

**Limited Engagement With Poverty:
School Desegregation and the North Carolina Fund**
(Final draft)

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“A second-rate education for our children can only mean a second-rate future for North Carolina. Quality education is the foundation of economic development, of democracy, of the needs and hopes of the nation. Quality education put in its bleakest terms is survival. In its brightest terms, it is life, and growth, and happiness.”¹ With these strong and hopeful words, North Carolina’s newly inaugurated Governor Terry Sanford launched his crusade in 1961 to improve the state’s schools, which remained statistically stagnated in the bottom fifth of all states.² During the next four years, Sanford made good on the promise of educational improvement by significantly increasing state spending for teacher pay, libraries, school supplies, and school clerical assistance, as well as the hiring of more teachers and staff. In addition, the governor introduced a series of experimental programs to educate youth and their teachers, and to recruit and train adults for the workforce. Achieving equal opportunity for all North Carolinians lay at the heart of the Sanford agenda.³

In July 1963, Sanford unveiled the North Carolina Fund as a central element in his reform program. Funded by a large grant from the Ford Foundation, and money from two local philanthropies and the federal government, the Fund sought to eradicate the abject poverty from which many North Carolinians suffered. At the time, 37 percent of North Carolinians lived below the federal poverty line, and one fourth of adults twenty-five and older had less than a sixth-grade education. To Sanford and his advisers, not only was starting an anti-poverty agency the way to do the “decent thing,” but it also represented the most palatable method to increase equal opportunity and, in turn, lift the economy. Undoubtedly, as a lame-duck governor, Sanford also saw the five-year experimental program as an effective way to extend his reform agenda well after he left office in 1965 – especially in an environment increasingly hostile to his “moderate” style of politics.⁴

The Fund had several educational components, including the Comprehensive School Improvement Project (CSIP) and the Learning Institute of North Carolina (LINC), plus programs that touched on education, including the controversial community action programs, or CAPs. Taking \$2 million of the Ford Foundation's original \$7 million grant, CSIP was the most expensive and arguably far-reaching of the programs. It emphasized improvement in grade school teaching methods, with the increased use of new technology, team teaching, and non-graded classes, in addition to its summer readiness program unofficially called Evenstart, which served as a predecessor to the federally funded Head Start, a program that remains wildly popular and effective today. CAPs also attempted to address educational needs, through preschool readiness, arts and crafts, adult education, and outreach programs, but these efforts often became eclipsed by more action-oriented approaches. These programs on the community level achieved varying levels of success. But something huge was missing.⁵

Sanford prided himself on his administration's education initiatives and its frank, comprehensive discussion of the school system's failures, yet the governor largely neglected the most significant matter of the day: school desegregation. Since 1954, no other issue had dominated educational debates in the South as that of the potential end of biracial school districts. To most white Southerners, segregated schools were a foundation of Southern life and an important mechanism to keep blacks in "their place." The Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* threatened the racial caste system Southerners had nurtured during the previous seventy years. Thus, a generation of Southern white politicians, including those in North Carolina, did their best to deny integration and the tools used to achieve it.⁶

In his 1960 campaign, political observers referred to Terry Sanford as the moderate – even the liberal – in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. Although he supported the Pearsall

Plan, a state-sanctioned program used by school districts to maintain segregation, Sanford did not demagogue the issue. When pushed on it, Sanford vigorously denied any support of *integration*. Years later, Sanford maintained that his 1960 position did not suggest his opposition to *desegregation*, a much different concept to him.⁷ “I never denied we were trying to end segregation,” he recalled. “We did it without dishonoring ourselves.”⁸ Thus, Sanford certainly could not be mistaken for “liberal” counterparts in the North, such as Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey, an unabashed civil rights supporter. But in North Carolina, Sanford’s moderate credentials passed muster as he polled forty-one percent in the first primary and then beat avowed segregationist I. Beverly Lake in a runoff, all with substantial African American support.⁹

Undoubtedly, Sanford’s omission of school desegregation from his education agenda was not an oversight, but a deliberate attempt to downplay a rancorous issue that could derail his other efforts. By 1963, token desegregation had taken root in North Carolina with the hopes that a few African American students in white schools would stave off court challenges.¹⁰ Of course, this would not be the case, as courageous black plaintiffs attacked and eventually defeated the discriminatory system through the federal courts. But for a governor who linked the state’s economic development plans to human skills enhancement through education and training, encouraging better black instruction through school desegregation seemed a logical objective. Most education experts at the time believed that black students could only improve if placed in white schools and that physical segregation made minority students feel inferior. Underachievement and poverty naturally followed. Although this assumption faced challenges later by blacks themselves, the statistics proved a stark reminder of the harsh legacy of woefully underfunded and marginalized schools. In 1963, the average African American had barely a

seventh-grade education, compared with the average white's tenth-grade level. And while 82 percent of black 18-year-olds failed the military's mental assessment tests, just 38 percent of whites failed.¹¹

Thus, if improving the education of African Americans was essential to Sanford's economic vision for North Carolina, did the governor and his policymakers have an ulterior motive when they unveiled the North Carolina Fund? Was their intention from the beginning to give a boost to school desegregation efforts, without explicitly saying? And even if this was not the case, how much did the North Carolina Fund encourage desegregation beyond a token variety? In many ways, endorsing genuine school desegregation was more moderate policy than sanctioning the empowerment of poor people, as the CAPs did.

An examination of Terry Sanford's education program, including those projects under the North Carolina Fund, as well as other innovations such as the Governor's School, the Advancement School, and the School for the Arts, suggests policymakers recognized the essential role school desegregation could play in achieving Sanford's vision. For instance, each of these new schools, as well as the Fund's board of directors and staff, was integrated. However, policymakers also recognized that a gradual approach that drew as little attention as possible remained the most politically palatable – a philosophy virtually unchanged from Sanford's campaign three years earlier. “You didn't want to make that the single issue,” said Sanford years later. “You wanted to keep that as far from the front burner as you could get it.”¹²

Not surprisingly then, the North Carolina Fund had a decidedly mixed legacy in terms of achieving greater school desegregation. An analysis of two statewide programs and the Charlotte Area Fund (CAF), the CAP in North Carolina's largest and arguably most progressive city, demonstrates the near impossibility of fighting poverty without upsetting the powers that

be, either in state bureaucracy or in local city halls and courthouses. While the North Carolina Fund featured limited desegregation on the state level through LINC-sponsored programs, it failed to provide leadership on the issue through the local community action programs it supported. In Charlotte, the CAF literally sat on the sidelines and ceded local leadership on desegregation to the courts, which eventually handed down the landmark busing decision, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*. CAF officials did not necessarily oppose further school desegregation, but they wanted to conduct it on their own limited terms – an unsatisfactory solution to many African Americans. By 1968, when Sanford’s great experiment ended, token desegregation remained standard in North Carolina’s schools, including those in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Poor blacks still attended schools in decrepit buildings with second-hand books, inferior lab equipment, and crowded classrooms. Thus, Terry Sanford and the North Carolina Fund might have made headway in improving the education of some children, but on the controversial issue of school desegregation, the North Carolina Fund flinched, failing to use one of its most potent weapons to help its most impoverished citizens.

