IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Court of Appeals

APPEAL FROM CHARLESTON COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

Jean H. Toal, Circuit Court Judge

Appellate Case No.: 2016-002525
Consolidated Civil Action No.: 2015-CP-10-2389

Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor;
and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F., A Minor,
Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., A Minor;
Adam Olsen Ackerman; and A.E.P., III, ... Plaintiffs,

v.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company,
and Jones Street Publishers, LLC, ... Defendants,

And

Eugene Walpole, ... Plaintiff,

v.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company,
and Jones Street Publishers, LLC, ... Defendants,

Of Whom Eugene Walpole, Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad
Litem for R.C.G., A Minor; and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad
Litem for C.F., A Minor, Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad
Litem for D.G.N., A Minor; Adam Olsen Ackerman; and A.E.P., III, are the ..... Appellants,

And

Of Whom Jones Street Publishers, LLC is the ..... Respondent.

RECORD ON APPEAL
VOLUME 2 OF 2

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SC Court of Appeals

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA) THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
) NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
COUNTY OF CHARLESTON) CASE NO. 14-CP-10-7203

James R. Moore, Jr., and Betty Moore, Guardians Ad Litem for R.A.M., A Minor; Amy Garrant and Lee Garrand, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor, and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company and Jones Street Publishers, LLC,

Defendants.

Eugene H. Walpole,

Plaintiff,

Civil Action No.: 14-CP-10-7655

vs.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company and Jones Street Publishers, LLC,

Defendants.

Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., a Minor,

Plaintiffs,

Civil Action No.: 15-CP-10-605

vs.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company and Jones Street Publishers, LLC,

Adam Olsen Ackerman,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company and Jones Street Publishers, LLC,

Defendants.

Civil Action No.: 15-CP-10-1044

A.E.P., III,

Plaintiff,

vs.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company and Jones Street Publishers, LLC,

Defendants.

Civil Action No.: 15-CP-10-2389

* *

DEPOSITION OF: EUGENE H. WALPOLE, III

DATE TAKEN: Wednesday, December 16, 2015

TIME: 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: 75 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC

REPORTED BY: TERI L. SAMPSON, RPR,
Notary Public and Certified
Live Note Reporter

* *

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I N D E X

WITNESS: EUGENE H. WALPOLE, III

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S T I P U L A T I O N S

It is hereby stipulated and agreed by and between the parties hereto, through their respective counsel, that the reading and signing of the transcript is reserved by the Deponent.

CHARLESTON, SC, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015

1:02 P.M.

P R O C E E D I N G S

- - - - -

WHEREUPON,

EUGENE H. WALPOLE, III,

being first duly sworn, testified as follows:

EXAMINATION

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Can I get your full name for the record, please?

A Eugene Hay Walpole, III.

Q And I understand you go by Bud.

A Bud.

Q Okay. And I assume most everybody calls you Coach, Coach Walpole?

A That's correct.

Q So I'm going to try to call you Coach Walpole, although I may at times call you Mr. Walpole. Can I get your home address, please?

A 2555 Sunnyside Farm Road, Johns Island, South Carolina, 29455.

Q All right. And are you married?

A Yes.

Q And what's your wife's name?

A Anne J. Walpole.
Q And does she work outside the home?
A She's retired.
Q From where?
A Roper Hospital.
Q Was she an RN?
A She was an RN.
Q And do you have any children over the age of 18 that live in the Charleston County area?
A Yes.
Q Okay. What are your children that live in the Charleston County area?
A Eugene Hay Walpole, IV, and --
(Off the record discussion.)
BY MR. DAVIDSON:
Q Go ahead.
A And Anne Katherine Morbitzer.
Q And where does the fourth work?
A He works -- where does he work?
Q Yes.
A He works at the Bank of South Carolina.
Q And is he married?
A Yes.
Q What's his wife's name?
A Kristen Walpole.

Q What about your daughter, is she married?
A Yes.
Q What's her husband's name?
A David Morbitzer.
Q I forgot to ask, is Eugene IV's wife employed outside the home?
A Yes.
Q Where does she work?
A She works for a group called The Directions Group, I believe that's the name of it.
Q Do you know what they do?
A I believe it's something to do with medical insurance, not exactly sure.
Q That's fine. What about your daughter?
A My daughter works for Blackbaud.
Q And your son-in-law?
A He's a teacher and coach.
Q Where at?
A At Hanahan High School.
Q Any other children in the Charleston County area?
A No.
Q Okay. Do you and your wife have other children?
A No.

Q Can you tell me a little bit about your educational background?

A Yes. I'm a -- I've been working for the Charleston County School District. This is my 25th year with the School District. I also had previous work experience at First Baptist Church School located downtown and Orangeburg Preparatory Schools in Orangeburg.

Q Is Orangeburg Prep a private school?

A It is a private school, yes.

Q And when were you at Orangeburg Prep?

A 1984 -- I'm sorry, yeah, 1984 to '88.

Q And what did you do at Orangeburg Prep?

A I served as the athletic director and assistant principal and basketball -- women's basketball coach.

Q And prior to Orangeburg Prep, where did you work?

A Excuse me?

Q Where were you prior to Orangeburg Prep?

A First Baptist.

Q And what were your dates of employment at First Baptist?

A That's where I started, 1979 to '84, and then I also had -- I actually worked there three different

times, I think it was '89 or '88, '89, and then again from '99 to 2001.

Q Were you still working at the Charleston School District while you were working at First Baptist?

A No.

Q You left --

A Yeah.

Q -- the School District?

A Right, and then came -- left and then came back.

Q And what possessed you to leave the School District and go with First Baptist?

A Well, I was at Middleton, the first stint in CCSD was at Middleton from '90 to '99, and I left Middleton at '99 to go back to First Baptist to coach, served as head football coach, they had an opening and asked me to come serve as head football coach, and my son was there at the time and so it was an opportunity to be head coach and be able to coach him also.

Q Were you coaching at Middleton?

A Yes.

Q What area?

A Physical education.

Q Were you doing any extra coaching like

football, basketball while you were at Middleton?

A Yes.

Q Which sport?

A Women's basketball and assistant football coach, primarily working with the junior varsity football.

Q So going to First Baptist gave you an opportunity to become head coach?

A Correct.

Q I've been asking you a series of questions and it's important that you know that in asking those questions, which will be similar to the way I will ask the questions throughout the day and you've sat in on at least one or two depositions, if there's ever a question about how I phrase something, or you're not sure about something that I ask, I want you to ask me to repeat it or clarify it, all right?

A Yes.

Q Now, you have to also understand this nice young lady here is taking down everything we say, and so a head nod doesn't do much for her, so you're going to have to give a verbal response, okay?

A I understand.

Q Also, if you need to take a break at any time, please let us know and we'll be more than glad to

stop and take a break and I'll keep the doors unlocked behind you so you can get back in.

Also, if at any time during the deposition your attorney objects to something, let him make his objection, but unless he instructs you not to answer the question, you're going to have to answer my question, all right?

A I understand.

Q Prior to today -- or prior to coming here today, what have you reviewed in preparation for your deposition?

A Can you repeat that question?

Q Prior to coming here today, what have you reviewed to help prepare you for your deposition?

A I've reviewed the complaint, I've reviewed newspaper articles that were written.

Q What else, anything else?

A No.

Q I ask this of most everybody, so I'm going to ask you. Are you presently on any medication?

A Yes.

Q What medication?

A Medications are amitriptyline, simvastatin. That's it.

Q Amitriptyline is for what?

A That's for the prostate, and the simvastatin is for the cholesterol.

Q One of the statins?

A Yeah.

Q Okay. Are you on any medication for high blood pressure or anything like that?

A No.

Q In the last three years, have you been on any other medication other than your two medications you mentioned to me?

A No.

Q And are the two drugs that you referenced, your prostate medication and your cholesterol medication, are they prescribed by your family doctor?

A Yes.

Q And who's that?

A Dr. Davis.

Q What's Dr. Davis's first name?

A I don't know. I'll have to -- give me -- can we come back to that?

Q Where does he practice?

A West Ashley Primary Care.

Q Okay. In the last three years, have you seen any other doctors other than Dr. Davis for any medical conditions?

A Yes.

Q What?

A ENT, Charleston ENT for nasal congestion.

Q Anything else? Anything else, any other doctors?

A No.

Q Have you, in the last three years, received any type of mental health counseling?

A No.

Q In the last three years, have you been to any psychiatrist or psychologist for any treatment of any mental disorders or any problems you've been having with any mental issues?

A No.

Q Have you in the past ever been prescribed any medication for depression, anxiety?

A No.

It's Dr. John Davis.

Q John Davis?

A John Davis.

Q Now, education-wise, I understand you graduated from The Citadel, is that correct?

A Yes.

Q And you are -- may be wrong, but I think you're around 58 now?

A Yes.
Q You graduated in -- Citadel in 1979?
A Yes.
Q And where did you grow up?
A Johns Island.
Q So you're local to the Charleston area?
A Yes, yes.
Q And where did you go to high school?
A First Baptist.
Q Okay. So you actually went to First Baptist and went back and taught at your alma mater?
A Yes.
Q Do you have any relatives, aunts, uncles, mother, father, that still reside in the Charleston area?
A Yes.
Q And do any of them have last names other than Walpoles?
A Yes.
Q What would their last names be?
A Hanckel.
Q Hanckel, how do you spell that?
A H-a-n-c-k-e-l, Hanckel.
Q What other name?
A Hay.

Q Hay?

A Hay would be -- did you say uncles or cousins?

Q Uncle, cousins, grandparents.

A The Hay family, H-a-y, Hays and Hanckels.

Q Any others?

A Cousins, any relatives, is that what you're asking?

Q Yeah, over the age of 18 that live in Charleston with a last name --

A Legare.

Q Legare?

A Legare would be one.

Q Do they primarily live in the Johns Island area?

A Hanckels live West of the Ashley. Legares are on Johns Island. Walpoles are on Johns Island, Wadmalaw Island.

Q Have your parents passed away, or are they still alive?

A My mother passed away.

Q What about your father?

A He's still living.

Q Still living.

A Yeah.

Q How old is he now?
A He's 88.
Q Wish him well.
A Thank you.
Q And where does he reside?
A On Johns Island.
Q Johns Island, okay. And I assume he's Eugene Hay Walpole, II?
A He's Eugene Hay Walpole, Jr.
Q So you-all did the Jr. thing, okay. And where did he work prior to retiring?
A Sunnyside Farms. He was the -- a farmer.
Q Did you-all own Sunnyside?
A He founded Sunnyside Farms -- or actually, his father started Sunnyside Farms, and then my dad took over the farming operations, and now he's passed it down to my brother, it's three generations.
Q And your brother's name is what?
A His name is Hank Walpole.
Q Hank?
A Uh-huh (affirmative).
Q Sunnyside I think is on Johns Island?
A On Johns Island.
Q Are they in like tomatoes and those type things?

A Well, it was started as a truck farm, tomatoes is one of the big crops. But now they've -- it's evolved into a -- they've turned it into a land clearing business, land clearing and landscaping business. It's just still in the same spot. It's Sunnyside Land Clearing. Sunnyside Farms Land Improvement is the actual name.

Q You presently work for the Charleston County School District?

A Yes.

Q And you work at the Academic Magnet High School?

A I coach, I'm the head football coach at Academic Magnet and the head women's basketball coach. I teach right next door at Liberty Hill Academy.

Q And at Liberty Hill is middle school?

A It's actually one through -- one through 12.

Q And what do you teach at Liberty Hill?

A Physical education.

Q How many classes during the day do you teach?

A How many classes?

Q Yes.

A Five, five to six classes, depending. It changes, schedule changes every now and then.

Q And do you teach a certain grade level or --

A I teach high school.
Q High school?
A Uh-huh (affirmative).
Q Do any of the Liberty Hill high school students, are they able to participate in the sporting program at Academic Magnet?
A No.
Q Do they have their own separate athletic program like basketball, baseball, football?
A No.
Q It's a non-sports school?
A Right, yes.
Q And how long have you taught at Liberty Hill?
A This is my third year.
Q So you started at Liberty Hill in the 2013, '14 year, does that sound about right?
A That's correct.
Q Okay. Prior to that, where were you teaching?
A Burns Elementary School.
Q When you were teaching at Burns, phys ed again?
A Yes.
Q Were you coaching at the Academic Magnet school?

A Yes.

Q Same sports, basketball and football?

A Yes.

Q How long have you been head coach at Academic Magnet?

A Since 2000 -- the head football coach has been since 2004.

Q Prior to 2004, were you one of the assistants at Academic Magnet?

A No.

Q Were you coaching at any other school at that point?

A No.

Q So the first head coaching position you had with the Charleston County School District was at the Academic Magnet school?

A That was the first head football coaching position.

Q And I believe I either read or seen, you're on a 190-day contract, is that right?

A Yes.

Q And has that been the type contract you've been on for the three years you've been at Liberty Hill?

A Yes.

Q And what's your compensation under the 190-day contract for teaching phys ed at Liberty Hill?

A What is the compensation?

Q Yes, how much do you get paid a year?

A With coaching?

Q No, without coaching.

A Without coaching, it's 65, just a little over 65,000, I believe, without the coaching.

Q All right.

A That's just --

Q Go ahead.

A -- an estimate.

Q That's fine.

A Okay.

Q Now, in 2013, when you moved from Burns over to Liberty Hill, did you get a raise?

A Would you repeat that, please?

Q You obviously were teaching at Burns Elementary.

A Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q And you obviously moved over to Liberty Hill. Was that your decision to move to Liberty Hill?

A I was interviewed, the position came open and I was looking for a position at that time, a PE position, that position came open, I went and

interviewed for it and received the position.

Q Okay. Do you remember who interviewed you for that position?

A Yes.

Q Who was it?

A Sarah Jamme.

Q And when you moved from Burns over to Liberty Hill, was there a pay increase from going to a one through 12 high school program as opposed to an elementary program?

A No. It's just on the regular pay scale. I don't think there's any difference going from elementary to high school. It's just based on years experience in CCSD and they have a scale.

Q And you --

A And it's determined by that scale. There's always, I guess, a little step increase as you move up in years, years experience, but that's what the -- that's what it's determined by, pay scale.

Q Obviously it was closer to Academic Magnet, so from that perspective, it was better for you for coaching purposes?

A Yes.

Q In 2014 and '15 and then again this year, '15 and '16, have you gotten those incremental raises under

the scale?

A Yes.

Q And who does your evaluation now?

A The principal of the school.

Q Okay.

A And there's also an outside, CCSD has an evaluator in the district that comes in and evaluates once or twice, depending on years experience. So it's a principal and then an outside evaluator who works for CCSD.

Q And do you know who was your outside evaluator last year?

A I don't remember her name.

Q Now, my understanding is as a coach, you get supplemental pay for your coaching duties, is that right?

A That's correct.

Q And is that by sport, in other words, you get X amount for teaching -- I mean, coaching basketball and another amount for football, or is it just here it is, one amount?

A Again, it's a pay scale based on years experience for each sport.

Q Each sport?

A Yeah. It's different -- different pay scale

for basketball and for football.

Q Is there any type of agreement, document, contract that sets forth your obligations and the school's obligations as far as your teaching -- or coaching, pardon me, coaching requirements to get your compensation?

A Is there a contract?

Q Contract, letter, documentation setting forth what your requirements are and what the requirements of the school district are for your coaching duties?

A No, not that I'm aware of.

Q And how much do you get compensated as a coach for your supplemental pay?

A For basketball, it's around 9,000 and for football it's around 10,000.

Q So an additional -- an additional $19,000?

A Yes.

Q Is that about ballpark?

A Yeah. I'd have to go back and look at the exact figure, but that's near or about where it is.

Q So you make about -- now about 85, $84,000 a year in your position?

A A little less than that.

Q Okay. Do you know what it is total right now?

A I think it's a little over -- a little over 78,000.

Q And did you get any incremental raises for your coaching duties this year, for the '15, '16 school year?

A Yes.

Q Do you remember how much those incremental raises were?

A They normally go up, it's very little, usually like $100 a year that they step up. Again, that's just based on years experience.

Q Have you ever been denied any increases in either your 190 contract scale increase or your coaching increases?

A No.

Q Now, obviously we're here in regard to the lawsuit you brought against the District and others in State court and I've got some questions I need to ask you about that, all right?

A Okay.

Q My understanding is that there was a ritual, post-game ritual, with a watermelon that was put into place by some of the football players during the '14, '15 school year during football season, is that correct?

A Yes.

Q Now, were you involved or did you go into the auditorium where the students were being interviewed or held before they were interviewed?

A No.

Q Did you know the interviews were ongoing at that point?

A No.

Q When did you learn that the student athletes at the Magnet, we'll call it Academic Magnet school, were being interviewed about the watermelon ritual?

A It was the afternoon of October 16th.

Q And did -- first you learn of it was when you were asked to come in and be interviewed by Mr. Martin and Mr. Clayton?

A When I arrived at Academic Magnet for my interview is when I learned about it.

Q You were at Liberty Hill?

A I was at Liberty Hill.

Q Prior to you going into the interview, had you seen any of the football players and had they advised you what was going on?

A No.

Q Had you been texted by any of them?

A No.

Q Or called on the cell phone and advised what was going on?

A No.

Q Prior to the interviews on the 16th, I understand the principal, and I think her name is Judith Peterson, is that right?

A Yes.

Q She had actually looked into the watermelon incident that occurred I think after the Garrett game where a watermelon was busted on the quadrangle at the Academic Magnet, were you aware of that?

A Yes.

Q Did she speak with you about that event?

A Well, she, on the -- I think it was the 13th of October, that incident on the quad happened before that date.

Q Happened, I assume -- wasn't it after the Garrett?

A It was after the Garrett.

Q And that Friday night, I assume probably on Friday nights?

A It was a Friday night, uh-huh (affirmative).

Q After the Garrett game?

A That's correct.

Q And did she interview you or talk with you

about what had happened?

A On the 13th, which was a Monday, Monday after, she came, knocked on the door of the gym classroom where, at that time, we were watching film, our team was watching game film of the Garrett game, she knocked on the door and asked to speak to me. So I walked out and at that time is when she said she had received a call regarding our team and the watermelon celebration.

Q What did she tell you she was looking into in regard to a watermelon celebration?

A At that time, she said she had received a call from Nancy McGinley, who evidently got a complaint that our team had broken open a watermelon and were celebrating, didn't specify when, just said she got a complaint from Nancy McGinley and was asking me what I knew about that.

Q Okay. And at that point when Principal Peterson came to you and asked you about the celebration, were you aware that the student athletes for the football team were, in fact, taking watermelons to games and then after the game, bursting the watermelons?

A Yes.

Q Did you ever talk with any of the student

athletes and ask them what that was all about?

A Can you repeat that?

Q Obviously you've said that you obviously knew about the watermelon celebration before Ms. Peterson mentioned it to you --

A Yes.

Q -- on the 13th?

A Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q Obviously you had seen the ritual take place on the field after some of the games, correct?

A Yes. I was aware of that.

Q And my understanding is -- well, I'll ask you. When did that ritual take place?

A When did it begin?

Q No. When did it take place in relation, was it before a game, or was it middle of the -- half-time, or was it the end of the game?

A It was after the end of the game.

Q And what did you observe as far as what the ritual was?

A I was aware that one of the players brought a watermelon to the game, they decided that if they won the game, they would break it open and eat it.

Q Do you remember which --

A If we won.

Q Did you have any idea what they were going to do with the watermelon if they didn't win?

A No.

Q And who was that student, do you remember?

A Yes. His name is Daniel Nelson.

Q And do you know when that tradition or ritual started?

A After the Military Magnet game.

Q And did it continue up until the Garrett game?

A Yes.

Q Did you or did any of the coaches ever take custody of the watermelon, carry it, have it sitting beside you, anything like that?

A Can you repeat that?

Q Obviously the watermelon was at the football games, correct?

A Yes.

Q It was either somewhere with the team, on the bench, beside the bench, somewhere near the field, is that right?

A As far as I know, yes.

Q Did you ever see the watermelon being placed somewhere near the field during the games?

A Did I see the watermelon being placed

somewhere?

Q Yes.

A No.

Q Did you ever see the watermelon during the game?

A Yes.

Q And where was it when you saw it?

A The time that I recall seeing it, it was on the bench.

Q Did you ever carry the watermelon from the bus, I assume you-all went to games by buses?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And I understand the Academic Magnet doesn't have a field on their school, but they walk to the field from the Academic Magnet?

A That's correct.

Q Okay. Did you ever carry the watermelon or did any of the coaches ever carry the watermelon from the Academic Magnet school to the field where you-all played or take it from the locker room to the bus and then from the bus to the field where you-all were playing away from Academic Magnet?

A I did not, no.

Q Do you know if any of the other coaches did?

A I do not know.

Q Did you ever discuss with -- I think you had two assistants, is that right?

A Correct.

Q Did you ever discuss with the two assistants the watermelon ritual?

A Can you repeat that?

Q Okay. I would assume periodically during the week you meet with your assistant coaches?

A Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q Is that right? You have to answer yes or no.

A Correct.

Q And I assume you talk with them during the game --

A Yes.

Q -- about whatever is going on, or they ride the bus with you and the team, is that correct?

A Correct.

Q Did you ever talk with the assistant coaches about the watermelon and the watermelon ritual?

A No.

Q Did they ever attempt to talk with you about it?

A No.

Q Other than knowing that Daniel Nelson had bought the watermelon and brought it to the game and

they planned on bursting it open and eating it after the -- if they won the Military Magnet --

A I didn't learn that information, that Daniel was the one, until the -- until after the interview, interrogation that we went through.

Q Okay. Did you question -- I assume you saw this watermelon sitting on the beach?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Did you go, "What in the world is that thing doing there"?

A No.

Q You just -- it was okay to have a watermelon sitting on the bench?

A Yes.

Q Did you have any knowledge -- other than seeing the players with the watermelon, did you have any idea before the investigation who bought it, who brought it, anything about it?

A No.

Q And you never asked anybody about it?

A No.

Q Now, the ritual that took place after the Military Magnet game and after the other games up until the Garrett game, because I understand it was different because they actually took a watermelon and burst it on

the Academic Magnet campus, can you tell me what you recall as far as the ritual was concerned, what did the players do?

A The players -- well, when the game was over, first thing we do, we go through the line, teams exchange hand shakes.

Q I understand.

A You know, once that is completed, then we gather the players together, coaches and players together, we got to debrief about the game that we just played. And then at that point, we dismiss them. The coaches -- assistant coaches are in charge of the players collecting the equipment, cleaning up the bench area. And I think at that point is where they have their celebration, after we break up from our team meeting.

Q And once you break up from the team meeting, what do you do?

A I normally -- my normal routine is to walk over and speak to the parents and other supporters and thanking them for coming to the game.

Q And it's the assistants that then stay on the field with the student athletes, gather the gear, that type of thing?

A Yeah, we're all right there together and we

just supervise them to make sure everything is cleaned up and left like we found it, get everything back on the bus to go home.

Q Did you ever observe the ritual of throwing the watermelon and bursting it on the field?

A No.

Q Did you ever observe the players gathering around in a circle and either chanting or making noises in regard to a post-game celebration where they then burst the watermelon?

A Was I aware of it?

Q Yes.

A I was aware of the celebration, yes.

Q Were you aware -- did you ever see them in the post-game celebration in a circle with the watermelon?

A I was aware that they were gathering in a huddle, yes.

Q Did you ever hear them making any noises or sounds when they were in the huddle?

A Just normal -- normal cheering.

Q And when you say "normal cheering," how would you describe it?

A Just normal football cheers that you would hear, you know, football teams make.

Q And when you say "normal football cheers," what are you referring to, can you demonstrate for me what sounds they were making?

A No, I don't -- just normal football cheers that you would see, you know, high school teams do or the movie, the Titans, Remember the Titans.

Q Well, some of the students who we deposed -- have you read any of their depositions?

A No.

Q Are you aware that a Robert Garrard indicated that the sound was like barking? Did you ever hear them barking?

A Just -- I don't know.

Q Daniel Nelson and I believe -- well, I know Adam Ackerman referred to the sound as ooh-ooh-ooh. Did you ever hear them doing that?

A I'm not aware of that. Just normal -- normal cheer, nothing unusual.

Q And what about -- Connor Frailey described it as oo-oo-oo. Did you ever hear them make that sound?

A No.

