

The Black Friar Incident: A Catalyst For Student Confrontation on DePauw's  
Campus, 1959.

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On the morning of October 28, 1959, DePauw students headed to class and were greeted by a crucified cat nailed to a tree in the Quad between Asbury and Harrison Halls. The cat, which was taken from the vertebrate anatomy lab, was presented with a note attached to the foot of the cross reading, "I drank."<sup>1</sup> The crucified cat symbolized the harsh treatment the secret organization, The Black Friars received for drinking on DePauw's campus. Serving as an emblem for student unrest, the image of the crucified cat captured the hostile feelings students held towards DePauw's authorities and administration.

On October 13, 1959, DePauw's newly instituted security officer, George Hecko overheard DePauw students discussing the nature of the Black Friar organization. Hecko proceeded to take the men into his office where he discovered that the students were involved with the club and established that he would attend a meeting with the members of the organization the following day in Asbury Hall. The controversial details surrounding the proceedings of the meeting sparked a student resistance on DePauw's campus unique for its time.

Following the meeting, Officer Hecko submitted the names of the Friars in attendance to Dean Lawrence Riggs. On October 19, 1959, Dean Riggs requested a meeting with DePauw's Discipline Committee in order to decide the fate of the Black Friars. The Discipline Committee, comprised of six students, four faculty members, and two administrators, decided to suspend the twelve known members of the organization on the premise that the men openly flaunted the University's prohibition on drinking, which stated,

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic, Kautz & Thomas Morgan, letter to the editor, *The DePauw*, October 30, 1959.

“DePauw University is opposed to the use of alcoholic beverages on the part of its students and therefore expects them to abstain from their use. Any student whose conduct indicates a lack of conformity to this policy is subject to disciplinary action. Persons who for say any reason feel unwilling or unable to support this standard should not enroll at DePauw.”<sup>2</sup>

The University’s uspension of the Black Friars provoked an outburst of student protests over what they saw as the administration’s deceitful management of the incident. Two stories over the details of the Friar’s meeting with Hecko had emerged and in the eyes of DePauw students, the administration had infringed on the cherished civil liberties of their fellow classmates by convicting the Friars through inadequate evidence and rumors.

The administration fashioned an account of the meeting and preserved that the Friars specifically invited George Hecko and acknowledged his purpose in attending the meeting. Furthermore the administration maintained that Hecko made no insinuation that the Friars would be exempt from punishment when he obtained their names.<sup>3</sup> The administration’s portrayal of the meeting severely contrasted The Black Friar’s description of the assembly.

According to former Black Friar member Pete Klinger, George Hecko coerced the three members into calling a meeting in Asbury Hall because he wanted to gather all the members of the organization in one place to inform them that he was the new replacement for former security officer Grover Vaughan, and planned to

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<sup>2</sup> President Russell J. Humbert, “Letter on Alcohol to Parents, Trustees, and Friends, of Depauw, 4 January 1960,” DC 278, DePauw Archives, Greencastle, IN.

<sup>3</sup> Dean Lawrence Riggs, “Letter to the Student Senate Regarding the Decision of the Discipline Committee, 27 October 1959,” DC 278, DePauw Archives, Greencastle, IN.

seriously enforce the rules on drinking.<sup>4</sup> Dick Bobb, another former Black Friar paralleled Klinger in his description of the purpose for the meeting. Bobb upheld that the Friars did not invite Hecko to attend a planned meeting but instead Hecko intimidated the members into hosting a meeting. Bobb's testimony revealed that the Friars never had a choice in the matter. Once Hecko caught the three members there was never any choice given to the men, "it was more like, 'Ok this is what you're going to do.'"<sup>5</sup> In addition to refuting the claim that the Black Friars invited Hecko to the meeting, Klinger and Bobb both maintained that they had no idea that Hecko's purpose at the meeting was to gather the names of the Friars in order to have them suspended. Bobb, who was not present at the meeting, explained that only five Friars actually attended and Hecko promised them, "If they provided the names of the rest members and agreed to disband the organization nothing would happen to them."<sup>6</sup> Klinger further echoed the shock of the suspension as he stated, "It came completely out of left field. Never in any of our wildest dreams did we think we would get kicked out. We sat down and talked in what we thought was an open exchange. We thought the premise of the meeting would be to learn the new rules."<sup>7</sup> Student adopted and utilized the Friar's explanation of the meeting in order to challenge the repression exhibited by the University in suspending the Black Friars.

Hostile feelings towards the administration-influenced Discipline Committee intensified as students berated the committee for dismissing the Friars despite the fact that they were never caught circumventing any regulations and were deceived

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<sup>4</sup> Pete Klinger, interview with author, November 17, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Dick Bobb, interview with author, September 18, 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Dick Bobb, interview with author, September 18, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Pete Klinger, interview with author, November 17, 2011.

into providing their names to George Hecko. The perceived grave misconduct of the University provided the foundation for an onslaught of student protests and criticisms that vilified the University administration and made martyrs out of the Friars. No longer would students allow the oppressive dictatorship known as the Discipline Committee decide the fate of their classmates without consulting the rest of the campus' opinion.

Resistance to the suspension of the Black Friars manifested through protests, demonstrations, and articles in *The DePauw*. Adopting the arguments and grievances of other students throughout the United States, DePauw students collectively opposed the University's unfair suspension of the Black Friars and managed to transform their inequitable position in University decision making through the formation of the student court. Through the Black Friar incident students reformed their nominal status on campus by evoking the precarious confrontation to gain support for policies and systems that balanced the power of the administration. Students were able to successfully utilize the arguments stemming from the Black Friar case when confronted with issues of authority in the early 1960's. The fact that the Black Friar protests of the late fifties provided DePauw students with the ability to challenge the University's hierarchical power status proves significant as historians often exclude the 1950's from the student demonstration narrative. When evaluating the historical significance of the Black Friar incident it is important to consider several questions that help expose the implications, factors, and underpinnings of the event. Why did University officials suddenly decided to disband and abolish the Black Friars despite their previous

uninhibited existence? Did the administration really believe that the drinking club threatened the wellbeing of the University or was there an underlying reason for the sudden and aggressive action? Why did students adamantly defend the Black Friars? Were the student protests really a defense against drinking hidden under the guise of the current political arguments of the time? Did the culture of the late fifties penetrate DePauw and form the seed of rebellion or did the critical response to the administration stem from internal forces within the DePauw community? The answers to these pertinent questions begin to form through an examination of the larger historical context in which the Black Friar confrontation occurred.

The Black Friar protests of the late fifties were uncommon for the time as the existing historiography dedicates the middle of the 1960's as the beginning of the student demonstration narrative. When focusing on student demonstrations and protests, the vast majority of historians limit research to the 1960's. Historian Joseph Gusfield illustrated the historical tendency to dedicate the mid 1960's as the beginning of the student movement on college campuses. In his chapter, "Beyond Berkley", from the collection *Campus Power Struggle*, Gusfield maintained that the free speech movement at the University of Berkley "marked the beginning of a new period of student action in American universities."<sup>8</sup> Historian Nathan Glazer also adopted Gusfield's view that the protest at Berkeley should be distinguished as the first example of student rebellion. As Glazer put it, "Whatever students may be doing to change the world-they are clearly doing a good deal...This, it seems, is the inference to be drawn from four years of student rebellion at the University of

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph, Gusfield, "Beyond Berkeley," in *Campus Power Struggle*, ed. Howard Becker (Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), 15.

California at Berkeley, where the present wave of student disorders first began.”<sup>9</sup> Researcher John Miner followed suit with Glazer and Gusfield as he argued that the 1950’s were “relatively quiescent” and it was not until the Berkley rebellion in 1964 that demonstrations spread to student bodies in the U.S.<sup>10</sup> However, the propensity for historians to devote the Berkley rebellion as the first example of student confrontation in the United States does not indicate that the tensions that emerged through the Black Friar incident were uninfluenced by the student culture of the 1950’s. Students of the late fifties possessed cultural and social beliefs that helped shape DePauw student’s arguments against the administration. Historians Philip Altbach and Mark Boren argued that these ideas of the late 1950’s molded the student protests of the 1960’s as they acknowledged that the late 1950’s were crucial to the formation of the New Left arguments that characterized the demonstrations of the 1960’s.

Student activism in the late fifties forged the beginning of a tumultuous decade of student unrest. Altbach revealed the significance of student protests in the 1950’s as he claimed that the revival of activism at the end of the fifties guided the way for the New Left, and “the most substantial student movement in American history.”<sup>11</sup> Altbach proceeded to attribute the revival of student activism at the end of the 1950’s to three matters: civil liberties, peace, and civil rights.<sup>12</sup> These three

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<sup>9</sup> Daniel Bell, *Confrontation: The Student Rebellion and the Universities* (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1969), 3.

