



HARVARD-RADCLIFFE CLASS OF 1966

Dear Classmates,

November 2025

The November, '25 issue of our newsletter follows what I hope has been a successful Thanksgiving holiday for you all.

Good News! The folks at the HAA have extended the deadline for you to submit an entry in **The Red Book**. So far, the number of submissions is not large. Where are you? You don't have to say much; just let us know you're alive.

Donna Gibson and **Randy Lindel** have formed a reunion committee and are busy planning our 60th reunion which starts on Wednesday June 3 through Friday June 5.

OK, lastly, I found this photo of your **2 class secretaries** together which you should save and put on your refrigerator!



Hilary Josephs:

(Hilary has been contacting the Schlesinger Library on how to access submissions to the **Radcliffe History project**):

Thank you for your question, and I have an update about the link to use for publication. Please use this link <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch02262/catalog> in the newsletter rather than the one I previously sent.

The reason for this is that soon (date uncertain) the public interface for HOLLIS for Archival Discovery (Harvard's system just for finding aids to its archival collections) will change.

By using the link <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch02262/catalog> no matter when the system change occurs you will be directed to the finding aid for the Project Questionnaires in the new system.

You can see what the finding aid will look like in [the new system here](#). ---- Please navigate to the left side of the screen under collection contents for a list of all the participants. By clicking on the name of a participant, it will direct to that folder on the right side of the screen. On the right, please navigate to and click on the link below Digital Content to access the materials.

N.B. The link <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/ead/sch02262/catalog> will continue to take you to the existing HOLLIS for Archival Discovery until the switch over. To access materials until the switchover, once opening the link please click on Digital Material (71). On the next screen, please click on the "Go to File" for each folder on the right side of the screen.

The finding aid for the collection in HOLLIS for Archival Discovery is the tool that researchers use to access the collection online.

Harvard's main catalog, HOLLIS, is the place where many people discover our collections. N.B. Both HOLLIS and HOLLIS for Archival Discovery are open to searching by the public. All our collections have a catalog record in HOLLIS Catalog, and if there is a finding aid for a collection, it is linked to the catalog record. Such is the case with the Class of 1966 Project Questionnaires.

Here is a sample catalog search to find the collection:
[Go to HOLLIS](#) In the search box type *Class of 1966 Project Questionnaires* Click search for [these results](#)

The project questionnaires are at the top of the results list.

If it may be of help for the newsletter, here is a direct, permalink to the Class of 1966 Project Questionnaires catalog record. <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/alma/99157293473103941/catalog> Once clicking on the link, please click on the title Radcliffe College Class of 1966 Project Questionnaires to open the record and see the full catalog description.

If anyone is having difficulty accessing the finding through HOLLIS for Archival Discovery or through the catalog record, please ask them to contact us at [Ask a Schlesinger Librarian](#) and we will help.

I hope this is helpful. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Sarah

Mark Packer:

My main reading group, Heavy Culture, has just completed its 35th year, with one session on Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* and one on F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Sort of the American Dream coming up and going down the tube. For 2026 we plan to concentrate on American authors to help celebrate the upcoming 250th Anniversary celebration.

Neva Goodwyn:

I have sent in my 60th reunion notes. I knew I couldn't include a photo, but have just come across one I wished I could use, so I thought I'd see if you would post it in the November notes that you so kindly put together for our class. This is the only photo I have of both my children with the 4 granddaughters. I took it in July 2019, a year before Dave died of a glioblastoma. The two littlest girls are his; they were 2 and a half and 5 in this photo. They had all been out chasing frogs and pollywogs in a pond in Maine.



In Memoriam:

Karen Nylander Potts 11/04/25 reported by her husband, Michael.

'65	Susan Shurin	08/31/24	San Diego, CA
'65	William Adkins	08/20/25	Tallahassee, FL
'65	Wildy Berry	02/04/20	
'65	Elizabeth G. Weymouth	09/29/25	New York
'65	Winifred Kershaw	05/30/23	Walnut Creek, CA
'65	Keith Roberts	08/18/22	New York
'66	Joseph Nadol	08/02/25	Needham, MA
'66	Harry Bisharar	04/09/25	Albuquerque, NM
'66	Margaret Rossiter	08/03/25	Ithaca, NY
'66	Richard Friedman	07/07/25	New Orleans
'66	William Magaletta	12/31/22	

There it is. Back at you at the end of the year.