North Carolina and the “Progressive Mystique”

In his classic study of Southern politics, V.O. Key sang North Carolina’s praises as a bastion of progressive thought, especially on the touchy issue of race. “The state has a reputation for fair dealings with its Negro citizens,” Key wrote. “Its racial relations have been a two-sided picture, but nowhere has cooperation between white and Negro leadership been more effective.”¹³ And on the surface, Key’s observations in 1949 seemed plausible, if a bit oversimplified. The state funded white schools far more than their black counterparts, but because of a court decision invalidating separate taxing mechanisms, the disparity in North

Carolina was less than in other Southern states.¹⁴ The turn-of-the-century leadership of Governor Charles B. Aycock also proved symbolic. Aycock, an avowed white supremacist, yet praised at Terry Sanford's inauguration sixty years later, championed universal education. While arguing against a proposed constitutional amendment to reinstate biracial taxation methods, Aycock even suggested that an increase in educational expenditures across the board helped both races; a nominally educated African American population helped the economy by filling necessary jobs, he said.¹⁵ Also, the academic accomplishments of luminaries Howard Odum and Frank Porter Graham at the University of North Carolina helped bolster the state's reputation as one out in front of its Southern counterparts; Odum's Institute on Social Sciences regarded black folkways as important to Southern culture as those of whites, while national observers considered Graham as the quintessential Southern liberal. Thus, observers saw North Carolina as a model for the South.¹⁶

But as William Chafe demonstrates in his study of Greensboro, where the national sit-in movement began, North Carolinians preferred style to substance when discussing racial issues. Rather than real substantive policy, North Carolina's elites cultivated a "progressive mystique," using feigned inclusion and respect for African Americans and their ideas of social justice – in other words, civility – to appear progressive without really being so.¹⁷ But basic statistics on African American life in North Carolina betrayed whites' desperately held belief in the material success of their racial policies. In 1950 black median income was less than half that of whites, while blacks completed an average of at least two grades less in education; an even larger gap existed in rural areas. Blacks made up forty-two percent of institutional prison inmates in the state while making up just one-quarter of the population. Similar gaps existed in categories from health care to housing.¹⁸

Such stark inequality in North Carolina and across the South motivated African American activists, including lawyers for the NAACP Legal and Educational Defense Fund (LDF), the legal arm of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Early on, activists recognized the power of litigation, or the threat of it, to improve schools. Led by Thurgood Marshall and other black legal minds, the LDF first tackled and won on equalization issues, such as teacher salaries.¹⁹ By 1950, after winning several key U.S. Supreme Court decisions requiring integration in a handful of professional and graduate programs – not to mention the 1944 defeat of the white primary in *Smith v. Allwright* – LDF leaders decided to challenge segregation outright. African Americans in North Carolina, with NAACP assistance, filed several lawsuits over unequal funding across the state in the late 1940s and early 1950s. None of these became part of *Brown v. Board of Education*, comprised of cases from five other states, but school districts in North Carolina were among the first to respond to the landmark decision declaring segregated education unconstitutional.²⁰

Immediately after the *Brown* decision on May 17, 1954, political leaders across the state indicated cautious support for desegregation. Although disappointed with the decision, Governor William B. Umstead conceded that “the Supreme Court ... has spoken.”²¹ In Greensboro, school board members declared their intent to follow the court’s edict, the first decision of its kind in the South, and in Charlotte, white city leaders preached calm and cooperation. Therefore, supporters of the decision believed that North Carolina would live up to its progressive reputation. But they were sadly mistaken.²²

As the Supreme Court deliberated implementation of school desegregation into 1955, Southerners increasingly discussed how to circumvent the federal mandate, including closure of the public schools, also known as massive resistance. North Carolina leaders, too, backed away

from their earlier endorsements of desegregation. After Umstead's death in late 1954, Luther Hodges became governor and quickly demonstrated masterful political skill as he managed to appear moderate while orchestrating the state's anti-integration forces. Several months after *Brown*, North Carolina leaders endorsed the Pearsall Plan, the recommendation of an appointed committee charged with finding a solution to the desegregation crisis. The plan's centerpiece was the Pupil Assignment Act, which gave local school boards wide latitude in rejecting transfer requests; as long as they did not use race, school officials could use any number of reasons to deny a black student's request, such as health or test scores. And while giving local officials legal cover to avoid desegregation completely, the act never forbade local districts from token desegregation. Aiming to stave off court challenges, a few larger urban districts chose token desegregation, including Greensboro and Charlotte in 1957. From the view of policymakers, the strategy proved phenomenally successful: both cities won reputations as regional leaders on racial issues, and, therefore, excellent places to do business; but seven years later, desegregation *remained* token in both cities. The progressive mystique still reigned supreme.²³

An age of optimism

As John F. Kennedy and Terry Sanford took office in 1961, policymakers began to “rediscover” America's approximately forty million people living in poverty.²⁴ From media and academic studies, such as Edward R. Murrow's exposé on Florida migrant workers, “Harvest of Shame,” to the civil rights movement and its attention to inequality, those in government became increasingly aware of America's poor and their threat to economic growth. Even though Cold War politics dominated the 1960 presidential election, the new president's perceived youth and vigor boosted Americans' confidence in the country's direction. Polls showed that Americans

were increasingly hopeful about the future – and blissfully unaware of their less-well-off brothers and sisters. For policymakers and activists, however, this confidence translated into the belief that the country had the tools to eradicate poverty while helping the economy.²⁵

This also proved the mantra of Terry Sanford's new administration in North Carolina. Running on a reform agenda, with education as the centerpiece, Sanford stressed the need to reduce poverty in order to grow the state's industrial base and economy. Every chance he had, Sanford recited the shocking statistics. Thirty-seven percent of North Carolinians had incomes below the federal poverty line, and one-half of all students dropped out of school before earning a high school diploma. North Carolina was well above the national average in illiteracy, high school dropouts, teacher-pupil ratio, and well below the average in voter turnout, per-pupil school expenditures, and teacher salaries. The average North Carolinian had an average of less than nine years of schooling, and one-quarter of those twenty-five and older had less than a sixth-grade education, or, in other words, were functionally illiterate. In Mecklenburg County, one of the state's most urbanized and presumably educated centers, the numbers were better but still troubling: 20 percent of families lived below the poverty line, 24 percent resided in unsound housing, and 15 percent were functionally illiterate.²⁶

This sad state came as a direct result of policies practiced in North Carolina since Reconstruction, with pitiful levels of education spending at the top of the list. Thus, Sanford's priorities in his first legislative session as governor surprised few: more education funding. Using remarkable political skill, Sanford managed to usher through an ambitious education program funded by a new sales tax on food, an unpopular levy critics called "Terry's tax" for the rest of his political career. Although acknowledging the tax's regressive nature, Sanford insisted that, "No one is going to go hungry because of this tax. But the children of North Carolina will

go thirsty for quality education if we do not enact this program for better schools.”²⁷ The new education spending eventually passed, one of many legislative victories for the young governor during his first year in office. But unlike his predecessors, Sanford’s attention toward education did not stop after the first triumph in 1961. During the next three years, North Carolina’s governor proved willing to experiment in education policy, from funding sources to teaching methods.²⁸

North Carolina’s anemic condition economically and educationally, however, did not stem from poor education spending alone. Other policies, such as anti-union “right-to-work” laws and the longtime disenfranchisement of the poor through poll taxes and literacy tests, contributed heavily. But for the hundreds of thousands of black North Carolinians who struggled to make ends meet, school segregation and its inherent inequalities loomed largest as a structural determinant of poverty. Even though by the early 1960s, per pupil school spending in some districts approached similar levels for black and white schools, generations of African American students learned with far less. They routinely used hand-me-down books, supplies, furniture, and other equipment. They attended classes in far more crowded conditions. And they generally learned in older, more dilapidated facilities. In 1920 blacks’ per-pupil value in school property was just 25 percent that of white students. This figure increased tremendously by 1964, yet it was still only 68 percent. Generations of experience told most blacks that white officials would never fund their schools equally. And to NAACP lawyers and social scientists, even if the schools had been truly funded on an equal basis, segregation still made black children *feel* inferior. In fact, they used this line of reasoning successfully while arguing *Brown*. White progressives agreed. “We believe quality always has followed the white schools,” stated George Esser, director of the North Carolina Fund in a letter to the Ford Foundation in 1968.²⁹ Thus, by

the 1960s, most progressives believed that only placing black students in white schools could improve African Americans' education – and in turn provide equal opportunity.³⁰

