

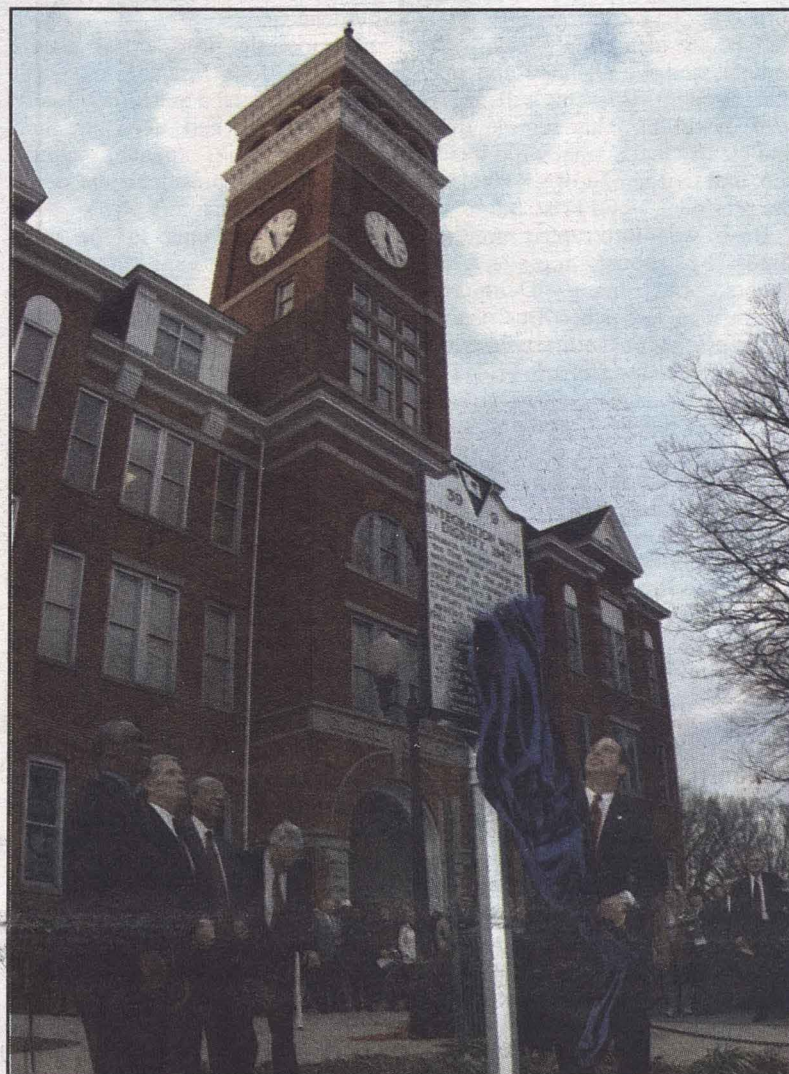


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ADAM HODGDEN/photo editor

**UNVEILING HISTORY:** Angelo Mitsopolous reveals the new marker in front of Tillman Hall as Gantt (L.), Barker, Perry and Edwards look on.

## “Heroes” recall historic day

*Historic marker will commemorate desegregation on Jan. 28, 1963.*

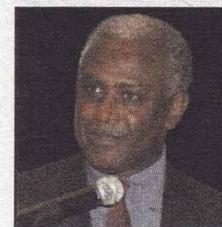
**WILL SPINK**  
News Editor

Clemson celebrated the 40th anniversary of its peaceful desegregation Tuesday afternoon as hundreds gathered in Tillman Auditorium to hear from heroes of the integration process. A new historical marker was also unveiled outside Tillman in honor of “Integration with Dignity, 1963.”

“There have been many days in the last three years that I’ve been proud of my alma mater,” said President James Barker as he received the marker, “but there’s not a day when I’m more proud than this one.”

Harvey Gantt, who broke the color barrier at the University when he enrolled 40 years ago, took the stage to a rousing round of applause and recalled his emotions on what he called that “very special day.” He said he had followed student comments in *The Tiger* for about six months and had a naïve but blind faith in the people of South Carolina, his home state, and the students of Clemson.

Gantt, who has twice served as



ADAM HODGDEN/photo editor

**Harvey Gantt**

Clemson students and see a salt and pepper audience,” he noted with a smile.

Gantt, who attended the ceremony with his wife Cindy, the first female African-American student at Clemson, remembered walking into the mess hall for his first meal, seeing other African-Americans serving his meal and feeling their pride in finally having an African-American student on campus. He called this a “very magical, special moment.”

Judge Matthew Perry, Gantt’s lawyer throughout the process, spoke after the man whom he called his “prize client” and asserted that he began the litigation because Gantt wanted an excellent architectural education, not because a group wanted to prove a point.

Perry recalled the trip from Columbia to Clemson that morning and the fact that Gantt had left his checkbook in the trunk of the car, which, he joked, caused them to be

mayor of Charlotte and is now an architect there, saw a much different Clemson than he did 40 years ago.

“I look at a room of

three minutes late in arriving on campus.

Former University president R.C. Edwards spoke of his part in the process and the importance of so many other people who worked behind the scenes to prepare for the successful desegregation.

“I’ll never be able to tell you how much I appreciate the support of the faculty, staff and students, especially the students,” Edwards said.

