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Excerpts

Contents

\$50,000 Endowment	1
Testimonial	1
A Valuable Opportunity	2
A Look Back	3
Website Reconstruction	4

A Testimonial

Robert Rounsaville was one of the thirty-two participants in the first session of the Summer Study Skills Program in 1961.

I was the oldest of three children of a lower middle class family. I was a shy and somewhat introverted student with no true goals or ambition, and I was not a very good student through my sophomore year of high school. My parents intervened on my behalf and had me take a number of tests given by the school counselor. The test results and my parents brought into focus (for me) the need to concentrate on my studies. I found that I lacked many skills necessary to be a good student.

By Robert Rounsaville

Around this time, my mother was taking a class in night school and befriended a lady by the name of Edith Johnson, wife of Sam Johnson. Needless to say, I found myself at Boggs Academy in Keysville, Ga., during the summer of 1961 in SSSP. This was a new experience for me as it probably was for many of us in this environment --attending a summer program for six weeks at a boarding school located in a rural, southern town.

The SSSP experience was enlightening for me. The organization and implementation of

See Testimonial Page 4

A Valuable Opportunity

By Cheryl Smith



From left to right: Cheryl Smith, Francesta Farmer, Harriet Rutledge, Marilyn Brewster, and Kaj Anderson

“Celebrating the Past and Present; Charting the Future - The SSSP Legacy”

Following the 1964 SSSP session in Knoxville, Mr. Johnson selected six SSSP participants to attend North Haven High School (NHHS) in North Haven, Connecticut, which is a suburb of New Haven with a population mostly of Italian heritage. The following students participated in the program: Kaj Anderson, Marilyn Brewster, Francesta Farmer, Kenneth Manning, Harriet Rutledge, and Cheryl Smith. The program was coordinated through Yale University and sponsored by an anonymous benefactor. Each year, we were all provided with either train, bus, or airline tickets for two or three trips between our respective hometowns and New Haven. Expenses for room and board were paid on our behalf.

The six students lived in the households of local families. All of the families had children in the same age groups as the participants. (I lived with two different families. The first family with which I lived was headed by a Yale pediatrician and included four children. The second family was headed by a widowed mother who had returned to nursing school after the youngest of her three children had entered high school. The mother and her older daughter were both in the same class at the nursing school.)

One of our resource persons was Frederick Parker who moved from Wisconsin to New Haven for three years. (Mr. Parker also conducted a math tutorial program for other students in the New Haven community). Mentors and advisors also included several Yale University professors and Dr. James Comer who was on the staff at Yale Hospital. The six of us attended discussion groups at Dr. Comer's office and home. Our group experiences also included "salon" type discussions; weekend visits to various Ivy League college campuses; a visit to a

Shakespearean theatre; an evening at the symphony; and an excursion to a poetry reading at a coffee house. I also vaguely recall that we went on a bus trip with a number of Yale students including Calvin Hill. (Of course, at the time, we knew him only as a Yale undergraduate. It was several years later when I again heard his name while watching a Dallas Cowboys' football game.) Although there were fewer than 25 black students at NHHS, my experiences were multicultural thanks to the assistance of the pediatrician's office manager. She took me "under her wing" and I enjoyed especially pleasant times with her West Indian family members who lived in both New Haven and New York. I recall one weekend when I accompanied her and several family members to NYC where we went to the Apollo Theatre. Also, Mr. and Mrs. Parker occasionally invited me to dinner either at their downtown New Haven apartment or at one of the nearby gourmet restaurants. A home girl who had married a New Haven police officer had moved to New Haven and they visited from time to time.

I entered NHHS in 10th grade while the other five entered in the eleventh and twelfth grades; so, at the end of two years, I was the only one left. Mr. Johnson gave me the option of returning to my hometown or remaining at NHHS through graduation. (He had repeatedly told us of his objection to Marilyn's, entering college before completing 12th grade. He stated that high school graduation was integral to the development of the total person. Although, in retrospect, I see great merit of his opinion in this matter, at the time, I needed to get out of the cold weather.) I returned to my hometown and graduated from Cartersville High School.

EPILOGUE

Kaj Anderson - deceased

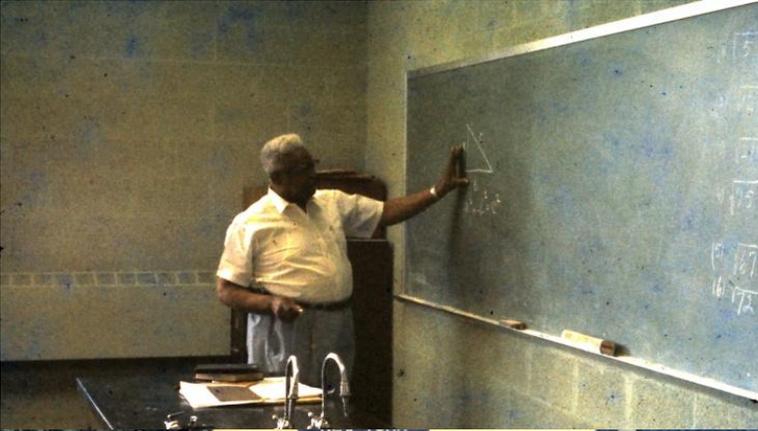
Marilyn Brewster - Attended Stanford University in Palo Alto

Francesta Farmer - Earned her undergraduate degree at Radcliffe and her law degree at Harvard

Kenneth Manning - Earned his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. at Harvard

Harriet Rutledge - Attended University of Denver

Cheryl Smith - Attended University of Georgia. Currently practices law in Atlanta





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Testimonial

the program, coordinated by Mr. Johnson and the many outstanding teachers and counselors, was excellent. Being surrounded by so many exceptional students, many coming from backgrounds and situations much less promising than my own, motivated me. The skills attained at SSSP helped me to finish high school, work summers at SSSP from 1963-65, graduate with a B. S. degree in Biology from Knoxville

(continued from page 1)

College, a Master of Education in Science from Atlanta University, and do advanced study at Georgia State University. I became a high school Biology teacher for thirty-two years (now retired), was also a coach for about half of those years, married an SSSPer, and am the father of two employed sons who are college graduates. I am grateful for the SSSP experience!

We're on the Web!
ssspfoundation.org