Yet not surprisingly, school desegregation remained absent from Terry Sanford's early education agenda. Despite his moderate reputation and his substantial black electoral support, he still treated racial issues with extreme care and even obfuscation. As a state senator, he called the segregationist Pearsall Plan a force for "moderation, unity, understanding, and goodwill"; and during the 1960 campaign, he suggested blacks should emphasize education over demonstration.³¹ As governor, he usually avoided discussing civil rights issues, unless coerced by events. Instead, Sanford addressed human rights in a more universal sense – implying white *and* black. His education program took that tone, as did his anti-poverty efforts in the North Carolina Fund. Yet, Sanford made some gestures with little fanfare, such as appointing several prominent African Americans to various state boards and desegregating the public park system. In the realm of school desegregation, he set an example by sending his children to a desegregated school, but this point was deceiving; exactly one black student attended the school, the epitome of token desegregation in North Carolina.³²

North Carolina's War on Poverty

Because North Carolina statutes at the time did not allow governors to succeed themselves in office, the state's chief executives rarely pursued an ambitious agenda during his last two years in office; their lame-duck status and lack of election momentum put them in a relatively weak position. But true to Terry Sanford's public persona, the young governor did not take it easy in 1963. Admittedly, he asked less of the General Assembly than he had in 1961 – especially no new taxes – but what he attempted outside of legislation proved more far-reaching

than anything passed during the session. Once again, Sanford turned to education and job training initiatives as central to North Carolina's economic future. And for really the first time as governor, Sanford bucked the regional politics of his era to positively address the economic status of the state's African Americans – and to even tacitly support the goal of desegregated schools beyond tokenism. But this was a political tightrope to walk, and Sanford took heat from both sides: conservatives against any more “racial mixing,” and liberals, including most African American activists, who demanded genuine school desegregation. These political constraints inevitably limited the potential effects of his programs, especially to attack poverty, before they even got off the ground.³³

Reflecting this new willingness to discuss African Americans' central role in the state's economy, Sanford officially unveiled the Good Neighbor Council on January 18, 1963, with the mission of encouraging better training of black youth in order that they could land good jobs.

Sanford shared his thinking behind the council:

Reluctance to accept the Negro in employment is the greatest single block to his continued progress and to the full use of the human potential of the nation and its states ... North Carolina and its people have come to the point of recognizing the urgent need for opening new economic opportunities for Negro citizens. We also recognize that in doing so we shall be adding new economic growth for everybody.³⁴

The twenty-four person panel comprised a mix of white and black leaders from across North Carolina. African Americans, although cautious, received the governor's announcement warmly; and across the country, Sanford won praise for his positive message. Of course, segregationists reacted as well – with promises to scuttle his agenda and whomever Sanford supported in the 1964 governor's race. He undoubtedly stood on shifting political sands.³⁵

On the heels of the Good Neighbor Council, Sanford announced another educational project, an eight-week summer program called the Governor's School. Although geared for the

state's most gifted and talented, the school again demonstrated Sanford's commitment to educational experimentation and sustained desegregation; the school's faculty and student body contained a small percentage of African Americans. But the Governor's School played a larger role than most expected because it became a loose model for Sanford's experiments during the rest of his administration. Not only did it accept desegregation with little fanfare, private sources provided the bulk of its funding, allowing it the flexibility a legislative program did not. Designed as a three-year program, the school received a grant of \$250,000 from the Carnegie Foundation, to be matched by civic leaders. Just a few months later, the governor unveiled his program to attack poverty in North Carolina using a similar framework.³⁶

The product of more than six months of discussion, the North Carolina Fund was incorporated as a non-profit organization on July 18, 1963, with funding commitments from the Ford Foundation, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, and the state and federal governments. The Ford Foundation's grant of \$7 million made up one half of the Fund's financial support, part of a larger campaign by the philanthropic organization to improve equal educational opportunity through teaching methods, school desegregation, and other means.³⁷ When announcing the Fund's creation, Sanford laid out his basic vision:

There are tens of thousands whose dreams will die. Some of this poverty is self-imposed and some of it is undeserved. All of it withers the spirit of children, who neither imposed it nor deserve it. These are the children of poverty who tomorrow will become the parents of poverty. We hope to break this cycle of poverty. That is what the North Carolina Fund is all about.³⁸

The Fund incorporated several components, including the Comprehensive School Improvement Project and the Learning Institute of North Carolina on a statewide level, and volunteer programs and community action programs on a more local level. All but the CAPs were solely educational in nature – not surprising for a politician deemed “the education governor.” And as the nation's

only statewide antipoverty agency, the North Carolina Fund and its programs provided a unique model for federal policymakers waging President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, announced the next year.³⁹

But as all-encompassing as the North Carolina Fund seemed, its founders made a deliberate decision to walk softly on the issue of school desegregation, fearing its political volatility could destroy the program before it even began. Indeed, Sanford designed the North Carolina Fund already with a hostile political environment in mind. Sensing that a more conservative man would succeed him and that the Legislature would kill more grandiose reforms, Sanford deliberately sought private funding and nonprofit status for the NCF. His foresight proved wise as his successor, Dan K. Moore, showed little interest in fighting poverty.⁴⁰

But if its funding formula already protected the Fund – not to mention that Sanford was a lame-duck governor – why not take more of a leadership role in school desegregation? Compared to the radical empowerment threatened by community action programs, genuine school desegregation actually seemed more moderate. This became obvious by 1967, as more active community action programs, such as Durham's Operation Breakthrough, supported marches, rent strikes, and other efforts challenging the economic elite.⁴¹ But race played a deciding factor. Sanford's own political ambitions may have been in the way, while George Esser, the Fund's executive director, said it came down to practical policy.⁴² "If we had taken on anymore in terms of the community school situation, we would never have gotten a foothold for other services that we were involved in," Esser said. "The question was whether the problem that came up was worth the risk that it posed for the rest of the program."⁴³ In the case of school desegregation, Terry Sanford and his aides decided the answer was no.

Thus, no matter how good Sanford's intentions were, his unwillingness to aggressively advocate such a pivotal issue, despite adequate political cover, removed a potent antipoverty weapon from his arsenal, especially on the community level, where school desegregation fights were waged most actively. From its statewide efforts, through the CSIP and LINC, to its community activities, epitomized by the Charlotte Area Fund, the North Carolina Fund ceded much of the leadership on desegregation to other venues and individuals, both practically and rhetorically.

Beyond Teaching 101

During the 1960s, the Ford Foundation spent nearly \$30 million on the Comprehensive School Improvement Project in twenty-five localities, including \$2 million in North Carolina through the North Carolina Fund. Designed as a four-year experimental program, CSIP encouraged classroom innovation on the elementary and early secondary school levels. In North Carolina specifically, those teaching methods included: developing a better understanding of different backgrounds of experiences, values, and abilities children brought with them to the classroom; reorganizing and reallocating time in the school day; redeploying staff to better utilize their skills, including use of team teaching and teacher aides; and using more technology, such as television. All seemed thoroughly appropriate, especially in a state that struggled to keep students interested in the classroom; according to the original CSIP proposal, only one-half of all North Carolina students who began in 1950 graduated in 1962, with deaths, net migration, and other factors only a small number.⁴⁴

Yet, bureaucratic and political opposition appeared immediately from the state Department of Public Instruction and its elected leader, state superintendent Charles Carroll.

