

Approves court action on barber shops

It has been close to two years since a move was conceived and a plan of action implemented in order to effect the end of the discriminatory policies in eight of the ten barbershops in Danville. I never imagined what would be involved in effecting a change in the discriminatory practices of those barber shops.

First, there was suspension of ads in the Cento from barbers, who practiced discrimination, and a resolution calling for the boycott of those shops by the Centre community. Later in the spring of 1970, there was the planning of picketing of those shops which was interdicted by lengthy negotiations with the mayor, police chief, city manager, model cities co-ordinators and some of the barber shop operators.

Those meetings turned out to be fruitless. I think that is quite amazing since some of those present held that "Negroes were their best friends" or contended their devout Christianity. It seems to be a lot of back-stabbing and backsliding to me.

Eventually, picketing was staged with the help of some 150 or so Centre students, faculty and community citizens in Danville in being on the streets listening to race-baiting, insults on character, and even threats of violent intimidation.

Others wrote letters, signed petitions, designed tactics and acted as monitors. The picketing resulted in the integration of two shops. Eventually, after a resolution of intent was approved by Danville City Commission, the picketing ceased.

A court suit in the federal court in Lexington was implemented with the results being what you have read of today. Still, there remains the task of getting the city's governing body to carry out its pledge and still the ultimate test of obedience to the court order remains to be carried out.

But it is correct and proper to express gratitude to all who helped in any way regardless of how and when to make this project as successful as it has been. Credit should further be given as it could not have been conducted this far without the patience, tireless work and contribution of time of others.

Thus, as a result the entire Eastern District of Kentucky will be free of one more vestige of ethnic discrimination and insult. With the Danville ordinance, the elimination of segregation in beauty salons and housing will be in sight. That is what two years of effort has netted.

With compassion,
Ollie Lee Taylor