<sup>10</sup> John Miner, “Changing Student Attitudes toward Bureaucratic Role Prescriptions during the 1960s,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 16, no. 3 (1971): 353.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Altbach, *Student Politics in America* (New Brunswick: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1997), 177.

<sup>12</sup> Altbach, 177.

issues emerged to the forefront of student activism due to the decline of cold war tensions and the heightened communist threat. The decrease of the communist threat allowed for the censure of Senator Joseph McCarthy, which created a “political relaxation” in the campus community where liberal faculty members began to speak out against the past repression, thus paving “the way for similar student behavior.”<sup>13</sup> Altbach’s emphasis on civil liberties, peace, and civil rights is mirrored through Boren’s explanation of student activism in the late fifties.

Paralleling the logic of Altbach, Boren maintained that left-wing liberal principles did not begin to penetrate student opposition until the end of the 1950’s because the Allies victory in WWII created a surge of patriotism that allowed conservative organizations to target left-wing associations as communist threats.<sup>14</sup> After the threat of McCarthyism students began to adopt liberal philosophy and fight for peace and civil rights as many campuses “staged demonstrations and rallies against the development of nuclear arms” and fought to “desegregate universities throughout the United States.”<sup>15</sup> Altbach and Boren’s explanation of student activism in the late fifties was exemplified through the DePauw students’ opposition towards the administration’s suspension of the Black Friars.

DePauw students embraced the themes that characterized the activism of their fellow classmates throughout America, and argued that the University violated the civil liberties of the Black Friars through their unethical manner of obtaining the names of the Friars and the callous punishment they imposed upon the men.

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<sup>13</sup> Altbach, 178.

<sup>14</sup> Mark Boren, *Student Resistance: A history of the unruly subject*. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 112-114.

<sup>15</sup> Boren, 114.



Principles of the late fifties activism emerged through articles in *The DePauw*, as students criticized the administration and described the University as “big brother, and an all powerful dictator” that used “dictatorial and McCarthy-like” tactics and operated as a “repressive regime” with “a complete lack of justice.” References to a “big brother” and “dictator” stemmed from the oppressive dictatorships that typified the Cold War context, while the terms “repressive” and “McCarthyism” were utilized by students to compare the administration to the former notorious senator, Joseph McCarthy, who was denounced as the ultimate representation of repression of freedom. Boren and Altbach’s explanations for the increase of student protests in the late fifties are manifested in the arguments of DePauw students during the Black Friar incident. However Altbach and Boren both insisted that student confrontation in 1950’s was extremely rare and limited to larger universities as “smaller colleges generally were not the scene of student protests.”<sup>16</sup> Boren and Altbach provide only a limited scope of student conflict in the 1950’s as their claims are diluted through the fact that a large protest occurred on a small campus in 1959 through the Black Friar case. Although Boren and Altbach deservedly ascribed the late 1950’s as the predecessor to the student protest and activism that characterized the 1960’s, they failed to recognize that the end of the 1950’s provided more than a subtle resurgence of liberal ideals and policies.

Both Altbach and Boren described the late 1950’s as an era where political and cultural ideas of the student movements of the 1960’s were first being formed but not acted upon. As Altbach put it, “One should not get the idea, however, that the

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<sup>16</sup> Altbach, 181.

end of the decade marked an immediate upsurge in activism. While growth did occur, the campus still was apathetic as a whole and only a tiny minority of students participated in any activist or liberal organizations.”<sup>17</sup> Boren agreed with Altbach in his explanation as he asserted, “the level of student resistance in the United States in the 1950s was negligible...in general the 1950s saw a great decline in U.S. student resistance actions.”<sup>18</sup> Despite the lack of secondary research on student activism in the 1950’s and the claims of Altbach and Boren, primary sources indicate that the 1950’s saw greater activism than indicated by historians and their existing scholarship.

In addition to the Black Friar incident, numerous primary sources challenge the arguments of Altbach and Boren through the illustration of large-scale campus demonstrations and protests at the end of the 1950s. The protests that occurred after the suspension of the Black Friars in 1959 on DePauw’s campus involved the majority of the student body, in contrast to Altbach’s belief that only a small minority of radical students participated in activism. Former Black Friar members and DePauw students who observed to the protest sustained that the demonstration involved the majority of the student body. John Null, DePauw student from the class of 1960, claimed that the entire student population was angry over the suspension of the Friars, while Dick Bobb maintained that the protest was the first whole campus revolt that involved both men and women.<sup>19</sup> The collective student opposition towards the administration was also displayed through letters from the

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<sup>17</sup> Altbach, 178.

<sup>18</sup> Boren, 113.

<sup>19</sup> John Null, Interview with author, November 13, 2011, Dick Bobb, Interview with author, September 18, 2011.

Student Senate and student body that demanded the Friars be reinstated into the University. The entire student body's involvement in the Black Friar affair was not an isolated incident of communal protests. Examples of unified student body demonstrations throughout the United States serve to challenge Altbach and Boren's claim that protests in the late fifties were reserved for small radical groups of students.

A protest at Alcorn A&M college in Mississippi on October of 1959, paralleled the student resistance at DePauw. Alcorn University officials and state police officers removed the entire student body from campus after 1,000 students, who were not satisfied with social regulations, protested "the expulsion of a male student who had been reported intoxicated."<sup>20</sup> The rebellion caused by the opposition to drinking prohibition was comparable to the Black Friar incident as infringing regulations exemplified students' preoccupations with civil liberties in the late 50s. As one student exclaimed, "We are adults and want to be treated like adults."<sup>21</sup>

Arizona State students did not hesitate to demonstrate in 1958, when a new plan was formed to name their school Tempe University. In response to the plan a mass of students demonstrated at the State Capitol and "hanged a legislator in effigy."<sup>22</sup> In November of 1959, University of Kentucky students challenged the administration by staging "a mass demonstration to protest a faculty decision not to grant them a holiday."<sup>23</sup> M.I.T. students provide another example of students

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<sup>20</sup> "Protests Close Alcorn College," *The Tri-State Defender*, October 31, 1959.

<sup>21</sup> "Officials Close Doors: Alcorn Students Cool Off After Rebellion." *New Pittsburgh Courier*, November 7, 1959.

<sup>22</sup> "Students in Protest." *The New York Times*, March 5, 1958.

<sup>23</sup> "Kentucky Students Protest." *The New York Times*, November 24, 1959.

protesting against administration policies. On March 4, 1957 more than 500 students participated in an outbreak "over the quality of meals and an 11 per cent increase in room and board."<sup>24</sup> Thirty-one students were arrested in the riots, where students set bonfires and the streets and threw "fireworks, bottles, light bulbs, and furniture from dormitory windows."<sup>25</sup> The MIT students utilized the same protest tactics as DePauw students. After the Friars were suspended students demonstrated their disapproval at East College. The students created a huge bonfire and proceeded to march on the quad, while they chanted "Save Those Friars" and threw firecrackers and cherry bombs.<sup>26</sup> In addition to the bonfire and fireworks DePauw students paralleled MIT students as they threw their school papers from dormitory windows to display their contempt for the administration.

Student rebellion at the end of the 1950's is again demonstrated through students at Bradford Durgee College as "almost half the members of the graduating class...said they would not attend commencement exercises... and protested against what they termed the political appointment of William J. Holland, the schools new president."<sup>27</sup> Maryland State offers another illustration of student body resistance against authoritative administration regulations. On April 2, 1957 the majority of students at Maryland State refused to attend class and staged a walkout "attributed to student restrictions and physical facilities."<sup>28</sup> A final demonstration of the

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<sup>24</sup> "31 Face charges in M.I.T. Rioting." *The New York Times*, March 4, 1957.

<sup>25</sup> "31 Face charges in M.I.T. Rioting." *The New York Times*, March 4, 1957.

<sup>26</sup> Jim Force, "Friars' Suspension Provokes Students' Outburst of Protest." *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>27</sup> "Students Give In: Accept Diplomas at Bradford Durfee After Protest." *The New York Times*, June 2, 1958.

<sup>28</sup> "College Students Balk: Shun Maryland State Classes in Spontaneous Protest." *The*

prevalence of student activism in the late 1950's throughout U.S. campuses is provided by Yale University.

In March of 1959 over 4,000 Yale students were involved in a riot during the St. Patrick's Day parade. Students threw snowballs at automobiles and rioted in the streets until the police were called to restore order to the campus. 4,000 students were put under probation, 8 students were hurt in the riot, and 16 students were arrested. The riot created further reason for students to oppose the administration and authorities as they vehemently reproached Whitney Griswold, the president of the University, for hastily issuing apologies to the surrounding community. In addition to condemning Griswold, students openly criticized the city police for their brutality towards innocent students surrounding the riot.<sup>29</sup> The frequency of student outbursts and demonstrations reveals that the late 1950's were a time of tension between students and administrations on U.S. campuses. The end of the 1950's should not be viewed as an addendum to the student protest movements that characterized the 1960's, but instead as the beginnings of active, physical demonstrations against the established order. All of the aforementioned campus uprisings involved questions of students versus the administration. If students felt that their civil rights and liberties were being questioned, they engaged in protest. It is apparent that the vulnerable concern over compromised freedom provided the foundation for student uprisings throughout the United States in the late fifties. Students at DePauw experienced the same threats as their counterparts and

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*New York Times*, April 3, 1957.