Part of the opposition originated from the inherent conservatism of a large education agency and the complications and threat a sudden infusion of innovation naturally presented. But underlying that lurked a resistance to the participation of an organization such as the Fund and the implication of colorblind assistance to the schools. The carefully crafted CSIP proposal did not mention school desegregation once, despite the Ford Foundation's known leadership in funding desegregation efforts in other places. However, reading between the lines, the proposal's use of race-based statistics and its listed objective of instructing teachers on better understanding children with different backgrounds suggested an ulterior motive: teaching skills in preparation for further desegregation. In typical Sanford style, it was made to look as innocuous as possible.⁴⁵

But that did not stop Carroll and department bureaucrats from nearly scuttling the entire effort. "As long as Terry was governor, Carroll [...] would slow things up," Esser said.⁴⁶ Added Bill Flowers, the Fund's education and grant liaison officer: "[Carroll] was a politician in an educator's job. If he had an interest in desegregation, he didn't show it."⁴⁷ More than a year passed before state officials began to fully allocate funding, and not before the Ford Foundation threatened to withdraw the money if activity did not start soon. Finally, in the fall of 1964, CSIP began to operate in the classrooms, and by 1967, it had reached roughly 25,000 children, 1,000 teachers, 220 principals, and 300 teacher's aides in 228 schools across the state. As a precursor to the federal Head Start program, CSIP also provided pre-school readiness for more than 4,000 children in the summers of 1964 and 1965.⁴⁸

Generally, CSIP won praise after the first four years. "Change is evident," concluded Bill Flowers in a 1967 report. "Some of the experimental components could lead to permanent changes in the North Carolina Public Schools primary curriculum [...]. The demonstration

showed the willingness of public school teachers to do and try new approaches when encouraged philosophically and financially.”⁴⁹ Schools across the state tried a variety of innovative methods to spark learning, including teacher’s aides, team teaching, non-grading, in-service training for teachers such as educational travel, college consultants, educational television, and even teachers’ participation in building and room design. Ironically, by 1967, the Department of Public Instruction became one of the CSIP’s largest supporters, publishing a glowing report on the program’s success. Omitting its earlier opposition, the department in its summary report declared: “As the offspring of many happy circumstances, born a-growing and nurtured in an atmosphere of enthusiasm, experiment, and determination, the CSIP found itself even in its infancy a robust, precocious force in North Carolina education.”⁵⁰ The state then extended the CSIP for another four years.

Probably the most dissatisfied with the CSIP was the Ford Foundation itself. Foundation officials sought more action-oriented programs, but were usually left disappointed, as was the case in North Carolina. “There is a real question as to whether it has become a program that is significant or comprehensive,” a 1966 foundation review committee stated.⁵¹ A year later, the CSIP still seemed closer to the status quo – a conclusion that the foundation made with several of its projects. In *A Foundation Goes to School*, a final assessment of CSIP nationally, the foundation took a critical look at the program, concluding among other things that the program had not made school desegregation central enough. Those in North Carolina gave little indication of the CSIP’s impact on the issue. Only Flowers singled out CSIP’s potential help in the transition to desegregation, at a conference in 1968. “These team approaches enabled administrations to move Negro faculty members into team teaching situations without the singular emphasis of race,” he wrote. “Similar opportunity was afforded in the use of biracial

teams of teacher aides.”⁵² Thankfully for North Carolina, Sanford sponsored school innovations other than the CSIP – ones that made a bit more effort in the name of desegregation.⁵³

The Education Think-Tank

More than any other program or institution created under the North Carolina Fund, the Learning Institute of North Carolina, or LINC, attempted to address the problematic issue of school desegregation in the mid-1960s. The Fund, in cooperation with the University of North Carolina, Duke University, the State Board of Education, and the Board of Higher Education, established LINC as a private educational planning agency in 1964, charged with designing innovations and conducting research to tackle enduring educational problems. The institute oversaw a variety of work, but undoubtedly, the North Carolina Advancement School best symbolized LINC’s interest in innovation – and desegregation – in public education.⁵⁴

The residential school targeted underachieving eighth-grade boys and gave them intensive guidance and teaching during a semester-long program. Between the fall of 1964 and summer of 1967, more than 2,300 boys and 250 teachers participated in the Advancement School. Although designed primarily to re-energize the boys and research the underlying causes for underachievement, the school also provided a desegregated model for other schools to emulate. In fact, its racial balance matched that of the state – nearly thirty percent were African American – a novel concept at a time of token desegregation. In addition, the school provided a laboratory for LINC-sponsored desegregation institutes for teachers during the summers of 1965 and 1966. These special programs emphasized several points, including how teachers could go beyond their middle-class roots and relate to students new to a desegregated atmosphere, plus provide the teachers themselves with the experience of working and living in an integrated

environment. And it seemed to succeed. According to one older visiting teacher: “It works. They just come together and wham! They’re a house; they’re a group. The racial differences don’t seem to make any difference to them. I was amazed.”⁵⁵

In its original goal, the Advancement School proved just as successful. Principals reported that 75 percent of the boys immediately improved their grades, while 90 percent showed “markedly improved attitudes.” The percentages dropped when the school considered sustained progress, but remained high especially among low-income African Americans (71 percent). The school also inspired at least one county-level counterpart in the Learning Academy in Charlotte.⁵⁶

Despite its narrow scope, LINC and its cutting-edge quality and unusual setup made the organization a target. To rush LINC into operation instead of waiting for a legislative session the following year, Sanford made several budget transfers to help match a Carnegie grant, angering legislators left out of the decision-making process. Their attempts the following year to kill it failed, but in 1967, they went on the warpath again when Advancement School director Gordon McAndrew waded too deeply into desegregation politics by calling the “freedom of choice” plans widely used by school boards a dodge to perpetuate segregation. This sparked a political firestorm, mainly because it was so close to the truth. The North Carolina Fund’s financial support stopped in 1967.⁵⁷

Of all the projects created by Terry Sanford and the North Carolina Fund, LINC proved the most involved with this critical issue. However, it was not the most equipped to handle serious implementation of the Supreme Court’s wishes. Because of the broad authority local school boards had, organizations on the local level seemed most suitable for this task. Yet, Terry

Sanford's anti-poverty brainchild made almost no attempt to compel these organizations to act. Charlotte's efforts through the Charlotte Area Fund illustrated this failure.

“A Very Un-Southern Southern City”

For years, Charlotte's treatment of desegregation mirrored that of the state at large: an emphasis on image, a paternalistic confidence, and a penchant for tokenism. Leaders of Charlotte, the state's largest city and a key engine of the economy, considered the city a bastion of moderation. Yet on the eve of the *Brown* decision, Charlotte was one of the most segregated cities in the country – a result of suburban development, restrictive race-based covenants, public housing construction, and generations of racist zoning policy. Census statistics reinforced the physical division between blacks and whites: in 1950 only seven percent of black men held a white-collar job, compared to more than 30 percent of white men; 52 percent of working black women were domestic workers, while only 17 percent of white women were; and the average white income was more than double that of blacks. A glance at education statistics revealed one major reason for the disparity in income: while whites finished an average of 12.2 grades of schools, blacks completed just 6.6.⁵⁸

The Charlotte School Board did not proclaim its support for the *Brown* decision as Greensboro's so promptly did, and in both 1955 and 1956 it rejected successive NAACP petitions to desegregate immediately. But by 1957, under threat of litigation by the city's aggressive NAACP chapter, the board approved the use of individual transfer requests as the Pupil Assignment Law spelled out. Because the board refused a few white parents' requests to shut down schools rather than desegregate them, four black students entered Charlotte's white schools for the first time in the twentieth century. All became the targets of harassment by white

mobs, but only Dorothy Counts suffered such persecution that her father withdrew her. Despite the incident, observers considered Charlotte's experience favorable, especially compared with that of Little Rock, where the governor's obstructionist actions required federal troops to desegregate Central High School. Even so, the treatment of Counts horrified city leaders obsessed with image. "There was a resolve it would never happen again," one community leader said later.⁵⁹ For the next few years, officials accomplished that by refusing any more transfer requests; by the 1959-1960 school year, only one African American attended a white school.⁶⁰

In 1960, however, activists once again forced Charlotte leaders into action in order to protect the city's prized image. While the local NAACP continued its litigation challenging the minimal token desegregation in Charlotte's schools, hundreds of black youths began to picket downtown lunch counters and other businesses in February 1960. Led by Charles Jones, a student at historically black Johnson C. Smith University, the movement forced image-conscious city leaders to act – first by setting up a biracial committee, similar to ones across the South at this time. The committee did not achieve immediate success, but in June 1960, after renewed black protests and a threat to boycott businesses over the lucrative Fourth of July weekend, negotiators achieved a breakthrough. A handful of lunch counters began to serve African Americans, and gradually restaurants and theaters across town opened their doors to all. By 1963, a full year before the Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated the integration of public accommodations, nearly all Charlotte businesses served blacks. The *Charlotte Observer*, an ardent supporter of desegregation, trumpeted the city's progress: "If one is to cite a dominant characteristic," intoned the *Charlotte Observer*, "it would doubtless be that Charlotte is a most un-southern southern city."⁶¹

