

*Integration with Dignity: A Celebration of
Harvey Gantt's Admission to Clemson*

Integration with Dignity:

A Celebration of Harvey Gantt's
Admission to Clemson

Edited by Skip Eisiminger



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A somewhat shorter version of this work will be posted soon on our website (see below), Wayne K. Chapman, Curator. A limited *de luxe* edition will also be specially prepared in collaboration with the staff of Clemson University's Office of Publication and Promotion Services.

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Harvey Gantt arriving on campus with his attorney, Matthew Perry, January 28, 1963

A Note from the President

Let me begin by establishing the context that existed forty years ago. In 1963, there were two South Carolinas and two Souths in America. There was a black South and a white South. Segregation was virtually absolute. Our races were legally, politically, socially, and economically separated. Most believed it would always be that way. Those who did not believe that often paid a heavy price. The change that was moving across the nation was manifested in the best and the worst of human nature. During the Civil War, Lincoln had used the term, “the angels of our nature.” In the American South there were “better and lesser angels” at work in the 1960s.

In 1961, riots had closed the University of Georgia when two African-American students had registered for classes. In 1962, Mr. James Meredith had enrolled at the University of Mississippi, but not before federal troops had put an end to riots, and two people died. The following year, riots broke out at the University of Alabama. Most believed and expected (and some even desired) that the same would happen at Clemson. It was a crisis in the moral fabric of America. At stake were:

- the moral promise of freedom in America
- the American dream
- the Constitution of the United States
- the Bill of Rights
- the position of America as the world’s beacon of freedom.

The world held its breath as Clemson talked, debated and planned. Fortunately, three

men of exemplary character were among the principal players in the drama that was about to unfold. All are personal heroes and mentors of mine: Judge Matthew Perry, Class of 2002 with an honorary Doctor of Humanities; Harvey Gantt, Class of 1965; and President Bob Edwards, Class of 1933.

Make no mistake, Clemson had not been on the world stage before nor have we since, but on January 28, 1963, Clemson was at the center of that stage. The stakes for America, South Carolina, and our school were as high as they could be. Clemson has a character and a personality shaped by its history. For you to understand these unique qualities, you must study January 28, 1963. This is why *Integration with Dignity* was conceived and written. I trust that you enjoy it.

James F. Barker
President of Clemson University



Harvey Gantt, *Taps* photo, 1965