<sup>29</sup> "All Yale Undergraduates On Probation After Riots." *The New York Times*, May 17, 1959.

responded in the same manner by protesting and challenging the oppressive force that attempted to deprive them of their civil liberties. The activism inherent to the culture of the late 1950's infiltrated the minds of DePauw students and provoked the uprising that occurred on DePauw's campus in 1959. While the cultural environment of the late fifties can be defined as a factor that contributed to the Black Friar confrontation, internal forces on DePauw campus also shared a role in sparking the student resistance.

The Black Friar incident was one of the first times DePauw students fervently questioned the decisions of the administration. What factors led to this outburst of protest? How did the critical response stem from internal forces within the DePauw community? The answers can be found through a critical examination of the Black Friar suspension and the student response. In order to fully comprehend the conflict created by the suspension one must be familiar with the nature of the Black Organization.

The Black Friars was a social drinking club formed by WWII veterans returning to DePauw through a military scholarship program. The date of origin, the founders, and the beginnings of the organization are unknown due to the nature of the club's secrecy. DePauw historian George Manhart briefly mentioned the organization in *DePauw Through The Years*, "The Black Friars, never officially recognized, have appeared and disappeared from time to time. They were described in one *Mirage* as men who were interested with their specific interest a secret one."<sup>30</sup> Other than Manhart's brief mention of the Friars no secondary source exists

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<sup>30</sup> George Manhart, *DePauw Through The Years Vol. II*, (Greencastle: DePauw

to document the history of the group. In addition Manhart only devotes a sentence to the uprising that stemmed from the suspension of the Friars as he refers to the campus turmoil as “something of a sensation” that developed after the suspension.<sup>31</sup> While the origin of the club still remains shrouded with mystery, former suspended Black Friar member Dick Bobb, was able to provide some background history as to the why the group formed with the intent of violating the University’s prohibition rules.

After fighting across Europe and risking their lives for their country the veterans of WWII came back to school and were confronted with DePauw’s anti drinking policy. Unwilling to accept the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, the veterans decided to form an organized drinking club that would remain secretive in order to by-pass the University’s anti-drinking rule.<sup>32</sup> The organization was formed by men from the DePauw fraternities: Delta Tau Delta, Alpha Tau Omega, Sigma Nu, Phi Kappa Psi, Phi Delta Theta, Phi Gamma Delta, Delta Kappa Epsilon, Sigma Alpha Epsilon, and Lambda Chi Alpha. When students partook in the rush process the rush leaders would remind them that no drinking was allowed on campus but would then mention that there was a group called the Black Friars that had managed to circumvent the rules. The active Black Friar members would then chose two potential candidates from their respective fraternities based on social reputation, high school, and extracurricular activities. If the prospective Friars were interested in becoming a member they would attend the pledge ceremony in the fall of their

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University, 1962), 478.

<sup>31</sup> George Manhart, *DePauw Through The Years Vol. II*. Greencastle: DePauw University, 1962), 478.

<sup>32</sup> Dick Bobb, interview with author, September 18, 2011.

sophomore year. At the pledge ceremony, which took place at the boulder, new pledges would receive black ribbons signifying their pledge ship with the Black Friars then members would sing the Black Friar anthem [Fig. 1] and proceed to Moore's Bar to celebrate the new pledge class. During pledge ship potential members would attend periodic meetings where they would "learn & refine techniques of chugging beer from #10 cans."<sup>33</sup> After fall semester the pledges were initiated in the spring and became official Black Friar members [Fig. 2]. The amount of time and commitment required out of the Black Friar initiates, begs the questions as to why students wanted to join this group. What did the club offer potential candidates that could not be received through drinking with a group of friends?

The Black Friars offered potential candidates an outlet for drinking as well as fraternal camaraderie. Students could attempt to drink with friends in fraternities but were faced with the threat of being reported to the administration by Kappa Tau Kappa (KTK), the intra-fraternity council that frequently raided fraternities for violations of University rules and regulations in regards to drinking.<sup>34</sup> The Black Friars provided students who wished to drink a safe haven from the KTK and DePauw authorities, as they did not drink on campus and isolated themselves to either Moore's Bar or the wooded areas that surrounded Greencastle. A main point of emphasis that was stressed to all Friar members was "to avoid apprehension at all costs."<sup>35</sup> In addition to supplying a safe means of drinking, the Black Friars attracted potential candidates with an aura of mystique. Students were enticed by

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Dick Bobb.

<sup>34</sup> Bill Watt, "Student Court: Chronicle Before the En Masse Resignations." *The DePauw*, October 19, 1971.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Dick Bobb.



the potential to become a member of the exclusive, secretive club. John Null, although not a member, illustrated this desire to affiliate with the Friars as he recollected, "The Black Friars were a neat group...there was a mystique that was associated with being a Friar."<sup>36</sup> For the selected individuals the benefits of Black Friar membership outweighed the tasks of pledge ship.

Once initiated new members were allowed to partake in all the regular activities of the Black Friars. Black Friar events included boulder runs, chugging contests, consuming beverages in local bars at least twice a week, drinking in the woods, and avoiding apprehension at all cost.<sup>37</sup> The Sigma Nu annex served as a safe haven for the Black Friars, as the half way point between Moore's Bar and campus living units, the annex provided an escape place for members being chased by the police. Despite its convenient location the annex could not hide the Black Friars from law enforcement forever and unfortunately for the Friar members of 1959, the blatant failure to follow University policies resulted in their demise.

With the assistance of George Hecko and the consensus of the Discipline Committee the administration managed to eradicate the Black Friars from campus. The Discipline Committee's final verdict sustained that the twelve known members of the Black Friar club would be suspended for the remainder of the fall semester until January 28, 1960.<sup>38</sup> Unbeknownst to the University there were actually fifteen members of the organization, but three of the men were protected because they

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<sup>36</sup> Interview with John Null.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Dick Bobb.

<sup>38</sup> Joe Harper, "University Suspends Black Friars." *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

played football.<sup>39</sup> The three athletes did not attend the meeting and their names were kept in secrecy. There were also ten potential Black Friar initiates who had been approved for membership but had not completed the pledging ceremony.<sup>40</sup> Despite the existence of remaining Black Friar affiliates, the suspension effectively disbanded and abolished the organization. The Black Friar club became extinct on DePauw's campus but its legacy remained fervent, as the incident inspired students to challenge and condemn the authority of the administration.

The first objection towards the administration was manifested through a campus protest on October 20, 1959. According to Jim Force, a writer for *The DePauw*, students formed a mob around East College and cornered Hecko upon his arrival [Fig. 4]. The students then riddled Hecko with an onslaught of questions regarding his and the University perspectives on the Black Friar situation.<sup>41</sup> As Hecko attempted to respond to the barrage, students booed and heckled him. Once the students finished deriding Hecko they proceeded to the quad and created a large bonfire to demonstrate their disapproval of the Discipline Committee's dismissal of the Friars. The student reaction to the suspension of the Black Friars foreshadowed the transforming power relation between the students and administration.

The uprising that occurred on DePauw's campus after the Black Friar incident set the precedent for proceeding university and student disagreements. As a result of the Black Friar suspensions DePauw students began to adamantly question the administration at DePauw. Student activism at DePauw in 1959,

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Pete Klinger.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Dick Bobb.

<sup>41</sup> Jim Force. "Friars' Suspension Provokes Students' Outburst of Protest." *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

revealed through newspaper editorials and demonstrations against the University's management of the Black Friar case, resulted in the formation of a student court that ensured that the student voice would no longer be denied through DePauw's administrative system of governing.