Yet, the struggle to desegregate schools – the Supreme Court’s original target in *Brown* – appeared stagnant. Although black litigants with NAACP support filed several lawsuits, each fell short in one way or another. Federal judges, however, signaled an increasing willingness to strike down practices that prevented further desegregation. Thus, a year after having one black student in a white school, the school district accepted twenty-six transfer requests by black parents for the 1961-1962 school year. The following year, the board voted to experiment with a geographically based pupil assignment plan, rather than one based on race. But even with these moves, Charlotte schools practiced a policy of token desegregation, outraging African American parents and activists.⁶²

Public demonstrations over school segregation broke out in August 1961, after the transfer of some 800 black junior high students to formerly all-white Harding High School in what was becoming an increasingly African American area; the board had moved the white students to a newly built school. The move predictably sparked protests from blacks, but also from nearby whites, concerned with their property values near a black school. A black organization, called the Westside Parents’ Council and led by local dentist Reginald Hawkins, questioned why African American students once again were relegated to a run-down facility, a longtime habit of all-white school boards. The board did not rescind its decision, but the vocal criticism was a sign of things to come. Hawkins became a leading African American activist in the city, especially in his critique of Charlotte’s anti-poverty program, the Charlotte Area Fund.⁶³

One CAP’s Failure

In March 1966, a group of education officials, civil rights leaders, and representatives of other organizations, including the North Carolina Fund, attended a statewide meeting on school

desegregation at Shaw University in Raleigh. A clear statement emerged among the more common statements condemning “freedom of choice” plans and voicing concerns for the wholesale firing of black teachers: community action programs need to play a central role in achieving genuine school desegregation.⁶⁴ “Community action was held to be the key to successful school programs,” stated a summary prepared by an unknown author for George Esser, NCF director. “The first order of business for each community is that of revitalizing or organizing community action programs to promote school desegregation.”⁶⁵ It then listed a series of actions local CAPs could take, including being a source of accurate information on school desegregation; being the main contact for concerned private and governmental agencies; developing a political action program and relating it to education affairs; contesting unfair policies and practices; processing letters of complaint; keeping civil rights organizations informed; and even litigating, when necessary. All seemed reasonable and within the practical limits of community action programs in North Carolina. Yet, none of the NCF-supported CAPs championed this role, not even the Charlotte Area Fund.⁶⁶

From its inception, the Charlotte Area Fund (CAF) took virtually no role in encouraging or even assisting further school desegregation. How it came in to being might explain this lack of initiative. Similar to most civic decisions made in Charlotte, the birth of an anti-poverty program in the Queen City resulted from Chamber of Commerce concerns – in this case, about how the city’s large population of impoverished and uneducated souls hurt the economy.⁶⁷ Grudgingly pressured from below by civil rights protesters and more willingly from above by Terry Sanford’s administration, the city fathers actively began to consider some type of anti-poverty effort. Thus, in January 1963, a representative of Charlotte, *Charlotte Observer* editor C.A. Pete McKnight, joined Sanford aide John Ehle and several Ford Foundation officials in

discussing poverty issues in North Carolina. This began a series of discussions that eventually led to the North Carolina Fund's conception and its proposal to the Foundation, including Charlotte's "preliminary statement" as a model.⁶⁸

After the Foundation accepted the North Carolina Fund proposal, Terry Sanford named George Esser as the new agency's director. Esser set up the Fund's offices in the black business district of Durham and compiled a staff. Beginning in January 1964, the Fund received fifty-one community program proposals, representing the interests of 66 counties, for consideration by the Fund. Ideas ranged from agricultural development programs and birth control planning to crafts initiatives and more traditional educational efforts. Eventually, after a rigorous selection process, the Fund's staff chose seven proposals involving thirteen counties, including that of the Charlotte Area Fund. Later in 1964, after President Lyndon Johnson unveiled his War on Poverty and the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Fund chose four more programs to support. The Charlotte Area Fund also received money from the federal government.⁶⁹

With some irony, Charlotte's original proposal in March 1963, and an expanded version in August when the Charlotte Area Fund was incorporated, had a relatively narrow educational focus. The proposals cited concerns that not enough African Americans were qualified to fill open jobs because of a heavy out-migration of educated blacks, the lower quality of black schools, or both. Thus, both proposals outlined a series of school-centered educational and social programs that included: a summer pre-school readiness program, a precursor to Head Start; a series of adult education initiatives, such as vocational skill development and technology; and experimental full-service neighborhood centers, with health maintenance and other social services. "[C]hances of a successful school-centered program would be good in Charlotte

because its School Board is truly progressive and its top administrative team unusually able and imaginative,” stated the August proposal.⁷⁰

Yet, glaringly missing from the mix was any mention of school desegregation, reflecting an overall belief by civic leaders that no racial crisis existed now that restaurants and theaters desegregated earlier in the year. Admittedly, Charlotte remained ahead of most of its counterparts in North Carolina, where only twenty-nine school districts out of 173 had *any* desegregation. Charlotte even used a modified geography-based assignment plan, but because of the city’s intractable residential segregation, less than three percent of African Americans attended formerly white schools in the fall of 1963. It was not long before the school board’s gradualism and the CAF’s limitations came under attack from blacks and advocates of the poor.⁷¹

In January 1964, Reginald Hawkins, the outspoken black activist who led voter registration efforts and protests against the city’s segregated hospital and dental society, openly criticized the CAF’s application for money from the North Carolina Fund, claiming the proposal did not address the root causes of poverty, discrimination and segregation. In comments to the press and in an extended letter to North Carolina Fund director George Esser, Hawkins argued that, “too few positive steps are being taken or proposed without coercion to break down traditional discriminatory patterns.”⁷² To make his point, Hawkins zeroed in on the school system. “There is still operated within Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, a dual system of public education based on race, where only token desegregation has taken place and the Negro child is still inferiorly trained,” Hawkins wrote Esser. “The present school administration [...] refuse[s] to come forth with a plan for complete and full desegregation of the public schools which is vital to breaking the cycle of poverty.”⁷³ Hawkins demanded that a future CAF board

include several African Americans, who regardless of class had been victims of discrimination. Yet Hawkins' reputation as a firebrand made him easy to dismiss among white leaders at both CAF and NCF, especially because two more conservative black factions existed in the city. When they chose to consult blacks at all, white civic leaders worked with Kelly Alexander's NAACP chapter and James Polk's business-oriented Eastside Council, both of which publicly opposed the direct action protests of the early 1960s.⁷⁴ Several months later, after the Charlotte Area Fund won official approval from the NCF, CAF leaders continued to move slowly, if at all, on Hawkins' demands.⁷⁵

At about the same time that the NCF officially accepted the Charlotte proposal in mid-July, the state NAACP launched a new campaign to push for further school desegregation. "Token integration is educationally harmful and discriminatory to both Negro and white children," declared Kelly Alexander, also president of the state NAACP.⁷⁶ But the likelihood of a strong CAF stand on desegregation – or any stand for that matter – seemed remote, since Hawkins' charges about the board's makeup were right. Established by city officials and the Chamber of Commerce, the board was remarkably white, male, and upper class.⁷⁷ Out of eighteen members in 1964, only three were black, and none was below middle-class status. But the board's makeup began to change after critics applied pressure. The North Carolina Fund's William Darity leveled the same charges Hawkins had, while Hawkins took his concerns to the U.S. Senate's War on Poverty oversight committee. Hawkins told the senators that African Americans lacked confidence in the CAF: "We are not so naïve as to believe that our oppressors ... are all of a sudden going to become altruistic toward the Negro and voluntarily organized poverty programs to eliminate the root causes of poverty."⁷⁸ By 1967, 18 blacks and several

representatives of the poor sat on the 39-person board, yet the active participation of the poor remained suspect at best.⁷⁹

