

## Wallace Gray to Governor William Avery

Wallace Gray, Kirk Chair of Philosophy, Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas writes Governor William Avery of Topeka concerning civil rights legislation. Mr. Gray expresses his support for legislation that would reduce discrimination of minorities at the local level. The letter describes an effort by college students to integrate the downtown barbershops of Winfield and includes a one page report on that subject. A letter from the Pre-Ministerial Club, Southwestern College, advocating civil rights legislation and the integration of the barbershops of Kansas is also included. An effort to strengthen the Kansas Act Against Discrimination in the form of a "Fair Housing Bill" (Senate Bill No. 166) was currently being considered by the legislature. Local concerns such as these reflected a national debate on civil rights reform that resulted in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Creator: Gray, Wallace

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## Wallace Gray to Governor William Avery



SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE in Winfield, Kansas

February 22, 1965

Governor William Avery  
Capitol Building  
Topeka, Kansas

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Dear Governor:

The enclosed sheet gives a brief account of the effort of some of our students to integrate the downtown barbershops of Winfield. Also enclosed is a letter from Mr. Bill Brazil, president of the Pre-Ministerial Club of which I am the sponsor.

As an interested faculty member I would like to say that our students have shown remarkable patience and restraint in approaching this problem. This is my ninth year at the college. Off and on during my residency in Winfield student groups and citizens' groups have tried to resolve the problem through negotiation but to no avail. This is the first direct action undertaken in Winfield.

One of the occasions for this action was the discourteous treatment on at least two occasions of students from Africa. Frankly I fear an unpleasant international incident someday in Kansas unless we can totally eradicate segregation from our public accommodations.

It seems to be difficult for our barbers to settle this matter justly, partly perhaps because they do not agree among themselves, partly because their customers are pushing and pulling them in different directions, and partly because barber colleges in Kansas may not be adequately preparing barbers to serve all of the public which licenses them.

I therefore strongly endorse some kind of Civil Rights legislation in Kansas which will give more direction and support to us on the local level. I understand that a bill was to be sent to an appropriate committee yesterday and that you are personally in favor of some such legislation. I whole-heartedly support your stand and hope you and others can lead the legislature to pass some bill that will bring relief to our minorities. To that end I and perhaps some other Winfield citizens would be glad to meet with the committee which is to report on this bill.

Yours very truly,

*Wallace Gray*

Kirk Chair of Philosophy

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Enclosure 2

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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ATTEMPT TO INTEGRATE WINFIELD BARBER SHOPS

by Vernon McDaniel  
Director of Publicity  
Southwestern College

With careful planning and prayerful consideration, seven Southwestern College pre-ministerial students and seven of their Negro friends on February 12, 1965, attempted to integrate Winfield's downtown barber shops.

After informing the administration and with the unanimous approval of the Student Council and Pre-Ministerial Club, the students decided, as their president put it, "to turn creeds into deeds."

Their attempt was not successful in that no downtown Winfield barber shop agreed to integrate. However, it was successful in the sense that it apparently awakened the Winfield community and the state of Kansas to the fact that segregation is still practiced in a state that is supposed to be fully integrated.

Most Winfield ministers supported the move and several presented their stand from the pulpit. At least one influential member of the community who had not been in sympathy with the action of the students remarked that his minister's sermon convinced him that segregation in any public place is wrong. This business executive is now using his influence to convince the barbers and others in the community that segregation is wrong.

Support of the students' action has come from both within and outside the community. There are also those who oppose it.

The students involved believe they have awakened Winfield and the state to a wrong that only the state's citizens can correct. They seemingly have faith that the people of Kansas will take appropriate action to correctly resolve this issue.

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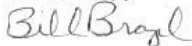
Dear Governor:

I am Bill Brazil, the President of the Pre-Ministerial Club at Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas. We as a club of approximately 35 young men, interested in the ministry, are concerned in seeing that people are treated as human beings with democratic rights. We wish to ask you if the State Legislature can help in an attempt to provide all men with their God-given rights. We regret that the State has to be asked to do something to change men's attitude toward their fellow men, but we believe that it will greatly help in the winning of men's freedom in a mostly orderly and speedily way. We also believe that some people want the support of the law to provide them with a way for expressing the attitudes they already feel. And thereby the law would give people a means of translating creeds into deeds.

Governor Avery, we would certainly appreciate your support and leadership in convincing the barbershops of Kansas that they should do what we think is only right and proper, and give every man the privilege of being able to get a haircut. Your guidance and assistance in this one, possibly small, area will be a great stride toward freedom for the rights of all men.

If there is anything our club or I can do in personal testimony please let me know. Some of us would gladly appear before any committee interested in this problem. Thank you so much for the concern and interest you have shown in giving us a segment of your busy schedule to consider a problem in our so-called integrated state of Kansas.

Sincerely,



Bill Brazil

BB:cls