Tom Black
co-class secretary

J. Chester Johnson:

For Racial Healing: #7 'Sheila Lorraine Walker: Lesson In Authentic Passion'

Readers will note the differences and distinctions established in the results set forth in this installment's description of the relationship between Sheila Walker and me and the description, as set forth in the immediately preceding installment, of the failure for the father of Black liberation theology and me to achieve racial healing. It would therefore be beneficial at this point to explain, with a concrete example, how one can indeed know racial healing. Toward that end, the relationship I shared with Sheila Walker will illuminate the means by which our friendship facilitated reaching that goal, which began several months following the four lunches with Dr. Cone.

The work between Sheila and me continued for seven years until her death, after a long illness, in 2021. I know Sheila's family – her husband, Ivor, and their two children – believed in the efforts Sheila and I exerted for the purpose. They, along with my wife and daughter, encouraged the depth of friendship and personal commitment Sheila and I expressed toward each other. In retrospect, it was therefore not surprising that Sheila's family asked me to give the eulogy at her memorial service. Moreover, following Sheila's death, Ivor and I have become quite close, talking and emailing every few days. His own authentic passion for racial healing and equality has remained sharp, insightful, and always compassionate.

Nearly a hundred years after the Elaine Race Massacre, separate, but parallel examinations by Sheila Walker and me into the brutal attacks by whites against Blacks brought us together in early 2014. Of course, there was an antipodal contrast in our personal histories related to the violence – her ancestors as victims and my grandfather's role as perpetrator.

From an outsider's point of view, Sheila and I were the unlikeliest of great friends and allies. She grew up Black, deep in the urban life of Chicago, Illinois. On the other hand, the first two decades of my life were spent, as a white boy, living principally in rural, southeast Arkansas. And yet, the magnetic force of the Massacre, one of the deadliest of our nation's racial assaults against Blacks, brought the two of us together. Notwithstanding the contrast which Sheila and I faced, our relationship blossomed to be one of the most important in my life – and I believe she would have said the same for her.

As part of our independent examinations of the Massacre, we both crossed paths with Robert Whitaker, author of ***On the Laps of Gods***, a well-regarded, detailed book about the white onslaughts against Blacks in Phillips County. Sheila had been particularly drawn to Whitaker's extensive work as a result of the special treatment and attention it had given to Sheila's ancestors. Around the same time, I sought his help for an article of approximately 10,000 words I wrote on the event for a national literary journal. In this connection, I asked Bob several questions to achieve clarification for my long, nonfiction piece. In turn, he asked if I would meet a Black woman, descendant of a family that experienced virulent white onslaughts during the Phillips County conflagration. I agreed. Sheila had also agreed to meet with me.

For our first communication in early 2014, Sheila and I held a telephone call lasting two hours. We shared much personal information about our respective ancestors – victims and perpetrator. While each of us was pleased with the phone conversation and we each had said so, we both wished to come together for a longer time and to share more of all we knew about the Massacre and our antecedents. So, on Saturday, March 15, 2014, Sheila and I met for the first time in Boston at the home of Sheila's son, Marcus.

Upon greeting each other as I entered the home, Sheila and I embraced for a very long time. From the beginning, we meant to be the obverse, the alternative to the attitudes and episodes that so characterized those early fall days of 1919 in Phillips County. Her welcome and, later, her forgiveness of my grandfather, Lonnie, opened the road to racial healing. She removed the possibility of a continuing pall – that is, Lonnie’s role in the white attacks, which, I felt, could intervene adversely in our journey.

After we became friends and began our commitment to racial healing, a symposium about the Massacre was held on September 20, 2014 at the iconic St. Paul’s Chapel in downtown New York City for which both Sheila and I made presentations. Forgiveness represented an essential part of Sheila’s being, and as she spoke that September day in St. Paul’s Chapel, Sheila emphasized that she had forgiven Lonnie more than I had, a comment that gathered everyone’s attention.