But the flap over CAF board membership was just one problem. Indeed, miscues plagued the Charlotte Area Fund from the start. When the North Carolina Fund officially accepted CAF in July 1964, it gave the new organization an administrative grant of \$11,275. CAF then sat on the money for six months, not even cashing it until early 1965 and sparking criticism for such inaction. Board members said they did not want to start spending until they found an executive director; yet even after they hired John Zuidema as director and began to develop programs, CAF proved slow-footed and incapable of coordination. Although CAF put into action all of the educational initiatives originally proposed in 1963, only the pre-school readiness program won praise, and the federally funded Head Start replaced it after a year. Manpower initiatives, a potential boon for Charlotte industrialists, stalled because of ineffective leadership and a volatile mix of mistrust and competition between the Charlotte Bureau on Employment, Training, and Placement, the Opportunity Industrialization Center, and the Charlotte Area Fund itself, which partially funded both programs.⁸⁰ Neighborhood centers, originally designed to provide health maintenance and other social service programs, instead served as information centers. Residents of poor neighborhoods could go to the centers and receive guidance on which agencies to visit, but little else. And of course, in the case of school desegregation, the centers had no information.⁸¹

The North Carolina Fund did not challenge the CAF's reluctance to address desegregation, but at least once, the federal Office of Economic Opportunity threatened to cut off funds over the issue. In late 1965 and early 1966, the OEO's Harold Bailin warned that Central Piedmont Community College, to which the CAF contracted its adult basic education program,

had insufficient desegregation of students and faculty. Instead of complying, however, CPCC officials, with CAF's silent support, resisted. Only after a newspaper editor and a local congressman intervened did the community college and federal officials reach a compromise, one brokered by OEO director Sargent Shriver that allowed partial desegregation of classes and gradual integration of faculty. However, no such leadership, from any level of the anti-poverty infrastructure – local, state, or federal – took on Mecklenburg's glacial pace of secondary and elementary school desegregation. Not even when it was handed to them.⁸²

In June 1966, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Superintendent A. Craig Phillips pitched his idea for handling increasing school desegregation, called "A Unified Approach to the Problems of Total School Desegregation." Directed to Bill Flowers at the North Carolina Fund, the proposal laid out a comprehensive project including a variety of training programs on the elementary, junior high, and senior high levels, a staff counseling program, and plans for a community attitude survey. Although the price tag for such a project was a substantial \$353,875, Flowers responded with enthusiasm, sending Phillips' proposal to George Esser and others with his endorsement. "It seems to me that both LINC and the Fund should sustain an interest in a broad, comprehensive approach to the school desegregation process," Flowers wrote. "As far as I know, there is no similar proposal in any southeastern state."⁸³ Enough interest in the proposal resulted in a meeting later in the month with representatives from the Fund, LINC, CSIP, and the Charlotte schools present. Flowers remained optimistic after the meeting and told Esser that Phillips and his staff "are much more advanced in planning and philosophy than an outsider might suppose. They are dedicated to the task of doing this job of educational system desegregation and in the process take advantage of the instructional implications."⁸⁴ But then the plan seemed to go nowhere. Increasing political problems cast doubt on LINC's ability to

participate, while the other agencies questioned how much funding they could provide, if any. Charlotte school officials, meanwhile, planned to meet with federal officials about funding. But in the fall of 1966, no large-scale desegregation training effort took place. In fact, the Charlotte schools' only major effort that fall involved athletics; black and white teams played against each other competitively for the first time.⁸⁵

Not surprisingly, CAF played no role in discussions of the desegregation proposal. CAF also boasted the smallest percentage of local agency participation (ten percent) of the eleven NCF-funded community programs; CAF simply failed to reach out to other local organizations who served the poor. With the exception of Domestics United, an advocacy organization for black domestics in its nascent stage, CAF remained strictly a service organization through 1969, when the North Carolina Fund's support ended. It never fulfilled the hopes of many activists or officials at the Ford Foundation, who described the action program as hostile to moving beyond social services to social change. But when the North Carolina Fund closed its doors in June 1969, CAF remained. Despite Ford reviews reflecting a deeply flawed organization in a divided community, white elites believed CAF was effective. And even though African Americans found it severely lacking, and the white poor found it so irrelevant that they did not participate, CAF and its successor agencies survived far beyond the War on Poverty.⁸⁶

In the end, neither the North Carolina Fund nor the Charlotte Area Fund contributed much to the struggle to desegregate schools. Instead, activists turned to the courts, which although long and drawn out, ultimately proved effective. After Reginald Hawkins' concerns about the CAF went unheeded, he, Darius and Vera Swann, and some 130 other African American parents and activists sued the Charlotte School Board on December 9, 1964, over its continued reluctance to move beyond token desegregation. The school board chairman called

the lawsuit “a waste of time.”⁸⁷ Little did he, the plaintiffs, or their lawyer Julius Chambers know that *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Board of Education* would become the most well-known school desegregation lawsuit beyond *Brown*. Surviving a rash of bombings of their homes and nearly six years of school board recalcitrance, these individuals witnessed a thoroughly satisfying culmination to their troubles: a 1970 Supreme Court decision allowing mandatory, cross-district busing to achieve genuine school desegregation. As *Brown* did sixteen years before, the *Swann* decision reverberated through schoolhouses and boardrooms across the country. And after several shaky years, Charlotte’s school desegregation became a model for the rest of the country, a point in which Charlotte residents – black and white – took pride.⁸⁸

Conclusion

Today, Charlotte remains a model for successful court-ordered school desegregation. But after more than 30 years, the question persists: did the judiciary have to mediate this issue in Charlotte and elsewhere? Or were there alternative ways to achieve this end? Even after the initial recalcitrance by legislative and executive leaders on the federal, state, and local levels, alternatives indeed remained. The bevy of anti-poverty programs that emerged after the “rediscovery” of poverty in the 1960s provided one such opportunity. Bolstered by academic studies, breaking the “cycle of poverty” became a new catch phrase for optimistic political leaders and young policymakers. And on both the national and state levels, politicians saw education as central to reducing, or even eradicating, poverty.

With the North Carolina Fund, Governor Terry Sanford fulfilled his dream of creating a state organization devoted to equal opportunity for all people, no matter what race or creed. Yet in many ways, the Fund left a mixed legacy on achieving just that, especially on the issue of

school desegregation. Sanford and leaders of the Fund certainly recognized the role of segregation in creating and sustaining large pockets of poverty among African Americans; generations of slavery and then Jim Crow had had a devastating effect. But in the face of stiff political opposition – ranging from local elites to the elected state superintendent of education – Sanford and the Fund blinked. Other than the handful of experimental schools assisted by LINC, the Fund provided little leadership in achieving greater educational opportunity through school desegregation. Instead, Fund-supported programs ceded that moral authority to others and subsequently had only a minor effect on the eventual implementation of desegregation.

Terry Sanford and his administration undoubtedly deserve some commendation for attempting to address such a complicated issue as poverty; in contrast, most politicians fuel their careers by condemning the unfortunate among us. But concerning school desegregation, even Sanford tried to hide behind practical politics. Such a provocative issue could have destroyed the entire reform program, he contended. But this excuse seems less acceptable, considering his lame-duck status, the federal government's early commitment to the cause, and the Fund's unusually independent finances, free from legislative whim. Years later, Terry Sanford lamented that the War on Poverty was not lost; it was never really fought. This perceptive commentary, however, also can be applied to the North Carolina Fund. For all its good intentions and innovative programming, North Carolina's war on poverty ended up being little more than a limited engagement.

¹ Inaugural address of Governor Terry Sanford in Raleigh, North Carolina (January 5, 1961) in Memory F. Mitchell, ed., *Messages, Addresses and Public Papers of Terry Sanford*, Raleigh: State of North Carolina (1966), 6.

² North Carolina ranked in the bottom ten in a variety of categories, including literacy, high school dropouts, and draftee failures on the Armed Forces mental tests. Exit inventory data from North Carolina Public Schools, Folder 7616, Series 7.3, North Carolina Fund Papers, Southern Historical Collection at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (herein after called NCF Papers).

