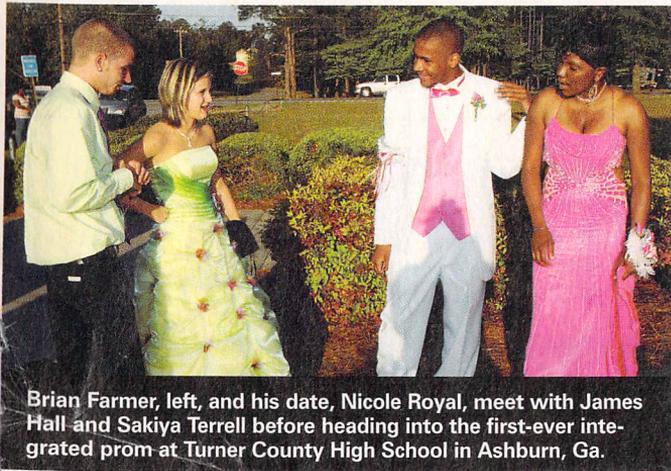


school breaks tradition of segregated prom

ASHBURN, GA—This spring, black and white students at Turner County High School attended prom together for the first time. The integrated prom, with an appropriate theme of “Breakaway,” signaled a “fresh start” for the school, according to senior class president James Hall. Instead of an official prom, the school had always had two unofficial events—one for black students and one for white students. The school has an almost equal number of black and white students, mirroring the town of Ashburn.

Initiative for the integrated prom came from the senior-class officers, two white and two black. First-year principal Chad Stone put \$5,000 of his discretionary fund into the event, and donations poured in after plans were publicized. “I couldn’t be more proud of these young people,” says school superintendent Ray Jordan. “The changes needed to come from the student body.”



Brian Farmer, left, and his date, Nicole Royal, meet with James Hall and Sakiya Terrell before heading into the first-ever integrated prom at Turner County High School in Ashburn, Ga.

“This is history, baby,” says senior Noriega McKeller. “Somebody had to do it. Why couldn’t it be us?” Some people say progress can still be made, however. Blacks outnumbered whites at this spring’s prom, and many whites went to their own party a week earlier. But Calvin Catom, a white senior who attended both events, said the weekend “was more like tradition; it wasn’t racist or prejudice.”

Sources: *Associated Press, abcnews.com*



Were you surprised that a school had still been holding segregated proms? Why or why not? Why did separate proms last so long at this school? Is the tradition harmless? racist? Explain. How might this new prom affect race relations at the school? in town?

Does having a whites-only party defeat the purpose of the integrated prom? Why or why not? Why are some traditions so hard to drop? Is it wrong to want to hang out with people who look like you? Why or why not?

What racial issues exist at your high school or in your community? Do you see progress being made in these areas, or are most people set in their ways? Explain. Can you think of any steps you could take to alleviate any tensions between different groups? If so, explain. Do you agree that students need to initiate changes within a school system? Why or why not? Do you feel empowered to stand up against injustices? Why or why not?

Scripture links: Psalm 133; Malachi 2:10; Acts 8:26-40; 10:27-28, 34-35; 17:24-28; and Galatians 3:26-29.