Q If you had heard them making animalistic sounds like --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

MR. DAVIDSON: That's fine.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q If you had ever heard them make the sound oo-oo-oo or ooh-ooh-ooh, would you have asked what was going on?

A If I -- if any of our players were doing anything -- making any sounds that I thought or any of our coaches thought were inappropriate or offensive, we would address that.

Q And would you agree with me that sounds of ooh-ooh-ooh --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- said by the students, if you had heard that sound, that might have given you some pause as to what they were doing if you would have heard that?

A I don't know. As I said before, if we -- if we did anything that we thought -- or if I heard anything that we thought was offensive or knew was offensive or inappropriate, then we would address that and stop it.

Q But you never heard them making any sounds like what the players have described?

A No.

Q If you had heard the players like Mr. Ackerman testify to making the noise ooh-ooh-ooh or --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- Mr. Frailey making the noise oo-oo-oo, would you have said something to them?

A I don't know. Again, if we thought -- if we thought it was inappropriate, we would address it.

Q Okay. Now, were you familiar that the students had actually drawn a face on the watermelon?

A No.

Q Did you ever see the face?

A No.

Q Did you ever look closely at the watermelon and see if any of them that you may have seen on the bench had a face or had the -- was turned in such a way that you couldn't see the face?

A Repeat that again.

Q Did you ever see anything that would indicate there was a face on the watermelon?

A No.

Q Have you seen a picture of the face that was drawn on the watermelon?

A During the interview, Kevin Clayton passed me a picture and said this was a picture or a drawing that was on the watermelon.

Q Okay. Let me make sure I've got the right one.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 1 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Now, do you recall, Coach, whether or not this is the picture that was presented to you during the interview?

A Correct.

Q Are you aware that one of the football players actually drew this picture as a depiction of what they placed on the watermelon?

A Repeat that, please.

Q Were you aware that one of the student athletes who was interviewed drew this picture as a representation of what was actually drawn on the watermelon?

A That was communicated to me during the interview.

Q Okay. Were you aware that one of the boys that was interviewed or deposed by us in this case indicated that this was, in fact, the picture that he drew for Mr. Clayton and Mr. Martin?

A I'm not sure I understand the question.

Q Okay. Are you aware that one of the student athletes we've deposed has indicated that what is Defendant's Exhibit 1 to your deposition was actually his artwork?

A I'm not sure that I understand what you're asking.

Q That somebody acknowledged that they had drawn this.

A This is what was communicated to me during the interview, that one of the players had drawn this on the watermelon.

Q And when you saw this, what did you think?

A Smiley face, smiley grinning face.

Q Now, the teams that you played, Military Magnet where this was first done, predominantly black?

A Military Magnet?

Q Yes.

A Yes.

Q What about the other schools you played that year?

A Bishop England, of course, is not, as is Branchville, it's not a predominantly black school.

Q What about the others?

A Yes.

Q Are you aware that this drawing was placed on the watermelon for one of those games, if not more?

A I was not aware the face was drawn on the watermelon.

Q Does this face in any way depict to you a picture of a monkey?

A No.

Q Is this a picture of what would be an individual, caricature of an individual?

A Caricature.

Q Does it indicate that it potentially could be perceived by someone as a picture of an African-American?

A No. I mean, I suppose someone could perceive it that way or in any way.

Q Would you agree with me that that picture, which could be perceived by someone as that of an African-American, along with the noises of ooh-ooh-ooh or oo-oo-oo could be misperceived by the public as being derogatory towards African-Americans?

A I suppose someone could be offended by that.

Q Would you agree with me that if you or your other coaches had seen this picture, heard those sounds, that that might cause you a little bit of concern that you might need to look into this a little

more?

A As I said, you know, we always tell our players to be respectful, we preach that to them, coaches and players. If we -- if we are ever aware or someone makes us aware that something we're doing is inappropriate, you know, we'll address it right away and put it to a stop.

Q I understand. And I appreciate that. My question is, though, your coaches, your assistant coaches had seen this photograph, this picture, and had heard the noises that had been depicted by the student athletes in their depositions, oo-oo-oo and ooh-ooh-ooh or barking of an animal, if you had heard that or if your coaches had heard that, seen that picture, would that have caused you a little bit of pause that maybe you might want to ask some questions of the student athletes about what in the world they're doing?

A I don't know.

Q Okay. Would it heighten your interest to find out what you were doing knowing that they were doing that shortly after defeating a predominantly African-American football team?

A I don't know.

Q Were you aware prior to your interview that the student athletes referred to this watermelon as

Bonds-Wilson?

A Repeat that, please.

Q Prior to your interview by Mr. Martin and Mr. Clayton, were you aware that this watermelon was being referred to by the students as Bonds-Wilson?

A No.

Q Bonds-Wilson, my understanding, is the name of the -- essentially the campus where the Academic Magnet and the schools in that area are located, is that right?

A That's correct.

Q And obviously you've been in Charleston a long time. You're aware that Dr. Bonds and Dr. Wilson, I believe, were both African-American teachers within the school district?

A Yes.

Q Would it concern you that they were naming this watermelon after two prominent African-American teachers?

A Bonds-Wilson is the name of our campus.

Q Okay. But my question is --

A That's what I understood is the reason they named it, after our campus.

Q Named it after the campus. And when did you learn that?

A In the -- well, they asked me that in the interview.

Q Okay. And were you aware that it was being called -- the watermelon was being called Bonds-Wilson?

A No.

Q Okay. You would agree with me that there are certain things perception-wise that can be offensive to African-Americans. You have to answer yes or no.

A Repeat that.

Q You would agree with me, there are certain things that you can do, that you can say, that you can represent to African-Americans that can be offensive to them, correct?

A Correct.

Q Confederate flag has been one of them lately, correct?

A Correct.

Q I assume, since you're a Citadel graduate, you realize The Citadel has had a little issue of late with some of its students wearing all white outfits claiming they were ghosts of Christmas past, you have seen that in the paper?

A Yes.

Q And you're aware that that's caused a little bit of a furor because, in fact, the way they looked

was reminisce of the Ku Klux Klan members from the older days, correct?

A Correct.

Q That's a perception that would be offensive to a segment of the population, might be offensive to whites, it might be offensive to blacks also, correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Did it concern you when you saw that representation that your alma mater was having that kind of activity at the school?

A Yes.

Q Even though the students may have not known the significance of what they were doing?

A Yes.

Q Would you agree with me that there is stereotypical images or items that had been associated in a derogatory manner to African-Americans that had been historically referenced in the south in the past?

A Yes. I may have heard that.

Q Well, you've lived in Charleston a long time.

A Yeah.

Q 58 years, right?

A Correct.

Q I grew up in South Carolina, too, so I'm not unfamiliar with some of these issues, okay? So I want

to ask you, you've heard people reference a food item like fried chicken and associating it derogatorily towards African-Americans, haven't you?

A I think I've heard that.

Q Okay. Well, you're aware there was a little bit of furor several years back when Sergio Garcia had indicated that he would invite Tiger Woods over for supper and give him fried chicken and that created a little bit of furor that resulted in Sergio Garcia apologizing for being insensitive to the racial connotation of the fried chicken comment he made towards Tiger Woods, you're aware of that, aren't you?

A Am I aware of that?

Q Were you aware of that, that that happened?

A I do not remember that particular --

MR. PARKER: I don't know who is right, you or -- the other counselor said it was Fuzzy Zoeller at another deposition. I don't know which one is correct.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Are you aware that there have been historically derogatory remarks about African-Americans and eating bananas?

A I may have heard that.

Q You're aware that there is also stereotypical

racism associated with watermelons --

MR. PARKER: I'll object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- and African-Americans?

A I may have heard that, but I've never associated, you know, watermelons with race.

Q Have you ever heard any of your friends reference watermelon, bananas, or fried chicken as a derogatory comment about blacks?

A No.

Q Have you ever seen something like that, Coach?

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 2 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Have you ever seen anything like that, Coach?

A I don't know. I don't remember.

MR. PARKER: What year did this come from?

MR. DAVIDSON: It came from early 1900s.

MR. PARKER: That's why I was asking. That's not a fair question.

MR. DAVIDSON: Yeah, it is. It's on the Internet.

MR. PARKER: He wasn't living then.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q You're aware that historically individuals have referenced watermelons and African-Americans in this type of imagery in the past?

A Can you repeat that?

Q Are you aware --

A I don't understand the question.

Q -- in the past, individuals have referenced African-Americans with watermelons with this type of imagery?

A I think I've heard that.

Q You knew that before you were interviewed by Mr. Martin, were you not?

A Did I know that before?

Q Yes.

A I may have heard that.

Q Are you aware, when Miss Peterson came and talked with you about this ritual, I think you're the one that said you were going to put an end to it, correct?

A Correct.

Q Okay. Because you knew that what they were doing wasn't quite right?

A That's not correct.

Q She indicated to you that there was some concerns about racial insensitivity by the students in

bursting a watermelon at predominantly black school football games, didn't she?

A Yeah. She -- she told me there was a complaint, there was a complaint about our celebration, so we decided, you know, since we had that complaint, that we'd put an end to it because someone evidently was offended by it, so we put a stop to it. That simple.

Q And I would assume when she told you the complaint, the complaint was, in fact, someone was complaining that what the students were doing with the watermelon and the sound and the bursting of it and doing it in front of primarily black students, black football teams --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- was, in fact, offensive to some individuals in the community?

A My conversation with her that particular day was that Nancy McGinley called with a complaint regarding our -- that someone saw us breaking open a melon, cheering, celebrating, they thought -- they were offended by it. So at that point, you know, we decided we'd stop. If it's just one person, we're not -- we

don't want to offend. We'll address it and move on.

Q But you obviously, when she told you about that complaint, she also, I think, has said that she also referenced that there were some concerns about racial insensitivity in regard to the ritual, correct?

A That particular conversation, she didn't really get into the particulars. As I stated, she said there was a complaint.

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Well, you knew --

A I'm just communicating to you what she told me. That was her initial, I think, when she first found out, received a call, and then she communicated that to me.

Q Well --

A And I think she went on and talked with some other coaches and players about it later on and --

Q And did it get back to you that there was concern?

A Well, I read -- I read the report that she wrote. She communicated with me that day in the hallway in the gym on the 13th, and then after that, the next thing I found out after that is she called a

meeting of the football team and coaches on Wednesday of that week, we were going to meet with her. And then just prior to the meeting on Wednesday, I was informed by the athletic director that the meeting was cancelled. I did not have any further conversations with her before that at that point and that was -- that's how it went.

Q Were you aware that there were concerns that the ritual had some racial overtones that might be perceived by members of the community as being insensitive to certain racial issues?

A That was communicated during the interrogation interview on the 16th --

Q So prior --

A -- by Lou Martin, Lou Martin.

Q Prior to your interview, okay, knowing that there had been a complaint, knowing that the students were bursting a watermelon, knowing the fact that the watermelon was being taken to ball games with -- some of which were predominantly African-American teams, it never dawned on you, you were oblivious to the concerns --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- that this might not be appropriate and might be offensive to certain members of society?

A No.

Q So did you realize that this ritual, after you talked with Miss Peterson --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- did it dawn on you that this was, in fact, potentially offensive to members of the community, certain members of the community?

A That is what she told me, it was --

Q Okay.

A -- when I --

Q Well, now, did you ever go online or look up watermelons and racism or racial stereotypical issues surrounding watermelons?

A Yes.

Q Did you see pictures similar to what you've seen here?

A I don't remember.

Q Did you see pictures of African-Americans with watermelons?

A I did.

Q Did you see a picture of an African-American

depiction of President Obama having -- holding a watermelon, eating a piece of watermelon?

A No.

Q Are you aware that was in the news a while back?

MR. PARKER: Object.

A (Continuing) Him holding a piece of watermelon?

Q A statue of him holding --

A A statue of -- no.

Q You didn't see that --

A I didn't see that, no.

Q But you did see similar renditions of --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- watermelons with African-Americans when you went online, correct?

A Yes.

Q Did you do that after you were interviewed by Mr. Martin or before you were interviewed?

A After.

Q Did all of a sudden a light bulb come on in your head that maybe this ritual wasn't such a good idea?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

A (Continuing) No. He told -- Mr. Lou Martin told me during the interview that the watermelon was a racial symbol and that us having it on the bench was like me running up and down the sideline waving a Confederate flag.

Q And then you went online and looked it up to see what he was talking about?

A Yeah. I went online and typed in, "Is a watermelon a racial symbol?"

Q And you saw some pictures?

A I think there were pictures.

Q Similar to what's Defendant's Exhibit 2, correct?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form.

A (Continuing) Excuse me?

Q Similar to what's in Defendant's Exhibit 2?

A I don't -- I don't know.

Q But you did see pictures, African-Americans and watermelons?

A Yes.

Q Did you read any of the articles that were written about it?

A I just kind of glanced over it. I didn't

read the entire article.

Q Did the articles indicate that, in fact, that watermelons had, in fact, been a stereotypical image of blacks with racism?

A What I remember is that the watermelon itself is not inherently racist, but could be used that way.

Q Well, now, when you saw that and read that, having seen this picture that was depicted, knowing that there was a watermelon with this picture depicted to be on it, now hearing about sounds that the students were making, does that make you now realize that maybe, in fact, the ritual that was being undertaken by your student athletes was really not appropriate under the circumstances?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question. You may answer.

A (Continuing) Could you clarify that question?

Q Having now gone online and looked and seen, confirmed -- because I think you said you were aware prior to this that watermelons had, in fact, been referenced with African-Americans in the past, correct?

A Yes.

Q And having been advised by Mr. Martin that the watermelon had a picture that was Defendant's

Exhibit 1 that was drawn by a student, I think they told you also the students were making noises, didn't they, Mr. Martin and Mr. Clayton?

A Yes.

Q They told you that those sounds had been depicted to them, I think they referenced it like monkey sounds, correct?

A That's what he -- that's what Lou Martin said.

Q And having heard that and then having heard that there was a complaint, going online and looking at those things, did something click that maybe what these students were doing was not appropriate?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

A (Continuing) I don't know if -- they asked me that in the interview, if it could be perceived, if someone could -- if I could see how that could be offensive to somebody. I told them I suppose it could be, you know.

Q And if you had --

A Somebody could perceive it that way.

Q And if you had had all of this information, seen the picture on the watermelon, okay, heard the sounds, realized that they were dropping the watermelon

after football games and that some of those games were played against predominantly African-American schools, that they had named this watermelon Bonds-Wilson, you would agree with me, recognizing that this might be offensive to some members of your community, that you would have put an end to it, correct?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

A (Continuing) Well, it's like I said before, if I don't know -- if we know -- any of our coaches, if someone brings something to our attention that could be perceived or if we knew -- if we had known beforehand or were aware of any negative perception of what we were doing, we would not have allowed it. That's just how we operate.

Q Go back to my question now. You obviously realized when you were talking to Martin and Clayton when they presented all of this information, you recognized that there's some people in the community that might be offended by this ritual?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q That's what you just said, correct?

MR. PARKER: That's not what he said. You

misstated that.

MR. DAVIDSON: Okay. Well, let's restate it.

MR. PARKER: State it. Do we want her to read back the question?

MR. DAVIDSON: I'm going to do another one.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q When you heard all of this presented to you, the picture, the watermelon, the complaints, the issues surrounding all of this, the sounds, the monkey sounds that was being related to you, did you or did you not recognize that this might be offensive to certain members of the community who were attending football games?

MR. PARKER: I object. You've already asked it once. You've answered it, but go ahead.

A (Continuing) I don't know. Again, if the -- if we knew that it had been, you know, somebody brings that to our attention, we -- they did bring it to our attention and we put a stop to it. Miss Peterson was going to meet with us, you know, to communicate that with us, the concerns about the watermelon celebration being offensive, that was what the meeting -- I understand was going to take place and we were going to -- she was going to talk to the players about that, you know. So at that -- but at that point, the meeting

got nixed and it moved on to investigation by the District.

Q Did you ever talk with the players about the ritual?

A We addressed the quad incident that happened after the game. I addressed the team regarding that particular incident.

Q That was because they left it in a mess, didn't they?

A We addressed the team because they interfered -- we interfered with the freshmen lock-in, the freshmen lock-in.

Q Did you mention anything to them about the fact that there had been some issues that maybe this wasn't the best ritual to do?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form.

A (Continuing) Repeat that, please.

Q Did you ever mention to the football players at any time that this ritual might be offensive to certain members of the community?

A No. I addressed the team at that -- on that particular day regarding the quad incident, that's when I addressed the team regarding that they were interfering with the freshmen lock-in and it was not appropriate.

MR. DAVIDSON: Let's take a short break.

MR. PARKER: That would be fine.

(Brief recess.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Coach, who accused you of being racially prejudiced?

A Lou Martin, Kevin Clayton.

Q Anyone else?

A Jones Publishing.

Q Okay. Now, anyone else that you know of?

A Nancy McGinley.

Q Anyone else?

A No.

Q When did Mr. Martin do this?

A October 16th interrogation.

Q And when you say "interrogation," you're talking about the interview of you?

A Yes.

Q And same would be true of Mr. Clayton?

A Yes.

Q And who was in the interview other than you?

A Lou Martin, Kevin Clayton, and Judith Peterson.

Q To your knowledge, did Mr. Martin or Mr. Clayton ever say anything to you after that where

they indicated to you that you were racially prejudiced?

A Yes.

Q When was that?

A On the 20th of October.

Q In the letter dealing with your termination as coach?

A Yes.

Q Any other -- any other time they said anything else to you other than during the interview and during that letter of the 20th?

A In person?

Q In person or something you read.

A Yes.

Q What?

A In an email from Kevin Clayton to Lou Martin.

Q When did you see that?

A I don't remember the date.

Q Were you copied with that email?

A I have a copy.

Q Huh?

A I have a copy.

Q My question is, were you copied with that email?

A I don't understand.

MR. PARKER: He's meaning did you get a copy simultaneous with the email.

A (Continuing) No, no.

Q Did you get the email after this lawsuit?

A Yes. I think I did.

Q And was that email from Mr. Clayton to Mr. Martin?

A Yes.

Q Was anybody copied on that email?

A I don't remember.

Q Was it dated October the 17th, 2014 where Mr. Clayton --

A I don't remember.

Q -- where Mr. Clayton indicated that at a minimum, you should be fired?

A Yes, that's it.

Q Okay. I show you -- I don't have an extra copy of that. Bottom of that page, was that the email you were referring to?

A Yes.

Q Any other emails, letters, notes, conversations that you're aware of by Mr. Martin, Mr. Clayton where they indicated to you that you were racially prejudiced?

A No.

Q Okay. If you don't mind, hand that to her and we'll mark that.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 3 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q If you don't mind, publish that email for me, please, sir, in other words, read it out loud.

A "I think at a minimum the head coach should be fired and not allowed to coach in the District. My rationale is because of his contempt and arrogance that he displayed during the interview. It wasn't until you discussed the possibility of his termination did he show any sense of remorsefulness. He is not a competent leader of young men and women. I recommend the termination of the head coach of both the football team and girl's basketball team."

Q Okay. Do you see the word "racial" in that email anywhere?

A No.

Q Do you see where it indicates anywhere in that email that you are racially prejudiced?

A No.

Q Would you agree with me, as head coach of a sports team, that you're ultimately responsible for the actions of your players?

A Yes.

Q Would you agree with me that you're ultimately responsible for the actions of your coaches?

A Yes.

Q Would you agree with me that part of the duty of a head coach or any coach is to be aware of what's going on both on and off the field in regard to the student athletes?

A Repeat that, please.

Q Would you agree with me that as head coach, it's important that you know what's going on on and off the field in regard to your student athletes because it can impact negatively the image of the program and the school?

A Yes.

Q And can impact negatively on you?

A Yes.

Q Now, the letter of the 20th that you referenced that accused you of being racially prejudice...

MR. DAVIDSON: I don't have an extra.

MR. PARKER: I'm sure we've got it.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 4 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Now, that's the letter that essentially removed you from your coaching duties, correct?

A Correct.

Q My understanding is that letter did not in any way affect your teaching responsibilities at Liberty Hill, correct?

A Correct.

Q It's my understanding also that as a result of that letter, you appealed Mr. Martin's decision to the superintendent?

A Yes.

Q And she overturned that termination of your coach's duty after she met with you and heard from you about your position in regard to this matter, correct?

A Yes.

Q So am I correct you never lost any income whatsoever from the letter of October 20th?

A Correct.

Q Now, if you don't mind -- let me see if I can find my copy. Take a moment and read that letter, please.

A (Witness complied with request of counsel.)

Q Do you see anywhere in that letter where Mr. Clayton -- I mean, Mr. Martin used the word "racially prejudiced" in regard to you?

A No.

Q And he indicated in that letter the reason

for your removal was failure to properly supervise your football team, correct?

A Yes.

Q Didn't have anything to do about racial insensitivity, did it?

A Repeat that, please.

Q Have anything, any word, any reference to racial insensitivity, that you were racially insensitive?

A The word "racially insensitive"?

Q Uh-huh (affirmative).

A The word "racially insensitive" is not in this letter.

Q Never accused you in that letter?

A Insensitive is in here, yes, sir, it is in here, excuse me. It is.

Q What does it say?

A It says, "These actions are perceived as racially insensitive by some who have seen it."

Q Okay. In talking about the actions of the students, correct?

A Yes.

Q And thought that you should have been a better supervisor to avoid a situation which might be perceived by some members of the community as racially

insensitive, correct?

A That's what the letter states.

Q It doesn't say anything about Bud Walpole is racially insensitive, does it?

A Does not say that, no.

Q Now, Miss McGinley, you said that she had accused you of being racially prejudiced. Do you recall that? Do you recall saying that?

A Yes.

Q Okay. When did that occur?

A In her -- she made a public statement, she made a false statement in public that the -- that our team was making monkey sounds.

Q Well, would you agree with me that if it was represented that -- by one of the students that they were going ooh-ooh-ooh, that could be considered --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form. We've been over that four times.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q -- potentially perceived as a monkey sound?

A No.

Q I will show you what's a news release.

MR. DAVIDSON: Mark that as 5.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 5 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Did you read this news release when it went out?

A I believe I read that.

Q Nothing in that indicates that Bud Walpole is a racist, does it?

A No.

Q Nothing in there --

A Inappropriate.

Q Inappropriate post-game celebration?

A Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q Okay. Doesn't say that Bud Walpole --

A No.

Q -- was racially prejudiced, racially insensitive, does it?

A No.

Q It just says there were inappropriate post-game celebration allegations, and as a result of that, you were going to be removed as head coach, correct?

A Correct.

Q The letter that you got from Mr. Martin on the 20th, who did you give that to?

A The letter I received from Mr. Martin on the 20th?

Q Uh-huh (affirmative). I believe it's

Defendant's Exhibit -- what's the number on that one, please?

A Four.

Q Four. Who did you give that letter to?

A Who did I give it to?

Q Uh-huh (affirmative).

A Well, I eventually gave it to my attorney.

Q Mr. Parker or Mr. Kobrovsky?

A I think they both got a copy.

Q Was that before or after you had your appeal heard and you were reinstated?

A Say again now.

Q Did you give it to your lawyers before or after you were reinstated?

A This was after, this was after I was reinstated.

Q That letter, Defendant's 4, that you got from Mr. Martin, did you give it to anyone else?

A I don't remember. I remember my attorneys are the only one I...

Q Did you authorize anyone to release that to anyone on your behalf, your wife, children?

A No.

Q Did you give it to any of the football players?

A No.
Q Give it to any of the parents?
A No.
Q Did you ever give that letter to any of the news media --
A No.
Q -- news outlets?
A No.
Q So that letter came to you, stayed with you, other than being given to your lawyer, is that what you're telling me?
A Yes.
Q Let me see that one more time.
A (Witness complied with request of counsel.)
Q To your knowledge, that letter has never been disclosed to any member of the public by you?
A By me?
Q Yes.
A No.
Q Nor have you given anyone permission to disclose that to the public, correct?
A Correct.
(Discussion off the record.)
(Defendant's Exhibit No. 6 marked.)
BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q What is Defendant's 6?

A Excuse me?

Q What is that letter?

A What is the letter, it is a letter from Nancy McGinley addressed to me.

Q Okay. And it deals with your being reinstated, correct?

A Correct.

Q And you were aware of your reinstatement prior to getting this letter, is that right?

A Yes.

