navigate. She then made this point: “. . . we have to learn to live together.” She referenced conversations with people in which both sides stayed calm amidst disagreement, and she stated that the American nation needs more of these conversations.

Likewise, Mr. Corlew acknowledged the importance of all levels of government action in working to eradicate institutional and systemic racism. For example, he stated,

You want to see them succeed with every opportunity you have, you want them to have wide open opportunities in the educational institutions. I think that's been the attitude I've had all my adult life . . . I think there is still a political resistance if you will almost like the national political thing, you know if you favor Obamacare and favor things that help people that you know since they can't help themselves. You know, have the government in effect supporting our whole population, you know—that's something that I embrace.

The participants expressed the belief that society has a role in working hard and striving for better because this country is nowhere near where it could be with race relations. Mr. Meek and his wife worked for the integration movement. To promote and support the integration movement in the South, they kept their children in the integrated schools and stayed in the South amidst struggles because of their experiences at Ole Miss. Mr. Meek has an optimistic view of a day when the nation will be a single society. He believes society will be a place where race will not be noticed because it will be moving so quickly.

Mr. Nassour had a few first-hand experiences with race-related incidents but would not let them pass without saying something and attempting to create change. He stood up for what he knew was right and did not let the person commit and continue to commit the racist actions. All of the participants agreed that there must be a change in society and that everyone has a part in creating it.

***Sub-theme: All humans.*** The sub-theme of all humans focuses on an acceptance of all—no matter race, creed, or religion. When discussing the divided society and presence of racism, all four participants expressed this sub-theme of all humans.

Therefore, if the nation is to work toward racial reconciliation, it needs to be a collective process. Mrs. Mitchell believed humans should accept one another for who they are and not what the world believes them to be: “Well we are all human beings. . . . we are all Americans.” This idea of all being one together was of high importance to Mrs. Mitchell.

Mr. Corlew recognized how change and progress are not done by one person, but rather occur by working together: “We ought to be doing everything we can as a society to support all races, all creeds because we are going to rise and fall together. It’s just we have diversity we need to embrace it.” Mr. Meek hoped for the single society in which race is not noticed, but he acknowledged that such a society takes time and hard work. He stated, “I think that time has helped us all become one people more homogenized as a people.” In such statements, he demonstrated how people can come to a new understanding and a willingness to engage a new culture. Mr. Nassour additionally mentioned his acceptance of people for who they are. If someone is not true to who they are, he does not engage with them.

### **Summary**

This study focused on two areas of the participants’ experience. Category 1, or “time on campus,” captured the “essence” of the integration of University of Mississippi (Creswell, 2013, p. 79). Category 2, identity and communal implications, described how their experience of integration of Ole Miss impacted their identity and interpretation of society. These five themes revealed the participants’ shared experiences on the staff of the campus newspaper during the integration in 1962 and the impact on their White Racial Identity Development.

## Chapter 5

### Discussion

The discussion below explores the impact the integration of Ole Miss had on the white identity of the participants. The themes that surfaced evidence an impact on the participants' White Identity. The following themes correspond with the stages of White Racial Identity Development: exposure to a new ideology, progress and change, environmental and societal factors, and coming together as humans. The associated sub-themes support these stages as well. The discussion focuses on the stages experienced by the participants.

Helms (1993) noted, "It [the model] is a process wherein the person is continually open to new information and new ways of thinking about racial and cultural variables" (p. 66). This event happened over fifty years ago; thus, some stages might not appear because only certain experiences were shared or remembered. The final stages of immersion and autonomy are the ones that surfaced most frequently. The findings of this study provide implications for practice, directions for future research, and the limitations of the study.

#### **Phase 1: Abandonment of Racism**

**Theme 1B: Exposure to a new ideology.** All four participants encountered a new ideology, which led them to reflect on their own racial identity. All had previous interactions with Africans-Americans, but the situation at Ole Miss was unique because

only one African-American student was not welcomed. Helms (1993) posited that White Racial Identity Development begins “. . . if the Black (in this instance) presence ‘intrudes’ into the White person’s environment, and the intrusion cannot be ignored or controlled, [as] the White person is likely to be forced to deal with White racial identity issues somewhat” (p. 54). Ole Miss was a segregated institution, so the introduction of an African-American student could have caused some to think about their own racial identity. Some may have become aware of the different treatment of people of color. The first phase of White Racial Identity Development is abandonment of racism, which includes three stages, but only two will be discussed (Helms, 1993). The sub-theme of unaware of overt racism was seen in the first stage of contact, and the sub-theme of revelation of own community was seen in the second stage of disintegration.