Opposition to the suspension of the Black Friar's began immediately as students begin to utilize *The DePauw*, to openly criticize the administration and call for collective action from fellow students. A mobilized student resistance came to fruition through an appeal from the student body, published in *The DePauw*, demanding that the University readmit the 12 Friars. Within the appeal students provided four grievances with the manner the Disciplinary Committee handled the Black Friar case. In the first objection students maintained that the Disciplinary Committee handled the case too speedily, "which did not allow sufficient time to obtain the facts and to consider the impact of their action."<sup>42</sup> The second opposition was "the method in which the names of the Black Friars were acquired i.e. the fact that the men were not aware of security officer's purpose at their meeting."<sup>43</sup> The third criticism stated that the Black Friar's "were not given an opportunity to disband, and the action taken was not necessary to accomplish the purpose of breaking up the Black Friars."<sup>44</sup> Lastly the student body expressed discontent in the fact that the punishment was given to the Black Friar's as a group, although individual cases were considered in the decision. The most severe element of the letter formed in the conclusion as the students proposed the potential for

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<sup>42</sup> "The Students Speak: Student Body Gives Fundamentals For Appeal to Readmit Black Friars." *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>43</sup> "The Students Speak." *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>44</sup> "The Students Speak." *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

detrimental outcomes if their objections were not considered. In concluding the letter the student body sustained,

“We feel that the ramification of this action, if it is not modified, will be permanently damaging to the University. Alumni, parents of present students, Greencastle townspeople, members of other colleges, and a large majority of the DePauw students have already expressed their dissatisfaction with the handling of the case, and it will in the future affect both admissions and the present student generation as alumni.”<sup>45</sup>

Students argued that they were not “protesting the University policy on drinking or condoning the actions of the Black Friars” but were protesting the unethical manner in which the Black Friar’s were convicted and punished.<sup>46</sup> Students believed that the Black Friars were swindled by Hecko and should have been given the opportunity to disband the organization before they were suspended. DePauw students felt that the decision to suspend the Friars was far too drastic and “a less severe measure would have been just as effective” in removing the club from campus.<sup>47</sup> In addition, students felt that the administration exceeded its jurisdiction by convicting the Friars with unsubstantiated evidence. Students’ alleged that the administration’s unjust conviction of the Friars bore a disturbing resemblance to Senator McCarthy’s tenuous accusations of communism against his political opponents and critics during the Cold War scare. Two DePauw women emphasized the correlation between the Friar case and McCarthyism, through a letter to the editor in *The DePauw*. The women claimed, “We are reminded of the unfortunate phenomenon of McCarthyism peculiar to the 50s when men were condemned for “subversive”

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<sup>45</sup> “The Students Speak.” *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>46</sup> “The Students Speak.” *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>47</sup> “Now, Its About This Friars Case” *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

associations or actions 10 to 20 years previous in their lives."<sup>48</sup> The administration's autocratic role in the Black Friar incident motivated students to apply the confrontational political and social discourse of the era as a method to dispute the perceived injustices of the University.

Students at DePauw were shocked and disgusted by the administrations' deliberate breach of civil liberties. Sharing the same grievances as their fellow students around the country, DePauw students expressed their discontent with DePauw officials. The opinions published in the DePauw newspaper reflected historians Philip Altbach and Mark Boren's theories that student activism in the late fifties centered around civil rights and civil liberties. This occupation with persevering civil liberties stemmed from tensions and conflicts surrounding the Cold War. The threat of Soviet nuclear warfare and communism coupled with demagoguery employed by McCarthy, forced a decline in civil liberties that did not end until the late fifties. During the Cold War Americans were subjected to multiple anxieties, as hostility with the Soviet Union instigated internal accusations of communism sympathy. These dual threats produced a general anxiety that suppressed civil liberties as concerned Americans hesitated to express dissidence towards the government in fear that they would be accused of sympathizing with or practicing communism.<sup>49</sup> After the threats subsided, apprehension towards expression disappeared and students adopted a preoccupation with upholding their

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<sup>48</sup> Jane Sturgis and Sonia Evenstad, letter to the editor, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>49</sup> Altbach, 178-179.

civil liberties.<sup>50</sup> When the administration exceeded its authority to abolish the Black Friars, students readily protested over what they saw as an encroachment upon their newly treasured civil liberties. Students revived the intense emotions that coincided with the Cold War by comparing the actions of the administration to those of Senator McCarthy and the former Soviet dictatorship.

In the October 21, 1959 issue of *The DePauw*, students began the trend of censuring the administration as a repressive dictator for its unethical treatment of the Friars. The editor of *The DePauw* newspaper provided the first example of the students' view of the administration as a dictator. Evoking the archetypal student arguments of the late 1950's the editor ended his article with a political reference to the repressive administration as he stated, "This situation reflects a gross breach of good faith. Big Brother is getting tough, isn't he?"<sup>51</sup> The Editor's reference to DePauw officials as Big Brother exhibited the undertones of student activism in the era, as it portrayed the administration as a dictatorship, denying its students the right to a fair trial and employing unethical methods to form a conviction. Following the editorial, Jane Sturgis and Sonia Evenstad wrote a letter to the editor that criticized DePauw administrators and captured the essence of the activism occurring in the era.

In their letter to the Editor Sturgis and Evenstad questioned DePauw's administration for refusing to uphold the principles of democracy, which were predicated upon civil liberties and civil rights. Sturgis and Evenstad maintained,

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<sup>50</sup> Altbach, 178.

<sup>51</sup> "Now, It's About the Friars Case." *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

“We have been under the impression that DePauw as an institution of learning upholds the principles of democracy as adhered to by our society in its administration-student relationships as regards to discipline. We feel that the actions in the Black Friar incident violated these principles.”<sup>52</sup>

Sturgis and Evenstad’s belief that the administration refused to observe the principles of democracy in the Black Friar case implied that the University was not acting as a just government operating on principles of democracy but rather as corrupt dictatorship. Students championed the moral value and importance of democracy in the Post-Cold War context as it had just defeated the threat of communism.<sup>53</sup> Further student discontent continued to be expressed in the same issue of the *DePauw*. In another letter to the editor, student Emily Morris acknowledged that the University had the legal right to suspend the Black Friar yet she claimed, “the methods, implications and harshness of the action over-step the bounds of good judgment and fairness.”<sup>54</sup> Morris went on to question the legitimacy of the Disciplinary Committee and the University officials that sanctioned the decision as she stated,

“Understanding that the Disciplinary Committee is an advisory body, it is clear that the recommendations of the Committee are only put into effect upon approval of the administration. Therefore, it is necessary to direct student concern not only to the body who promulgated the solution but also to those whose approval put it into effect.”<sup>55</sup>

The majority of DePauw students shared Morris’ speculation that the Discipline Committee operated as a puppet for the administration. Former Friar, Pete Klinger

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<sup>52</sup> Sturgis and Evenstad, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>53</sup> Boren, 112-114.

<sup>54</sup> Emily Morris, letter to the editor, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>55</sup> Morris, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

remarked on the administration's overbearing influence upon the Disciplinary Committee. Klinger retained that despite the Discipline Committee's tri-partite structure, "the students had no power, they did whatever the administration told them to."<sup>56</sup> Despite the administrations attempt to exploit the Discipline Committee as a scapegoat, students recognized who pulled the strings of the marionette and aimed their hostile resistance at the administration. Student Sally Medbourn took a different approach in another letter to the editor in denouncing not only the administration but also the students for not taking an offensive approach towards the situation. Medbourn lamented that the University was able to make unfair decisions because students were afraid to stand up for what they believed was "just and democratic"<sup>57</sup> for fear of expulsion or social disapproval. Medbourn explained, "It is because of these fears so characteristic of the DePauw student that the administrative authorities are assured that any decision they may deem convenient to make for the University's smooth operation, will go unopposed."<sup>58</sup> Medbourn's anger at the universal student apathy reveals the nature of the time and the authority of the administration.

The 1950's were considered a time of relative tranquility, students were considered passive and the decisions of authority figures generally remained unquestioned.<sup>59</sup> Up until the Black Friar confrontation, DePauw students possessed no experience in challenging the administration. This inexperience inhibited students from collectively mobilizing to confront the unethical practices of the

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Pete Klinger.

<sup>57</sup> Sally Medbourn, letter to the editor, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>58</sup> Medbourn, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>59</sup> Altbach, 204.



University. Students were by no means apathetic to the Black Friar incident as exemplified through the protest and letters of opposition. Medbourn's perception of student apathy is grounded in the lack of student experience in confronting an oppressive administration. Medbourn's letter was published only two days after the Friars were suspended. Students did not possess the skills or knowledge to form a mobilized opposition that quickly after the incident. However two days after Medbourn's letter was published, the student body and Student Senate issued a resolution to the administration demanding that the Black Friars be reinstated. Unbeknownst to Medbourn, the Black Friar incident provided the foundation for collective student organization and armed the student body with the experience to take on the administration when issues of authority were called to the forefront in the early 1960's. Despite her criticism of the student body Medbourn's objection still conformed to the established argument, which evoked similarities between the administration and the Soviet dictatorship of the Cold War.