Being white, I could largely accept that the whole concept of forgiveness – its power and rectitude – would be novel and mostly unexplored by me. So much seemed new, but I was willing to learn – to be gifted with redemption, not for Lonnie alone, but for the way I could endure the weight of the Massacre, that one, inexplicable and horrifying episode I unwittingly received without an escape. Of course, I didn’t participate in the Elaine Race Massacre, but as the day is long, I surely acquired it, and if I didn’t deal with the Massacre, then all I had done was foist it forward for the next generation and possibly for succeeding generations.

Following a period when particulars of the Massacre and Sheila’s 1919 antecedents in Phillips County, combined with the respective perspectives we took toward my grandfather, had been vetted, we moved on to fresh ground. Enough confidence and trustworthiness permeated our words and sentiments that we left the Massacre and related topics behind, which would allow us to build on our friendship, away from the nucleus of the catastrophe. We traveled further and deeper into the realm of authentic passion and allyship.

It did not take me long to acknowledge that Sheila possessed remarkable gifts beyond her attention to the influence of forgiveness: her directness, her comfort with herself which made us all comfortable around her, and her unlimited empathy. A word, used infrequently, linked me to Sheila’s reservoir of good will; the word, co-inherence, derives from the concept that we, as individuals, reside in others, who, in turn, also reside in us, for Sheila seemed to walk in the shoes of everyone she met – Black, white, or any other color and ethnicity or condition.

In April, 2017, Sheila and I were invited by the Delta Cultural Center, a State of Arkansas agency located in Phillips County, to talk about our reflections on the Massacre and on the process and progress of our racial healing. There, we emphasized the path Sheila and I had taken to racial healing for a locale that had suffered too long without a common acknowledgement of the tragic event and without any major effort by the local Black and white communities to engage in racial comity.

Although Sheila and I recognized important breakthroughs in our conversations before this presentation, the Arkansas colloquium solidified a depth in the relationship. We had been on a mission previously, but the mission took on even more coalescence and mutual vision thereafter. One of Sheila’s close friends, Dr. Barbara J. Love, who taught social justice education for decades at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and who attended the colloquium to support Sheila’s role and to offer constructive commentary during the question and answer period, had sensed this drama and acuteness in the commitment Sheila and I had made to each other, which Barbara would later reflect in an email sent to me, almost immediately upon Sheila’s death:

I think that you have some idea of your significance in Sheila’s life, and how committed she was to you and to the healing and unity work around the Elaine Massacre. To Sheila, you are a near miracle – a white man with the personal knowledge and experience of that history, and the care, compassion, and commitment to engage in healing. I don’t know whether she told you or not, but she thought that the work with you added years to her life”.

Sheila and I never fumbled for topics to fill our conversations. The dialogue always flowed naturally like rapid streams of water. The subjects were routinely weighty and interesting (certainly, for me), consisting of personal, crucial, and racially based topics. There always seemed to be a desire for a fulfillment of that goal of authentic passion as we pursued fundamental elements of communication to understand, empathize, heal, love, and co-inhere. The subject exceeded conversation itself as we left the conventional and sought something “beyond” where only the seekers of truth can rely on each other to try to achieve a meaningful conclusion that would be illuminating to us both, for each of us, but which we charted together – Black and white, for something was at stake, this representation of authentic passion, our pursuit of the unique that was only unique because we sought it together.

Her experiential stories and testimonies had the effect of altering a series of preconceptions I brought to our conversations. I believe this effect will always be an effect, both directions, Black and white, in a successful one-to-one, authentically passionate relationship that includes conversations like the ones Sheila and I enjoyed.

We began to realize that our collective narrative carried a distinctive voice that many Americans should hear. Our story could help to serve as other voices to many Black and white people, who also believed in authentic passion and the way it conveys deep friendship and healing across races and as an antidote to racial separation. Our combined voice and this relationship expanded to many who desired emulation of Black and white harmony, respect, and friendship. We had, in effect, established by our commitment to and belief in authentic passion and resultant allyship a more expanded family beyond the normal contours of expectation for Blacks and whites. The mission, the advent, the communion held a certainty that could not be denied nor diminished, and its clarity allowed us to describe and promote its dimensions for others.