*Unaware of overt racism: Stage 1 - Contact.* The four participants had previous interactions with people from African-American communities, but the experience at Ole Miss revealed an idea of whiteness they had not yet encountered. The contact stage is characterized by the idea of “obliviousness to own racial identity” (Helms, 1993, p. 51). Helms (1993) identified the existence of a point in this stage when a person recognizes the differences in how people of color and White people are treated. At Ole Miss, the participants witnessed “obvious acts of discrimination” during the riots (Helms, 1993, p. 57). This experience was interpreted as opening Mr. Corlew’s eyes to how different people could behave even if they seem to have similar experiences to oneself.

Mr. Nassour grew up in Vicksburg, Mississippi, which, from his perspective, was ahead of other cities in Mississippi in relation to the integration of its citizens. He felt his city had more progressive ways because some people were already integrated. Mr.

Nassour did not encounter racial views expressed at the riots until coming to the institution. Overall, it was interpreted that the participants recognized these racial views were not right and that there was not equality between the races.

***Revelation of own community: Stage 2 - Disintegration.*** The stage of disintegration is characterized by “first acknowledgement of White identity” (Helms, 1993, p. 51). For the participants, this revelation of own community came with a multitude of feelings, perhaps most pointedly those expressed by Mr. Meek. He grew up in a segregated society, and coming to the realization this way of life was wrong was an essential part in his own identity development. Mr. Meek stated that going to Ole Miss allowed him to experience attitudes that made him reevaluate his own beliefs and values. He realized these rioters believed in the same separate society he grew up in, and he started to wonder about the morality of it.

## **Phase 2: Defining a Nonracist White Identity**

**Theme 2A: Environmental and societal factors.** In the second phase of White Racial Identity Development, the white person moves to defining a positive, nonracist White Identity. The two themes of environmental and societal factors and coming together as humans fall into this phase. This phase includes three stages: pseudo-independent, immersion/emersion, and autonomy. The four sub-themes are discussed in relation to these stages. From the researcher’s interpretation and understanding of the stages, most of the participants’ responses fell in the stages of immersion/emersion and autonomy.

***Background: Stage 4 - Pseudo-independence.*** The stage of pseudo-independence is marked by “intellectualized acceptance of own and others’ race” (Helms,



1993, p. 52). This stage involves recognizing the responsibility of whites for racism and how they continue this process intentionally or unintentionally (Helms, 1993). The sub-theme of background and environment was evident in this stage, specifically for Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Meek. Mrs. Mitchell mentioned how some people have past situations that cause them to have bias. Mrs. Mitchell's response does not represent how she feels about other races, but she communicated how some people in this stage might think about race. For Mrs. Mitchell, she grew up in an environment in which she was taught to accept people for who they are and not to judge based on race, religion, or creed.

Mr. Meek mentioned how his experiences at home and at Ole Miss differed greatly, but he learned that his community was not right. Furthermore, he mentioned that he never knew the segregated society was wrong because it was all he knew. His response could evidence how one might progress through the White Racial Identity Development Model, which could lead to changing one's attitudes that one has believed to be "right" until now. From the researcher's interpretation, this stage was evident in Mr. Meek and Mrs. Mitchell's development, but they experienced it in different ways. Furthermore, background and environment have an important impact on how people engage with those different from them.

***Recognition of divided society: Stage 5 - Immersion/Emersion.*** The stage of immersion/emersion was not part of the original schema published in 1984 but instead was added in the early 1990s. That stage is characterized by an "honest appraisal of racism and significance of Whiteness" (Helms, 1993, p. 52). The sub-theme of recognition of divided society was part of all of the participants' experiences. In the last two stages of the White Racial Identity Development model, an individual should solidify

these understandings. There should be awareness that society is not perfect, recognition of race problems, and maintenance of a positive, non-racist white identity.