After providing a call to the students of DePauw to resist the decision to suspend the Friars, Medbourn heatedly attacked the administration and the disciplinary committee for their inconsiderate decision-making and unscrupulous invasion of the Black Friar's meeting. Medbourn disparaged the University as she argued,

"Not only has its decision to expel the Black Friars been rash and unjust, but the tactics employed to apprehend them have been unethical and underhanded. An innocent meeting of the Black Friars and the security department resulted in providing the security department an opportunity to obtain the names of the members present, all of whom were later expelled. This expulsion then was decided upon with no definite proof of guilt as there is not constitution stating the group's purpose, nor were they engaging in any anti-DePauw practice at the time of the apprehension. It was based rather on

the presumption that each member had at some time broken the DePauw drinking rule."<sup>60</sup>

MedBourn's objections to the University paralleled the arguments of her counterparts in college campus across the U.S. as she attacked DePauw officials for violating the civil liberties of the Black Friars in deceiving them into revealing the members of the organization. In addition to condemning the unethical manner in, which Depauw security obtained information about the Friars, Medbourn attacked the institution for failing to uphold the central principles of democracy. Medbourn's opposition to the administration reflects the political stance of students in the late fifties after the cold war. Medbourn's portrayal of the University as a dictatorial machine, instituting corrupt and immoral procedures in order to guarantee the established order, attempted to draw parallels between the administration and the former Soviet Union. Medbourn's letter compliments Altbach's theory that student activism manifested through the end of the Cold War threat and returned to the new left principle of democracy.<sup>61</sup> Students were not hesitant to construct similarities between the former Soviet Union and repressive administration if they felt the principles of democracy were being compromised. Student demands for immediate action from the administration and their fellow classmates culminated in a Senate resolution demanding that the University readmit the 12 Friars.

In the October 23 1959 issue of the DePauw the Student Senate published a decree insisting, "that the University modify its action to the effect that the 12 men concerned may attend school for the remainder of this semester barring any further

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<sup>60</sup> Medbourn, *The DePauw*, October 21, 1959.

<sup>61</sup> Altbach, 179.

infraction of a University rule.”<sup>62</sup> The widespread student disapproval of the Black Friar suspension was exemplified in the Senate’s resolution. Within the resolution the Senate maintained that they had called a special meeting and everyone present “took a definite and almost unanimous stand on the Black Friar’s case.”<sup>63</sup> The Senate then asked that the student body to show support for the demand by appearing at the Administration building at 1:30 p.m. on Friday. In addition to publishing the decree the Senate also revealed that they established a committee to investigate the disciplinary committee that resolved to suspend the Friars, and were in the process of forming a student court based on the findings of the investigation.<sup>64</sup> The Senate’s involvement in the resistance to the disciplinary measures of the administration revealed the extent to which this event had penetrated campus culture and discussion. The incident was not a minor disagreement between a few delinquent individuals and the administration but was a matter of upholding and preserving the fairness and civil rights that were promised through United States democracy. The uproar over the Friar case proved to be too significant to remain sealed within the DePauw bubble. Rumors about the suspension of the Black Friars provoked further dissent towards DePauw authorities revealed through the letters of a rivaling University.

The ill regard towards the University’s oppressive treatment of the Black Friar’s even permeated the men of Wabash, DePauw’s greatest rival and bitter enemy. In a letter to the editor in *The DePauw*, the men of Wabash acknowledged

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<sup>62</sup> Student Senate, “Senate Resolution Demands University Readmit 12 Friars.” *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>63</sup> Student Senate, *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>64</sup> Student Senate, *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

that the repressive suspension of the Friars was unacceptable to the extent that even as rivals, they supported DePauw students in the conflict against the administration. As the Wabash men put it, "It is not very often in the course of human events that men of Wabash and students of DePauw can stand together firm of mind with a common cause to bind us. The perhaps not so unprovoked dismissal of 12 of your male students gives rise to something within us all, which tells us this action was wrong."<sup>65</sup> The Wabash men then went on to criticize the DePauw administration for enforcing an outdated drinking policy and compared the statutes of DePauw to the one rule present on Wabash campus known as the "gentlemen's rule", which stated, "conduct yourself as a gentlemen." The Wabash men maintained that if the "gentlemen's rule" was practiced on DePauw's campus, "we doubt that the meeting of these 12 students would have been considered ungentlemanly."<sup>66</sup> In closing their letter the men of Wabash provided DePauw students with an appeal to challenge the administration as they petitioned, "Unite and throw off your chains of utter domination, for you know that even your rivals back you. Only in this way will students and administration gain the mutual respect necessary to keep your institution one of the most acceptable in the Midwest."<sup>67</sup> The attacks against authority by Wabash and DePauw students alike embody the collective student politics of the late 1950's, which foreshadowed the upheaval on college campuses in the 1960's. Historian Daniel Bell illustrated the resistance to authority, which characterized DePauw students and other students throughout the U.S. in his

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<sup>65</sup> Men of Wabash, "Wabash Men Attack Friar Case Decision." *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>66</sup> Men of Wabash, *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

<sup>67</sup> Men of Wabash, *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

explanation of the underpinnings of the student protests of the 1960's. Bell asserted, "The upshot has been that what was originally concern over a specific set of identifiable and specific political issues (e.g., civil rights)...What began as an attack against the way in which authority has been exercised turned into an attack against all existing authority."<sup>68</sup> As Bell exemplified, the student criticism of authority in the late 1950's, provided the foundation for the anti-institutional student confrontations of the 1960's. The cultural tendency for students to oppose the established order in 1959 penetrated the culture at DePauw, as students willingly challenged the authority of the administration in opposition to what was viewed as an unjust violation of the Black Friar's civil rights. In addition to having endured condemnation from Wabash and Depauw students, DePauw officials were subject to disparagement from alumni as well.

In an article published in the Indianapolis Star, on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1960, DePauw alumna Jane Allison referred to the Black Friar suspension as the "Dreyfus Case of fraternity row."<sup>69</sup> Allison's parallel of the Black Friars incident to the Dreyfus Affair, illustrated her views about the administration's unfair handling of the Black Friar case. Just as Allison believed the Black Friars were wrongly convicted and unjustly punished, the Dreyfus Case resulted in sending Alfred Dreyfus to life in prison under inhumane conditions under the false conviction of treason. In addition to censuring the DePauw administration for illegitimately disciplining the Friars, Allison

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<sup>68</sup> Bell, 5.

<sup>69</sup> Jane Allison. "Black Friar's Case Stir's Gotham Alumni." *The Indianapolis Star*, January 1, 1959, DePauw Archives, DC 278.

commented that the repercussions of the incident affected alumni.<sup>70</sup> Allison's claim was reinforced in an interview with Faris Chesley, a non-Friar member from the class of 1960. Mr. Chesley commented on the effect the Black Friar's suspension had upon alumni as he upheld that, "It (University's handling of the Friars) left a bad taste in many people's mouths and affected giving for a long time."<sup>71</sup> Even alumni became caught up in the University's poor decision making regarding the Black Friars. A small group of individuals who gathered with the purpose of opposing DePauw's no drinking policy, had garnered the unwanted attention of the entire student body, a nearby University, and alumni, which placed the administration in a delicate situation, forced to weigh the consequences of conceding to student demands or remaining steadfast in their decision to suspend the Friars. How would the University officials respond?

The University administration did not alter its original decision to suspend the Friars for the remainder of the first semester of 1959. President Humbert, Dean Riggs, and Norman J. Knights, Director of Public Relations, spearheaded a campaign in an attempt to regain face and quell feelings of hostility. The first defense was manifested in a defensive letter from Dean Riggs that was published in *The DePauw*. Riggs began the letter by objecting to the students' claim that the administration dominated the Discipline Committee as he refuted, "The Discipline Committee has no axe to grind...it is certainly no 'rubber stamp' committee, we refer to individuals members for assurance on each point."<sup>72</sup> Riggs then went on to provide a counter to

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<sup>70</sup> Jane Allison, *The Indianapolis Star*, January 1, 1959, DePauw Archives, DC 278.

<sup>71</sup> Faris Chesley, interview with author, November 13, 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Lawrence Riggs, "Dean Riggs Answers Black Friar Protest." *The DePauw*, October

each of the four arguments established in the student body's appeal. Riggs contended that the board considered "each point of the resolution but the committee found nothing to warrant modification of its announced decision."<sup>73</sup> According to Riggs, the decision to suspend the Friars was not formed too quickly as the Black Friar case was "one of the longest periods of deliberation on a single case in the history of the Discipline Committee."<sup>74</sup> Dean Riggs went on to argue that the Black Friars understood Hecko's reason for attending the meeting, as they personally invited him to attend a scheduled meeting. According to Riggs, Hecko then obtained the names of the Black Friars present at the meeting, and told them that their names would be referred to the Dean's office. Riggs opposed the student body's claim that the Friars should have been given a chance to disband before they were dismissed. He insisted that the action towards the Black Friars was not simply to disband the group but to also punish the offenders. As Riggs put it, "whenever a group exists under such circumstances...it becomes necessary for constituted authority to speak out and punish if necessary in order to make clear the responsibilities normally required of groups by our University community."<sup>75</sup> Riggs insisted that the Black Friar's punishment was unanimous because the group claimed to be leaderless, which in turn made it "impossible to isolate degrees of variation with fairness and certainty." In his final remarks to the student body, Riggs maintained that the Discipline Committee was not operating on circumstantial evidence as he argued The Discipline Committee "has real evidence in day to day

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30, 1959.