Q Anything in this letter indicate to you or any -- excuse me. Is there anything in this letter that would indicate that Miss McGinley used the words or referenced you as a racist or racially prejudiced towards members of the African-American race?

A In this letter?

Q Yes.

A Well, it said, "The failure led to members of the Magnet football team participating in a ritual that was culturally insensitive."

Q She's talking about your leadership there, correct?

A That's what it says.

Q Okay. But she, in fact, overrode that

decision and decided to reinstate you, did she not?

A Yes.

Q Okay. But your reinstatement was conditioned on certain acknowledgements by you, is that correct?

A Correct.

Q And you actually --

A Conditions, conditions of a reinstatement.

Q You actually left that meeting with Miss McGinley and did not submit to her during that meeting those responses to her request for conditions, did you?

A At that meeting?

Q Yes.

A No.

Q You submitted them later in the afternoon?

A Yes.

Q I assume you talked with someone about those conditions?

A Yes.

Q Who did you talk with?

A My son and the attorney at that time, Dwayne Green.

Q And after speaking with them, you did, in fact, submit a statement concerning the request by Dr. McGinley, correct?

A Yes.

Q And I think she referenced it in her letter where she says, "Statement of commitment from Mr. Walpole."

A Yes.

Q I show you Defendant's 2 -- or Defendant's 7, I guess.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 7 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Take a look at that. Is that your signature, Mr. Walpole?

A Yes.

Q Is this something you typed up?

A The secretary at the office typed that. I wrote it and she typed it for me.

Q Did you handwrite this out and have her type it, or did someone help you put it together?

A I handwrote it.

Q Okay. If you don't mind, read the first commitment you made.

A "I commit to teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings."

Q Why did you make that commitment?

A Well, these commitments were made after my

meeting with Dr. McGinley. I agreed to the commitment because I wanted my job back.

Q Well, did you agree that --

A And --

Q -- you ought to teach all students to better respect the differences of others and be sensitive to their feelings, is that something you agree with?

A Do I agree with that?

Q Uh-huh (affirmative).

A Sure.

Q And then your second one was what?

A "I will attend and participate with students in any sensitivity training sponsored or initiated by the District."

Q Okay. And that was training that you actually undertook?

A Yes.

Q And then the last one, "I will counsel my students before games to be extra vigilant in their actions when dealings with others of different race and ethnic background." Why did you agree to that?

A Why did I agree with it?

Q Uh-huh (affirmative).

A Again, I wanted my job back, and so she asked me to write down -- come up with some commitments and

then I submitted to her and I was reinstated.

Q All right. Were these commitments you did not believe in?

A Would you clarify that?

Q Did you believe in these three principles you set forth in Defendant's 7?

A Which particular one?

Q These three, did you believe in these three commitments?

A Sure. We always -- we can always, you know, better ourselves as coaches and players and learn new things that would help us improve relationships, you know, with other people, sure.

Q And so what you're saying to me is even though you wanted your job back --

A Sure.

Q -- these were core principles that you felt like you could live with in your teaching profession?

A Yeah. You have to understand, during the meeting, you know, we discussed these things. She --

Q She wanted --

A She wanted some commitments as to how to -- regarding sensitivity.

Q She didn't want something like --

A And at the same -- huh?

Q She didn't want something like this happening again?

A She wanted a compromise, so I was willing to give a little bit, you know, to -- I was in a -- I needed -- I wanted my job back, I wanted to be back with my team, and so we had an agreement and went forward with it.

Q Okay. Well, you're not -- are you saying that you would have signed anything?

A No.

Q Okay. Are you saying that you signed this document just because you had to, there was no other reason?

A To get -- you know, the goal was to get my job back and do --

Q So this had no meaning to you other than getting your job back?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Is that what you're saying?

A No.

Q What you're saying is this document you signed recognizes these were commitments that you, Bud Walpole, coach of a high school football team, felt were appropriate principles or commitments to be

made --

A That's what she and I agreed.

Q Was anyone in that meeting with you and her?

A No.

Q Did she ever in that meeting reference you as a racist?

A No.

Q Did she ever say you were racially prejudiced?

A No.

Q Did she say that you were racially insensitive?

A No.

Q After your discussions with her, did you believe that you could take this experience and make it a teaching experience for your players?

A Yeah. We talked about that, yeah.

Q Would I be right that you did not want anything to be offensive to certain members of the community, be they black, white, whatever?

A We would -- we teach our students to be respectful and we would never do anything to hurt a flea or the feelings of a flea.

Q And you --

A We teach our players to be respectful and...

Q And you understand after all this had gone on that there were certain members of the community that were offended by the ritual, correct?

A Yes.

Q And you didn't want it to happen again and that you felt that you could use this to teach your players to be more sensitive to others of different ethnic origins or different racial origins?

A That's what our agreement -- that was our agreement.

Q Are you aware at any time Dr. McGinley ever referring to you in any press release or any news conference as being racially prejudiced or racially insensitive?

A Well, I believe that the statements made by the superintendent and the associate superintendent, as well as Kevin Clayton, were falsely made, were falsely published, that I knowingly allowed our team to draw a monkey face on a watermelon and make monkey noises. Those statements were defamatory and were published in the print media, they were on national TV, and on the Internet.

And by making those false statements, they were intended -- their intentions were to depict me as a racist and to falsely accuse me of casting

African-Americans in a derogatory light.

So, yes, I believe they are false statements that were published and depicted me as being racially insensitive and depicted racial prejudice.

Q We've referred to Mr. Martin and Mr. Clayton during the meeting of the 16th.

A Uh-huh (affirmative).

Q We referred to Mr. Martin's letter to you of the 20th, correct?

A Yes.

Q And the email that's been marked as one of the exhibits, I can't remember the number, can you tell me the number of the exhibit?

A Which one?

Q Yes, sir. What's that one?

A Three.

Q Other than those three documents, are you aware of any other documents where any claims were made by Mr. Clayton or Mr. Martin that you knowingly allowed this to happen, anything in any of those documents?

A Any other documents besides these?

Q Those, because those are the ones you've referenced here today. I've asked you a question. If you know of any more, tell me what they are besides newspaper articles, I'm not worried about newspaper

articles.

A No, not that I can remember.

Q Did you ever hear Mr. Martin or Miss McGinley tell the press in a news release or a news conference that you had knowingly allowed the students to do something like paint monkey faces or paint a face on things, make monkey sounds, did you ever hear them say that in any type of news conference?

A Yes.

Q Who did you hear?

A Nancy McGinley.

Q Was that in the news statement that she handed out and read to the press?

A No. That was a press conference she did that was televised or taped. I saw a tape of it.

Q Did she read the statement?

A I don't know whether she read -- she made the statement.

Q I show you a copy of a statement.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 8 marked.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q This is Defendant's Exhibit No. 8, Coach. If you don't mind, take a moment and read this and find for me where Miss McGinley is saying you knowingly knew that the students were doing this or anything that

refers to you as a racist or racially prejudiced or racially insensitive.

A What was the question?

Q Do you see anything in here that calls you a racist?

A Well, that "After a meeting on Monday, the 20th, Dr. McGinley concluded there was no evidence to suggest that the football players understood the negative cultural implications of the ritual by buying a watermelon and drawing a face on the melon, naming it Bonds-Wilson." And that was my point, you know, after Lou Martin and Kevin Clayton met with the players on the football team on the 16th and found no racial reason, no evidence of racial reason for the watermelon celebration, even though -- but they still published reports, false reports, even though they talked to the coaches and the players and the players and coaches told them there was no racial reason for the celebration, but Nancy McGinley, Kevin Clayton, and Lou Martin still published those reports, still went public that there was, even though all concerned told him that it was not.

Q She's saying here that -- understood the negative cultural implications, the students may not have understood that, right? Right, isn't that what

she said?

A Right.

Q Okay. But you recognize now, having seen everything, that, in fact, there was a potential racial implication that might offend certain members of the African-American community?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q You don't think any of this offended anyone in the African-American community?

A The complaint that we got was that it did. Someone was offended. That was the complaint that I received from Miss Peterson, yes.

Q And it indicates it is clear the coaches either knew or should have known about the negative racial stereotypes of this watermelon ritual. Do you agree that --

A That was their perception, that was Lou Martin's and McGinley's perception, even though -- and that's what they published, false statements that I knowingly allowed a melon to have a face on it, monkey face and they said monkey noises, even though they did an interview with all the players and coaches and were told none of the players or coaches were aware of any

racial reason for the celebration, but they decided in their view that it was and so they published that, they had a press conference, it was published in the newspaper and TV and, you know, as a result, our reputation, the team's reputation, my reputation was damaged.

Q Well, tell me how your reputation was damaged.

A Again, because of false statements made by Lou Martin --

Q I understand why. I'm asking how.

A -- that were published, even though they found no racial reason during the interview for the celebration, were published and, in my opinion, were defamatory. And because of that, I mean, I was told by Lou Martin in this letter, No. 1, that I was being terminated from my position as head coach and basketball coach, that I was not allowed to contact any parents or players, that I was not allowed to coach for CCSD ever again, and that I was not allowed to set foot on the Academic Magnet campus without permission. And these false reports depicted me as a racist, damaged my reputation, it caused public humiliation, emotional distress, depression.

What's even more depressing is that my

grandchildren or anyone else can now just click on the Internet and read all about it. There were some remarks made in the city paper that damaged my reputation and our team's reputation, remarks that were very inappropriate and very ugly, to be honest.

Q Well, let me just make sure --

A It damaged as a community that I grew up in and was raised in and worked in for over 30 years.

Q Let's just back up because I don't really don't think you've answered my question. In this summary that Miss McGinley did, it says, "The coaches knew or should have known the negative racial stereotypes of this watermelon ritual." Would you agree with me that you should have known that what was happening could potentially have been perceived by others as racially insensitive?

A None -- none of the coaches or players were aware that the celebration --

Q I'm not asking about that. I am asking about you --

A -- that it could be perceived that way. I suppose it could be perceived that way, and it was. And you know, we put an end to it. It's that simple.

Q Should you have known, as head coach, that this type of ritual could be perceived by others as

racially insensitive?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form.

A (Continuing) If I had known in the beginning or if someone had told me, if we knew what the players were going to do beforehand, if someone would have told us that might be -- that might be offensive in some way, we wouldn't have allowed it. That's just how we operate.

Q If your students had shown up in all white outfits with white hoods on, would you have perceived that to be inappropriate?

A Yes.

Q Would you have perceived that not to be current historical events, that's something that happened in the past that blacks find --

A It's inappropriate.

Q If your students -- student athletes had been making monkey sounds and eating bananas at the end of the game, would that have been inappropriate?

A What we, you know -- we had a player bring a watermelon to the game, they decided if we win, we'll break it open and we'll eat it. That's what we knew. That's what the coaches knew was going on. And when somebody complained, it was after six games, a complaint was brought forward, we stopped it because we

don't want to offend anybody. You know, I appreciated Miss Peterson bringing that to our attention, whoever brought that to our attention, you know, so we could put an end to it.

Q Do you know a Dot Scott?

A Do I know Dot Scott?

Q Yes.

A Yes, I know who she is.

Q And who is Miss Scott?

A She's -- I believe she's the head of the NAACP locally.

Q You agree with me that you apologized to Miss Scott for the celebration and said that you did not see them as racially insensitive?

A Yes.

Q Do you agree with me that Miss Scott commended the superintendent for swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team at the Academic Magnet school, do you remember her saying that?

A Yeah, I believe I remember reading that in the newspaper.

Q Do you remember her also indicating that she compared the celebration to the desecration of the Confederate flag --

A Yes.

Q -- by black students when they were playing a white team?

A Yes.

Q You admit that you apologized to her for the actions of your team?

A Yeah, I believe I did, yes, spoke to her on the phone.

Q Would you also agree that you issued a statement that you were truly sorry -- "how truly sorry I am to anyone who my actions or inactions may have offended," do you recall making that statement?

A Yes.

Q What actions or inactions do you believe offended others? "My actions or inactions may have offended," what action of yours or inactions of yours may have offended others?

A What I was referring to was what -- the complaint that we got, our watermelon celebration was offensive, and so that's what I was referring to.

Q Well, I understand that you --

A That particular activity that was brought to my attention that someone -- that a Military Magnet made the complaint is what I understand. So we were apologizing for that, okay, but wanted to also know we

were not aware that that -- breaking open a watermelon after a game was offensive. But it was, you know, evidently it was, and we apologized to her.

Q Listen to my question.

A I have no problem with that. If we did something or anything that I do or our team does that we're not aware that it offends somebody or was inappropriate, we apologize for it --

Q Okay.

A -- and move on. That's what we were doing.

Q I want you to listen to my question.

A Excuse me?

Q This is the statement, "He released a statement Tuesday saying, 'how truly sorry I am to anyone whom my actions or inactions may have offended.'" What I'm asking is, what actions of yours or inaction of yours offended people?

A I don't -- I don't know on that.

MR. PARKER: I'll object to the form.

A (Continuing) The statement was referring to, you know, the watermelon celebration and the actions, so --

Q But you said, "my actions."

A -- I don't know.

Q What actions of yours offended --

MR. PARKER: Object to the form.

A (Continuing) I don't know.

Q What inactions of yours offended someone?

A I don't know.

Q Would I be correct that the actions and inactions of yours that offended people is you allowed this ritual to go on and you didn't realize how racially insensitive it was to certain members of the African-American community?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form.

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Isn't that right, Mr. Walpole?

A We were not aware that the celebration -- that breaking open a watermelon after a game, eating it and celebrating, we were not -- none of the coaches or players were aware that that was offensive, no.

Q Did you give a written statement to OCR, Office of Civil Rights?

A A written statement?

Q Yes.

A I don't know. I don't remember doing that.

Q Do you remember meeting with the Office of Civil Rights when --

A Yeah. There was an interview.

Q Do you remember meeting with them?

A Yes.

Q Do you know they were here to investigate this incident as potentially being racially motivated?

A Yes.

MR. DAVIDSON: Let's take a short break and let me look at my notes.

(Brief recess.)

BY MR. DAVIDSON:

Q Coach Walpole, do you presently serve on any boards or organizations, either statewide or local?

A No.

Q Are you an active member of any of the coaches' associations here in South Carolina?

A I am a member of the South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association and South Carolina Football Coaches Association and the South Carolina Basketball Coaches Association.

Q Do you hold any positions with any of those organizations?

A No.

Q Have you ever applied or attempted to hold positions in any of those organizations?

A No.

Q Have you ever been selected to be one of the assistants for the Shrine Bowl?

A No.

Q Or for the North-South game?

A No.

Q Can you tell me today sitting here the name of anyone you know that thinks less of you today as a result of these events?

A I would say yes.

Q Tell me their names and their addresses, please.

A I don't know the name, but the -- one of the assistant coaches at North Charleston High School this past season, after the game was over that we won 19 to nothing, we were going through the line exchanging handshakes, and according to two of our assistant coaches, one of the North Charleston coaches refused to shake hands with us and stated that, "We do not have any respect for you-all because of what happened last year."

Q Was it an African-American coach?

A Yes.

Q North Charleston primarily an African-American school?

A Yes.

Q And did he say this to you, or did he say this --

A He said it to the assistant coaches.

Q Okay. And you don't know his name?

A I don't, I don't.

Q Did you complain to his head coach?

A No.

Q Complain to the Coaches Association?

A No.

Q Complain to your principal or your superintendent?

A No.

Q Anyone else?

A There was a -- yes, a student at Academic Magnet and William Pugh, the reason I mention William is because I think it was two or three years ago, William and his sister transferred to Academic Magnet from Nashville, they came in and I coached Cara Pugh, William's sister, on the women's basketball team and William was, I think, a couple of years younger, and after one basketball practice, I walked to the lobby and he was always sitting there doing his homework waiting on his sister to finish practice.

And I -- so I started talking to him and just got to know him, very impressive young man, and so I would talk to him every now and then, and I asked him if he would be willing to serve as our public address

announcer for our basketball game that we were looking for, and I thought this might be a good opportunity for him to -- you know, since he was a new student, to come in and kind of get involved with the school a little bit, so he agreed to do that.

He did that for us for a couple of years and then after the -- this all came out last year, I think he wrote an article in the school paper, I believe, and I read it, and in the article, he was critical of me and our football team for what happened. So just reading that, I believe he might be one that maybe changed his mind, maybe, about me, about our relationship.

Q Where is he now?

A He's still at the Academic Magnet. I think he's a senior.

Q Is he an African-American?

A Yes.

Q Anyone else?

A Not that I know of.

Q What do you do for hobbies, Coach?

A Right now, just playing with the grandchildren.

Q How old are your grandchildren?

A Excuse me?

Q How old are they?

A Three years old and I think the second one is about a year. He just turned a year old a few months ago.

Q Just two grandchildren?

A I have two.

Q Okay.

A Just working, working around the house, completing projects.

Q Hunt, fish, anything like that?

A I do a little bit of fishing, boating.

Q You were born in what year?

A What year was I born?

Q Uh-huh (affirmative)?

A 1957.

Q So you were in high school starting in '65? No, '75, '75, is that right?

A Graduated high school in '75, graduated '75.

MR. DAVIDSON: I'm going to let my co-counsel ask you a few questions.

EXAMINATION

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q Good afternoon, Mr. Walpole. My name is Meliah Bowers Jefferson and I represent Jones Street Publishing. I'm going to just ask you a couple of

questions, my questioning is probably a little bit shorter than his because he covered quite a bit of things that I would have covered in my questioning.

You mentioned that you have been a coach at -- with the Charleston County School District for 25 years.

A Yeah. This is my 25th year of working for CCSD.

Q Okay. And would you remind me again how long you've been coaching with the Academic Magnet High School?

A I started there in 2003.

Q And how did you -- how did you obtain that position?

A How did I obtain it, the athletic director at that time hired me.

Q Was there a general solicitation for a job -- for the job of head coach, or were you -- did you know people in common, how did you hear about the job opening?

A Through the athletic director.

Q Okay. Were you friends with the athletic director?

A Yes. I mean, we --

Q Did anyone else apply for the job?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.

A I don't know.

Q And in your position as coach of the football team, approximately how many students do you come in contact with each year?

A As coach of the Academic Magnet football team, how many --

Q Yes.

A -- students do I come into contact with?

Q How many athletes do you coach?

A Oh, how many athletes do I coach, okay. Well, this year we had 29 players on our football team.

Q Okay. And what is the racial composition of your football team this year?

A We had one African-American player on our team.

Q This year?

A Yes.

Q Okay. And in 2000 -- this would be the 2015-'16 school year. What about the 2014-'15 school year?

A We had one, same person.

Q Okay. And you also coach the girls' basketball team?

A Correct.

Q How many athletes are on the girls' basketball team?

A This year we have 14.

Q Okay. And what's the racial composition of the girls' basketball team?

A We have one African-American on our team.

Q Okay. And what was the racial composition of the girls' basketball team in the 2014-'15 school year?

A 2014-'15?

Q Yes.

A I think they were predominantly white female.

Q Do you -- how often do you interact with the parents of these athletes?

A Well, I interact with them after each game is over or -- before or after or both and then through -- I communicate with them each week through email, we send the parents the schedule for the week, practice schedule, and any other information that they need to be aware of.

Q Okay. Do you participate in any interviews as the coach of either of these teams?

A Would you clarify that?

Q Do you participate in any interviews, do you -- do you respond to requests for interviews from

the newspaper or television stations as coach?

A Yes.

Q How often do you do this?

A Not very often. In football, in football this year, I think before the North Charleston game, that was the game of the week, so I think a couple of -- two or three of the stations came out and interviewed, interviewed me and some of our players, and they also went over to North Charleston and interviewed their coach and their players. And then, you know, sometimes after the game, if it's the game of the week, they'll do interviews.

Q Okay. And what exactly is the game of the week?

A The game of the week this year was Channel 5, everybody has a featured game of the week that they, I guess, give more coverage to than maybe the other if it's a rival game. And this particular game between us and North Charleston, we were both undefeated, five and 0, so there was a lot riding on that game, we were rivals, so they featured that as the game of the week. So what they would do is come in before the game and just do interviews, like a feature presentation prior to the game.

Q Are you -- even when you don't do personal

interviews with the newspaper or the television station, are you covered in the news as the coach of the football team or the basketball team for the Academic Magnet school?

A Are we covered in the news?

Q Yes.

A Yeah. All the schools, you know, are covered.

Q Do they --

A Cover sports.

Q Do the newspapers or news stations mention your role as coach of those teams?

A Yeah, at times, I've heard that. They mention, you know, a lot of coaches, who the coaches are in the Friday Night Lights.

Q Have you ever given any -- any speeches to the public?

A Not to my knowledge, no, I don't remember any speeches to the public, no.

Q Have you ever -- have you given any speeches at all other than just rally speeches to your team?

A No.

Q You mentioned earlier that you were -- you believe you were accused of being a racist by Jones Street Publishing. Could you tell me how you believe

Jones Street Publishing has defamed you?

A Yes. I believe there were three or four articles published. The first one I think was entitled Melongate: Big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey sounds don't mix." And it referred in the article as our players behaving more or less -- and excuse me, you know, for saying this, but this is what was mentioned, behaving more or less as racial douche bags.

It also -- and that's a team that I coach that they were talking about that was mentioned and that I condone -- that I was condoning racial activities, racial rituals. It also mentioned that our school, Academic Magnet, is one of the top schools in the country, was producing Grade A dumbasses, you know. And again, that's some of those students on the football team and that I'm the coach of.

There was another article -- I think this first article I mentioned was published around, I think, the 20th of October or so. And the next one that I remember was, I think, an October 21st or 26th article and the headlines -- or there was a quote in there that said that evidently Coach Walpole -- Coach Walpole doesn't have any regard, you know, for racial sensitivity, not aware of what racial sensitivity is.

And there was another article and the

headlines were in that article, "School district forces out superintendent who fired coach who condoned racial acts [sic]."

Q Anything else you can think of?

A No.

MS. JEFFERSON: Let's mark as the next exhibit -- if you can hand that to her, please.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 9 marked.)

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q Mr. Walpole, if you will take a look at that article. Would Exhibit 9 be the first article you made reference to earlier, "Melongate: Big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey sounds don't mix"?

A Yes.

Q Okay. Would you tell me what language in this article you allege is defamatory to you?

A Well, the very first line, "Today, Charleston was consumed by one story and one story only, the removal of Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole amid the allegations that his players more or less behave like racial douche bags."

Q And why do you think that sentence is defamatory --

A Well --

Q -- to you?

A -- racial douche bags, I think that's an extremely ugly remark and false remark and -- to be made by anybody, particularly publicly, very hurtful and it portrayed -- falsely depicts our team and myself as being racist.

Q Okay. And before we move on, could you tell me what your definition of racist is?

A Yeah. Making -- casting a person in a derogatory light, making derogatory remarks regarding a particular race or acting derogatory to a particular race.

Q Okay. And could you tell me what else in this article you find -- you allege to be defamatory towards you?

A Yeah. The fourth paragraph says, and this is false, players reportedly making monkey sounds to, you know -- and against -- "after the largely white Raptors squad beat one of their opponents, each one largely an African-American team." That's a false statement, because, I mean, if that was true, that would be, you know, falsely accusing us of casting African-Americans in a derogatory light.

Q And just to be clear, was there an allegation that the players were smashing watermelons on the ground?

A Is there an allegation?

Q Was there a report of an allegation that the players were making -- were smashing watermelons on the ground?

A A report?

Q Yes, was there a report made --

A Yeah.

Q -- to the public that --

A Yeah, it was published.

Q Okay.

A After the interview on the 16th, that was published, yeah.

Q Okay. And did the players admit to smashing watermelons on the ground?

A Yeah. We broke open -- that's what happened. They brought a watermelon to the game, players decided to break it open, that was the routine, ritual, celebration.

Q Okay. Did -- are you aware that at least one of the players admitted to making sounds of ooh-ooh-ooh?

A That's what I read in the report that Lou Martin -- you know, that Lou Martin put up, yeah, I read that in that statement, uh-huh (affirmative).

Q Okay. Is there anything else in this article

that you find defamatory?

A Yes.

Q Could you tell me what that is?

A Sixth paragraph that I referred to earlier, that "I think it's time to reconsider Academic Magnet's rankings because they clearly are producing nothing more than grade-A dumbasses."

Q Anything else?

A Yeah. The point that an entire team of players thought it was okay to draw a grinning face and smash it on the ground each time they beat a largely black team and making monkey noises. That's a -- you know, making monkey noises, that's a false statement that was published.

