

! Coronavirus Preparedness & Updates

[View the latest campus news & information surrounding COVID-19.](#)

>

COPPIN STATE

Reflections from Spring '71

Published Tuesday, June 02nd, 2020

Alum Walter Douglass reminisces on his student experience in the 1970s after a picture of him and fellow university students was recreated by a group of Coppin State University students.



There is nothing like a throwback photograph to stir up feelings of nostalgia. Alum Walter Douglass recalls this picture fondly. It was spring 1971 and there was a certain naiveté he and his classmates enjoyed at that time. They “Danced to the Music” at the “Psychedelic Shack” and watched the Flip Wilson Show, Gunsmoke and the original Hawaii Five-O. “At that time, very few students consumed alcohol. Drugs were considered in bad taste; and marijuana had not yet become popular.” Walter and his classmates constituted hope for their communities. “We were for the most part at Coppin representing our families, ourselves and the Black community,” said Walter with pride. It was a time, he explained, when Black students attending colleges were considered

among the best thinkers, athletes and leaders in the nation. Equally important, he wanted everyone to know, young men respected young women.



Then, the campus was the epicenter of their social life. Most events transpired either in the student union or Pullian gymnasium. Coppin's homecomings were considered the "best of the best."

"Homecoming, 1972 featured Earth, Wind and Fire for \$7.00." On campus was the place to be and Walter and his friends gathered often. So, the day the picture was taken, according to him, was another ordinary day... until, "Someone dropped off a load of watermelons on campus." They turned melons into a party.

Hence, the smiles on their faces. "I remember everyone's face on the picture. On the far right is Joe Johnson. He was a great athlete and was on Coppin's basketball team. Joe was also on the Dean's list and a member of Omega Psi Phi fraternity. Next to Joe is Sissy. She was an athlete and was a cheerleader. In the absolute center holding the watermelon is Mary Owens. The lady to Mary's left with the big smile is

Mary's best friend at the time. Her first name is Joanne. The person sitting second from the left drinking the soda is me," said Walter. Although he could not remember his name, the gentlemen seated behind Walter, with the dark glasses, was a member of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity. That information is important because, "What was so wonderful about our Coppin community was that regardless of your Greek affiliation or lack of membership, everyone on campus was like family."

Fifty years ago, "There were no computers, calculators, cable television, internet or cell phones. Man had just stepped on the moon in 1969 and some houses in Baltimore City were just 10 years removed from outhouses. Hilton Parkway and Edmondson Village were called "The New World." There were more opportunities to find work, support a family, purchase a home and live a comfortable life because of the availability of blue collar and service-oriented jobs which no longer exist." For these reasons Walter feels a college education is more meaningful today. "But I am thankful for every experience I had on Coppin's campus. My four years there were some of the best years of my life," he said.

[News Archive](#)[RSS Feed](#)



All content © 2021 Coppin State University. All Rights Reserved.