<sup>73</sup> Lawrence Riggs, *The DePauw*, October 30, 1959.

<sup>74</sup> Lawrence Riggs, *The DePauw*, October 30, 1959.

<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Riggs, *The DePauw*, October 30, 1959.

actions of these persons through the years.”<sup>76</sup> While Dean Riggs countered the objections of the student body during the onset of the Friar case, President Humbert did not begin to take action until the members of the club were suspended.

In a short memorandum President Humbert asked his secretary to contact Norman Knights to write letters in his name to the parents of the students that were suspended and to those students who adamantly protested the dismissal. In the words of Humbert, “He [Norman Knights] writes a fine letter and he knows the background. I know he will not mind helping me pull the chestnuts out of the fire.”<sup>77</sup> Aside from this short memorandum from President Humbert no other information printed by the President was found in the archive folder documenting the Black Friar Case. The archive folder contained letters to students and parents that were signed by President Humbert, however Norman Knights drafted these letters in the name of the President. In addition to the lack of information in the archives, President Humbert never addressed the students through *The DePauw* newspaper in contrast to Dean Lawrence Riggs. While President Humbert did not even take the time to form his own letters to those influenced by the suspensions, an even greater indicator of his apathy towards the Friar incident is illustrated through his absence at the first Discipline Committee meeting regarding the Black Friars. Despite being a member of the Discipline Committee, President Humbert was away on business when the first discussions of punishments arose.<sup>78</sup> President Humbert seemed oddly

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<sup>76</sup> Lawrence Riggs, *The DePauw*, October 30, 1959.

<sup>77</sup> President Russell J. Humbert, “Memorandum to Secretary,” DC 278, DePauw Archives, Greencastle: IN.

<sup>78</sup> Lawrence Riggs, “Draft of Letter to the Student Senate, 27 October 1959,” DC 278, DePauw Archives, Greencastle: IN.



removed from the situation given the nature of its impact on DePauw's campus. Insight from former students could reveal the motives behind President Humbert's distance from the Black Friar case.

Students of the Black Friar era adamantly preserved that the source of the Black Friar's suspension stemmed from President Humbert. According to Pete Klinger, after the suspension, a rumor formed around campus that a wealthy donor promised President Humbert a large sum of money if he cleaned up drinking on campus.<sup>79</sup> Dick Bobb's account of the affair supports the rumor as he upheld that President Humbert hired George Hecko specifically for the purpose of exposing and disbanding the Black Friars.<sup>80</sup> Faris Chesley agreed with Mr. Bobb in his assertion that Humbert and Riggs contrived the entire incident.<sup>81</sup> If President Humbert took such an active role in organizing and planning the removal of the Black Friars from DePauw's Campus why did he become passive once the plan was formulated into action? A plausible explanation is that President Humbert did not want to receive negative attention or criticism as the architect of the Black Friar's dismissal. This theory is reinforced through the fact that President Humbert only placed his name on concession letters to parents of Black Friars or those who were deeply disturbed about the management of the Black Friar case during the brief period uproar. Unlike Riggs, Humbert refused to publish a statement in *The DePauw* that reinforced the appropriateness of the Discipline Committee's decision. Neither condemning nor praising the Black Friars President Humbert ensured that he would not become the

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with Peter Klinger.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Dick Bobb.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Faris Chesley.

target of student opposition. Humbert's corresponding letters, produced by Knights, to the Black Friar's parents exemplified this focus on preserving his reputation. In a generic letter that was sent to each the parents, Knights referred to the student accusations against George Hecko and the Discipline Committee as unfortunate hearsay, and maintained that Humbert's involvement in the disciplinary decisions was a challenge and a burden. Acting as Humbert, Knights closed the letter in stating that the Discipline Committee has reaffirmed its original decision and "our interest now is to help [name of Friar] as much as possible in his immediate and future program...you will find [name of Friar] presence at DePauw will be without prejudice, and it is our sincerest hope that he will return in January knowing he can expect our fullest assistance."<sup>82</sup> President Humbert's liminal stance on the confrontation is manifested through his inability to confirm that the suspension was necessary, and his continued focus on the unfortunate events and the student's return to school in the spring semester. This fear of fully committing to a side is again illustrated through the campus newspaper.

Humbert's failure to openly support either view towards the Black Friar suspension is exemplified through an article in *The DePauw* that claimed Humbert would consider the demands of the Student Senate regarding the dismissal of the 12 members of the Black Friars. In the article, Student Senate President, Richard Havlik declared that President Humbert would seriously consider "the material the Senate presented giving the student's feeling concerning the Black Friars' case...and would also discuss the material with those involved in the decision and meet again with

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<sup>82</sup> President Russell J. Humbert, "Letter to Black Friar's Parents, 30 October 1959," DC 278, DePauw Archives, Greencastle, IN.

the executive committee after further consideration."<sup>83</sup> In addition to agreeing to re-evaluate the disciplinary measures placed upon the Black Friars, Humbert gave his complete approval to the Student Senate's plan for a possible all-student court. Despite the agreement to reconsider the suspension of the Friars, the punishment remained the same. In agreeing to the proposition for an all student court and reassessing the punishment of the Black Friar's, President Humbert remained on the campaign trail of saving face.

Providing the possibility of concession meant that President Humbert would not fit into the 1959, student formed mold of a repressive dictator striving to strip students of their civil liberties. President Humbert did not possess the administrative power to reverse the punishment given to the Friars or he made disingenuous assertions in an attempt to regain admiration by the student body and conceal his level of involvement in the Black Friar confrontation. While Humbert adopted a detached stance in order to cope with the onslaught of criticism, Knights and Riggs relentlessly expressed the necessity of suspending the Black Friars.

In contrast to President Humbert, Dean Riggs and Norman Knights explicitly avowed that the Black Friars were a threat to the well being of DePauw University and rightfully deserved the Discipline Committee's punishment of suspension. Dean Riggs operated as the face of the Discipline Committee as he submitted the views of the administration under his name in order to be published by *The DePauw*. Knights conversely functioned within the shadow of President Humbert, as he wrote letters to frustrated and problematic individuals under the guise of Humbert's name. The

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<sup>83</sup> Richard Havlick, "Senate Submits Demands, Humbert Agrees to Consider." October 26, 1959.

administration's first public announcement about the Black Friar case was conveyed through Riggs, in the October 21<sup>st</sup> issue of *The DePauw*, a week after Hecko originally questioned the few members of the organization. In a short paragraph on the front page of the newspaper Riggs stated that after thorough consideration the Discipline Committee had decided to suspend the twelve members of the Black Friars. Riggs defended the action of the Discipline Committee as he argued, "the existence of this group, widely known as a drinking club, has been seriously prejudicial to the best interest of the University community."<sup>84</sup> Once confronted with the demands of the Student Senate and student body to readmit the Black Friars, along with the numerous letters to the editor disparaging DePauw officials for the unfairness of the case, Riggs realized that a better argument was needed to confront the hostility that emerged on campus. The claim that the group was suspended because it was prejudicial to the best interest of the University, could not withstand the student arguments towards the administration's repression and violation of civil liberties.

In order to combat student opposition Knights and Riggs employed a parallel tactic when challenged with criticism over the management of the Black Friar case. Both administrators argued that students were allowing emotions to interfere with their reasoning as they based arguments off false accusations. Dean Riggs' letter to the student body contended, "It is highly unfortunate that in the past several days hearsay, opinions founded on rumor and personal assumptions have been elevated in the minds of many to the level of what they consider to be facts. Emotion thus

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<sup>84</sup> Lawrence Riggs, *The DePauw*. October 21, 1959.

generated has obscured reason.”<sup>85</sup> In a memorandum to President Humbert, Norman Knights applied the same understanding of the student confrontation as Riggs, as he lamented, “Many students confessed their opposition to the committee’s decision was based on information they knew to be unreliable. *The DePauw* carried only one side of the case...one cannot appreciate the scope of misrepresentation which helped whip up student emotion.”<sup>86</sup> Riggs and Knights’ condescending argument further reinforced the negative student opinions of the administration as a dictator. In claiming that the students were operating through ill guided emotions rather than effective reasoning, Riggs and Knights painted a picture of DePauw students as ignorant children unable to form knowledgeable judgments due to inflated emotions.