Many were drawn to this place of discovery, as more than one commented that if a small constellation of Americans could adopt our adherence to authentic passion and allyship, the racial enigma that the country confronted day after day would be measurably less acute and less insolvable. The story within the story – the story of our racial healing and friendship within the story of the Massacre and its aftermath – became a missionary commentary that Sheila and I believed we should and could convey. Both Blacks and whites approached me, asking for advice toward this type of participation in racial healing, not on an institutional basis, but dependency on a personal one, reflective of the course that Sheila and I had taken, relying on the message of authentic passion, which inevitably did lead to allyship.

Sometimes, one simply has to turn from everything he or she has known and heard, and follow a completely different course; and if one doesn't, then there is a loss of absolutely everything of one's own integrity of self. There is then no recovery. One can grow up to be one kind of person, and then turn around, thank God, to be another. These were topics of conversation that Sheila and I routinely explored on the phone or in person to examine the walls or opportunities for correction that authentic passion, antiracism efforts, and allyships can confront and conquer.

Prior to the dedication of the Elaine Massacre Memorial on September 29, 2019, which was held in Helena, Arkansas, there was an event in Elaine itself where Sheila and I were each given a plaque that bore the title, “Authentic Reconciliation”, and stated, in part, these words:

Sheila Walker and J. Chester Johnson are the living definition of reconciliation. . . Their reconciliation, friendship, and cooperative efforts represent the hope for the future.”

While the words of authentic passion and racial healing surrounded the relationship that existed between us – and rightly so – we regularly characterized our bond as allyship, mindful of the strong obligatory charge that allyship required of us in broader, social terms. Not surprisingly, people have now encouraged an espousal for the multiplication of Black-white friendships, allyships, and racial healing in building an improved Black-white environment. If we, Blacks and whites, cannot be allies personally, as individuals, for and with each other, then can we be true allies within the larger, more public, and political world in which we also live?

Following Sheila's death, David P. Solomon, who organized, funded (along with other members of his family), constructed, and took all required steps to bring the Memorial into being and who

was the chief executive officer of the Elaine Massacre Memorial Committee, wrote a piece in May, 2021 as he saw the effects of the allyship between Sheila and me:

“Chester and Sheila did something I think will eventually be recognized as far more valuable than the Memorial itself: they embodied reconciliation, they modeled reconciliation, they preached reconciliation, and they demonstrated reconciliation in their presence, in their deeds, in their joint lectures, and in their written words. They showed the world an extraordinary act of love and acceptance that I think was far more inspiring than the Memorial. . . Sheila and Chester showed a way forward.”

We Blacks and whites are finally left with each other to work out results one-to-one, and maybe that's the way we knew it would and should be all along. It is time for individuals of goodwill, Black and white, to find each other in missions that foster public expressions of authentic passion and allyship, depending instinctively on each other for the sentiments and humanity to address obstacles embedded in so many past ways.

Next Time: *U of Michigan Study Finds White Men More Prejudicial Than White Women Against Blacks*

J. Chester Johnson:

For Racial Healing: #8 ‘U of Michigan Study Finds White Men More Prejudicial Than White Women Against Blacks’

NOTE: This #8 installment in the “For Racial Healing” series will describe the findings of an important study by the University of Michigan that indicates white men are more prejudicial than white women against Blacks, based on a large pool of more than 440,000 persons. Relatedly, #8 demonstrates the ways that this greater prejudice by white men has often manifested itself through restrictive, institutional and personally brutal treatment of Blacks. Moving forward, also reflective of the results of the same University of Michigan study, we will examine in the #9 installment the exercise of racism by white women, which has generally shown more moderation toward Blacks in various respects, certainly in comparison to white men, together with, in some, highly visible instances, a willingness and capability, though on a limited scale, to assist Blacks in the achievement of their civil rights goals, while white men were taking a completely different tactic, attempting to encumber and obstruct Black initiatives toward equal justice and equal opportunity.