All three received standing ovations from the crowd after their remarks, and other speakers during the celebration continually called them their “heroes.”

The new historical marker, that stands in front and to the left of Tillman as one faces the building, tells briefly the story of Gantt’s application and enrollment at Clemson.

As he presented the marker to President Barker, Student Body President Angelo Mitsopolous said, “We must carry their wisdom into a new vision for the future.”

In addition to the marker, Gantt received recognition by an honorary membership in Blue Key and a picture from the group that will hang in Tillman Hall. Blue Key President Benson Driggers said that Gantt “embodies everything that Blue Key

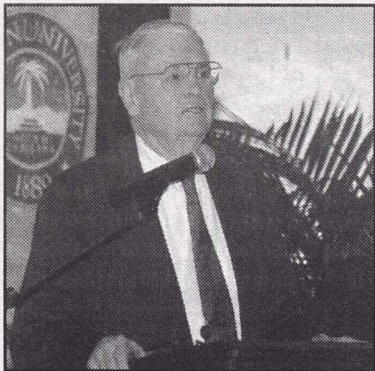
SEE HERO, PAGE 6

recognizes in faculty and students.” “We’re honored to have him as a member,” Driggers commented.

Those in attendance also got to watch a new documentary film produced by Harry Durham, who originally filmed the event for the University in 1963. The 30-minute video featured original footage from Clemson and other schools that were integrating, as well as interviews with Gantt, Perry, Edwards, Walter T. Cox, John K. Cauthen, Ernest F. Hollings and others involved in the integration at Clemson.

A seven-member panel composed of Clemson students, faculty and administrators discussed the current status of race relations and the prospects for their future at the University.

Political science professor Bruce



ADAM HODGDEN/photo editor

**PAST PRESIDENT:** R.C. Edwards, University president 40 years ago, said communication was key.

Ransom, who moderated the discussion, said that he remembers Gantt’s first day vividly, as he was then an eighth grade student in South Carolina.

“I can say without any question that Harvey Gantt is my hero,” Ransom said.

History professor Lewis Suggs, a civil rights historian who also named Gantt as his hero, explained that Gantt’s application process moved with the civil rights movement and the understanding of a need for change.

Althea Richardson, director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, cited the University’s African-American enrollment, which increased steadily until 10 years ago. She commented, “Have we come a long way? Absolutely. Do we have a long way to go? Absolutely.”

Junior Denisha Champion, an African-American student, said that student life at the University is whatever one makes of it. “You have to go out there and look for things that appeal to you,” she stated.

Agreeing with Champion, junior Franklin Davis said that when minority students get involved with people and activities, they feel much more integrated than otherwise. “That’s when you realize that there’s really one Clemson. It’s that orange blood we have,” he said.

Director of Access and Equity Byron Wiley pointed out that programs are in place from 10th grade



ADAM HODGDEN/photo editor

**PROUD PERRY:** Judge Matthew Perry was Harvey Gantt’s lawyer when he sued Clemson.

through graduate school to improve integration at Clemson. While he admitted no one is satisfied with the numbers, he said he is confident they will change.

Provost Dori Helms closed the panel discussion by acknowledging the importance of what happened 40 years ago as the University looks at the future. “Harvey Gantt put in motion a change that has made Clemson what it is today,” she said. “It’s important for that diversity to be a piece of this University.”

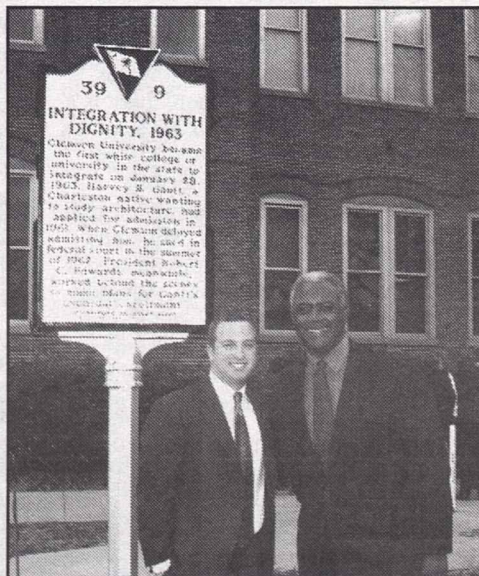
Gantt agreed with those who took this opportunity to look back as an opportunity to be spurred to action now. He said, “If we think about integration with dignity, we need to think about how we continue as an institution to build on that legacy.”

## Integration with Dignity, 1963

Clemson University became the first white college or university in the state to integrate on January 28, 1963.

Harvery B. Gantt, a Charleston native wanting to study architecture, had applied for admission in 1961. When Clemson delayed admitting him, he sued in federal court in the summer of 1962.

President Robert C. Edwards, meanwhile, worked behind the scenes to make plans for Gantt’s



ADAM HODGDEN/photo editor

Erected by Clemson University, 2003

eventual enrollment. Edwards and several leading businessmen, politicians and others drew up an elaborate plan, described as “a conspiracy for peace,” designed to ensure that Gantt would enter Clemson without the protests and violence that marked the integration of other Southern universities. After a federal court ruled that Clemson should admit him, Gantt enrolled without incident. He graduated with honors in 1965.