Mrs. Mitchell shared her concern with political correctness and her cynicism toward the news media in society today. She mentioned how the media promotes racism. For Mrs. Mitchell, it is important for the media to publish accurate information, which she believes is not being done. When asked about moral dilemmas with being white, she stated she does not feel guilty but knows there is still a lot of division in the country. From the researcher's interpretation, Mrs. Mitchell's observation and feelings correspond with this stage because this is how an individual in this stage would respond to inaccuracies about race in the world, as well as to what it means to be white.

Mr. Corlew recognized how racism has left scars on the nation's systems and institutions that will take time to heal. He knows there must be change if Americans believe all are truly equal. When asked about race conversations since leaving Ole Miss, he offered,

I think that people of my generation who are thinking [rational] people completely totally understand that all of our futures depend on all of us doing as well as we can do. There's not any hatred or racial prejudice about African-Americans. You want to see them succeed with every opportunity you have, you want them to have wide open opportunities in the educational institutions. I think that's been the attitude I've had all my adult life. That's the attitude my friends have . . .

Mr. Corlew believes his generation has seen the problem and knows their action is needed, which is a marker of this stage. He later stated there are still people who are racist.

The researcher observed Mr. Meek's experience at Ole Miss as leading him to a point at which he analyzed racism and what it meant to be white. He had a different impression of what community looked like and how one should live with people different from oneself. Mr. Meek continued to state that other Americans had a similar experience to him and that many have come to realize this was not right. Also, Mr. Meek recognized there are people who still do not embrace diversity. These observations are important to make in this stage because they assist one in seeing how racism still exists in society but also how hope for the future still exists.

Mr. Nassour recognized racism and prejudice remain present in all parts of the country. He experienced it with people in both New York and Mississippi, not just in one part of the country. Mr. Nassour claimed,

It's a whole different atmosphere in most of the south anyway and that's not to say that a lot of people haven't changed. But I think that there is change on the surface enough of a change to make a difference.

All four participants recognized society is still divided and racism still exists. Similarly, they recognized there are white people who still adhere to the ideologies expressed by the rioters at Ole Miss. The participants stated there has been a lot of progress and that most of society agrees with racial integration but knows it takes time for ideologies of the past to fall away. This stage is marked by a realistic appraisal of racism and recognition of the complexity of being white in society. The researcher interpreted that the participants experienced this stage in a variety of ways.

***Ownership of change / All humans: Stage 6 - Autonomy.*** Autonomy is the last stage, and someone in this stage can be characterized as having a "positive, nonracist

White identity, values cultural similarities and differences, feels a kinship with people regardless of race, and seeks to acknowledge and abolish racial oppression” (Helms, 1993, p. 68). Autonomy does not mean a person has finished developing, as it is an ongoing process by which that person continues to gain new information on race and culture. The two sub-themes of ownership of change and all humans fall into the last stage of autonomy.

Mrs. Mitchell sought out people racially different from her but discovered they had some similar experiences growing up. Mrs. Mitchell described herself as a melting pot and felt society should accept one another no matter race or religion. The researcher interpreted Mrs. Mitchell’s attitudes as what would be present for someone in the stage of autonomy. Furthermore, Mrs. Mitchell communicated the importance of accepting people for who they are and not for their race, religion, or gender.

Currently, Mr. Corlew lives in Mississippi, and he recognized the large African-American population and acknowledged the state’s low financial status. He mentioned that, if people continue to discriminate against others because of their race, it simply perpetuates the problems and hurts all, including those who discriminate. Mr. Corlew mentioned that society must support all people and embrace diversity because society rises and falls together. The researcher interpreted his attitudes as coinciding with the autonomy stage because he valued the cultural differences and sought to support all people, no matter their race or creed.

Finally, when asked about systemic and institutional racism, Mr. Corlew acknowledged its existence and gave the following response:

With race we just haven't reached the point you know this country should reach. I don't know any other way to do but to keep working, strive to do better. . . . We see it all day every day here [Mississippi], we know there's poverty, lack of opportunity and you know just things we don't do a very good job with. Our local government, our state governments and we as a society need to do better.

Mr. Corlew understood change needs to take place and that doing so is the responsibility of everyone. He recognized his part in this change, and he voiced that it can only be done by society coming together and accepting one another.