On a Sunday evening in 2022, Freda and I attend an event at a well-known church on the upper eastside of Manhattan in New York City. The presenter was a credentialed, Black speaker on racial healing, who would concentrate that night on the subject of white responsibility in Black-white relations. She had spoken and written on the subject with authority, so we anticipated the presentation with enthusiasm to hear what she had to say on a topic that has major consequences for Black and white Americans.

I should not have been surprised, but as I surveyed the twenty plus attendees at the gathering, except for the head cleric of the church and me, all of the audience consisted of women, mostly white women. Where were the white men? Was the lack of attendance by white men that night an indication of their weak interest in this matter of gravitas? Was this non-involvement another signal that white men do hold a higher degree of prejudice against Blacks than white women have demonstrated?

Recently, I discovered an article, published in 2018, written by the researcher, Shervin Assari, who, at the time his study had been released, was an assistant professor at the University of Michigan. The principal purpose of the article had been to shed light on how anti-Black bias in white men hurts Black men's health. As an aside (but quite an important aside), the study employed a device called the “Implicit Association Test (IAT), which measures racism by calculating how our brain struggles to match black faces with good terms”.

The Michigan study applies an evolutionary cause to white men's behavior toward Blacks, especially toward Black males, which we can also employ to derive some clarification of white women's conduct:

"My recent study that used IAT (Implicit Association Test) of 444,422 individuals shows that white men have higher implicit bias against blacks than white women do. This finding makes sense evolutionarily. All social animals including humans needed to make a distinction between their in-group members (those individuals who are like them) and the out-group (rivals). So, to increase our survival chance, we have historically favored our in-groups to out-groups. This is particularly true for the in-group males who are very aggressive toward out-group males, due to the mating and sexual selection."

If this overall proposition is true – that is, white men carry more bias against Blacks than do white women, which I have come to believe – does the thesis mean that, in this time of widespread acknowledgment of white racism and racial responsibility, white men's attitudes toward Blacks will have to be addressed in a more specialized and separate fashion?

It is disturbing that there are more than just a few of us, but certainly less than desirable, who have noticed over time that the racial bias against Blacks among white men has been more pronounced than that shown by white women. Taking into account the fact that white men historically enjoyed greater economic privilege and position than white women, this comparatively higher degree of prejudice against Blacks among white men can also help to explain why institutions have failed so continually to fulfill the hopes and dreams of both Blacks and a multitude of whites who expected that institutions would have adopted and pursued policies and practices for breaking through racial barriers in a more positive and demonstrable way.

The implications of this finding are quite expansive and relevant. For example, the 1964 Civil Rights Act was meant to eradicate racism in all areas of American life, including the business world, by forbidding discrimination on the basis of race in hiring and promoting. Sixty years later, however, a 2024 study by Fortune Magazine determined that though Black Americans constitute over 14% of the country's population, there were only eight Black CEOs among Fortune 500 companies, or 1.6%. The study also found that "eight out of 500 leaders is a near-record high. . .". As a result of the greater prejudice against Blacks that resides with white males, it is more than reasonable to emphasize now that the acute problems faced by Blacks have not only been racially based, but apparently gender-based as well.

While I do not discount the evolutionary theory, espoused in the University of Michigan study, I know that this theory is not the final word for conclusive evidence that white men bear greater prejudice against Blacks. There is another proposition that I believe is also associated with that bias, which I will dub the "those we abuse, we loathe" response and which is also related to the evolutionary theory. The protector role, reflective of the "in-group" incentive for the white male against the "out-group" Blacks, would have presumably required physical enforcement to establish domination. In this respect, it explains a good deal when we understand that a meaningful part of the white man's higher degree of bias against Blacks also derives from the reality that "those we abuse, we loathe".