Q Published by whom?

A What?

Q Who do you allege published --

A Well, like I said before, the -- Lou Martin falsely published that I knowingly allowed our football team to draw a monkey face and make monkey noises, even though from the interview with all the players, no one -- if -- they told them that was not so. No one -- there were no coaches -- all the coaches and all the players told them there was no racial reason, that they were aware of any racial insensitivity that was going

on during the watermelon celebration.

Q Is there anything else in this article that you perceive as defamatory?

A Well, I just think that those are specific things, but I believe the whole article falsely depicts our team and myself as being racist.

Q Okay.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 10 marked.)

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q This articles is titled "District: AMHS football team's watermelon ritual included monkey sounds, caricature." Is Exhibit 10 also one of the articles you referenced as being defamatory?

A It was an article that mentioned that I had an apparent problem recognizing racial insensitivity. I don't know if this was the article or not.

Q You don't believe this is one of the articles or you're not sure?

MR. PARKER: I object to the form of the question.

A (Continuing) Is it one that I read?

Q Is this one of the articles that you allege --

A I think I did read -- yeah, I did read this article, yes.

Q Do you allege anything in this article is defamatory of you?

MR. PARKER: Excuse me, but I'm going to hand him a copy of the complaint if you're asking him these questions. It would be easier to do that.

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q And just for your records, this is the article that is referenced in the complaint at paragraph 15.

MR. PARKER: You can go to paragraph 15. She said paragraph 15 is where we allege that.

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q In paragraph 15 or in paragraph 16, you allege that the caption of this article is defamatory. Is that the only thing in this article that you allege is defamatory?

MR. PARKER: If you would, why don't you hand him the complaint. Thank you.

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q I'm going to need that back in just a second.

A Yeah, yes. The caption, the title.

Q Is there anything else in there other than the caption that you allege is defamatory?

A Yeah. "Coach removed after complaint of animalistic sounds following defeat of majority black

team."

Q And where is that in the article? And I'm going to need you to read from the article and not the complaint.

A Okay.

Q We can move on if you don't see anything right now. Let's move on to the other article that you mentioned.

A That's it right there. "Coach removed..."

MR. PARKER: It's in the caption.

A (Continuing) It's in the caption.

Q Okay.

A The previous one.

Q Thank you.

(Defendant's Exhibit No. 11 marked.)

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q I've handed you an article entitled "Mob Rules." Are you familiar with this article?

A Yes.

Q Is this an article that you allege contains statements that are defamatory to you?

A Yes.

Q Could you tell me what in this article -- what statements in this article are defamatory to you?

A Right at the caption, "School board forces

out superintendent for firing coach who condoned racist ritual."

Q Okay. Anything else?

MR. PARKER: You can refer to the complaint.

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q Other than the statements that are referenced in the complaint, are there any other statements in this article that you contend are defamatory towards you?

MR. PARKER: If we can let him see what's in the complaint, we can answer that.

MS. JEFFERSON: Go off the record, please.

(Discussion off the record.)

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q We'll move on from that question.

Mr. Walpole, have you sought any type of counseling for any reason at all in the last three years?

A Have I sought any counseling?

Q Any type of counseling for any reason in the last three years.

A Have I sought, have I sought?

Q Have you obtained or seen any type of counselor for any reason in the last three years?

A Yes.

Q Could you please tell me who you have seen and why?

A The -- at the request of the -- Mr. Bobby, who was the acting superintendent, I was required to attend five sessions with the counselor at SAVE, S-A-V-E, located in Charleston.

Q Okay. Could you tell me what -- what you -- could you tell me what SAVE is or why you attended SAVE?

A It's a -- I think it's Strategies to Assist Valued Employees, is what it stands for. I think it's paid for by the -- I believe it's paid for or sponsored by the School District for School District employees as a service, but I was required to attend five sessions of that as part of the cultural sensitivity training that was stated in a letter to me as part of the -- they required me to do that as part of it.

Q Okay. And during your sessions on cultural sensitivity with SAVE, what -- what topics did you explore?

A I don't -- that -- I don't know if I'm allowed to -- that was private. In the letter, Mr. Bobby made me say that those conversations would be private, remain private.

Q Okay.

A So I need to go by that letter, that's what he stated in the letter.

Q That's fine.

A That's what the letter -- so I'm going to abide by that.

Q I understand that you were supposed to develop a plan with your assistant coaches for assessing cultural sensitivity. Did you do that?

A We did.

Q And could you explain to me what that plan is?

A I don't have it in front of me. But it was a plan I was asked by Mr. Bobby to develop with my assistant coaches, I think he referred to cultural competency plan, how I would address cultural sensitivity with my team as part of the agreement that we had. So we -- coaches and I came up with a plan and we submitted it to the -- Mr. Bobby for approval, and also met with Miss Holiday, who was kind of heading that up, and met with her a couple of times to discuss it and tweak it, so forth, and we came up with a plan and then that was to be implemented with our athletes.

Q Has that plan been implemented with your athletes?

A Yes.

Q What do you -- what does this plan require of your athletes?

A There were different activities listed on there. I don't have them in front of me, but it was -- one was that we would -- in a pre-season scrimmage with one of the teams that we had a scrimmage with, one was St. Johns and one was Palmetto Christian, and after the scrimmage, the plan was to meet -- meet and greet, you know, team members, socialize and take them a Gatorade or a sandwich, just kind of socialize and get to know one another. And so we did that for St. Johns High School after the scrimmage. That went well, that was good. That was one of the things, one of the activities that we did.

Another one was talk about respect, what respect means, what have you done lately to be respectful, so forth. I'd have to get that plan in front of me. I can get a copy of it. There was several -- there were several activities like that, that we agreed to do and implement and we went over it with the principal.

Q Do you --

A Yeah, just activities, you know, to improve relationships, make sure we're respectful and get along with others and ways that we can improve in those

areas.

Q Improve what relationships?

A Improve relationships of -- get -- between our team, our team getting -- know the backgrounds of each other, ways in which we can be respectful, team-building activities. I don't have that in front of me.

Q Did you participate in those activities as well?

A Yeah. I led the activities. I led the discussions. We had -- we did a team survey at the beginning and we just asked -- we had questions asked, where are you from, what hobbies do you like, interests, and so forth, and it has kind of garnered some information about each other we didn't know before, backgrounds, and that was the purpose of that, one of the purposes of that plan, to teach the players to get to know other people, not just ones you compete against or compete with, get to know who they are and you can appreciate each other a little bit more, maybe work together a little bit better if you know one another.

Q You told me that you currently have one African-American student athlete on your football team.

A Yes.

Q During your cultural sensitivity activities, what did you learn about him?

A What did we learn about Darius, Darius Nwokike, Darius, let's see, I don't remember right offhand. We were aware where each other -- what state were we from, information like that. I don't remember exactly where he grew up. I know he loves football and loves his teammates, I remember that, and wants to play college football. He's only been playing football for two years at Academic Magnet and he's a very, very nice young man, very nice family, and I sat in on his thesis the other day. He asked me to sit -- they do a thesis, the seniors do. He did a great job with that, got an A on that thesis. So he's a very bright young man, got a good future ahead of him. I think he wants to go to the Naval -- yeah, he wants to go to the Naval Academy. He's got a brother that's there, I think.

Q You were born in 1970 -- I'm sorry, 1957?

A Yes.

Q And you attended First Baptist school?

A First Baptist school.

Q Was First Baptist integrated when you attended?

A Was it integrated?

Q Yes. Did you attend school with any black

children?

A I don't -- I don't remember, I don't remember.

Q Were there any black -- were there any black students in your graduating class?

A No.

Q Do you remember when South Carolina integrated schools?

A Yes.

Q Were you still in private school at that time?

A We were in private school, it was in the -- I know it started in -- we actually -- let's see, I graduated in '75, I started there in the 7th grade at First Baptist, so whatever year that was. I graduated '75. I started there going into the 7th grade, yeah.

Q And you graduated from First Baptist?

A Yes.

Q Okay. So it was a private school, First Baptist?

A Yeah. It's a private school. It's a private school now. Still is.

Q Still is, okay.

A Yeah, it's still a private school.

Q During -- do you believe Charleston County

schools have made significant progress in establishing racial integration in their schools since you graduated?

A Can you repeat that? I'm not sure I -- clarify that or repeat that question.

Q Do you think -- does the racial integration of Charleston County schools look substantially different from the way it looked when you graduated?

A Does it look different?

Q Substantially different?

A I don't know.

Q Have you ever used the word "nigger"?

A No, not to my knowledge.

Q Has anyone in your family ever used the word "nigger"?

A No, not to my knowledge.

Q Have you ever laughed at a racially insensitive joke?

A Repeat that, please.

Q Have you ever -- have you ever laughed at a racially insensitive joke?

A No.

Q Have you -- have you heard the word "coon" in reference to a black person?

A No, not to my knowledge.

Q Do you know what Sambo, what the reference to Sambo means?

A I've heard that name, but, no.

Q Could you identify -- could you identify a Sambo picture if you saw one?

A I don't -- I don't know.

Q Do you believe the Confederate flag is a racist symbol?

A Yes.

Q Have you ever worn clothing with the Confederate flag on it?

A No.

Q Have you ever displayed the Confederate flag on your vehicle?

A No.

Q Have you ever displayed the Confederate flag on or in front of your home?

A No.

Q Who determines whether or not something is racist?

A Who determines if something is racist?

Q Yes. Who determines whether or not something is racist?

A It's up to the -- I don't know. I don't know. It's up to the -- it depends on what it is, up

to the individual interpretation, I don't know.

Q Is it --

A If the person think it's derogatory, you know, if I thought it was something that was derogatory towards somebody.

Q Does --

A Is that what you mean?

Q Does the person committing the act, if -- scratch that.

If I perceive an action towards me as racist, would that be a fair assessment on my part?

A If you -- if you were offended?

Q If I was offended and I considered something to be racist, would that be a fair assessment on my part?

MR. PARKER: Object to the form of the question.

A (Continuing) I'm not sure I understand.

Q If -- is it the province of the offended or the actor to determine what is racist?

A I'm not sure I understand the question. I don't know.

MR. PARKER: Is what you're saying that just because you perceive something is racist, does that make it racist?

MS. JEFFERSON: No.

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q My question is, if I'm offended by an action, does that make it racist?

A Does that make it racist?

Q Yes.

A You know, I don't know. I mean, I don't know. I'm not sure I understand the question, how to answer that.

Q All right. Do you believe that whether something is racist is a matter of opinion?

A I don't know. I guess it could be. I suppose it could be.

Q How did you --

A I don't know.

Q How did you first learn of -- how did you first learn about the publications in the city paper?

A I believe -- I believe I first learned about that either -- I believe my attorney had a copy of that, that article, those articles in the city paper.

Q Okay.

A He had a copy of that and I believe that's where I first read it, he gave me a copy.

Q Okay. Are you aware of any other media publications about the incident with the football

players and the watermelon?

A Just, you know, what I've read on the Internet.

Q Have you read any articles or any media on the Internet that implied or called you racist?

A I believe I have, yeah, yes, uh-huh (affirmative).

Q Did you lose any friends as a result of the articles published by the city newspaper?

A Any friends?

Q Yes.

A Not that I know of.

Q You mentioned that the assistant coach at North Charleston High refused to shake your hands. Did -- are you aware of whether or not this coach was with the team last year?

A I believe he was.

Q Okay. And did you -- you said you do -- he did not mention this comment to you?

A No.

Q Okay. Did he shake your hand?

A I don't recall. We shake a lot of hands. We shake the hands of every player, I do, of every player and every coach that's in the line, that comes down the line. Some coaches will walk off to the side sometimes

and just bypass the players and just shake the other coaches' hands. So I don't recall -- I don't recall shaking his hand. I may have. I remember shaking the head coach's hand. We always -- but I do remember shaking some of the assistant coaches' hands. I just don't remember whether it was him.

Q Who told you that this coach made the comment?

A One of my assistant coaches.

Q Could you please give me his name?

A Yeah, Steve Kamp.

Q You mentioned William Pugh as a student who might have changed his opinion of you. Do you know whether or not he changed his opinion of you?

A Just what I read in the article that he wrote. I don't know -- he has never told me that. But, like I said, I got to know William very well when he got to school and always enjoyed talking with him, very, very fine young man, and we asked him to do the -- be the public address announcer for all of the basketball games. We had a good relationship, and still do, I still see him. I've seen him a couple of times since then. And he's still very -- very pleasant with one another, but I'm just basing it on that article he wrote.

Q After he wrote this article, did you talk to William about his opinion?

A No.

Q Why not?

A Well, I don't know. I don't know. Just never did. I didn't feel led to at the time. We still talk when I see him.

Q In your cultural sensitivity training from SAVE, after you went through your cultural sensitivity training at SAVE, did you feel it was important to understand his point of view?

A Yeah, I mean, I respect any -- any of our players, you know, students, coaches, you know, very respectful of their point of view, yes, of course. We're all -- sometimes we have disagreements on this, that, and the other, and we've always been and we've taught our players to be that way, you know, respect the other person's point of view. If you don't know what it is, you know, find out, be respectful, be respectful to that.

Q But you did not talk to him about his article or why he felt the way he felt?

A No.

Q Have you reached out to any of the schools that -- have you reached out to any of the schools that

you -- that your team was playing in which the watermelon ritual was performed?

A Have I reached out to them?

Q Yes.

A Well, we -- I have and I have always had a good relationship with all of the coaches that we play. We have mutual respect for one another, we've been going at it for years, you know, on the football field, basketball court, and we do. The St. Johns scrimmage this year, we got together with them after the scrimmage and had a nice conversation, wished them well, it's always a pleasure to -- scrimmaging with them because the teams are pretty evenly matched. And like I said, we shared a Gatorade together.

And then Baptist Hill, I saw one of their coaches in Chick-Fil-A one time on the way. We were on the way to -- we were on the way to a trip out of town, I think to Branchville, I think they were on their way somewhere, and I saw the assistant coach that I've known for a few years in Wendy's with the cheerleaders, and he and I got to talking and he mentioned that they were starting a -- trying to get a JV team or a B team together, but they didn't have any -- didn't have any uniforms, practice gear or anything like that, so I knew that we had some extra practice gear, practice

pants and jerseys that we weren't using that we had stored up, so I said, "We've got 30 or more of those if you-all would like to have them, you know, to start your program," and so they don't have to spend money.

So we -- as a matter of fact, we were playing them the following week, so I said, "I'll just bring them to you when I see you at the game next week." So we got the stuff together and when we met at our field, I handed him two bags of equipment. You know, we all do that for each other. We all try to help each other out when we can. We're competitors, but we're also friends, you know, and we know that we want to do -- help our players and our program in any way we can, we're all in that together.

Q So after -- I'm sorry.

A So that's the way we -- another way we kind of reached out, give you an example.

Q After this media coverage, the coaches of these other schools still remained friendly with you?

A Yes, yeah.

Q Just a couple more questions. You indicated that you have suffered distress, emotional distress, as a result of this incident. Could you explain to me how you experienced emotional distress as a result of the city paper publications?

A Yeah. Like I said, with Mr. Martin, I mean, Mr. Martin delivered that letter to me that day saying that I would no longer be able to coach at the Academic Magnet or any other CCSD school and I was not allowed to set foot on the Academic Magnet campus again, nor was I allowed to contact any of my players or parents, and, you know, after 30 -- this is my 37th year of coaching, that's pretty stressful, that's pretty emotionally distressing.

And then the two days that I spent trying to get my job back was particularly distraughtful, not just on me, but on my wife and my two children and I'm sure other people, too, that knew me and knew who I was and knew my family, that had grown up in this area, and I'm talking about all people. That was a very distressing time and it still hurts, it's still hurtful, you know, to relive that. That's quite a devastating blow to take, you know, after 37 years of a positive reputation, you know, not only in this community, but all around the state, and, you know, that -- it was humiliating and got -- and the things that were said in the print media, national TV, local TV.

Like I said, all -- what's most depressing about it, Meliah, is that my grandchildren one day when

they get older, they're going to be able to click on the Internet and pull that up, racist coach, they're going to be able to see that. That's something that because of the Internet, it's not going to go away, I'm going to have to live with the rest of my life and I guess explain that to my grandchildren. And so, yeah, it was mostly the stress, you know, depressive. Hopefully we'll get through it.

Q Did you have any symptoms associated with your emotional distress and depression?

A Just -- it's just an empty feeling, sickening feeling, anxiety as a -- you know, I had to -- not only wondering whether -- that was quite a hit, it would be a hit financially on my family also, not being able to be reinstated in my position. It would have been a hit financially, and I had to spend money out of my savings account those two days just to have somebody help me get my job back, hard earned money just to get my job back over something that I was falsely accused of and also our team.

Q Are you aware of any -- has anyone on your team ever told racially insensitive jokes on the football field?

A No, not my knowledge.

Q How about in the locker room?

A Not to my knowledge.
Q On the bus?
A Not to my knowledge.
Q Are you aware of any -- any of their -- any of your athletes' social media activity?
A Am I aware of any of their social media activity?
Q Yes?
A No.
Q Do you participate in social media?
A Pretty much email, you know, text message. That's probably the extent of it.
Q Do you have a Facebook page?
A I don't. My wife does.
Q Your wife does?
A Yeah, but I don't.
Q Twitter?
A No.
Q Instagram?
A No.
Q LinkedIn?
A No.
Q I think --
MS. JEFFERSON: Can I just look at my notes?
MR. DAVIDSON: Yeah, we'll take a short

break.

MR. PARKER: If you've got any more, why don't you go ahead and --

MR. DAVIDSON: All I want to know is how much money is he claiming he took out of his savings.

MR. PARKER: He wants to know how much money you took out of your savings.

A (Continuing) How much money?

MR. PARKER: Sure.

A (Continuing) $1,600.

MR. DAVIDSON: Okay. That's all the money -- as a result of all of this, that's the only money you've spent?

A (Continuing) That's all the money. That was what I -- those two days I had to...

MR. DAVIDSON: That's all I needed to know.

MS. JEFFERSON: I have a few more questions.

BY MS. JEFFERSON:

Q Did you talk to your team at all after the shooting at the Mother Emmanuel Church?

A No.

Q Did you talk to your team after the shooting of Walter Scott?

A No.

Q Did you talk to your team after the

Confederate flag came down from the State house?

A No.

MS. JEFFERSON: No further questions.

MR. DAVIDSON: That's it. Thank you.

(Deposition concluded at 4:47 p.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T E

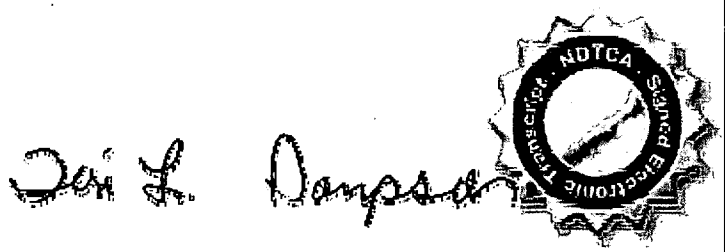
STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA:

COUNTY OF CHARLESTON:

I, TERI L. SAMPSON, Registered Professional Reporter, Notary Public and Certified Live Note Reporter, State of South Carolina at Large, certify that I was authorized to and did stenographically report the foregoing deposition; and that the transcript is a true record of the testimony given by the witness.

I further certify that I am not a relative, employee, attorney or counsel of any of the parties, nor am I a relative or employee of any of the parties' attorney or counsel connected with the action, nor am I financially interested in the action.

WITNESS MY HAND AND OFFICIAL SEAL this 29th day of December, 2015, in the City of Charleston, County of Charleston, State of South Carolina.

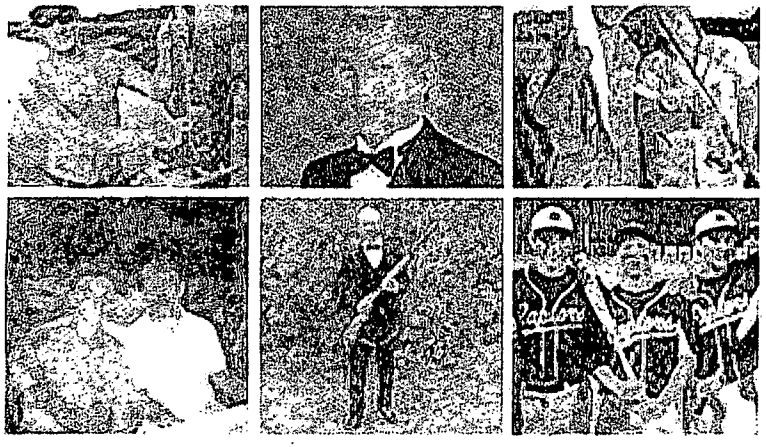


Teri L. Sampson, RPR,
Notary Public and Certified
Live Note Reporter
My commission expires:

EXHIBIT A

Adam Ackerman

Adam Ackerman Timeline 2012 All Posts



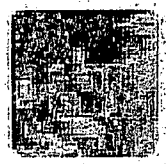


November 6, 2012

Ize uh bhad bitch>>$%3#!!?$$



ROVS99



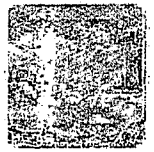
Adam Ackerman @camowearingdude · 20 Jul 2014