³ Howard E. Covington Jr. and Marion A. Ellis, *Terry Sanford: Politics, Progress and Outrageous Ambitions* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 246.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 296; and Robert R. Korstad and James L. Leloudis, "Citizen Soldiers: The North Carolina Volunteers and the War on Poverty," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 62 (Autumn 1999): 178-180.

⁵ W.L. Flowers, *An Historical Review of the North Carolina Comprehensive School Improvement Program, 1963-1967*, Folder 7634, Series 7.3, NCF Papers; and Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 331.

⁶ James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 86-117.

⁷ Although at first it might appear as semantics, integration and desegregation are not the same. Generally speaking, desegregation means a minimal of white and black in the same school or room, such as one African-American child in a school of 300, while integration suggests a more thorough mixture, such as 100 or 200 black children out of 300.

⁸ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 229.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 222-237.

¹⁰ Token desegregation meant desegregation at a minimal level, such as considering a school of 500 desegregated even if only one member of the other race attended.

¹¹ Exit inventory data, Folder 7616, Series 7.3, NCF Papers.

¹² Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 229.

¹³ V.O. Key Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1949), 206.

¹⁴ In *Puitt v. Commissioners of Gaston County*, the North Carolina Supreme Court struck down separate taxation while it upheld the segregation of black and white schoolchildren. Ironically, anti-tax whites brought the suit. Davison M. Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race: The Desegregation of the Charlotte Schools* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 9-12.

¹⁵ Heavy black migration, especially after World War I, sparked white fears of labor shortages in eastern North Carolina and elsewhere. Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 8-13.

¹⁷ Civility represented an alternative to the more flagrant violence other Deep South states became known for, but violence remained an underlying threat, if African-Americans and other perceived agitators rebuffed elites' more civil overtures. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (Oxford University Press, 1980), 4-8.

¹⁸ U.S. Bureau of Census, *1950 Census of Population: Characteristics of Population, North Carolina* (Washington: Bureau of the Census, 1953), 37, 44, 54, 206.

¹⁹ Interestingly, by 1945, black teachers' salaries exceeded those of whites because of their higher qualifications, a result of limited job opportunities for African-Americans trained in other professions. Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 20.

²⁰ Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 18-24. For a thorough discussion of the legal campaign against school segregation in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, see James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and Its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-45; and Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The*

History of Brown v. Board of Education and Black America's Struggle for Equality (New York: Vintage Books, 1975).

²¹ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 48.

²² *Charlotte Observer*, May 18-19, 1954; and Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 42.

²³ Throughout the debate over school desegregation, Hodges's fervent rejection of massive resistance allowed him to hold onto the middle road. In addition to championing the original Pupil Assignment Act, he endorsed amendments to the Pearsall Plan giving local districts the right to option out of public schools rather than desegregate. And in maybe Hodges' most symbolically important gesture, the governor also touted his moderation by condemning the debate's two "extremes," the Ku Klux Klan and the NAACP. More than any other act, this gave him credibility among white North Carolinians who opposed integration but supported nurturing the state's progressive image – even as it alienated most blacks. Newly elected John F. Kennedy rewarded Hodges for his skillful handling of the desegregation crisis and success in luring business to the state by tapping him for U.S. secretary of commerce. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 49-56, 58-60, 65-67.

²⁴ The government estimated America's impoverished at thirty-nine million, but author Michael Harrington placed it as high as fifty million. James T. Patterson, *America's Struggle against Poverty in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 97-98.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 97-111; and Alice O'Connor, *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History* (Princeton University Press, 2001), 139-151.

²⁶ Exit Inventory Data, Folder 7616, "Proposal to Improve Teaching in Primary Grades, Comprehensive School Improvement Project," Folder 7625, "Poverty Statistics for Mecklenburg County," Folder 4032, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers; and education rally address in Mitchell, *Messages, Addresses and Public Papers*, 114-119.

²⁷ Education rally address, March 9, 1961, in Mitchell, ed., *Messages, Addresses and Public Papers*, 118.

²⁸ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 254-267.

²⁹ George Esser letter to Mitchell Sviridoff, Ford Foundation vice president, February 22, 1968, Folder 764, Subseries 1.6, NCF Papers.

³⁰ Education Study Data, January 1967, Folder 7617, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers; Kluger, *Simple Justice*, 170-171, 315-339, 352-357, 705-707; and Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, xvi, xxvi, xxvii, 42-45, 64. The notion of black school inferiority, however, has been challenged of late. Plenty of African-Americans, rural and urban, working class and middle class, young and old, were proud of their schools and defended the feeling of community these schools encouraged. Despite the unequal funding, many blacks also were cautious of the school desegregation advocated by NAACP activists. In many cases, this caution became alarm in the late 1960s and early 1970s as black children and families carried the burden of desegregation and busing. Of course, white politicians' recalcitrance had little to do with these concerns. For a North Carolina example of black opposition to desegregation, see David S. Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina, and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

³¹ Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights*, 56.

³² *Ibid.*, 273-278; and Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 251.

³³ Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 305-310.

³⁴ *Southern School News*, February 1963. Sanford mentioned the Good Neighbor Council idea in a speech on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, but did not make the official announcement, complete with membership, until January.

³⁵ Establishing the Good Neighbor Council,” January 18, 1963, Mitchell in *Messages, Addresses and Public Papers*, 579-580; *Southern School News*, February 1963; and Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 296-298, 324. Not long after Sanford unveiled the Good Neighbor Council, George Wallace become governor of Alabama, proclaiming, “Segregation now ... segregation today ... segregation forever.” Wallace’s message resonated with whites across the country, including North Carolina. See Dan T. Carter, *Politics of Rage: The Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 11-14, 109, 136-138, 458-459.

³⁶ *Southern School News*, February 1963, June 1963, July 1963.

³⁷ Founded in 1951, the Ford Foundation’s education arm, called the Fund for the Advancement of Education, was an early advocate for school desegregation. Its objectives of equal educational opportunity, including desegregation, continued after the Foundation absorbed the Fund in the early 1960s. Edward Meade Jr. “Recalling and Updating ‘Philanthropy and Public Schools: One Foundation’s Evolving Perspective,’ ” *Teachers College Record* 93 (1992): 436-462. For more on the Fund’s efforts, see Paul Woodring, *Investment in Innovation: A Historic Appraisal of the Fund for the Advancement of Education* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970).

³⁸ Terry Sanford, “Poverty’s Challenge to the States” in R.O. Everett, ed., *Anti-Poverty Programs*, 1966, 79-80.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 82; and Billy Barnes, “The North Carolina Fund: A Progress Report,” *Popular Government* 30 (June 1964), 2-3.

⁴⁰ Supporters of one-time Sanford opponent I. Beverly Lake backed Moore, a conservative judge, in the second primary and trounced Sanford’s preferred successor, L. Richardson Preyer. Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 338-339, 345.

⁴¹ “History of OBT,” Folder 4352, 5-7, Subseries 4.8, NCF Papers.

⁴² Sanford considered challenging Senator Sam Ervin in 1968, but withdrew his candidacy months before the primary. While president of Duke University, Sanford made two unsuccessful bids for the Democratic nomination for president in 1972 and 1976. Covington and Ellis, *Terry Sanford*, 355-358, 400-408, 412-416.

⁴³ Robert Korstad’s interview with George Esser, October 31, 2002.

⁴⁴ Proposal to Improve Teaching in Primary Grades,” Folder 7625, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers; and Meade, “Recalling and Updating,” 442.

⁴⁵ W.L. Flowers, “An Historical Review of the North Carolina Comprehensive School Improvement Project, 1963-1967,” Folder 7634, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers, 272; and “Proposal to Improve Teaching in Primary Grades,” 1-19.

⁴⁶ Korstad’s interview with George Esser October 31, 2002.

⁴⁷ Author’s interview with Bill Flowers, November 20, 2002. In a review of the CSIP, Flowers goes into plenty of detail on the “passive resistance” used by Carroll and the state educational bureaucracy. Historical Review of CSIP, 1963-1967 (complete), 43-64, 105-111, Box 30, Esser Papers.