Mr. Meek and his wife desired to be part of the change in how society interacts with different races. This was evident in their choice to stay in the city and enroll their children at an integrated school while other friends sought different options. In a difficult period in history, Mr. Meek and his wife pursued ways to change the racial climate and be an example to other white people. Overall, Mr. Meek's home community and his experience at Ole Miss led him to push for change in society and the acceptance of all people and to be aware of people's past environments.

Finally, Mr. Nassour had a variety of experiences in which he stood up to others' racial prejudice or bias. In both experiences, he approached people directly and asked them what they were doing and why. Changes occurred because he approached the people who were racist or prejudice, but, in the interview, he did not identify himself as "a mover and shaker in any way you know." Though he does not see himself this way, it is important to recognize that such daily actions help move society forward from a racist and prejudice mindset. At the end of his interview, he stated his belief that, in society now, most people accept one another as human beings. Lastly, Mr. Nassour has taken

action against prejudice and bias and hopes all people learn to accept others as human beings as he does.

All four participants continue to work through the model of White Racial Identity Development. The participants continually have new information and experiences that add to their development, and these experiences could lead them back to previous stages. For these participants, much time has passed since their experience at Ole Miss, but it is evident the experience impacted their White Racial Identity Development. Through this discussion emerged the following implications for practice that higher education professional should take into consideration.

### **Implications for Practice**

Though this study looked back on an event that happened over fifty-five years ago, much can be learned from the integration of Ole Miss. Several implications for practice can be taken from the research, including understanding the backgrounds of students, the idea of coming together, and creating events and programming around racial reconciliation. These practices are focused on closing the gap between people. Also, these practices can further one's understanding of having a longer view of history. Furthermore, it can increase one's sense of what progress has been made while still recognizing the progress yet to make.

First, it is essential for an institution to know how to engage with all of their students. They need to be prepared for the diversity of students they bring to campus. If an institution desires to bring more domestic or international students from a certain region, they must be prepared to serve them. The institution should have knowledge of the region, including the history of the education system, gender roles, and cultural

norms, just to name a few. The students' background is very important and will impact their experience at college and how they engage at the institution.

The second implication for practice is the idea of coming together. This implication is especially relevant because of the division that has heightened many campuses and the country in the past few years. First, it is important for those working at higher education institutions to agree on a shared vision of inclusion and diversity. These ideas can assist in bringing those at the institution together as one. Despite many different perspectives on how to implement inclusion and diversity on campuses, it is crucial to get everyone to the table to recognize the need for a change. Second, professionals must model for students how to live out diversity and inclusion, as students closely watch how staff and administration interact with one another on this issue.

Third, it is important for institutions to promote events and programming that help students recognize and understand issues of race and racism and the change that must be done together. The programming and events could incorporate history and statistics to help them understand the issue and provide a shared foundation. One event could be led by history and social work professors, who could share the historical framework and give current statistics on race issues like poverty and incarceration, as well as inequality in housing and educational opportunities. In addition, students could be empowered and equipped to communicate effectively with their respective government representatives. Also, it would be wise for the institution to seek out local organizations as potential partners. There could be an event at which local organizations come in and help students contact their representatives and give information on how to get involved on a personal level. These partnerships could provide excellent opportunities for students and assist in

bridging the gap between the campus and the local community. Those two practices are not easily performed, but they can have wide reaching positive impacts as the world continues to grow more complex and connected.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Though there is much literature on the civil rights movement and integration, there remains more to discover. For example, at least three main implications for future research arise from this study alone. First, research on the history of institutions should be conducted, specifically exploring the implications of history on enrollment of institutions. Recently, institutions have researched their past ties to slavery (Martinez, 2017). These institutional discoveries are part of the larger American story but remain vital for institutions to acknowledge. These could be discoveries made that impact a student's probability of enrolling at the institution.

The second implication for future research is to study the impact of protests or sit-ins on a campus culture and individual students. As seen in this research, these types of events can have lasting impressions. An additional area of future research is how experiencing or participating in a protest impacts a student's understanding of free speech, their development of self-esteem, and their future involvement in social movements. There are a variety of avenues that could be explored but would be important to this area of research.