Put the fire to a hater, and smoke a nigga

10

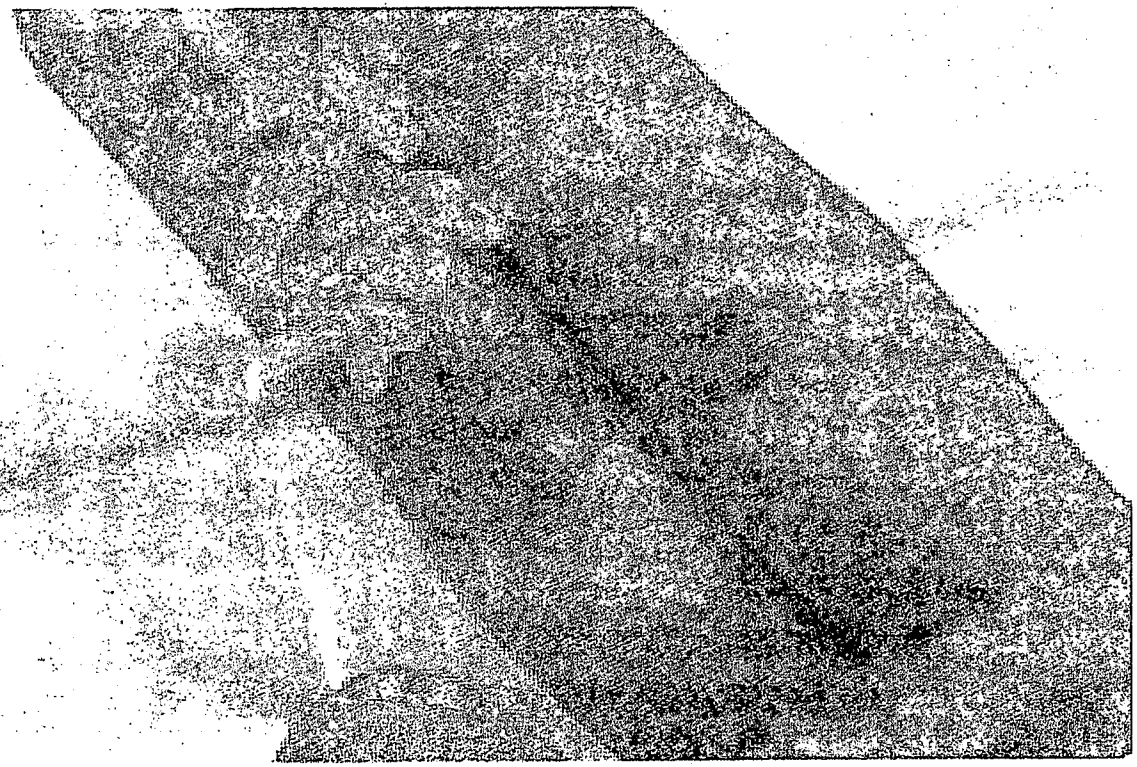


Adam Ackerman retweeted



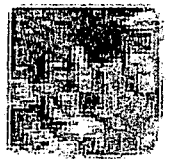
CHILDHOOD RUINER @RUINER · Sep 5

when u finger an Asian girl



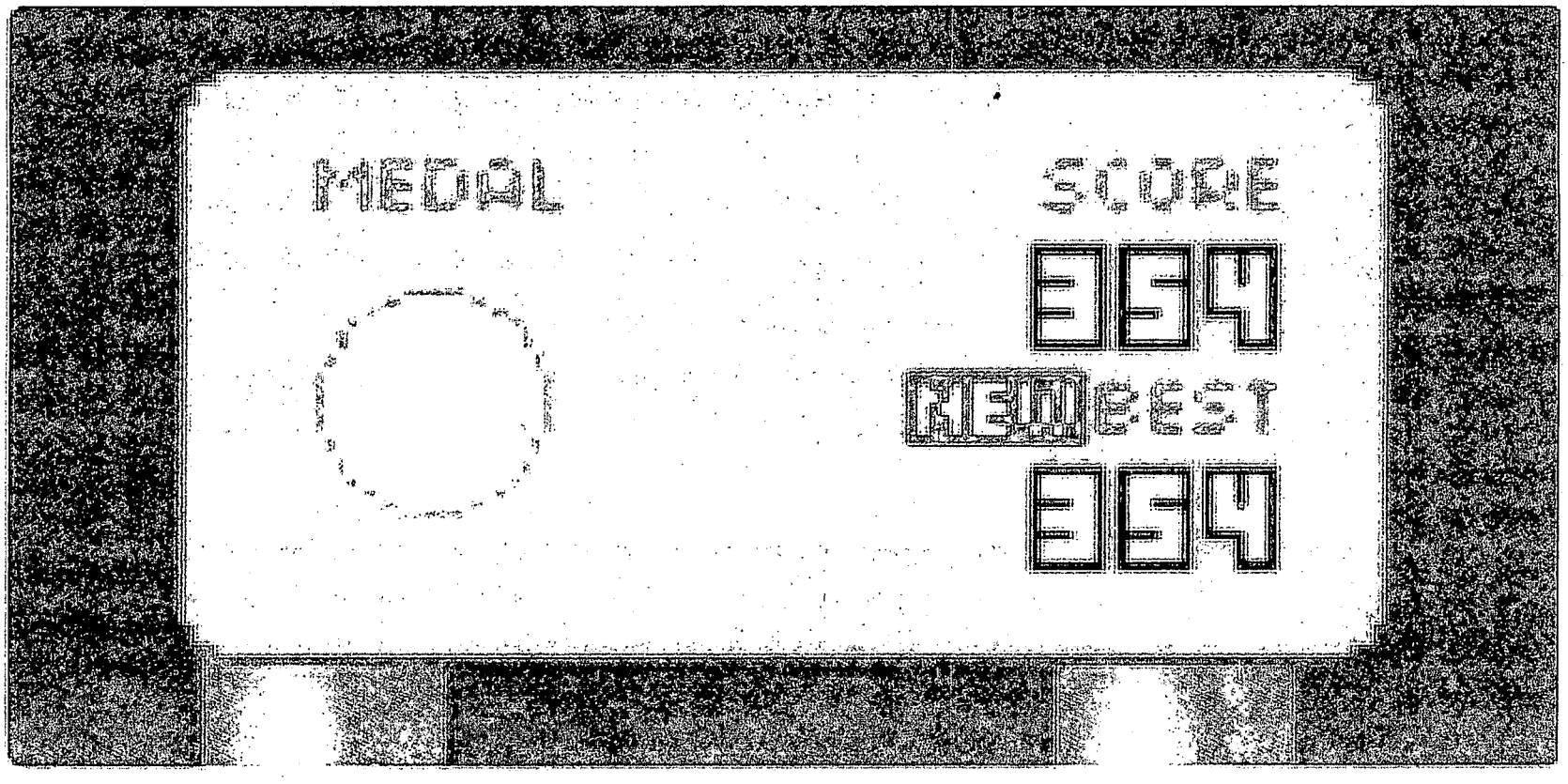
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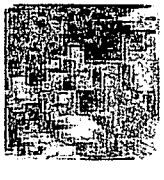
Adam Ackerman

Fuck a bitch nigga



ROA 601

View photo



Adam Ackerman

Popped a molly I'm sweatin

CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

Melongate: Big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey sounds don't mix

The sad truth

Posted by Chris Haire on Tue, Oct 21, 2014 at 5:20 PM

Today, Charleston was consumed by one story and one story only: the removal of Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole amid allegations that his players more or less behaved like racist douchebags. And if there's one lesson to be learned from all of this it's this: big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey noises don't mix. Any sensible person can see that.

Apparently not. And apparently not the coaching staff and the players on the Academic Magnet Raptors.

Somewhere along the way in this year's unexpectedly successful season, the Raptors took a liking to buying watermelons before their games. They apparently drew a face on it each time — a big toothy, grinning face. The first time the watermelon was named Junior. The next time it was Bonds Wilson, the name of the campus the AMHS shares with School of the Arts. That name stuck.

But here's where the things get even worse. At the close of each game, the players smashed the watermelon on the ground while reportedly making the monkey-like sounds of "ooh ooh ooh ooh." Apparently, the players did this after four or fives games, each time evidently after the largely white Raptor squad beat one of their opponents, each one largely an African-American team. Parents of players on one of the opposing teams reportedly brought this to the attention of African-American School Board member Michael Miller last week.

That the coaching staff of the Academic Magnet Raptors and none of its players, including at least one African American, didn't see the trouble with this toxic combination of monkey sounds, toothy grins, and watermelons is at best baffling and at worst indicative of the casual acceptance of racism in Charleston today, even among the best and brightest that the county has to often. After all, AMHS is not only the No. 1 ranked school in the state, it's one of the tops in the nations.

Seriously, did everyone at AMHS forget the last 100 years of American history? Did they forget about blackface, Buckwheat, and *Birth of a Nation*? Did they forget about minstrel shows? Did they forget about Coons Chicken, lawn jockeys, golliwogs, and the like? Apparently so. I don't know about you, but I think it's time to reconsider Academic Magnet's rankings because clearly they are producing nothing more than grade-A dumbasses.

Even more troubling is the degree to which Raptor Nation has circled the wagons around Walpole and the team. Frankly, this has nothing to do with the fact that the coach is by all accounts a good man. Walpole's merits are meaningless.

The point is that an entire team of players thought it was OK to draw a grinning face on a watermelon, smash it on the ground each time they beat a largely black team, and make monkey noises — and no one apparently told them to stop.

No one said, "Hey guys, I know not a single one of you has a racist bone in your body, you know, because that's a bad thing, and well, you're an Academic Magnet kid, and you come from a good middle-class white family and you're going to college, and there's no way in hell you'd, you know, draw a racist caricature on a watermelon and make monkey noises and do it fully aware of, like, what all that stuff means, because if you did, knowing all that stuff, then, yikes, people might start thinking you're racists. Hell, I'd think you're a racist, and, well, I just don't know if I can deal with the fact that Charleston's best and brightest students are racist douchebags. I mean, it's just a joke right? Right?"

Actually, it's not. It's the sad truth about life here in Charleston, S.C. today.

Tweet Like 0

CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

District: AMHS football team's watermelon ritual included 'monkey sounds,' 'caricature'

Coach removed after complaint of 'animalistic' sounds following defeat of majority-black team

By Paul Bowers Follow @paul_bowers



Paul Bowers

AMHS parents Connie and John Biggs were incensed by the district's decision to remove Coach Walpole. "There was nothing racial about this until it was made racial by someone else," John said.

Charleston County School District officials released more details this afternoon about a post-game ritual involving a watermelon that led the district to remove football coach Eugene "Bud" Walpole from his coaching position at Academic Magnet High School. The details were released during a press conference that became heated as parents from the school called for Walpole's reinstatement and demanded apologies from Superintendent Nancy McGinley.

According to McGinley, interviews with students indicated that upperclassmen on the AMHS Raptors football team came up with the post-game ritual prior to their Sept. 5 victory against Military Magnet Academy.

"It was reported to us that a player was selected to smash the watermelon ... Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others either were standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds that were described as 'Ooo ooo ooo,' and several players demonstrated the motion," McGinley said.

McGinley said the watermelon was named at each game — "Junior" after the team's first victory against Military Magnet High School on Sept. 5, then "Bonds Wilson Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5" after the team's five subsequent victories. (Bonds Wilson is the name of the joint campus that Academic Magnet shares with Charleston County School of the Arts.) One of the players also drew a face on the watermelon with a Sharpie. "It was a face that could be considered a caricature," McGinley says.

McGinley said Walpole had not been fired from his teaching position at the school, but he was removed from his positions coaching the football team and the girls' basketball team. She said at the press conference that she had not yet spoken with Coach Walpole, but that she would meet with him and then report her findings to the school board at a later meeting.

"An allegation was brought to my attention from one of the board members that the Academic Magnet High School football team has practiced a watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds as part of a post-game celebration," McGinley said. "This board member was clearly concerned about racial stereotypes related to this type of ritual."

McGinley presented her findings to school board members in an executive session today, but she said she would make another presentation to them after meeting with Walpole. It remained unclear at the meeting whether the school board would be able to reinstate Walpole as a coach. School board member Tom Ducker said the board "probably will make some kind of a decision on where we go from here" after hearing from McGinley following her meeting with Walpole.

"Everything's on the table, so it really will depend upon that conversation that they have with Dr. McGinley and what Dr. McGinley says after the interview with the coach and what her recommendation is," Ducker said.

The instigating incident

McGinley said that on Mon. Oct. 13, a parent from Military Magnet High School raised a concern about the postgame ritual with school board member Michael Miller. Miller brought the concern to McGinley's attention, and McGinley says she asked Principal Judith Peterson to investigate.

"She reported back to me that the coaches said they were aware of this ritual following victories and they did not observe cultural insensitivity," McGinley said. However, based on Miller's report that the team engaged in a "tribal-like chant that is animalistic or monkey-like," McGinley says she sent Associate Superintendent Louis Martin and a district Diversity Committee advisor to investigate at the school on Oct. 16.

According to McGinley, the football team was taken to a lecture hall and players were interviewed individually by Martin. McGinley says the two questions asked of every student were, "What do you know about the watermelon incident?" and "Do you see anything potentially sensitive about that issue?"



Paul Bowers

Superintendent Nancy McGinley held up a drawing that represented the figure drawn on a watermelon by a member of the AMHS football team.

McGinley says that according to the student interviews, the team brought a watermelon to games and traditionally kept it on the bench during every game this season. However, at an Oct. 10 game against Garrett Academy of Technology, the students accidentally left the melon on the bus and delayed their postgame ritual until they returned to the AMHS campus in North Charleston, where they proceeded to smash the watermelon in a courtyard. This took place during a freshman lock-in at the school, and McGinley says several school employees witnessed the incident and the team was disciplined for disruption.

McGinley said she and Principal Peterson told the team to cease the ritual last week, and Monday night the district notified Walpole that he had been relieved of his duties as head coach. Coach Andrew Rusciolelli will serve as interim head coach for the two remaining games of the season.

"The perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned, and therefore we took action yesterday to relieve the head coach of his responsibilities," McGinley said.

Military Magnet, the school from which the complaint originated, is majority-black, along with all but two of the teams on the AMHS football team's season schedule.

A member of the AMHS football team started an online petition to reinstate Walpole, and the petition has so far garnered more than 1,800 signatures.

Vocal opposition

Parents at the press conference angrily questioned McGinley about the decision to remove Walpole until she announced that the press conference was over and walked out of the room.

"Where are you going, ma'am?" one parent asked as McGinley headed for a side door in the school board room at 75 Calhoun St.



Paul Bowers

Connie Biggs, president of the AMHS Booster Club, said the so-called "monkey sounds" from the ritual were "football grunts" reminiscent of what she had heard in the movie *Remember the Titans*. She told McGinley that the face drawn on the watermelon looked like "a happy celebration picture."

Biggs does not have a child on the football team, but she said parents were upset that district officials interviewed students without getting parental consent. She says district employees interviewed the team members for four-and-a-half hours.

Biggs' husband, John Biggs, said the team is multiracial and that there was nothing racist implied in the watermelon ritual. "There was nothing racial about this until it was made racial by someone else," John said. "To me, these are the people that are racist. They're trying to turn an innocent bonding experience of a high school football team into some kind of racial slur that it's not."

McGinley said at a press conference that AMHS players reportedly engaged in a "tribal-like chant that is animalistic or monkey-like" after defeating a team from a majority-black school.

Jenifer Lake, a parent whose son played football under Walpole's coaching in a previous seasons, says she saw Walpole discipline players for acting in an unsportsmanlike manner.

"If anyone did anything that was not sportsmanlike or of the proper conduct, they got benched," Lake said. "He didn't put up with anything. He's a true Southern gentleman who believes in good sportsmanship."

Larry Kobrovsky, a state school board member and former member of the Charleston County school board, attended the meeting to stand in opposition to the decision and to ask McGinley questions. He said he thought the school district owed Walpole and the team an apology.

"It's absurd, I think. Racism is real, but when you stretch it to the point of absurdity you diminish the reality of it," Kobrovsky said. "I think they need to act like adults and apologize to the parents and their kids."

At the press conference, Kobrovsky asked school board chair Cindy Bohn Coats if she thought the district had made the right decision in relieving Walpole of his coaching duties. "I feel we need to continue to have the conversation," Coats said.

Tags: Academic Magnet High School, Bud Walpole, Charleston County School District, football, Nancy McGinley, Larry Kobrovsky, Sports, Race

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CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

School district forces out superintendent who fired coach who condoned racist ritual

Mob rules

Posted by Chris Haire on Thu, Oct 30, 2014 at 4:25 PM

My friends across the United States, don't believe the hype. Charleston is not the No. 1 city in the United States. I'm sorry you've been led to believe this. I truly am.

Yes, we have a great and wonderful town, full of colonial charm and history and friendly pride. We're home to great chefs and great restaurants, a truly great arts festival, and a music scene that's on the edge of breaking through — Cary Ann and Michael, love ya! Sean Brock, I just ordered your cookbook. Spoleto, Memorial Day weekend can't get here soon enough.

From the Battery to Upper King, the Ashley to the Cooper, we are truly one of the most beautiful cities in the country, if not the world. I love Charleston more than I've loved any other city — and I lived in Honolulu with the ocean right out my bedroom window and the mountains to my back.

But goddammit, this town is rotten with racists.

Not only do we have a Confederate-flag waving, Southern apologist heading up the College of Charleston, now the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees has forced Superintendent Nancy McGinely out of her job because she dared to fire a football coach who condoned a racist act.

Honestly, I had no idea that this was how the Coach Bud Walpole controversy would play out. I don't think anyone really did. The ouster of McGinley is every bit as surprising as one of George R. R. Martin's wedding-day bloodbaths. But it's even more brutal than the *Game of Thrones* author could have conjured up because McGinley was in the right to give Walpole the boot — and the board should've backed her.

The Academic Magnet coach had to know that his players were engaging in a ritual that would be perceived as racist by any sensible outside observer. If you don't already know, a racist caricature had been drawn on a watermelon and then smashed each time the largely white football team defeated their predominantly African-American competitors. Even worse, they reportedly made monkey sounds when they did it.

And based on what has been reported, it appears that McGinley in part was motivated to remove Walpole because he apparently didn't see anything disturbing himself, a stance that more than strains credulity given the coach's 50-some-odd-years on this planet.

But none of that explains how we got here — with Charleston's most successful superintendent being escorted from office by pitchfork.

In hindsight, there's no denying that McGinley simply misjudged her fellow Charlestonians. Perhaps she too had bought into the hype that the Holy City had shaken off its racist past, that our Lowcountry home had been born anew as America's most beloved tourist town. Perhaps she genuinely thought that the community would rise up with her and condemn this racist behavior. But it didn't.

As the controversy unfolded, the black community largely remained silent, while the entire Academic Magnet community rallied behind Coach Walpole, with some even going as far as to deny any racist connection between watermelons, Sambo-like caricatures, monkey noises, and black people. Because one single coach had been fired, they were willing to ignore America's shameful racist past. Apparently, to admit that their coach, their children, might be just a smidgen racist was simply too much to bear.

Coach Walpole's firing should have been a teachable moment, the kind that instructs the largely white student body of Academic Magnet High School in the ways that white people, even good ones, can inadvertently engage in hurtful racially offensive behavior. Instead what the students got was a teachable lesson in mob rule and white privilege. Days after his removal, Walpole was reinstated.

Many years from now, I know that many of these same AMHS students who defended Walpole and his players will see the error of their ways. I know that they will realize that it was wrong to turn a blind eye to how much pain the team's actions caused the African American community, some of them their fellow students. Now that Nancy McGinley has been forced out of office, perhaps that realization will happen much sooner rather than later.

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CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

I am a racist and proud of it

Posted by Chris Haire on Tue, Jun 25, 2013 at 3:49 PM

I realized something about myself today: I am a racist. And I'm not ashamed to admit it. In fact, I'm damn proud that I'm a racist.

The truth of the matter is I'm so proud of my racist beliefs I'm going to teach my two daughters to be racists, just like their racist old daddy. After all, if there's anything that's going to save our country from splitting in two, it's more racists.

There, I said it. The U.S. needs more racists, especially now that we have a black man in the White House and Congress seems poised to grant amnesty to some 11 million illegal immigrants.

Now, you're probably wondering how I came to the conclusion that I'm a racist. Well, it's pretty simple.

It all starts with Paula Deen.

Actually, it starts with Roan Garcia-Quintana, a former Nikki Haley campaign chair.

Wait, wait, that isn't right. It actually starts with SCGOP head Katon Dawson. And Jake E. Knotts. And John McCain. And Rick Perry. And Ron Paul. And Sergio Garcia. And Michael Richards. And Mel Gibson. And Matt Drudge. And Lou Dobbs. And Pat Buchanan. And Don Imus. And Rush Limbaugh. And John Rocker. And Fuzzy Zoeller. And John Mayer's penis.

All of these people have one thing in common: they are not racists. Nope. Nada. No way. They may have done a few things to make some folks think this, but this rogues gallery is in no way, shape, or form racist. In fact, they don't have a single racist bone in their non-racist bodies. They believe in a color-blind society. They believe that we are all God's creatures and that only some of us are lazy and stupid and morally derelict and sexually depraved, but they are not racists.

With this in mind, I've come to the conclusion that I've been wrong about the definition of racism all of these years. In fact, it must be the exact opposite of what I've thought it always meant. After all, if Paula Deen isn't a racist, then who is? Me, apparently.

I've never hired African American servers to pose as slaves. I've never told a racist joke. I've never called anyone a nigger. I've never belonged to an organization that doesn't believe in "race mixing." I've never called anyone a "raghead." I've never belonged to an all-white country club. I've never posted an image of our president eating a bucket of fried chicken. I've never owned a cabin in the sticks called "Niggerhead Ranch." I've never bemoaned the fact that our nation is losing its white Anglo-Saxon Protestant heritage. I've never called anyone a "nappy headed ho." I've never adhered to the tenets of the cult of white victimhood. I've never published a newsletter with racist content and courted anti-Semities and white nationalists to my nascent presidential campaign. I've never argued that the 14th amendment is unconstitutional. I've never argued that blacks have benefited from slavery.

And so City Paper readers, I've come to you today to admit this truth. I'm a racist. And I'm not going to apologize for it. So all of you non-racist assholes can take Paula Deen's entire collection of cookbooks and stick them up your non-racists asses.

Tags: Racist, Racism, Paula Deen, Rick Perry, Michael Richards, Rush Limbaugh, John Rocker, Fuzzy Zoeller, Roan Garcia-Quintana, Nikki Haley

Tweet Like 0

ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL
STATEMENT OF RECORD
Dr. Nancy J. McGinley

On Monday 10/13/14, Board member Miller reported to Dr. McGinley that an AMHS football player had reported to him a post-football game watermelon "ritual" which included an allegation that students were making monkey sounds. Board member Miller said he had alerted the student to the cultural sensitivity of the use of the watermelon, especially as it related to stereotypes of African Americans. Dr. McGinley then called the Principal of AMHS and asked her to investigate the allegation. A few days later, the Principal emailed Dr. McGinley indicating that the coaches were aware of the ritual but they were not present when the students smashed the watermelon. The tone of the Principal's email implied that there was merely a tradition of eating watermelon after the games and that the coaches had no concerns about any potentially racially sensitive overtones. Dr. McGinley stated she was still concerned about the possible negative cultural interpretation of the practice and the Principal agreed that the ritual would cease. After receiving the email, Dr. McGinley was also concerned that no coaches were present during this "ritual" and so as they had not observed what was actually said or done when the watermelon was smashed. Dr. McGinley, therefore, felt the situation warranted further investigation. Dr. McGinley directed Associate Superintendent Lou Martin (who had been the AMHS Principal's direct supervisor for 6 years and was familiar with the campus) to look into the matter further to determine if there was any truth to the student's allegation that the team made "noises that emulate the sounds from an ape and or monkey" which is what Board member Miller had indicated in an email.

Lou Martin and the CCSD Diversity Consultant, Kevin Clayton, went to AMHS on Thursday, October 16, 2014 to continue the investigation and to ask "either a cross section of the players, or all football players" (per Dr. McGinley's instructions) what they knew about the watermelon and the allegation that the team made "noises that emulate the sounds from an ape and or monkey." A decision was made by Lou Martin and Kevin Clayton, after talking to the Principal to interview all of the football players.

The protocol for conducting the interviews was not discussed with Dr. McGinley prior to the interviews but after the fact she understood the rationale for separating team members prior to asking them questions and had no objection to interviewing the students separately. She understood the entire team was addressed by the Principal prior to the interviews and were told what was going on and who would conduct the interviews. The interviewed students were given bathroom breaks, full make up privileges for any classroom work missed, and some teachers brought work or even exams to the lecture hall which was used as a "study hall" session while students were awaiting their turn to be interviewed. After each interview was conducted the student was permitted to return to class.

On Friday, October 17, 2014, Dr. McGinley was out of the office but was made aware that several AMHS football parents had called or emailed objecting to their children being interviewed the previous day. The parents' concerns were responded to by Mr. Martin, the Director of Community Outreach, Dr. Brenda Nelson, or Dr. McGinley. Dr. McGinley emailed Chair Coats individually at 10 a.m. to alert her of the investigation and updated the Board in the afternoon. That same afternoon, as she was traveling, Dr. McGinley spent about an hour on the telephone listening to Mr. Martin's account of the investigation, his preliminary findings and his initial recommendations for sanctions. Dr. McGinley asked critical follow up questions to ascertain the seriousness of the situation. Mr. Martin's report was significantly different than the Principal's had been. Mr. Martin agreed to work on finalizing his written report and Dr. McGinley scheduled a face to face meeting with him for Monday morning as she was concerned about what he had reported to her. During this time, Dr. McGinley was deluged with emails from Board member Miller. Despite her assurances to Mr. Miller that this was an administrative function and that a formal investigation was in progress, Mr. Miller wanted to be personally involved; he sent Dr. McGinley nine separate e-mails that week. Board policy and Dr. McGinley's contract clearly state board

members are to work through the superintendent and allow her to conduct the administrative and managerial functions of the district.

After a meeting on Monday morning October 20th, Dr. McGinley concluded there was no evidence to suggest that the football players understood the negative cultural implications of their ritual that included buying a watermelon, drawing a caricature (face) on the watermelon, naming the watermelon "Bonds-Wilson", transporting the watermelon on the team bus, sitting it on the team bench and surrounding and smashing the watermelon after a victory. However, it was clear the coaches either knew or should have known about the negative racial stereotypes of this watermelon ritual. Dr. McGinley accepted Mr. Martin's recommendation that the two assistant coaches be reprimanded and that the head coach be relieved of his duties for failing to monitor and supervise his players who repeatedly engaged in this inappropriate ritual.

As per Charleston County School District protocol, Mr. Martin worked with the CCSD Office of Employee Relations to compose discipline letters for Coach Ted Walpole and the two assistant coaches. Consistent with procedures, this letter came from the Associate Superintendent who hand-delivered the letter to Coach Walpole Monday afternoon. Due to the sensitive nature of this decision, Dr. McGinley and other administrators met with the football team on Monday afternoon.