The patronizing undertones of Riggs and Knights bolstered the claim that the DePauw administrators were acting as authoritarians by dismissing student opinions on the premise that they were distorted through emotions. Knights further illustrated the administration’s tendency to view the students as uninformed children through questioning the maturity and morality of DePauw students in his memorandum to President Humbert. In the memorandum Knights disdained,

“There is something to be said, along with freedom, of the mature acceptance of responsibility and rules of action when these are entered into voluntarily. Our admissions office exerts itself to emphasize nondrinking regulation. I wonder if the educational and moral values inherent in living up to voluntarily assumed responsibilities had not been overlooked in this Black Friar incident. For my part I am convinced that some students think it

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<sup>85</sup> Lawrence Riggs, *The DePauw*, October 30, 1959.

<sup>86</sup> Norman Knights, “Memorandum to President Humbert, 9 November 1959,” DC 278, DePauw Archives, Greencastle: IN.

perfectly acceptable to circumvent the rules, which they, by coming to DePauw agreed to observe."<sup>87</sup>

After questioning the moral validity and maturity of the students who attacked the administration through their demonstrations and letters to *The DePauw*, Knights went on to presume that the students did not rebel for the benefit of their fellow classmates or against the breach of civil freedom committed by the University but instead for the right drink on campus without the threat of suspension. Knights claimed, "Students are more worried about the threat to their own clandestine drinking activities than the welfare of the suspended boys...what they really want to know is 'what will happen us if were caught.'"<sup>88</sup> Knights' conceited observations towards student opposition reveal the growing tensions between students and authority that were prevalent on college campuses in the late fifties.

In 1959, the end of the second red scare and the McCarthy era stimulated students to speak out against repression and protest against specific infringements of civil liberties and academic freedom.<sup>89</sup> The rise of student activism "indicated a trend away from reliance on adult guidance."<sup>90</sup> Students no longer adopted a submissive role to adults. Altbach explained the deviation between students and adults, "Student activists took their leadership from adults...the end of the fifties marked a critical turning point...as students struck off on their own."<sup>91</sup> However just because students were eager to regain power from adults, does not mean that adults

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<sup>87</sup> Norman Knights, "Memorandum to President Humbert."

<sup>88</sup> Norman Knights, "Memorandum to President Humbert."

<sup>89</sup> Altbach, 179.

<sup>90</sup> Philip Altbach, "Before Berkeley: Historical Perspectives on American Student Activism," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 395, (1971): 13.

<sup>91</sup> Altbach, *Student Politics in America*, 203.

were willing to consent to the student's reorganization of authority. The conflicts of the late fifties seemed to arise out of the dichotomy of power, as students began to question the authority that attempted to monitor and restrain their freedom. This conflict between adults and students was illustrated through Knights and Riggs' belief that the students were protesting due to their inability to effectively reason as adults and their child-like motives for protesting. Administrators throughout the U.S. shared the same attitudes as Knights and Riggs as University officials often denied controversial speakers from entering campus and demanded lists of radical student organizations in order to prevent students from negative influences.<sup>92</sup> In the minds of campus administrators, students did not possess the right to listen to radical viewpoints and form judgments for themselves; instead they needed to be treated as children and forbidden from controversial influences. These infringements often created hostile reactions among students, just as Knights and Riggs' refusal to acknowledge student demands provoked further conflict among students and the administration.

The administration's refusal to concede to the students' demands to reinstate the Friars created an atmosphere on DePauw's campus that was fraught with tension. Many students lost respect for the administration and felt uncomfortable with their lack of agency in the outcome of campus affairs. Faris Chesley, class of 1960, illustrated the change in attitude towards the administration as he reflected on the outcome of the incident, "The Black Friar incident was not handled well by the University, and was a reflection of underhanded hypocrisy and poor

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<sup>92</sup> Altbach, 179.

judgment...the administration acted very two faced and people left with sour feelings towards the administration...a significant number of people changed their attitude towards the University and future giving."<sup>93</sup> Mr. Chesley's assertion that the view of the University negatively transformed after the incident is further reinforced through newspaper editorials in *The DePauw*. In a letter to the editor, DePauw student Ed Runden illustrated the critical perception held of the administration, "The administration has lost much in the eyes of the student body...they developed resentment and bitterness in the student body...and made martyrs out of the group they wanted to get rid of."<sup>94</sup> In the eyes of DePauw students the administration had become a suppressive dictator, willing to compromise morality to ensure the success of the regime. Applying the anti-McCarthy activism of 1959, DePauw students Matt Hammond and Paul Campbell rebuked the administration's suspension of the Friars.<sup>95</sup> Hammond and Campbell's attack on the administration echoed the collective student grievances of the era as they decried, "Official administrative DePauw showed its true colors when by true dictatorial tactics and complete lack of justice, it removed the Black Friars. A college should be run on principles of honesty and fairness and not by an all-powerful dictatorship no matter how benevolent they think they are."<sup>96</sup> The hostile resentment towards the administration proved so powerful that students proposed a motion to send a letter of appeal to the Board of Trustees explaining the injustices

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with Faris Chesley.

<sup>94</sup> Ed Runden, "Administration Shows Lack of Judgment," *The DePauw*, October 26, 1959.

<sup>95</sup> Altbach, 178.

<sup>96</sup> Matt Hammond and Paul Campbell, "That's the Way it Goes." *The DePauw*, October 26, 1959.



of the Discipline Committee.<sup>97</sup> This motion was eventually defeated at the student senate but the lack of faith and distrust in the administration still remained steadfast. The collective fear of an overpowering administration led to the proposal for a student court that would allow students to salvage their voice in University discipline procedures.

The idea for the student court stemmed from outrage over the Discipline Committee's conviction of the Friars that was supposedly based on partial evidence and rumored testimony. In an attempt to seek justice and prevent any future violations of civil liberties, students at DePauw demanded that a student court be formed to check and balance the despotic nature of the Discipline Committee. DePauw student, Albert Moore expressed the communal belief in the necessity of a new order as he reasoned, "The Student Court is an outgrowth of the Black Friars Incident, for that incident proved the need for some form of orderly relationship among students faculty and administration on disciplinary matters...it will provide a channel for student opinion, instead of a grave which many feel the mixed board (discipline board) has been."<sup>98</sup> Moore's reference to the Discipline Committee as a grave further illustrated the student belief that the committee exercised its authority through harsh disciplinary sentences fashioned by administrative officials. The students' desire to partake in the discipline process came to fruition in the spring of 1960, through an all-campus vote regarding the institution of the new student court.

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<sup>97</sup> "Senate Defeats Motion to Notify Board of Trustees." *The DePauw*, November 2, 1959.

<sup>98</sup> Albert Moore, "Moore Points to Checks, Balances of Court Plan." *The DePauw*, January 15, 1960.

On March 11, 1960 the proposal for the student court passed with an overwhelming majority of 83% in an all-campus referendum.<sup>99</sup> The new court ensured that future disciplinary incidents would not result in the same hypocrisy and injustice that characterized the Black Friar case. The organization of the court included nine upperclassman and two faculty advisors. The nine students were chosen by a vote through the Student Senate, while the faculty advisors were selected by the President to represent and correspond with the administration on the disciplinary issues. The court's preamble reflected the lingering student preoccupation with the misfortunes of the Black Friar case. The preamble stated,

“When a student court is instituted among students for the purpose of disciplining themselves, it becomes necessary that cases be decided on an individual basis. Prior decisions of the court may be persuasive authority, but not conclusive. The theory of personal consideration cautions the court from transporting the decisions of an earlier similar case to a contemporary one.”<sup>100</sup>

When drafting the preamble students remembered that the Black Friars had been tried on circumstantial evidence and convicted for the actions of their predecessors. In addition to sentencing the Friars based off hearsay, the Discipline Committee tried and condemned them as a group instead of weighing the individuals' involvement with the organization. In order to prevent a repeat of this grave infraction of justice, the Student Senate conveyed the magnitude of holding individual trials and forming judgments through contemporary consideration by placing the aforementioned clauses at the beginning of the preamble. The institution

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<sup>99</sup> John Croley, “Present Student Court Evolves From Black Friars Incident.” *The DePauw*, February 11, 1969.

<sup>100</sup> “Students to Vote on Court in All-campus Referendum.” *The DePauw*, March 9, 1960.

of the student court guaranteed that the authority of the oppressive administration would not longer stifle student opinions on disciplinary affairs.

The suspension of the Black Friars produced an aggressive student response that triggered a demand for a change of order on DePauw's campus. Beginning with the formation of the student court, students utilized the precarious suspension of the Black Friars to advance their position in the University hierarchy. The Black Friar incident allowed for re-examination of the student positions in DePauw society. By the birth of the 1960's the climate of DePauw began to transform, as students assumed a more dominant responsibility in forming the systems that would govern their lives on campus. The Black Friar confrontation prepared students to address issues of inequality and agency that transpired through the 1960's.