Additionally, Blacks remain degraded for that white man, who experiences and inculcates instinctively that "those we abuse, we loathe" consequence. Growing up in a racist family in a racist region, I learned that message from the time I was a child, though I may not have fully understood the cruel and brutal implications and nature of it all. I could not help but notice that when a white person verbally demeaned a Black person, it was often followed by a diatribe of negative comments about Blacks generally. Even though the phrase of "those we abuse, we loathe" would not be owned by most white men in America today, the truth of it is still applicable for so many. This attitude carried forward by white men year after year has a continuing effect of minimalizing the worth of Black lives. In fact, it is impossible to have a credible conversation about racial healing in the absence of a full admission that Black lives have been routinely treated as demonstrably less valuable than white lives.

Searching for a related cause of brutality that has existed by white men against Blacks, one can certainly surmise that it may partially occur as an outgrowth of the white racist men's reliance on the "those we abuse, we loathe" effect that undergirds a foundational untruth: that is, the belief that Blacks are innately inferior to Caucasians, thereby increasing the latitude for many white men to take full control through physical action, sufficient and necessary, to subdue Blacks. Although these white men should have fundamentally known better, they instead have used this widespread falsehood and trope as an excuse for inflicting particular harm on and gaining particular power over Blacks. For whites who crossed the unsupportable bridge that Blacks are inferior, it is not too extreme then to swallow derivative fictions that try to bear witness to other big lies, such as elongated and thicker hip muscles among Black athletes allow for more efficient and higher jumping abilities, or thicker crania among Blacks cause their brain size to be smaller, or a lackadaisical nature of Blacks makes them useful mainly for less mentally challenging and less impressive occupations. One can even hear ardent white racists reiterate the myth about Black men being endowed with generally larger genitalia, and, at the same time, argue that this Black masculine feature affirms the bestiality of the race.

The harm, caused by so many American white men against Blacks, whether by implicit reactions (derived from white predecessors) or more direct, physical acts of abuse and degradation, has produced so much scar tissue over the years that it has become nearly impossible for perpetrators and related descendants to penetrate into their own hidden humanity through those layers of tragedy that numerous white men have developed. The absence of so many white men from the country's anti-racism engagement and the prolonged racial subjugation by whites generally of Blacks go hand in hand. The knowledge that this subjugation had been wrong but had been continued regardless took much humanity from the white perpetrators, and the descendants from generations past carried that inhumanity with them, for they had also, like their forebears, made a critical choice between accepting the benefits that the immoral code of racism wrought and receiving humanity by publicly and personally repudiating the inherited racist code. At the same time, however, there were very many whites, especially American white men, who decided simply to ignore the fact that a choice had to be made at all, and by ignoring an overt choice, a choice had in fact already been made, whether they realized it or not.

We have met white men – inheritors of the bloody and evil past that could not, would not be substantially altered – who let filiofetism sit at the table with ancestors, particularly forefathers, who were the first to lose their humanity, and to justify the loss of that humanity, shared the loss with sons, nephews, grandsons, and all the rest of those protectors of the "in-group" filiofetism by pretending that there was nothing to accept or reject. The perpetrators and descendants concluded it was only the past, and they couldn't change it (nor would they), for they learned many lessons from it that would be lost if they rejected it.

So many white men know that, even today, there is a decision, a choice, but one that they feel doesn't have to be made. Of course, it can be ignored, and the more who ignore the choices, the better it seems for the whole of white men. Little do they entirely comprehend that by ignoring the choice, they have also lost their ability to capture their humanity, and by not capturing their humanity, they have re-invited the past and filiofetism without judgment, declaration, or consternation – with impunity, but with only apparent impunity. The hardest aspect to accept in this scenario consists of the realization that a seemingly ambivalent message will be confirmed for the next generation with the unresolved past being foisted on succeeding generations without the necessary personal clarity that each generation owes the next. There is no exit without choice, and the progeny then have to make or dismiss the choice, though they shouldn't, for the choice should have been made for them long ago that humanity could be instilled as an act of love.

As we consider steps toward authentic passion and allyship, it is important to keep distinctions affecting white prejudice between white women and white men in mind. In particular, the prejudice of white men will need to be addressed in a somewhat different, more intense way, including an acknowledgment of white men's discernibly greater prejudice toward Blacks.

Next Time: White Women at Crossroads encumber and obstruct *Black* initiatives toward equal justice and equal opportunity.