An urgent Board meeting was called for Tuesday afternoon October 21st during which Dr. McGinley shared the results of the investigation and the justification for the personnel decisions. The Board asked Dr. McGinley if she had met with the coach and she explained that she had not as the procedure was for the Associate Superintendent to conduct the investigation and recommend disciplinary action and then for her, as Superintendent, to hear an appeal, if there was one. Only two or three Board members were physically present at the meeting so the five (5) members who attended by telephone could not see the caricature shown to the Board.

No formal action was taken by the Board and no vote or directive was given since it was an informational meeting. However, Dr. McGinley understood the Board wanted her to meet personally with the coach to hear his appeal as soon as possible and she told them she would. On Tuesday at approximately 5:20, Dr. McGinley called the coach and left him a message stating that she would meet with him the next day (Wednesday) at 2 p.m. to hear his appeal.

On Wednesday morning October 22nd, Chair Coats called Dr. McGinley and angrily asked if she was going to have to call a Board meeting in order to reinstate the coach. Dr. McGinley explained to Chair Coats that she was hearing the coach's appeal at 2 p.m. and was prepared to reinstate him if he could adequately address her concerns.

At the 2 p.m. meeting, Dr. McGinley asked the coach what he would do differently if she overturned the Associate Superintendent's recommendation and the coach talked to her about diversity and sensitivity training. Dr. McGinley asked the coach to put his resolution in writing so she could consider it and she then suggested it would help heal the division in the community if he and she could stand up together publically and explain what had happened and how it would be addressed and rectified. The coach agreed to put the resolution in writing but he wanted more time and he refused to address the issue publically. The coach left the building without preparing a written resolution but indicated he would prepare one and email it to Dr. McGinley by 4 p.m. o Dr. McGinley's final decision regarding the coach's appeal was, therefore, put on hold until she received his written resolution.

In the interim, a press briefing was getting underway in the Boardroom. Three (3) Board members (Ducker, Garrett, and Moffley) had already told the press that they would reinstate the coach the next day. Chair Coats told the press that she expected the outcome of Dr. McGinley's meeting with the coach to be positive, inferring reinstatement.

At about 4:30, Dr. McGinley received the coach's written resolution, reviewed it, and told the coach she was prepared to reinstate him and that she would tell the Board and public. It was within Dr. McGinley's authority to hear employee disciplinary appeals and reverse personnel decisions. Dr. McGinley reversed this disciplinary action because she thought it was the humane thing to do after talking to the coach.

Sent from my iPhone

On Oct 22, 2014, at 5:38 PM, PORTIA STONEY <portia_stoney@charleston.k12.sc.us> wrote:

Official Statement

Dr. Nancy J. McGinley

October 22, 2014

I met with Coach Bud Walpole at 2:00 p.m. today. I went into this meeting with an open mind prepared to listen to both his perspective and his appeal. During the meeting, he acknowledged that the facts that emerged surrounding the celebratory practices of the Academic Magnet High School football program could be viewed in a negative way. He agreed that we will work together on increasing diversity awareness for students and the community.

I requested that he provide to me his written statement of commitment, after which I would consider his position as the head football coach. I received his statement at 4:45 p.m.

Having reviewed his statement, I am persuaded that he appreciates CCSD's need to investigate these facts. I feel

good about our meeting, and I am confident that in his position as teacher, mentor and coach he will use the experience to deliver on his commitments, which are as follows:

1. I commit to teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings.
2. I will attend and participate with students in any sensitivity training sponsored or initiated by the district.
3. I will counsel my students before games to be extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.

While there are, and may continue to be, different perspectives on this chain of events, I would like to invite our community to join together with me and Coach Walpole to use this as a "teachable moment" for the benefit of our children.

This is not about winning or losing, this is about enhancing our commitment to dignity and respect, regardless of our differences.

Taking into consideration the potential value that he will add to our students and the community, given this experience, I am asking him to resume his coaching duties effective Thursday, October 23, 2014.

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email: "chriscollins4schoolboard@gmail.com Chris Collins" **Wednesday, October 22, 2014 at 6:16:20 PM Eastern Daylight Time**
To: email: "portia_stoney@charleston.k12.sc.us PORTIA STONEY"
Cc: email: "cindybohncoats@gmail.com Cindy Bohn Coats" , email: "cfraser@wrsrealty.com Cfraser@wrsrealty.com" , email: "tcraigascue@gmail.com Craig Ascue" , email: "emoffly@aol.com emoffly@aol.com" , email: "mmiller_barber@yahoo.com Michael Miller" , email: "retafblue@gmail.com retafblue@gmail.com" , email: "todd.garrett@avisonyoung.com Todd.garrett@avisonyoung.com" , email: "tripp@trippwiles.com Tripp Wiles"

Dr McGinley I don't understand why you made this statement to the press to reinstate the coach without coming back to the board for consideration like we discussed in our meeting yesterday. I found out from the news that you reinstated the coach. I'm really not pleased that you didn't include the board members. On such a hot topic that has the board under public scrutiny, you should have come back to board.

On Wednesday, October 22, 2014, PORTIA STONEY <portia_stoney@charleston.k12.sc.us> wrote:

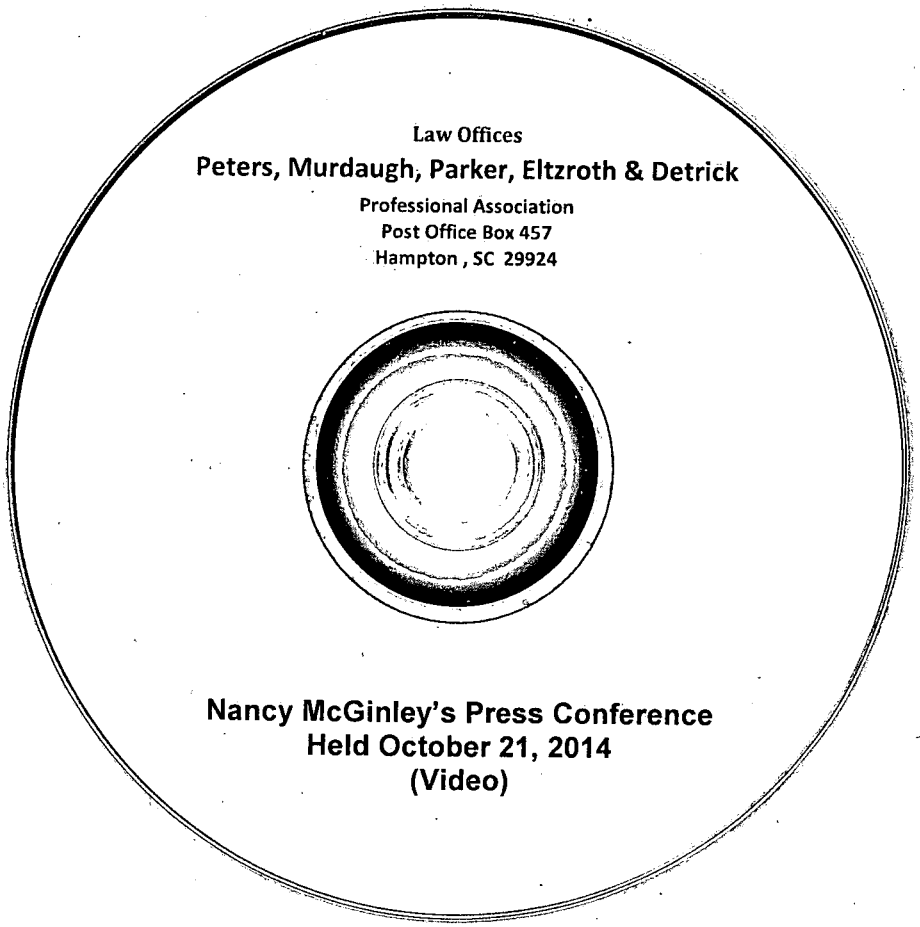
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October 22, 2014

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Video of Nancy McGinley's Press Conference held on October 21, 2014



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF CHARLESTON

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JAMES R. MOORE, JR. and BETTY MOORE, Guardians Ad Litem for R.A.M., a Minor, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, KEVIN CLAYTON, AXXIS CONSULTING COMPANY, and JONES STREET PUBLISHERS, LLC,

Defendants.

C.A. No.: 2014-CP-10-7203

AFFIDAVIT OF CHRIS HAIRE IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT ON BEHALF OF JONES STREET PUBLISHERS, LLC

FILED
2016 APR 29 AM 11:40
JULIE J. ARMSTRONG
CLERK OF COURT

APPEARED BEFORE ME, Chris Haire, who first being duly sworn, deposes and states as follows:

1. My name is Chris Haire. I make this affidavit of my own personal knowledge. I am over 18 years of age and competent to give testimony in a court of law.

2. I am the editor of the *Charleston City Paper*, a weekly newspaper published in the Charleston area by Jones Street Publishers, LLC. The *City Paper* is a small publication focused on the arts, music, food, and opinion. Among other things, my job duties include the writing of opinion pieces and editorials for the newspaper's online publication and weekly printed newspaper.

3. I was the author of the opinion editorial titled, "Melongate," which was published in the *Charleston City Paper* on October 21, 2014, and the opinion editorial titled, "Mob Rules," which was published in the *Charleston City Paper* on November 5, 2014. Copies of these editorials are attached as Exhibit A and Exhibit B. These editorials concern the "watermelon

ritual" that had been performed by the Academic Magnet High School football team following victories during the 2014 season, the firing of Coach Walpole because of the watermelon ritual, and his later reinstatement and Superintendent Nancy McGinley's resignation.

4. The *City Paper* did not break the news about the watermelon ritual. Publications and broadcasts about the watermelon ritual and the coach's firing began both during and immediately after a public press conference held by the Charleston County School District, in which Superintendent McGinley made statements about the watermelon ritual and announced Coach Walpole's firing. This was clearly "the" Charleston story that everyone was talking about that day on radio, television, and the internet.

5. I watched the news conference by a live television broadcast from the School District's public hearing room. I distinctly remember Superintendent McGinley stating that the watermelon ritual involved "monkey-like" chants of "ooh ooh ooh ooh," the drawing of a caricature face on a watermelon, the naming of the watermelon as "Bonds Wilson," and the smashing of the watermelon while the players chanted the "monkey sounds."

6. At the time of the press conference, I knew Superintendent McGinley well and had known her for some time. I have always considered her to be completely honest and trustworthy. I have never had any reason to doubt the truth of what she said, particularly in the context of official announcements such as those made at this public press conference, and I had no reason to doubt the truth of the statements she made during the press conference. I accepted them as true and reliable.

7. At the news conference, the audience was shown a redrawing of the caricature by the same player who had drawn it on the watermelons. A copy of the drawing is attached as

Exhibit C. There was no question in my mind then, and there is no question in my mind now, that the drawing was intended to be a caricature of an African-American person – the broad nose, kinky hair, big ears and eyes, and big toothy grin immediately brought to my mind the "Sambo" caricatures of the past.

8. Moreover, "Bonds Wilson" is the name of the formerly segregated African-American school that had been located at the site of the Academic Magnet High School campus. The name "Bonds Wilson" was taken from the names of two prominent African-American educators of early 20th-century Charleston.

9. Based on the facts as stated by the School District at the public press conference, I formed the opinions that the watermelon ritual involved offensive racist behavior on the part of the football players, and that the players and coaches should have known that this behavior would be perceived as offensive and racist. I believed that the apparent failure of the players and coaches to recognize the possibility of such a perception of their actions was "indicative of the casual acceptance of racism in Charleston today, even among the best and brightest," as I stated in the first editorial.

10. I wrote the two editorials at issue to express this point of view and (in the second one) to criticize the failure of the School Board and the community to support Superintendent McGinley's decision to fire Coach Walpole. As I stated in the second editorial: "Coach Walpole's firing should have been a teachable moment, the kind that instructs the largely white student body of Academic Magnet High School in the ways that white people, even good ones, can inadvertently engage in hurtful racially offensive behavior. Instead what the students got was a teachable lesson in mob rule and white privilege."

11. Both of the editorials were published in the "Views" section of the *City Paper*, which is a section dedicated to the expression of opinion by the newspaper's editors, by guest editorial writers, and by readers. With both of my editorials on the watermelon ritual, my whole purpose in writing the editorials was to state my opinions concerning the ritual, the firing and reinstatement of Coach Walpole, and the resignation of Superintendent McGinley. I held these opinions in good faith at the time they were published, and I continue to hold them and to believe that they express a valid point of view. In writing these editorials, my sole intent was to express my views based on the official statements of the School District officials, and not to cause harm to any individual.

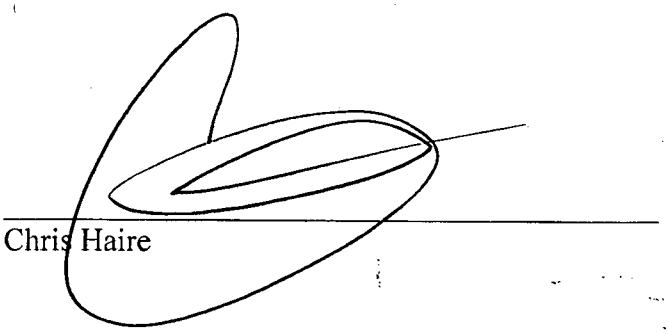
12. In response to my editorials, I heard from people, including Academic Magnet High School students, who disagreed with my opinions. All of these disagreeing statements of opinion were published by the *City Paper* on its website or in the paper.

13. Numerous other news reports, commentary, and editorials concerning the watermelon ritual and the firing of Coach Walpole were published or broadcast by other writers and commentators, over television and radio, in other print media, and in a great many internet media sites, blogs, and commentary before and during the same time period as when my editorials were published. Copies of some of these other publications (a small sample) are attached as Exhibit D. There is no question that the watermelon ritual was a matter of widespread and substantial public interest, commentary, and debate during this time. Further, many of these other publications and broadcasts were made to a vastly greater audience, readership, or viewership than the relatively small readership of the *City Paper*.

14. Many other commentators besides me expressed the opinions that the watermelon ritual involved racist behavior on the part of the football players, and that the players and coaches either had to have known or should have known that it would be perceived by African-Americans as racist. Again, much of this commentary was published and broadcast through radio, television, print and internet media to a vastly greater audience than the readership of the *City Paper*. Some of this other commentary (again, a small sample) are included in Exhibit D.

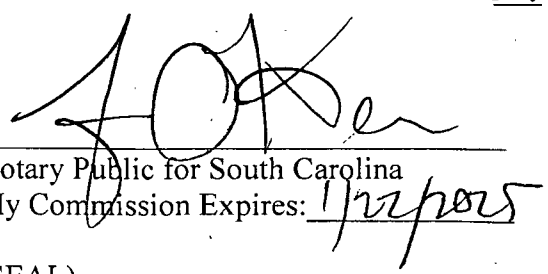
15. At the time my editorials were published, and at the present time, I considered them to be accurate, truthful, and fair with regard to the factual statements contained in them. I had no reason to doubt the truth of any of the facts stated in the editorials, and did not doubt the truth of any of the factual statements. With regard to the statements of opinion, those were and still are my opinions concerning this matter. Those opinions were based solely on the facts as reported by School District officials to the public and press, which were reported widely in the news media.

Further affiant sayeth not.



Chris Haire

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 27 day of April, 2016.



Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: 1/22/2025

(SEAL)

EXHIBIT A

CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

GROUNDHOG DAY CONCERT
BILL CARSON
KATHAN KOCI
RON WILYAOUT

Melongate: Big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey sounds don't mix

The sad truth

Posted by Chris Haire on Tue, Oct 21, 2014 at 5:20 PM

Today, Charleston was consumed by one story and one story only: the removal of Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole amid allegations that his players more or less behaved like racist douchebags. And if there's one lesson to be learned from all of this it's this: big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey noises don't mix. Any sensible person can see that.

Apparently not. And apparently not the coaching staff and the players on the Academic Magnet Raptors.

Somewhere along the way in this year's unexpectedly successful season, the Raptors took a liking to buying watermelons before their games. They apparently drew a face on it each time — a big toothy, grinning face. The first time the watermelon was named Junior. The next time it was Bonds Wilson, the name of the campus the AMHS shares with School of the Arts. That name stuck.

But here's where the things get even worse. At the close of each game, the players smashed the watermelon on the ground while reportedly making the monkey-like sounds of "ooh ooh ooh ooh." Apparently, the players did this after four or fives games, each time evidently after the largely white Raptor squad beat one of their opponents, each one largely an African-American team. Parents of players on one of the opposing teams reportedly brought this to the attention of African-American School Board member Michael Miller last week.

That the coaching staff of the Academic Magnet Raptors and none of its players, including at least one African American, didn't see the trouble with this toxic combination of monkey sounds, toothy grins, and watermelons is at best baffling and at worst indicative of the casual acceptance of racism in Charleston today, even among the best and brightest that the county has to often. After all, AMHS is not only the No. 1 ranked school in the state, it's one of the tops in the nations.

Seriously, did everyone at AMHS forget the last 100 years of American history? Did they forget about blackface, Buckwheat, and *Birth of a Nation*? Did they forget about minstrel shows? Did they forget about Coons Chicken, lawn jockeys, golliwogs, and the like? Apparently so. I don't know about you, but I think it's time to reconsider Academic Magnet's rankings because clearly they are producing nothing more than grade-A dumbasses.

Even more troubling is the degree to which Raptor Nation has circled the wagons around Walpole and the team. Frankly, this has nothing to do with the fact that the coach is by all accounts a good man. Walpole's merits are meaningless.

The point is that an entire team of players thought it was OK to draw a grinning face on a watermelon, smash it on the ground each time they beat a largely black team, and make monkey noises — and no one apparently told them to stop.

No one said, "Hey guys, I know not a single one of you has a racist bone in your body, you know, because that's a bad thing, and well, you're an Academic Magnet kid, and you come from a good middle-class white family and you're going to college, and there's no way in hell you'd, you know, draw a racist caricature on a watermelon and make monkey noises and do it fully aware of, like, what all that stuff means, because if you did, knowing all that stuff, then, yikes, people might start thinking you're racists. Hell, I'd think you're a racist, and, well, I just don't know if I can deal with the fact that Charleston's best and brightest students are racist douchebags. I mean, it's just a joke right? Right?"

Actually, it's not. It's the sad truth about life here in Charleston, S.C. today.

Tweet 20 Like 185

ROA 621

EXHIBIT B

V

HAIRE OF THE DOG | BY CHRIS HAIRE



Mob Rules

School board forces out superintendent for firing coach who condoned racist ritual

My friends across the United States, don't believe the hype. Charleston is not the No. 1 city in the United States. I'm sorry you've been led to believe this. I truly am.

Yes, we have a great and wonderful town, full of colonial charm and history and friendly pride. We're home to great chefs and great restaurants, a truly great arts festival, and a music scene that's on the edge of breaking through — Cary Ann and Michael, love ya. Sean Brock, I just ordered your cookbook. Spoleto, Memorial Day weekend can't get here soon enough.

From the Battery to Upper King, the Ashley to the Cooper, we are truly one of the most beautiful cities in the country, if not the world. I love Charleston more than I've loved any other city — and I lived in Honolulu with the ocean right out my bedroom window and the mountains to my back.

But goddammit, this town is rotten with racists.

Not only do we have a Confederate flag-waving, Southern apologist heading up the College of Charleston, now the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees has forced Superintendent Nancy McGinely out of her job because she dared to fire a football coach who condoned a racist act.

Honestly, I had no idea that this was how the Coach Bud Walpole controversy would play out. I don't think anyone really did. The ouster of McGinley is every bit as surprising as one of George R. R. Martin's wedding-day bloodbaths. But it's even more brutal than the *Game of Thrones* author could have conjured up because McGinley was in the right to give Walpole the boot — and the board should've backed her.

The Academic Magnet coach had to know that his players were engaging in a ritual that would be perceived as racist by any sensible outside observer. If you don't already know, a racist caricature had been drawn on a watermelon and then smashed each time the largely white football team defeated their predominantly African-American competitors. Even worse, they reportedly made monkey sounds when they did it.

And based on what has been reported, it appears that McGinley in part was motivated to remove Walpole because he apparently didn't see anything disturbing himself, a stance that more than strains credulity given the coach's 50-some-odd-years on this planet.

But none of that explains how we got here — with Charleston's most successful superintendent being escorted from office by pitchfork.

In hindsight, there's no denying that McGinley simply misjudged her fellow Charlestonians. Perhaps she too had bought into the hype that the Holy City had shaken off its racist past, that our Lowcountry home had been born anew as America's most beloved tourist town. Perhaps she genuinely thought that the community would rise up with her and condemn this racist behavior. But it didn't.

As the controversy unfolded, the black community largely remained silent, while the entire Academic Magnet community rallied behind Coach Walpole, with some even going as far as to deny any racist connection between watermelons, Sambo-like caricatures, monkey noises, and black people. Because one single coach had been fired, they were willing to ignore America's shameful racist past. Apparently, to admit that their coach, their children, might be just a smidgen racist was simply too much to bear.

Coach Walpole's firing should have been a teachable moment, the kind that instructs the largely white student body of Academic Magnet High School in the ways that white people, even good ones, can inadvertently engage in hurtful racially offensive behavior. Instead what the students got was a teachable lesson in mob rule and white privilege. Days after his removal, Walpole was reinstated.

Many years from now, I know that many of these same AMHS students who defended Walpole and his players will see the error of their ways. I know that they will realize that it was wrong to turn a blind eye to how much pain the team's actions caused the African-American community, some of them their fellow students. Now that Nancy McGinley has been forced out of office, perhaps that realization will happen much sooner rather than later.

ROA 623

EXHIBIT C

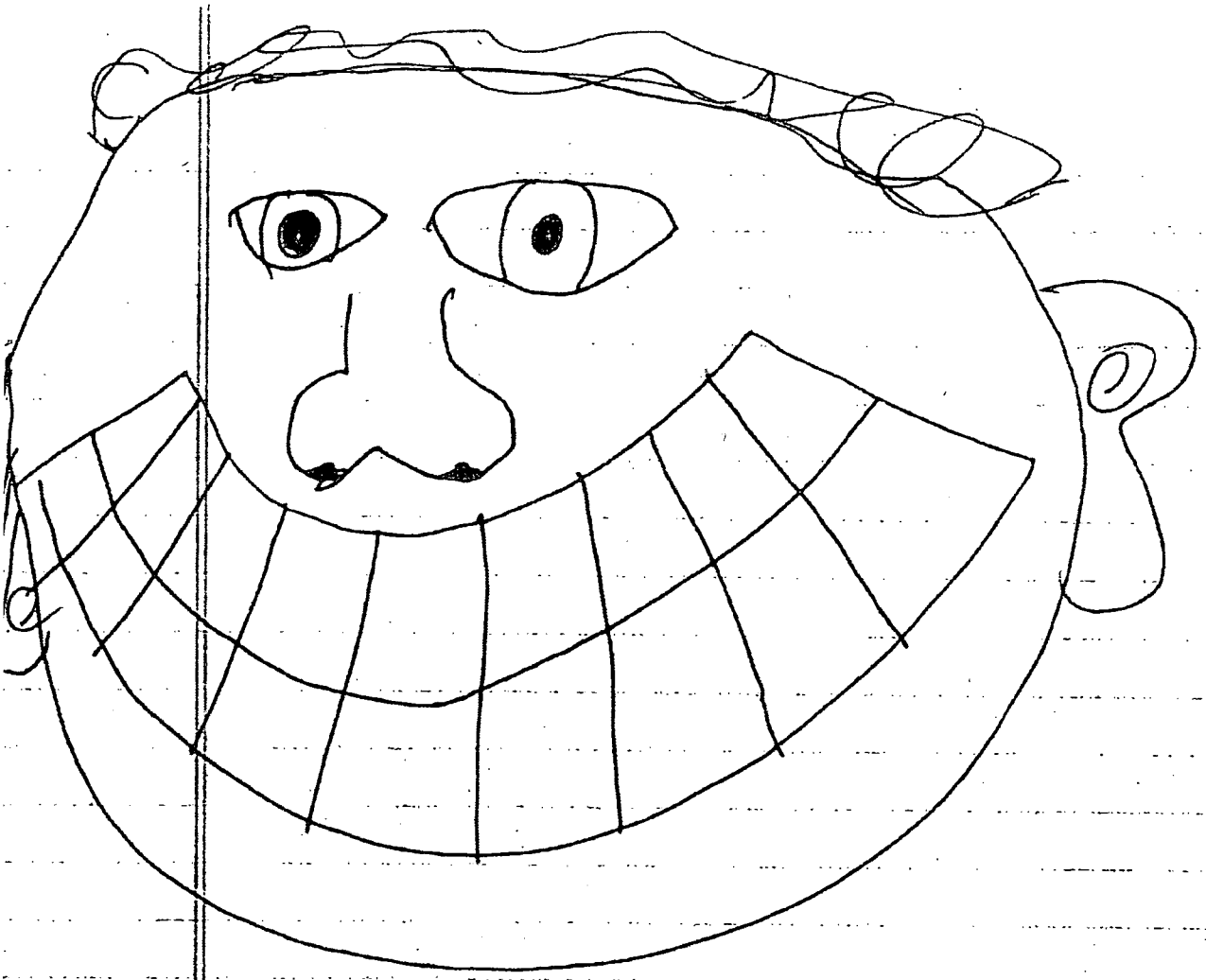


EXHIBIT D



Coby DuBose on Criminal Injustice, Race, and Poverty Follow RSS Sub

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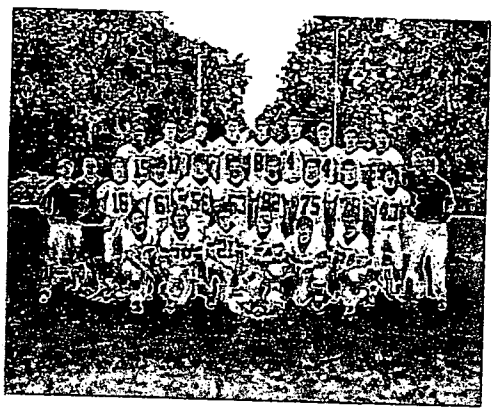
TUE OCT 21, 2014 AT 01:18 PM PDT

White SC High School Football Team Celebrates Win by Making Monkey Sounds and Smashing Watermelons

Grizzard

This portion of 186 Comments / 0 New

Meet the football team at Academic Magnet High School, a public school near Charleston, South Carolina.