The Black Friar's influence on the changing culture at DePauw was exemplified through a conference that was held in the Student Union Ballroom a several months after the suspension. On February 6, 1960, Dr. Robert Schaffer, the Dean of Indiana University, travelled to DePauw University to engage in a conference that examined the topic of student voice on DePauw's campus. The theme of the conference, "Our Voice: Mute or Unheard?" addressed the effectiveness of the student voice in University affairs. After the address from Dr. Shaffer the members of the conference convened into discussion groups to "examine the topic of the student's voice."<sup>101</sup> The question of whether or not DePauw students possessed a voice in campus communication arose from the administration's

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<sup>101</sup> "IU Dean to Launch Senate Conference on Student's Voice." *The DePauw*, January 15, 1960.

obstinate response towards the students' demand to reinstate the Friars. Students recalled the Black Friar case to compliment the argument and belief that student voice was virtually non-existent on DePauw's campus. The students' belief that the Black Friar suspension revealed an underlying problem about the lack of communication between students and administrators was visible in the student body's first appeal to the administration. As the student body put it, "We believe this action [suspension] underlies a lack of communication...Last year a resolution sent to the administration by the Student Senate received no answer at all."<sup>102</sup> After the conference students continued to recall the Black Friar affair in order to ensure the protection of their newfound voice. In 1961 students again evoked the Black Friar confrontation within a motion to elect a student body president.

The proposal for a student body president emerged when students realized the necessity of having a representative body after the Black Friar case. The ability to collectively organize was essential to the Black Friar incident, as students had to form a combined outlet if they wished to be acknowledged by the administration. While mobilization among students occurred to some extent, students could have influenced the outcome of the case if they were accurately represented. DePauw student, Lenni McColloch introduced the Black Friar case in order to reinforce the argument that the student body needed a president to represent them, "A number of campus incidents have pointed up the need for unified student representation. The

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<sup>102</sup> "Student Body Gives Fundamentals For Appeal to Readmit Black Friars." *The DePauw*, October 23, 1959.

Black Friar case of last year exemplifies a situation where a lot of time and trouble could have been saved if the campus had been represented in a unified manner.”<sup>103</sup> McColloch’s belief that student representation was imperative provides insight into the way in which students perceived the administration after the Black Friar event. The fact that students formed a new student court, held conferences to discuss the efficacy of their voice, and summoned proposals to ensure effective representation reveals the changing political climate triggered by the Black Friars. All of these measures were instituted in an attempt to protect student freedom and limit the power of an administration deemed suppressive.

The impact the Black Friar case had on DePauw history is often overlooked as transforming student attitudes towards authority are often attributed to the cultural influences of the 1960s. However the vast majority of historians denote the mid 60’s at the height of the Vietnam War as the starting point for the student protests that epitomized the 1960s. The pinnacle of student rebellion at DePauw predates the 1960’s, which proves significant because it forced a conversion in student attitudes towards the administration that can only be attributed to the Black Friar case. The dramatic influences the Black Friar confrontation had upon student behavior are further highlighted in the fact that the protests occurred amongst a docile generation of students. Students of the 1950’s conformed to societal expectations in terms of lifestyles. The clothes, music, and dance of 1950’s students did not conflict with the surrounding society, and public opinion polls revealed that

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<sup>103</sup> Lenni McColloch, “McColloch Explains Issues Of SBP, Constitution Fight.” *The DePauw*, March 17, 1961.

generational conflict was nonexistent.<sup>104</sup> The Black Friar suspension awakened a passive generation of students and provided the foundation for students to evaluate their compromising position in campus affairs. The fact the Discipline Committee's decision to suspend the Friars created such an aggressive reaction amongst an inert cohort of students exposes how strongly students felt towards the prejudices and injustices manifested in the decision. John Null, a DePauw student from the class of 1960, reflected on the magnitude of the case as he explained, "Ours was a docile generation. We grew up during WWII and the Korean War but people were pretty old fashioned in doing what authorities, society, and their parents told them to do. This [uprising] was a very strange and significant event for that era...this was the first time students had ever questioned the ruling of the administration."<sup>105</sup> The exclusivity of the uprising was reinforced by every interviewee as the former students and Black Friar members maintained that this was the first time that students had adamantly challenged the administration and nothing similar occurred throughout the rest of their years at DePauw. The Black Friar incident sparked a student resistance on DePauw's campus that was unique for its time. The opposition to the unfair suspension of the Friar's embodied the arguments of other student protests and movements of the late 1950's. The surrounding culture of 1959 penetrated the minds of DePauw students as they evoked political and cultural circumstance of the time in order to facilitate the arguments against the administration's handling of the Black Friar case. Comparing the University to Big Brother and Senator McCarthy, DePauw students echoed the objections of their

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<sup>104</sup> Altbach, 204.

<sup>105</sup> Interview with John Null.

fellow student counterparts throughout the United States as they disparaged University officials for violating their treasured civil liberties. DePauw student's universal opposition to the University's disciplining of the Friar's did not fall upon deaf ears. The continued demand for change was the catalyst in the formation of the new student court. This student court was established in a manner that ensured that the administration and the Discipline Committee would no longer unjustly condemn DePauw students or fail to uphold the principles of civil rights. The Black Friar incident of 1959 transformed DePauw culture as a balance occurred between the students and the administration that provided previously marginalized students a voice in the affairs of discipline.

**Fig. 1.** "Black Friar Anthem." Provided by Dick Bobb, September 18, 2011.

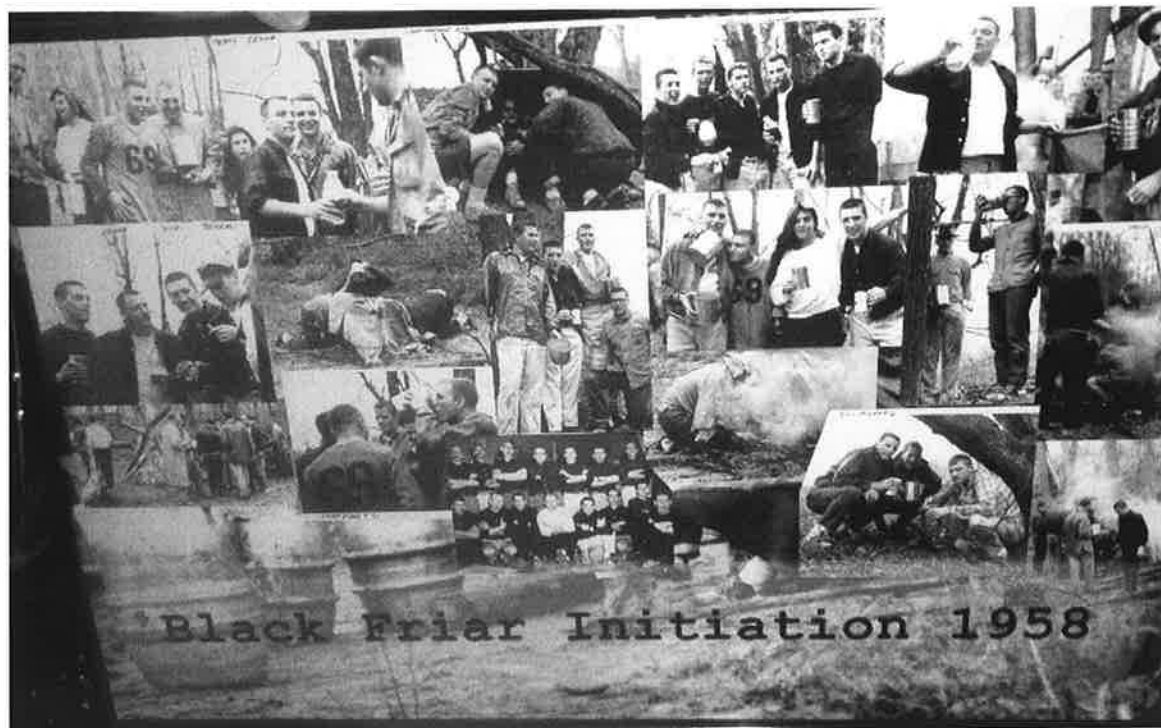
Give a Cheer, Give a Cheer  
We're the Boys who drink the Beer  
In the Halls of Ye Old Black Friars

Give a Yell, Give a Yell  
We're The Boys who raise the Hell  
In the Halls of Ye Old Black Friars

And it's Guzzle Guzzle Guzzle  
As it Trickles Down Your Muzzle  
Drink Up, We'll Never Run Dry  
And if Humby should appear, we'll say "Humby Have a Beer"  
In the Halls of Ye Old Black Friars

Keep a Drinkin, In the Halls of Ye Old Black Friars  
Keep a Drinkin, In the Halls of Ye Old Black Friars

**Fig. 2.** Black Friar Initiation of 1958, Picture provided by Delta Tau Delta Fraternity House.





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