

A look at how MSU's stance on diversity has changed throughout the decades



Carolyn McLean, an audiology and speech sciences sophomore, center, translates gospel music into American Sign Language with a branch of the MSU Gospel Choir, Signs of Adoration, during a service at St. Stephen's Community Church in East Lansing. McLean, who is the chairperson of Signs of Adoration, says that her relationship with God is a defining part of her life. In addition to leading Signs of Adoration, she sings in the Gospel Choir. "My goal is to be like Christ," McLean said. "I wouldn't trade (choir) for the world. It's an experience that changed my life."

PHOTOS BY KATIE BAUSCH/THE STATE NEWS

PROGRESS IN DIVERSITY

Right: Carolyn McLean, an audiology and speech sciences sophomore, sings in the MSU Gospel Choir during a practice Monday evening at Hubbard Hall. The choir was originally entirely African American but is now more diverse. McLean says she has met many friends through the choir. "No strings attached," she said. "You come, you say you like it, you join. You don't even have to be able to sing. All you have to do is be excited."

Below: McLean, second from left, sings in the MSU Gospel Choir during a practice Monday evening at Hubbard Hall. She spends several evenings each week practicing with both the choir and the group Signs of Adoration, of which she is chairperson.



By Brittany Hammas
THE STATE NEWS

To audiology and speech sciences sophomore Carolyn McLean, interacting with students from an array of backgrounds is one of the best parts of MSU. "I think my culture is great; other cultures are probably great, too. And if I never experience them, then I never know," said McLean. "I see many different types of people, so I love that about (MSU)."

McLean heads Signs of Adoration, which is a gospel sign language group on campus. The historically black group has begun extending its membership to all ethnicities.

But 60 years ago, developing a multiracial student group, such as Signs of Adoration, would have been more challenging. Diversity at MSU had a different meaning at the time, as MSU students and people across America were just beginning to feel the implications of the civil rights movement.

The story of black history at MSU is one written by the hands of a multitude of students, faculty and alumni — one that continues to be written today.

How it was

He was barred from the right to rent an apartment in East Lansing and denied admission to MSU's graduate school.

It was the late 1960s, and Bill Andrews was one of about 500 black students at MSU in a time when racism was "alive and well."

"I can recall being outside of the Chemistry Building, sitting on a bench that is probably still there, wondering if I should go back to Detroit," said Andrews,

who graduated from MSU in 1971 with an undergraduate degree in social science.

"I had been at MSU for maybe two weeks, and it seemed like everything was impossible. You reach a point where you think, 'Why am I here? Can I do this?' Of course, the answer is always yes ... The answer was yes because I had no choice. You put yourself together and you go forward, which is exactly what I did. I didn't quit, of course ... Frankly, this was a real challenge. I had not been in an integrated situation, I was from Detroit. It was a big world to me."

With the help of an MSU official, Andrews was later admitted to graduate school at the univer-

BASKETBALL

SPARTANS DEFEATED BY MINNESOTA

By Joseph Terry
THE STATE NEWS

The MSU women's basketball team lost its second consecutive game Thursday night for the first time since Dec. 14, falling 66-51 to Minnesota.

MSU 51
MINN 66

The game started off at a blistering pace, as Minnesota guard Emily Fox took the opening tip for an easy break-away layup. MSU junior forward Aisha Jefferson answered with a layup off a bucket. Fox answered that shot with a 3-pointer, putting Minnesota up 5-2 with only 52 seconds elapsed from the game.

The three by Fox was just a precursor to what Minnesota would bring for the rest of the first half. In the first half alone, Minnesota hit six threes, shooting 40 percent from behind the arc.

"We had great ball reversal," Minnesota head coach Pam Barton said.

Minnesota scored 43 percent from the field in the first half, taking a seven-point lead into the break, 34-27.

"We had played them with some zone in the past," head coach Suzy Merchant said. "They just got beat at Northwestern who played them with nothing but zone. Obviously some of those guards said that enough is enough. Our zone is normally good but we were just flat."

After halftime the game didn't get much easier for the Spartans. MSU slowly fought back a few times, but were too far behind to contend with a consistent outside threat. For the game, MSU was 1-for-18 from behind the arc, a miserable 5.6 percent shooting percentage.

Leading the conference in nearly every rebounding statistic, MSU was outrebounded in the game, 43-35.

"I think they outworked us," Merchant said. "They wanted it more. They got on the boards right from the tip. I thought our kids were slow at reacting."

"We have some kids on this team, especially our post players, that are very capable of being double-dig. It rebounders right in and night out. Some of their performances in the rebounding area were inexcusable."

Minnesota spread the lead even further and won the game 66-51.

The Spartans, now 19-9 overall and 12-5 in the Big Ten, slip out of contention for the regular season championship and will be fighting for anything from a No. 2 seed to a No. 5 seed in the Big Ten Tournament when they play Purdue on Sunday. They will also be fighting for a solid seeding in the NCAA Tournament.

"Mentally, we need to be stronger this time of year," Jefferson said. "NCAAs are a lot different."

"It's a lot tougher and we just want to prepare for the long run, but right now we need to focus on who we got up next."

More Online...

To view a photo gallery from last night's game, visit stateneews.com/multimedia.

To see Carolyn McLean talk about her life at MSU, go to stateneews.com/multimedia.

See BLACK HISTORY on page 2A