As you can see here, they're almost entirely white, with the exception of a single teammate. Recently, they've played a number of games against teams that look like this:

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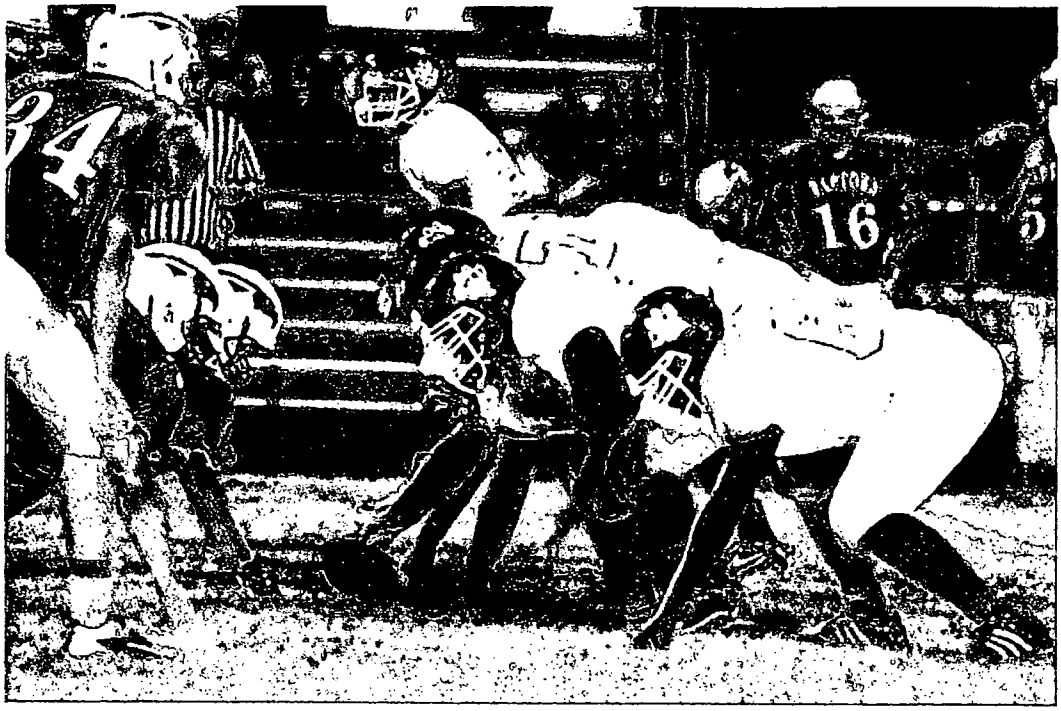
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On the left, you see the Raptors of Academic Magnet. On the right, North Charleston High School, a team that's made up almost entirely of black players.

During a recent winning streak, Academic Magnet has developed what you might call an *odd* tradition. **They smash watermelons on the ground**, then eat them. This alone might be offensive after defeating a mostly black team, but the fine folks at Academic Magnet have added something extra to their little celebratory routine - making "monkey noises."

A parent of an opposing team took issue with this practice and complained to the local school board. After investigating, the school took action against the coach, firing him, despite what many people claim is a prolonged run of success.

As you might suspect, some people have really taken issue with the "sensitive" and "overly PC" response to this incident. Just to provide some picture of what we're dealing with:

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On local radio this morning, broadcaster Emerson Phillips, who has been honored by the SC Broadcasters' Association with awards, went on a prolonged rant in which he bemoaned the fact that "some people" - namely, black people and Jewish people - "see racism or anti-Antisemitism in everything." According to him, those people "let racism effect everything they do."

These are typical refrains from racists and those who look to cover for racists in all parts of the country, but especially in the Deep South. This event has been met with incredulity on the part of many white people, who seemingly cannot understand how something as innocuous as a watermelon and "monkey noises" could ever be viewed as racist. These people, of course, are either extremely disingenuous or have been living in a cave.

It's in this light that a "Dear White People" lesson is needed.

As white people, we do not get to tell black people what they can and cannot be offended by. Offense is the province of the offended, especially when such offense is objectively reasonable.

More than that, we inherit - and in fact, occupy - the actual world, complete with its full history. We do not occupy a world where watermelons are neutral fruits in the context of a white person speaking to a black person. Likewise, we don't occupy a space in which one group making monkey noises toward the other constitutes a signal of mutual appreciation for the local zoo.

Rather, we occupy a world in which white people have used symbols - be they the confederate flag, watermelons, fried chicken, nooses, or anything else - to intimidate, de-humanize, and otherwise demean black people. And black people cannot be blamed for learning and understanding that history. When black people understand that in the early 1900s, white people dressed in blackface in order to highlight the "simplicity" of the black man by showing that black man content with just having his fill of watermelon, then we have a duty to moderate our use of those symbols.

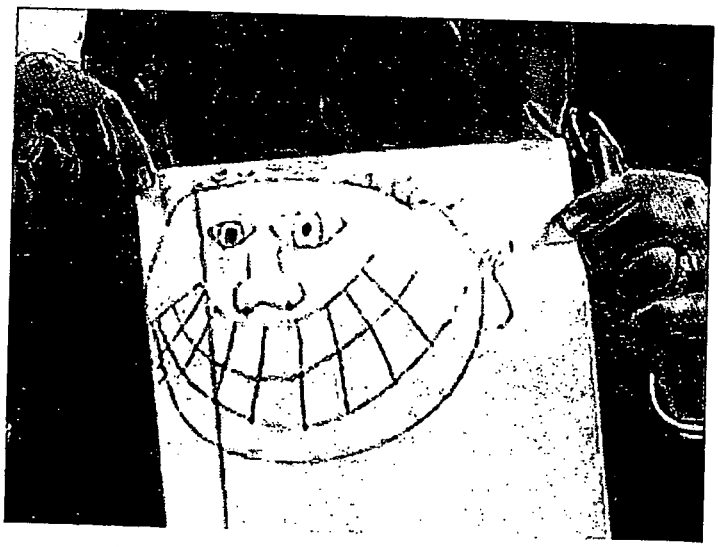
When black people understand that even today, the president of the United States is depicted as a simpleton after a juicy watermelon treat, we must understand that the context in which they view, and receive, messages about things like watermelon are through the context of that distant and not-so-distant history. For centuries, watermelons have been used to demonstrate that the black man is so stupid that he would be content with his lot in life - that of the oppressed, the enslaved, and the downtrodden - if a white man would only give him some watermelon. Understanding that, it becomes very easy to understand why a black person today would take great offense at a nearly all white football team celebrating a win over a nearly all black football team by smashing watermelon and ripping a few primate noises.

I don't buy that the Academic Magnet team engaged in its little ritual without nefarious intent. There are few contexts in which young, white boys would use monkey sounds and eat watermelon on the same field as young, black boys that do not suggest the intention of racial subjugation. But even if one gives these boys a benefit of the doubt they have not earned, it is still the responsibility of white folks to understand history and to avoid those symbols which will rightly be offensive to black people or any other ethnic group.

And when those people speak up about the offense, it is incumbent upon us not to tell them that they are wrong - another form of racism in which we elevate our judgment over theirs - but rather, to listen to what they have to say, to study the history behind it, and to understand how, given the hundreds-years context, black people would be angered at the suggestion of their simplicity.

Updated: To add this nugget from **News 4 Charleston**:

"Further, the students also drew a face on each watermelon and named them, according to McGinley. She said the investigation revealed the students also named the watermelons Junior and Bonds Wilson.
Bonds Wilson is the name of the formerly predominantly-black school in North Charleston where Academic Magnet now sits."



The above image was uncovered in the investigation. It's a sketch that administrators believe the students used to draw faces on the watermelons. It doesn't take a history scholar to see that that picture is a really poor high school artist's rendering of some of the old sambo "art" that was produced in the early 1900s. The overdone smiles. The red eyes. The overdone nose. I know that racists will deny it, but I've seen enough of those types of illustrations to know

what these students intended.

ORIGINALLY POSTED TO COBY DUBOSE ON CRIMINAL INJUSTICE, RACE, AND POVERTY ON TUE OCT 21, 2014 AT 01:18 PM PDT.

ALSO REPUBLISHED BY COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT.

Charter Schools Civil Rights Racism Recommended Rescued Rescued to Recommended South Carolina watermelon

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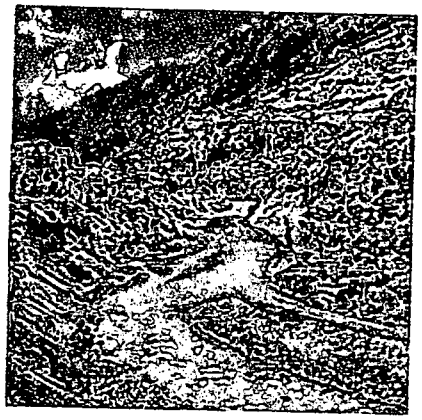
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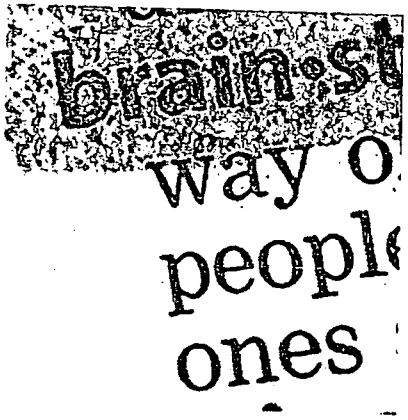
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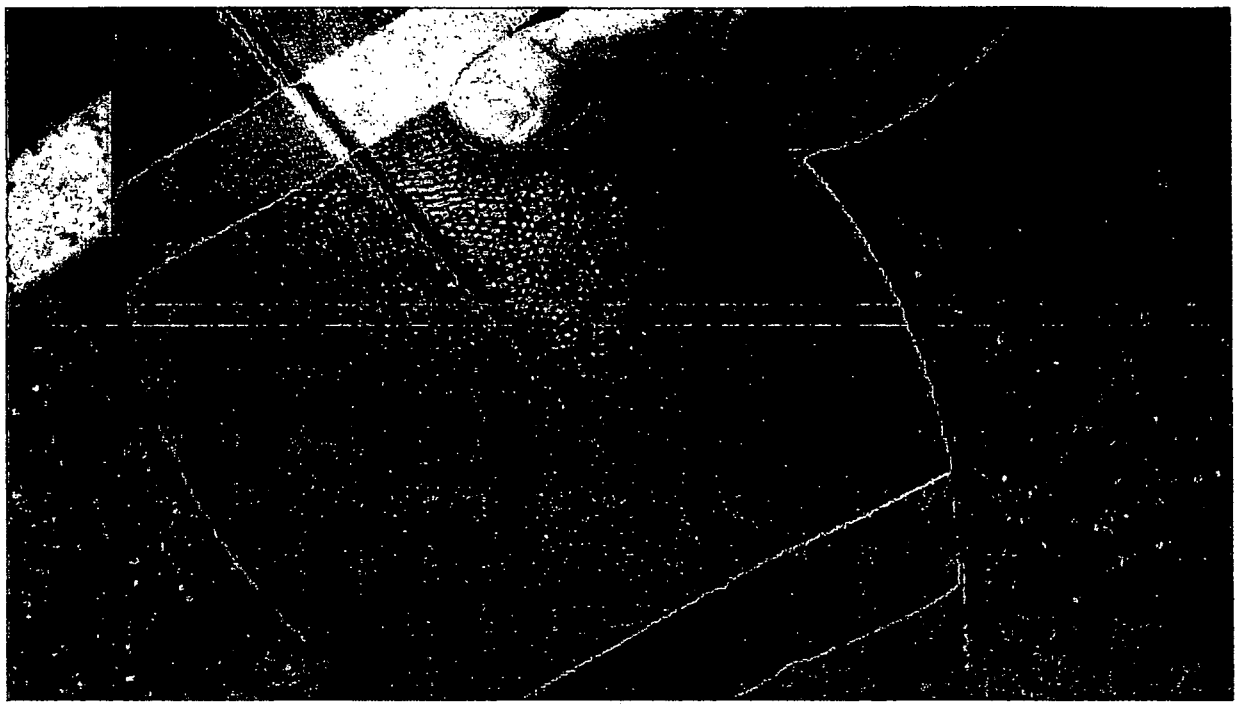
35 Celebrities Who Completely Ruined Their Faces
Caliser

COMMENT PREFERENCES ◉ EXPAND ○ SHRINK ○ HIDE ☐ AUTO REFRESH?

S.C. coach fired over watermelon, ape-like celebrations

By Associated Press

Published: October 21, 2014, 6:37 pm Updated: October 21, 2014, 6:37 pm



(Photo Credit: WPBN/WTOM)

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) – A high school football coach has been fired because of postgame victory celebrations the district superintendent says involved players smashing watermelons and making ape-like sounds.

Nancy McGinley said Tuesday she was contacted last week by a board member who said the parent of an opposing player was offended by the celebrations by the mostly white Academic Magnet High School football team in Charleston County. The Raptors were smashing watermelons with smiling faces drawn on them and eating the fruit as a postgame snack.

The district announced that Bud Walpole will no longer coach the football team or the girls' basketball team. He is still a teacher at the school.

A phone listing for Walpole could not be found. On online petition had 1,500 names late Tuesday seeking his reinstatement.

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Racist Display Gets High School Football Coach Fired

October 22, 2014

Bud Walpole, head football coach at Academic Magnet High in Charleston, South Carolina, got fired because his team smashed watermelons to commemorate their victory over a team with Black opponents, Raw Story reported.

Walpole's termination was announced earlier this week by Charleston County school district superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley after a district-led investigation determined that not only did the team smash the watermelons, they drew faces on and named them.

"It is our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults," said McGinley. "That the perceptions and the practices that were part of the ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned, and therefore we took action yesterday."

It was noted that several of Academic Magnet's opponents were predominantly Black teams, while Academic Magnet has one black player. A complaint was filed reporting that the team was making "animalistic or monkey-like chants" after their games, the time at which they smashed the watermelons.

Despite the investigation, Darius Nwokike, the team's sole Black player, actually defended his coach.

"It was just something we could look forward to during the week," said Nwokike. "It really started by accident. We'd go to the Subway before games, and before the second game of the season, one of the players saw a watermelon stand. He thought it would be cool to buy one and maybe we could eat it after the game if we won. Well, we won and we broke the watermelon because we didn't want to cut it. It was a tradition that lasted six games."

No doubt this series of events is a strange one. Perhaps the tradition didn't have a racial intent; however, be that as it may, one thing Walpole is guilty is a serious lack of self- and social-awareness. There are other people in this world than him and his team.

Joshua De Leon





Football Coach Canned After Mocking Black Opponents With Watermelons

NEWS, VIDEO

» by D.L. Chandler (@dlchandler123) Oct 22 2014, 12:24pm

SHARE THIS TWEET THIS EMAIL THIS

A high school football coach in Charleston, S.C. was fired this past Monday after allegations of racist behavior by his mostly-white squad came to the surface. With the team performing a watermelon-smashing ritual after game wins, it appears that the team was mocking Black players.

Charleston County School District superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley said Tuesday that Academic Magnet High football head coach Bud Walpole was fired after an investigation into the post-game ritual and news of "chanting sounds" being made.

More from WCIV:

Early information about the scandal only showed the students were breaking open watermelons and eating them after victories. McGinley said reports from people at other schools suggested they were making "animalistic or monkey-like chants" after the games.

Further, the students also drew a face on each watermelon and named them, according to McGinley. She said the investigation revealed the students also named the watermelons Junior and Bonds Wilson.

Bonds Wilson is the name of the formerly predominantly-black school in North Charleston where Academic Magnet now sits.

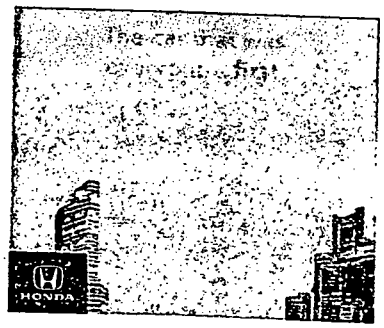
The Charleston branch of the NAACP announced this morning plans for a press conference. The conference will be held at the NAACP's downtown facility in the city at 1:30 p. m. ET.

McGinley says that school officials called the watermelon smashing an "innocent ritual" and didn't see the potential for harm in it. A Charleston County School District board member then added the complaints of the "animalistic or monkey-like chants" during games.

Academic Magnet's one lone Black player, Darius Nwokike, started a Change.org petition to reinstate Coach Walpole.

Watch WCIV's news report below.

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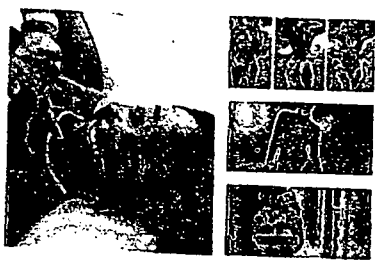
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BANGIN CANDY



Coach Fired After Horribly Racist Postgame Parties Involving Acting Like Monkeys, Smashing Watermelons

October 23rd, 2014 mdesmond Racism in America 0 comments

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I played football back in middle school, so I can understand that sometimes post game celebrations can get out of hand. However, it's the job of the coach to keep them from spinning out of control and disciplining the players when they do stupid and offensive things as fit — not encouraging them. American Magnet Football coach Bud Walpole found this out the hard way when he was dismissed by the Charleston County School District on Tuesday following post game celebration that allegedly involved smashing watermelons and making "ape sounds" that were offensive to the African Members of the team.

The allegations were first brought to district officials by a parent of the opposing team. The allegations led to an investigation, which unearthed details of the coach and his players smashing watermelons and having the players eat the fruit remains, in addition to making "ape-like noises" while smashing the aforementioned fruit.

Watermelons and ape-like noises; it doesn't take a lot to see why, after a century or more of stereotypes, those would be offensive to the African American players. It's not rocket science, it's basic media exposure and understanding American history. It's disingenuous to insist that they're somehow "innocent" or "good fun;" a century plus of stereotypes doesn't go away because you're *uncomfortable* with them at that moment in time — try living with them, day in and day out.

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Whipper seeking coach's ouster

Lawmaker, alumni from Bonds-Wilson speak out on ritual

BY AMANDA KERR
akerr@postandcourier.com

Less than 24 hours after Academic Magnet High School head football coach Bud Walpole got his job back, a state lawmaker and Bonds-Wilson Alumni Association members called for the suspension and possible firing of Walpole and his assistant coaches over what some considered a racially offensive post-game watermelon ritual.



Whipper

State Rep. Seth Whipper, D-North Charleston, whose district includes the Academic Magnet High School campus, held a press conference Thursday outside the Charleston County School District headquarters in downtown Charleston where he and several Bonds-Wilson alumni said they plan to attend a school board

Please see COACH, Page A4

Inside

Brian Hicks: Overreaction at Academic Magnet overlooks a different problem. **A2**

Football coach Bud Walpole returns to practice field **C3**

Whipper seeking ouster of Magnet football coach

COACH, from A1

meeting Monday to press for the "true facts" regarding the post-game tradition.

"If the facts are that this particular act did occur, then we're going to ask that everybody be terminated," Whipper said. "I cannot see how we minimize how an adult person (Walpole) who is more than 50 years old could forget what has happened in this country and allow young men to practice the kind of behavior we know has been established by (the district's) investigation."

Whipper said sanctions may need to be taken against the players as well, including an immediate end to the team's season.

"I feel that we're at the point where if the young men who are on that football team believe they've done the right thing, their season should be suspended," he said.

Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley reinstated Walpole on Wednesday as head football and head girls basketball coach two days after district administrators fired him from his coaching duties in connection with the post-game ritual in which players chanted while smashing watermelons. McGinley has said the district never considered taking punitive actions against the players on the team.

As part of his reinstatement Walpole was required to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to better respect the differences of others, attend sensitivity training and to counsel his players before games to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

Whipper said Thursday he was not familiar with the stipulations Walpole was required to make as part of his reinstatement, but he would work to make sure something like this never happens again rather than punishing an exemplary role model," he said.

Bonds-Wilson alumnus Kevin Williams, who was among the group who attended the press conference, said he feels the players' decision to use the name Bonds-Wilson reflects their lack of knowledge about the school's history. Bonds-Wilson opened in the 1950s as a segregated school, and was integrated in 1971. The school was closed in 1985 and has since been demolished.

Bonds-Wilson has produced several notable alumni, including former Raiders coach Art Shell and jazz percussionist Alphonse Mouzon.

"They don't really understand the history and what the school stood for," said Williams, a 1983 graduate of Bonds-Wilson.

"It's a historical name and means a lot to the black community."

Some graduates of the school as well as the black community, Whipper said, are upset to see the school's name associated with a watermelon when the district did not include the name Bonds-Wilson as part of the magnet school's name when the school moved to that location.

"The Bonds-Wilson community is really disturbed about this that somehow the name Bonds-Wilson is not good enough to name the school in that way, but good enough to name a watermelon," Whipper

Poll

Do you think any further action needs to be taken in the case of the Academic Magnet High School football team's watermelon ritual? Find this story at **postandcourier.com/polls** to vote.

ment.

School Board member Michael Miller reported the team's tradition to the district on Oct. 13 after hearing from a parent of a Military Magnet Academy student who was offended by the ritual, which the team performed following its defeat of Military Magnet on Sept. 5.

District officials questioned the 29 players on the team as well as Walpole and his assistants about the ritual two days after Miller reported his concerns.

The team's victory ritual involved the group chanting in a circle and smashing a watermelon decorated with a caricature face drawn with black marker.

Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston. The Bonds-Wilson Campus pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who spoke with the players as part of the district's investigation, said some players had no idea why the watermelon was named Bonds-Wilson.

A few, he said, considered using the name Bonds-Wilson as a 12th man on the team and were doing it "kind of as a unity for support."

Attorney Dwayne Green, who is representing Walpole, said Thursday afternoon that Walpole did not know about the "negative connotations" of his team's ritual of smashing watermelons.

Watermelons are tied to racial stereotypes that were prevalent after the Civil War that, according to Citadel history professor Marcus Cox, perpetuated the idea that African-Americans were simple-minded and inferior.

"If he had known, he most definitely would have put the practice to a stop," Green said.

Green invited Whipper to meet with the coach to make his "own assessment on what type of person the coach is."

"I'm confident that if he went beyond the second- and third-hand accounts of what happened that he'd come to the same conclusion that I have and said. 'We can't accept that, so something will be done.'"