⁴⁸ Flowers, “An Historical Review,” 272, 283-284.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 293, 295.

⁵⁰ Department of Public Instruction, “Born A-Growing: CSIP Summary Report of North Carolina, 1964-1967,” 8, Folder 7635, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers.

⁵¹ “Review Committee for Ford Foundation Report,” January 1967, 9, Folder 766, Subseries 1.6, NCF Papers.

⁵² Flowers, “Innovative Efforts in North Carolina Public Education,” 8, Folder 7609, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers.

⁵³ Ford Foundation, *A Foundation Goes to School: the Ford Foundation Comprehensive School Improvement Project, 1960-1970* (New York: The Foundation, 1972), 38-40; and Meade, “Recalling and Updating,” 443-436.

⁵⁴ “Origins of LINC,” Folder 7656, “Educational Developments in North Carolina,” Folder 7673, and “LINC: North Carolina Advancement School, 1964-1967,” Folder 7685, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers; and *Southern Education Report*, May-June 1966.

⁵⁵ “LINC – Final Report, 1964-1967,” 26-27, Folder 7693, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers; and “North Carolina Advancement School, 1964-1967,” 2-3, Folder 7685, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers.

⁵⁶ “Follow-up Study of High Potential Underachieving Students at the North Carolina Advancement School,” Folders 7694-7696; and *Chapel Hill Weekly*, January 21, 1968, Folder 7688, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers; and *Southern Education Report*, July-August 1965.

⁵⁷ *Chapel Hill Weekly*, January 21, 1968.

⁵⁸ U.S. Bureau of Census, *1950 Census of Population*, 67, 72. For more discussion on housing patterns in Charlotte, see Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

⁵⁹ *Southern School News*, September 1959.

⁶⁰ Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 70, 72-75, 83.

⁶¹ *Charlotte Observer*, September 21, 1963; and Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 84-86. For further detail on this phenomenon, see Elizabeth Jacoway and David Colburn, eds., *Southern Businessmen and Desegregation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).

⁶² Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 80-83.

⁶³ Hawkins, an alumnus of Johnson C. Smith and Howard universities, organized the political group Mecklenburg Organization on Political Affairs (MOPA), which was designed to increase black voter registration. But by the early 1960s, Hawkins’ organization began orchestrating direct action protests, most notably against the segregated hospital. Hawkins ran for governor in 1968 and won a respectable 21 percent in the Democratic primary. Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 90, 94-95.

⁶⁴ School districts used freedom-of-choice plans that allowed parents to choose what schools their children could attend. Though the plan was fair on paper, white parents never applied to black schools, and black parents faced tall bureaucratic obstacles to successfully obtain permission to send their children to white schools. The U.S. Supreme Court cast severe constitutional doubt on these plans in 1968 in *Green v. New County School Board of New Kent County, Va.* *Patterson, Brown v. Board of Education*, 100, 145-46.

⁶⁵ “Summary – Statewide Meeting on School Desegregation,” March 26, 1966, Raleigh, Box 28, George H. Esser Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (herein after called Esser Papers).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ The importance of the Chamber of Commerce to Charlotte civic affairs cannot be understated. All but one bond measure supported by the chamber passed. All but one Charlotte mayor between 1935 and 1975 had been a chamber member and the owner of his own business. And from the early 1960s to the late 1970s, every mayor had been president of the chamber. The business alliance’s role remained key in nearly everything the city did,

including negotiating desegregation rules or tackling poverty. Kathy Futtrell, "History of CAF for the Process Analysis," March 1968, 13-15, Folder 3979, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; and Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 97-98.

⁶⁸ Futtrell, "History of CAF," 19-23.

⁶⁹ Billy E. Barnes, "The North Carolina Fund: A Progress Report," 2-5; "Proposal to OEO, November 1964," Folder 4064, and "Proposal to OEO, Spring 1965," Folder 4065, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; and Korstad's interview with George Esser, October 31, 2002.

⁷⁰ "Proposal to Ford Foundation," CAF proposal in appendix, 4, Folder 760, Subseries 1.6, NCF Papers.

⁷¹ "Proposal to Ford Foundation," 4, 11; Futtrell, "History of CAF," 23-24; "Original Proposal to North Carolina Fund," Folder 3982, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; *Southern School News*, August and October, 1963; and *Charlotte Observer*, September 21, 1963.

⁷² Reginald Hawkins letter to George Esser, January 30, 1964, Folder 151, Subseries 1.2.1, NCF Papers.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Alexander, a longtime NAACP activist, remained committed to that organization's more legal-minded efforts, including school desegregation, while Polk's organization preferred more business-based solutions. The Eastside Council ran one of the CAF's neighborhood centers, and Polk later directed a local manpower agency. Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 93; and Futtrell, "History of CAF," 38, 52-56.

⁷⁵ Reginald Hawkins letter to George Esser, January 30, 1964; *Charlotte Observer*, January 6, 1964; Futtrell, "History of CAF," 33-35; and Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 104-105.

⁷⁶ *Southern School News*, August 1964.

⁷⁷ Board members in the first year included a who's who of city powerbrokers, including Charlotte Mayor Stanford Brookshire, *Observer* editor C.A. Pete McKnight, local businessman Charles Lowe, attorney William Mulliss, Board of County Commissioners Chairman Sam Atkinson, U.S. Appellate Judge J. Spencer Bell, Memorial Hospital board chairman James Cannon, Chamber of Commerce President Brodie Griffith, and former chamber presidents Joe Robinson and J.E. Burnside. Folders 3986, 3987, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers.

⁷⁸ Futtrell, "History of CAF," 36.

⁷⁹ William Darity, "Report to North Carolina Fund," November 11-14, 1965, Folder 4046, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; *Southern School News*, August 1964; *Charlotte Observer*, June 30, 1965; and Futtrell, "History of CAF," 32, 34-35.

⁸⁰ CBETP was founded in 1965 and initially funded by the Stern Family Foundation, while the Presbyterian Synod ran OIC. Both contracted with each other through CAF, causing much confusion over funding and personnel decisions. To add to the confusion, Hawkins started his own manpower organization, called JOBS, although it proved ineffective. Proposal to Stern Family Foundation, Folder 4105; Rock Fazio, "Manpower Draft Evaluation," May 30, 1967, Folder 4112; interview with Ernie Russell, CBETP, November 16, 1965, Folder 4046; interviews with Bill Darity and Reginald Hawkins, January 18, 1966, Folder 4047; Martha McKay, "Review of CAF," 1966, Folder 4055; and Futtrell, "History of CAF," 52-56, all Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers.

⁸¹ Martha McKay, "Review of CAF," 1966, Folder 4055, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; and Futtrell, "History of CAF,"

⁸² OEO Area Coordinator Harold Bailin letter to John Zuidema, CAF executive director, December 13, 1965, and Bailin letter to Zuidema, January 5, 1966, Folder 4077, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; and Futtrell, "History of CAF," 50-51.

⁸³ Flowers memo to Esser, et al., July 7, 1966, Folder 7680, Subseries 7.3, NCF Papers.

⁸⁴ Flowers memo to Esser, et al., July 26, 1966, Folder 239, Subseries 1.2.1, NCF Papers.

⁸⁵ Ibid.; Flowers to Esser et al., July 7, 1966, Folder 7680, Subseries 7.3; A. Craig Phillips and W. Leslie Bobbitt, "A Unified Approach to the Problems of Total School Desegregation," Folder 4096, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; and Davison, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 123.

⁸⁶ Field Reports for CAF, 1965 to August 1966, Folders 4046-4049, Subseries 4.5, NCF Papers; interview of Preston Kennedy, Fund field representative in Piedmont, on CAF, Folder 7278, Subseries 6.10, NCF Papers; Flowers, "Innovative Efforts," Appendix F, Folder 7328, Subseries 6.10, NCF Papers; Futtrell, "History of CAF," 50-52, 54; and "Review Committee for Ford Foundation Report," 8.

⁸⁷ Douglas, *Reading, Writing and Race*, 114.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 108-112, 120-123, 210-212, 250-251; and Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 155-159.