The third implication for future research is to study other important historical events like the integration of Ole Miss by interviewing living witnesses and examining archival material as well. Many events have yet to be studied; one in particular is the Kent State University shooting. Researchers may benefit the existing pool of literature



by studying archival material at Kent State University and conduct interviews similar to those done in the present study. These historical events hold great import, and by hearing witnesses' stories, scholars and practitioners alike garner a better understanding of higher education's past and the events that have shaped specific institutions forever.

### **Limitations**

There were three particular limitations to this study. First, the participant pool was limited due to the amount of time that has passed since the event. Therefore, some of the potential participants have passed away. In 1962, the potential participants' ages were 18-22, and now these same individuals are in their mid-seventies. Depending on their health, it is possible that the potential participants passed because of advanced age or due to an unnatural cause of death. Second, the age of the participants in the current study, combined with the amount of time that has passed since the event, could be seen as a limitation. Because the event happened in 1962, there could be details that participants did not remember. The details of events can grow dimmer as time passes, especially as a person grows older. Also, since a lot of time has passed, there are a variety of accounts of the event, but each one has its own interpretations.

Finally, the researcher recognizes that a degree of personal bias could have influenced the research process. The researcher has a passion for history and the importance these events have for the future of all people. The researcher also has a passion for understanding and discussing race in an open dialogue, an interest that could impact the research process as well. The researcher desires for society to recognize a need for change and reconciliation amongst people. Finally, the researcher's own White Racial Identity Development could have influence on the research process.

**Conclusion**

Overall, the participants' experience of the integration of Ole Miss impacted their White Racial Identity Development, which, in many ways, shaped their whole lives. They all experienced ideologies and cultures foreign to their own and had to wrestle with what it meant to be white. Also, it impacted the way they interact with people of a different race and how they view society more realistically. It is important to recognize how events that happen on campuses today impact students and how those experiences can continue to impact these individuals into the future. Campuses should take seriously the identity development process and assist all students in it. Higher education professionals will find it valuable to look to history to understand and serve their campuses and society better.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Informed Consent**

#### **TAYLOR UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT**

The Articles of Integration: A phenomenological, case study of the impact of integration of Ole Miss in 1962 on the campus newspaper staff's white identity

You are invited to participate in a research study of the impact of Ole Miss' integration on white identity of campus newspaper staff. You were selected as a possible subject because of your involvement on the campus newspaper staff during this historical event. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

The study is being conducted by Kelsey Snyder and Taylor University's Masters of Art in Higher Education department

#### **STUDY PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to discover the experience of integration of Ole Miss in 1962 and its impact on the identity development of the alumni who were on the campus newspaper staff.

#### **NUMBER OF PEOPLE TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:**

If you agree to participate, you will be one of a possible number of 15 subjects who will be participating in this research.

#### **PROCEDURES FOR THE STUDY:**

If you agree to be in the study you will do the following things:

The duration of participation in the research will be up to a couple months. The main participation will be in an interview lasting 30-45 minutes. After completion of these interviews there will be follow-up to ensure the researcher has the proper understanding of what was said in the interviews. Also, that the interpretations were what was intended by the participant.

The researcher will contact the Ole Miss alumni office to inquire about contact information for the alumni of the newspaper staff in 1962. Then the researcher will seek out the alumni's interest in participating in the study. The researcher will set up interviews with alumni willing to participate. Interviews will either be in person or over the phone and will be semi-structured. The protocol developed by the researcher is based on the stages of white identity. The questions will be informed by other studies on white identity development (Helms, 1993). The interview questions will be structured by the

researcher through white identity studies. Interviews will be 30-45 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

Primary source documents will be used for the research to better inform the interviews. The researcher will read and collect newspaper articles and other materials written by the participants. Those articles will be accessed through the Archives and Special Collections at Ole Miss Library and other materials will be researched by the researcher. These materials will better inform the researcher of the essence of integration. Interviews of the participants and their written work will be the researcher's procedure to collect data.

#### RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

While on the study the risks involved in participating in this research could include emotional distress from describing past experiences which could have been traumatic. There could be social risks to the participants. There will be sensitive topics discussed which could cause emotional and social stress in their lives. Some of these topics are an intense subject right now in the United States which might be hard for them to discuss because they do not know their full thoughts yet. There also may be other side effects that we cannot predict.

#### BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

This study will assist in filling a gap in the literature concerning the event of integration at Ole Miss. This study will provide a deeper understanding of a student's experience at Ole Miss during integration and how it has impacted their white identity. Also, it will assist the alumni in reflecting on their experience in a new way. There will be light shed on Ole Miss for how their vision has changed since this event and how that has changed the student experience forever. Through this research, it will give a more in-depth insight of what race relations were like and how the campus newspaper handled these situations.

#### ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY:

You have the right to not participate in this study there is no need to give explanation it is your right to say no.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

This research will not use your name in public documents or in any presentations given by the researcher. There will be numbers assigned to your name to keep your identity secure and confidential. There will be a supervisor of research and committee who might see this data in the raw form. Also, the researcher's computer will be locked by password only known by the researcher.

#### COSTS

Taking part in this study will not be a cost for you.

## PAYMENT

You will not receive payment for taking part in this study.

## COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

In the event of physical injury resulting from your participation in this research, necessary medical treatment will be provided to you and billed as part of your medical expenses. Costs not covered by your health care insurer will be your responsibility. Also, it is your responsibility to determine the extent of your health care coverage. There is no program in place for other monetary compensation for such injuries. If you are participating in research which is not conducted at a medical facility, you will be responsible for seeking medical care and for the expenses associated with any care received.

## FINANCIAL INTEREST DISCLOSURE

One or more individuals involved in this research might benefit financially from this study. The Institutional Review Board (an ethics committee which helps protect people involved in research) has reviewed the possibility of financial benefit. The Board believes that the possible financial benefit is not likely to affect your safety and/or the scientific integrity of the study. If you would like more information, please ask the researchers or study staff.

## CONTACTS FOR QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

For questions about the study or a research-related injury, contact the researcher Kelsey Snyder at (260) 517-3637. If you cannot reach the researcher during regular business hours e.g. 8:00AM-5:00PM), please call Kelsey Snyder After business hours, please call (260) 517-3637

In the event of an emergency, you may contact:

Kelsey Snyder  
kelsey\_snyder1@taylor.edu  
(260) 517-3637

Dr. Todd Ream, Faculty Advisor  
todd.ream@taylor.edu  
(765) 998-4399

Susan Gavin, chair of Institutional Review Board  
ssgavin@taylor.edu  
(765) 998-5188



**VOLUNTARY NATURE OF STUDY**

Your participation in this research is voluntary and your refusal to not participate will not result in penalty or any loss of benefits. You may discontinue your participation in the research at any time during the process. There will be no penalty to participant for stopping their involvement and no loss of benefits the subject is otherwise entitled.

**SUBJECT'S CONSENT**

I will be given a copy of this informed consent document to keep for my records. I agree to take part in this study.

**Subject's Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Person Obtaining Consent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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Any other questions regarding the nature of this research, his/her rights as a subject, or any other aspect of the research as it relates to his/her participation as a subject can be directed to Taylor University's Institutional Review Board at [IRB@taylor.edu](mailto:IRB@taylor.edu) or the Chair of the IRB, Susan Gavin at 756-998-5188 or [ssgavin@taylor.edu](mailto:ssgavin@taylor.edu).

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview Protocol**

1. Why did you decide to attend Ole Miss?
2. How would you describe the culture at Ole Miss while you were a student?
3. Why did you choose to work for the campus newspaper?
  - a. What role or roles did you fill while at the campus newspaper?
4. Were there any ways in which you were personally impacted due to your experience on the newspaper staff?
5. How would you describe the campus climate when you were a student?
  - a. In relation to race, arriving and departing, if not addressed in previous question on culture
6. In what ways, if any, were you emotionally impacted by the integration of the institution?
7. Have you had conversations concerning race since leaving Ole Miss? If so, could you tell me a little bit about that?
8. Has your experience at Ole Miss continued to impact your outlook on life? If so, in what ways?

#### Possible follow up questions from other questions:

What are your beliefs on the importance of diversity and inclusion?

What, if any, moral dilemmas come with being white?

What, if any, is your understanding of systemic racism?