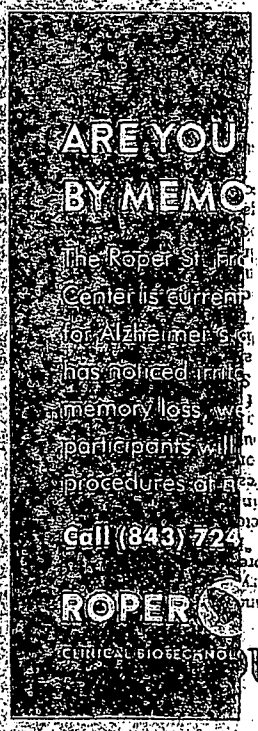
Attorney Larry Kobrovsky, who is representing the Academic Magnet School Improvement Council, said Thursday the students did not perceive that their postgame tradition had racial connotations.

"These are kids who had no racial intention, no ideas that it would be perceived this way by anybody," he said. "These are children who had no baggage racially who can't even comprehend of what they're being accused of because it wasn't in their minds eye."

Kobrovsky is also planning to attend the school board meeting on Monday to ask McGinley and Martin for an apology on behalf of the students for making the inference of racially provocative behavior against the players and for the manner in which the players were interrogated about the ritual.

"This is why you don't unleash the genie of racial accusations casually because you can't put it back in again," he said.

"All the adults need to act responsibly to calm things down."



State rep: Fire all the coaches at Academic Magnet

Posted: Oct 20, 2014 10:01 PM EDT
Updated: Oct 23, 2014 3:50 PM EDT

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (WCIV) – Last Friday, Bud Walpole stood on the sidelines hoping his Academic Magnet Raptors could pick up a seventh win. This Friday, he'll do the same. But it's what happened in the last week that really shapes those first steps on the field in North Charleston.

That's because Walpole was fired Monday, alternately defended and vilified Tuesday and Wednesday, and asked to return to his job on Thursday. He said yes, according to his attorney Dwayne Green.

Green said Walpole was both thankful and grateful for the opportunity to return to the sidelines and will take this week as a learning opportunity.

But the issue seems to be far from over after a strange press briefing Thursday morning in front of the school district's headquarters involving District 113 Rep. Seth Whipper and members of the Bonds Wilson Alumni Association.

Whipper called for the re-firing of Academic Magnet head coach Bud Walpole on Thursday. He also called for the firing of all of the football team's assistant coaches.

He also wants Academic Magnet to suspend the rest of the season.

McGinley said in a release early Wednesday evening she had asked Walpole to return to work. She met with Walpole at 2 p.m. and asked him for a statement of commitment which he provided nearly three hours later.

"I feel good about our meeting, and I am confident that in his position as teacher, mentor and coach he will use the experience to deliver on his commitments," McGinley said in the letter.

Part of Walpole's commitment, if he accepts the district's offer, will be to "teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings;" to attend in sensitivity training provided by the district; and "counsel my students before games to be extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

McGinley said this ordeal was not about winning or losing, but bout ensuring that everyone gets respect and dignity in the community

While Walpole and McGinley were meeting at district headquarters, attorneys Andy Savage and Larry Kobrovsky met with parents at Academic Magnet.

Notes from that meeting show parents are looking for CCSD officials to define its current procedures for handling investigations as well as assurances those procedures are carried out evenly for everyone across the district.

The shift in Walpole's employment came after Charleston NAACP officials likened the post-game watermelon ritual that led to the firing of the coach to a black football team urinating on the Confederate flag after games.

Chapter president Dot Scott compared the ritual by Academic Magnet's football team to a predominantly black football team urinating on a Confederate Flag as a "victory ritual" when they beat a predominantly white team. The Academic Magnet watermelon celebration being defined as "fun" was also compared to the "fun" whites used to have lynching blacks.

She said Wednesday the NAACP would not comment on that statement, however.

School board member Elizabeth Moffley said by phone Wednesday afternoon that she thought Superintendent Nancy McGinley would reinstate Walpole before the board convened again to vote on the matter.

Moffley said the majority of board members are unhappy with the way Walpole was fired and the decision to fire him. As a result, many members are encouraging McGinley to reinstate him quickly.

Scott read a prepared statement Wednesday afternoon commending the school district for "swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual."

Scott said the drawings on the watermelon were racially identifiable caricatures and named for a former black high school. CCSD Superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley said Tuesday the students named the watermelons Bonds Wilson, which is the name of the campus area and former predominantly-black school where Academic Magnet and School of the Arts now sit.

She went on to say that someone has to be held accountable for the behavior of the players.

"The parents and other adults involved -- who should set a standard of positive behavior for our children -- are old enough to know that and should re-examine their values if they try to excuse away a blatant insult to many in our community, regardless of race or culture," she said.

Scott said the issue at Academic Magnet is representative of a larger problem across CCSD, pointing to non-specific examples of black Kindergarten students being interrogated, and black middle school students being arrested for talking back to teachers.

There is a diversity problem in the schools, Scott said, which may be why the students named watermelons Bonds Wilson instead of having the school name changed to Bonds Wilson Academic Magnet.

A parent at the CCSD press conference on Tuesday said the students used the name as a nod to school pride. Others who are defending the students and Walpole said it was the team's sole black member who filed the online petition to have him reinstated.

Scott said there are always outliers when issues of race and racism arise.

Scott did say she met with Walpole Wednesday morning and he apologized for the incident, saying he did not see the celebration by his team as racially insensitive.

On Tuesday, school district superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley responded to questions from parents and the media on why officials elected to fire Academic Magnet's football coach after learning of a post-game celebratory ritual.

Walpole was fired Monday. McGinley clarified the situation Tuesday, saying Walpole was removed from all athletic programs. He was also the coach of the girls' basketball team.

She said she had not talked to Walpole but would be meeting with him and then the board before making a decision on reinstating him.

Early information about the scandal only showed the students were breaking open watermelons and eating them after victories. McGinley said reports from people at other schools suggested they were making "animalistic or monkey-like chants" after the games.

Further, the students also drew a face on each watermelon and named them, according to McGinley. She said the investigation revealed the students also named the watermelons Junior and Bonds Wilson.

Bonds Wilson is the name of the formerly predominantly-black school in North Charleston where Academic Magnet now sits.

McGinley said the complaint was lodged on Oct. 13 through a board member who was concerned about racial stereotypes. As a result, the school's principal was called and an investigation began.

However, McGinley said school officials found no culture of racism and called it an "innocent ritual." That's when school board member Michael Miller included complaints of the chants.

"The purchasing of the watermelon, the drawing of the face to me makes this issue not only inappropriate but highly disrespectful and highly insensitive," Miller said after the press conference Tuesday. "I do recognize that

children will be children, youth will be youth, and sometimes in their youthfulness they are not aware of the social ramification and implications of things that they do."

Walpole declined to comment on the matter Monday evening. David Spurlock, the Charleston County director of athletics, confirmed Walpole's ouster Monday evening.

District officials released a brief statement Tuesday morning on the matter, only saying an investigation was conducted that led to Walpole's dismissal. The statement classified the post-game celebrations described by a student and parent as "inappropriate."

The district also named the interim coaching staff.

"Coach Andrew Rusciolelli will serve as the interim head football coach and Coach Steven Kamp and Coach Gary Weart will be assistants for the two remaining games of the 2014 season," the statement reads.

Meanwhile, the Academic Magnet student body is being vocal in trying to get Walpole reinstated, including an online petition with nearly 1,800 signatures by 5 p.m. Tuesday. The petition was started by Darius Nwokike.

"Walpole is the greatest coach to walk Magnet's halls," said one student in an email to ABC News 4.

The student, who is not on the football team, said he has only seen Walpole interacting with the school's athletic director, but otherwise has never interacted with Walpole.

According to the student, the issue with Walpole began with celebrations after games.

"The whole thing began when the football team started celebrating victories by smashing a watermelon and cheering in a circle to celebrate a hard-fought win," the student said in an email. "This was seen by a [Charleston County School District] official who deemed the act to be racist."

The student said Walpole did not purchase the watermelons.

However, the student said the football team was taken out of class last week by the district's associate superintendent and another man and asked about the watermelon incidents.

Walpole and the team traveled to Whale Branch on Friday, a day after the interviews, the student said.

"Then [Monday] after school, as Coach Walpole and was coming to the school for practice, he was stopped... and told of his firing," the student said.

A parent of a student on the football team corroborated the student's story, adding the members of the team were held for several hours while each was questioned individually about the actions of the incident.

The parent said the students ate or destroyed a watermelon after each game as an act of good luck. The parent went on to say this was not an act of racism but a seemingly harmless activity for a team.

A former student posted an opinion to CNN's iReport, calling to task the school district's process and decision.

"These high school athletes were forced into a room one by one and questioned about their 'racist' acts. Since when is eating watermelon racist? Since when does a school board have the right to interrogate students without notifying their parents? The way this situation has been handled can only be described as despicable," the former student wrote.

Another former player, Tyre Moore, called Walpole "one of the nicest and most caring coaches I've ever played for. I truly believe, along with any other players, that Coach Walpole is a first-class guy who always does the right thing."

Walpole has been the head coach at Academic Magnet for nearly a decade.

The school district has a diversity council, a group that aims to promote diversity within CCSD and offers diversity awareness education. It is headed up by Dr. Brenda Nelson, who said the first phase of the district's diversity program was started during the 2009-2010 and wrapped up in 2012. The second phase is underway, but Nelson did not have details on it.

Nelson said CCSD was among the first in the state to have a diversity council. She is also working on a diversity plan for the district that should be rolled out in early November.



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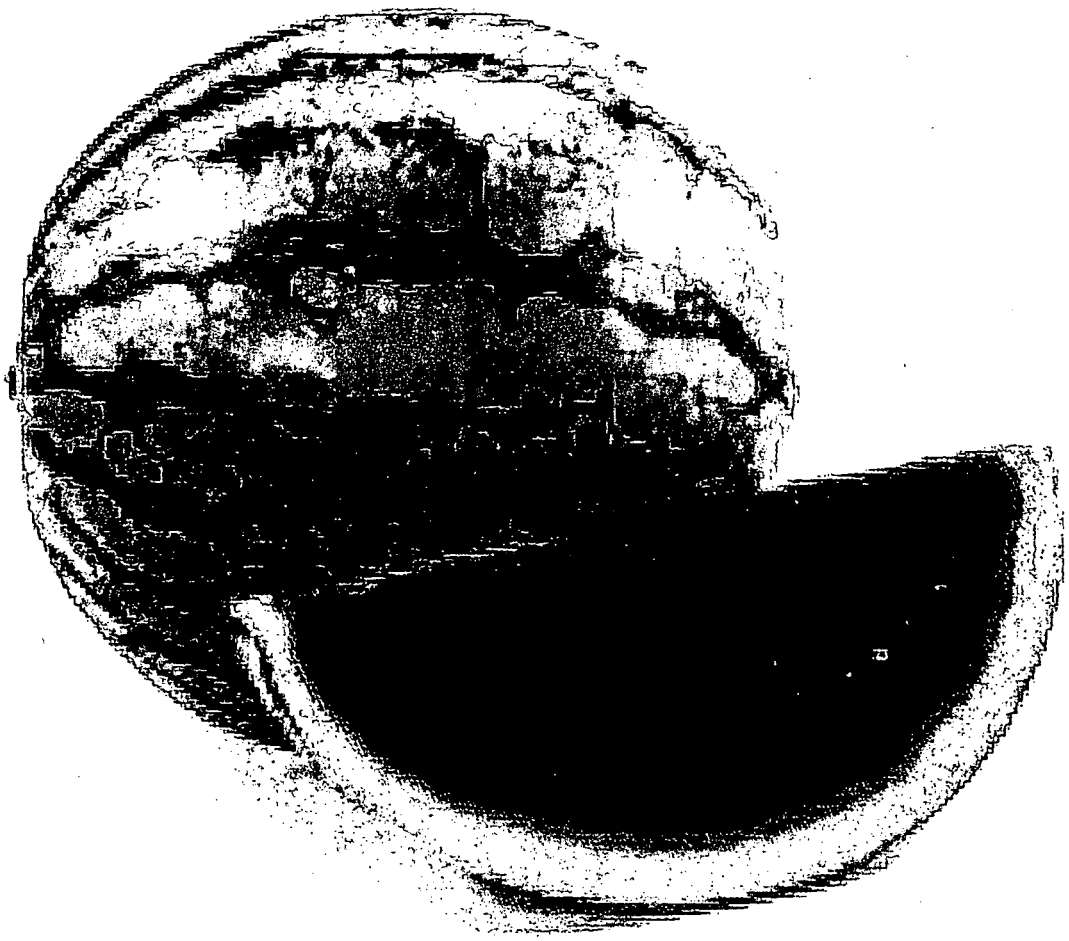
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William Pugh, Contributing Writer
October 30, 2014
Filed under News, Showcase

Sometimes a Watermelon isn't Just a Watermelon.

This past month has been quite controversial with regards to the firing of Academic Magnet High School's head football coach, Bud Walpole and the team's post-game practices. The controversy began with the team's initiation of a post-game ritual of naming, drawing "caricatures" on, and smashing of watermelons while chanting "ooh ooh ooh"-like sounds according to CCSD Superintendent Nancy McGinley. The ritual was observed and reported to a Charleston County school board member who then brought it to the attention of Dr. McGinley. McGinley, then investigated the incident and asked Walpole to resign as head coach, on the basis that he was aware of the team's actions and passively stood by.

It is important to see the other side of the situation. The media and general conversation around the topic has been slanted tremendously, making the event appear to be a compete misunderstanding, and free of any racial insensitivity. This is simply not accurate. The actions committed by the team, intentionally or not, were racially insensitive due to continual stereotypes singling out African Americans dating back to slavery. That is a fact. Black stereotypes are present in today's society, and the students at Academic Magnet are aware of this. When you hear the words: watermelon, fried chicken, kool-aid, rap music, and fears of swimming, what ethnic group comes to mind? This is an unfortunate reality, but events like this even further add to its prevalence and acceptance in our society.

Sometimes a Watermelon isn't Just a Watermelon.

Given the circumstances, the watermelon represented more than just a fruit. It served as a representation of African American cultural stereotypes. The fact is, the team committed these actions time and time again after defeating predominately African American schools. Racism may not be the appropriate word to use, but "cultural insensitivity" is. The fact that Coach Walpole did not find fault in these acts is troubling. This is why, he was asked to resign; to take responsibility for the players' senseless actions (as a head coach should). Superintendent McGinley took action in order to send

a message of zero tolerance.

Of the 644 students at Academic Magnet, I am one of our 15 African Americans. That's 2.3%. From my personal experience and perspective, I am very offended by the actions of some of my classmates. I find fault in their careless, thoughtless, and insensitive actions. Knowing most of them, I do not feel that any of them are racists and hate African Americans, but I do feel that because of the lack of diversity at the school, some of them are not fully able to realize the magnitude of their actions and why they are offensive. I feel that it is impossible that the team or individual who started this ritual did not know of any correlation between the watermelon and African American race. The wide grin, large nose, and "twig-like hair" characteristics drawn on the melon are distinctly similar to depictions of Blacks during both slavery and post-slavery time periods. As if this wasn't enough, the team decided it was appropriate to name one or more of the watermelons "Bonds-Wilson", the name of the AMHS campus. The campus was named after the original all black high school that was built during segregation, more specifically for the two men who founded it 64 years ago. Granted, some of the students may not have known this, but it leads me to ask, "why name the melon 'Bonds-Wilson' in lieu of a name like 'Academic Magnet' ? As far as the "chanting" noises are concerned, I do not know what the team actually said or the intention behind it, but with the other facts presented, it makes me wonder even more "what were my peers thinking"? If you look at the facts of this situation, and put yourself in my shoes, regardless of your original stance, it is clear to see how the acts of the football team were offensive to the African American community. I believe that we can use this as a platform to educate those around us of the importance and harm that racial stereotypes can cause to both individuals and communities as a whole. This also needs to be used to raise awareness of the lack of diversity at Academic Magnet. The fact that Academic Magnet is a public school and African Americans only make up 2.3% of student body is very troubling to me. It allows for events such as these to often slide by because not enough people stand up and risk going against the homogenous views of their peers.

Sometimes a Watermelon isn't Just a Watermelon.

It's the intent and lack of sensitivity of some of my peers that bothers me, and also the media's biased portrayal of the situation. It's important, whether you agree with me or not, that you try to acknowledge the other perspective of this controversial issue. I have heard talk, of people wanting Superintendent McGinley to issue a public apology. Granted, she acted swiftly, but it was better than avoiding the issue brought to her attention all together. Where is the apology for the students that are were affected by these events? Where is the apology for the students such as myself that endure this nonsense daily? That is what I want to know. Sometimes a Watermelon isn't Just a Watermelon. It represents much more when it is used to play upon the stereotypes of a group of people that have been historically oppressed, and it creates disunity and distrust.

The problem is not just with eating a watermelon after a win, or even smashing it. The issue is with what all went into this ritual and how people haven't been able to see why the football's teams acts are offensive. Some of the students think that this whole situation is a joke. As of right now, I feel that many of them would do it again if given the opportunity. No one has stood up to tell them that their actions were wrong, and it's time for that to change.

Sometimes a Watermelon isn't Just a Watermelon.

-Respectfully Submitted by William Pugh

Junior at Academic Magnet HS

Recent Sports Scores

McGinley's departure teaches familiar lesson in unfairness

BY THE REV. JOSEPH A. DARBY

I'd like to offer a few thoughts on the untimely "resignation" of Charleston County School Superintendent Nancy McGinley in the wake of the Academic Magnet High School football team controversy. I considered writing in her defense last week, but my sense of the school board's obvious goal led me to believe that it would probably be published after her dismissal or "resignation."



Darby

An Oct. 31 letter to the editor helped shape these thoughts. The writer noted how South African President Nelson Mandela embraced the all-white apartheid-era Springboks Rugby team, as depicted in the movie "Invictus." He hailed that as the kind of thing that generates "teachable moments" and suggested that the community embrace what happened to the aforementioned football team and their coach as a teachable moment.

The writer went on to suggest that a teachable moment would involve state Rep. Seth Whipper — who called for the coach's dismissal — supporting the Academic Magnet football team, attending its next game, feeding them afterward and then talking about the history of Bonds-Wilson High School. He concluded his call for a teachable moment and forgiveness by lamenting the "... race baiters and PCers [who] are now perpetuating this blight on society."

I'd also like to share a few "teachable moments." I begin with a reminder of what happened before President Mandela embraced that rugby team.

Soon after becoming president, Mandela formed a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" — a "court" that heard testimony about the atrocities of apartheid from the victims and the perpetrators — not to fix blame or punish, but to "clear the air," promote forgiveness and understanding and move forward.

Any good teachable moment requires those on both sides of an issue to hear and respect what each side sees as injustice. That's never happened when it comes to race in America and that didn't happen in this case. The school board's statement on Dr. McGinley's resignation called it a "win-win," but even Stevie Wonder could see that one side got their way.

The teachable moment in this instance wouldn't begin with Rep. Whipper supporting the Academic Magnet football team. The writer said that he should, because "they are his people too."

If the writer had Mr. Whipper's constituents in mind, then he's mistaken. The 600-student school is in Mr. Whipper's majority black House district, but only 15 black students attend the school; few — if any — students live in his district and, beyond being fellow human beings, they're not "his people."

The teachable moment in this case should include an awareness of Bonds-Wilson High School's history, but should also explore a number of questions:

Why does a school that was racially balanced in its formative years now have a profound racial imbalance?

Why does a football coach in his mid-50s not understand that a "victory celebration" featuring a watermelon — with a caricature and the name of a legendary black high school drawn on it — is patently offensive to the overwhelming majority of the black community?

Why do angry and aggressive parents and supporters not understand that as well, and instead temperately model respect, dignity and diversity for their children?

And why do they wield so much privileged influence that a superintendent, who weathered seven demanding years in her position, is rudely forced out in roughly one week?

A teachable moment should also lead to reflection on a couple of questions: Why does "forgiveness" have to be one-sided — especially hereabouts where, as the song says, "old times there are not forgotten"? How do you achieve reconciliation while dismissing those who don't share your views as "race baiters and PCers" without hearing or respecting what they think?

All of those things are elements in potential teachable moments in this case, but this case generated one clear teachable moment. Those who fired Dr. McGinley for standing against racial insensitivity — and who named the district's chief financial officer instead of the district's chief academic officer as interim superintendent — are elected officials who are accountable to the people on Election Day.

Perhaps by the next school board election, they'll also be elected not at-large, but from real single-member districts so that they can more easily be held accountable.

The Rev. Joseph A. Darby is presiding elder of the Beaufort District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and first vice-president of the Charleston Branch NAACP.

9586-D-011

Readers lament McGinley's exit

I continue to be amazed and disturbed by the elected members of the Charleston County School Board, a group that has done nothing but get in the way of progress in our public schools for the entirety of my lifetime.

It is this group, no matter who it is comprised of at any given time, that seems to bring out the worst in the collective whole whenever they are assembled to make decisions. I simply cannot understand why otherwise well-intentioned individuals continuously agree to serve and then fall into this pattern.

I invite the school board to come to 103 St. Philip Street on the fourth Tuesday of any month and observe as I have the privilege to preside over the monthly meeting of the Board of Commissioners for Charleston Water System, the chairmanship of which I have held since 2003. It is the very model of a well-run organization.

The efficiency is a testament to the fact that we have been very fortunate to assemble the right management team and wonderful staff of over 450 dedicated employees over the years and have essentially been able to set policy and stay out of their way while they do the jobs for which they have been hired.

Confidence in your team is paramount and you must find the right people and develop this belief in them to succeed. Meddling and micromanaging is no way to govern.

THOMAS B. PRITCHARD
Pritchard Law Group, LLC
Broad Street
Charleston

Board should reconsider

Not for nothing, but seldom have we found Mayors Joe Riley and Keith Summey on common ground. When it comes to the job performance, over time, of Dr. Nancy McGinley they agree: She has done a terrific job in a difficult environment.

The Charleston School Board should appreciate this rare agreement between these two mayors and take corrective action which includes rejecting McGinley's coerced resignation and returning her to the superintendency.

One questionable decision shouldn't outweigh seven years of accomplishment.

STEVE DRISCOLL
Folly Road
Charleston

Why trust the school board?

The Charleston County School Board doesn't hire superintendents to run the school system. It hires superintendents to let the school board members play superintendent. This school board is a laughingstock.

I admit the incident at the Academic Magnet High School was by no means a high point of the McGinley administration, but the strides the district made under McGinley's management were laudable in a school system that, prior to her hiring, didn't have much to brag about.

The remarks made by Elizabeth Moffly were especially telling: "The district [administration] has been insubordinate to this board, and Nancy ignores us," Moffly said. "Hopefully, that will change. If you get rid of the leader, they [in the administration] want to keep their jobs, and they will fall in line."

That's right, folks, fall in line. That's nothing less than a direct threat and an attempt to intimidate current employees. The fact that Moffly is not seeking re-election should be a great relief to any parent of a child in the system.

As for voting for the school district tax levy? Why would I trust this school board with my tax dollars? Until this school board's interest becomes educating children and not feeding their pumped-up sense of importance, I wouldn't give them one thin dime.

STEW WILLIAMS
Chisolm Road
Johns Island

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BRIAN HICKS

Why the board and McGinley divorced

Race at the center of nearly every recent controversy

Nancy McGinley had lost the school board.

It was apparent by Monday afternoon — when the board hastily canceled its regularly scheduled meeting — that it was all over.

Charleston County School Board members had spent the afternoon discussing the superintendent's performance review. By most accounts, it was a hostile meeting, so much so that some of the more circumspect board members feared that, if they convened that evening, McGinley would be unceremoniously fired in front of a live audience.

For years, McGinley had known that some members of the school board — notably Elizabeth Moffly — wanted her gone. Her relationship with the nine-member board varied over time, but the superintendent had always managed to keep five or six on her side.

By Monday, however, her slim majority had all but evaporated. And despite what some board members publicly said, their message to McGinley was clear: resign or be fired.

So on Thursday McGinley resigned offstage, leaving the school board to face a hostile crowd that threatened their jobs and called them a bunch of "racist rednecks."

In the end, of course, it came down to race. Nearly every controversy the school district has faced in recent years has been tainted to some degree by race: the Academic Magnet student suspended for tweeting a racial slur, the new Lincoln High added to the sales tax referendum at the last minute, the battle for control of the old Rivers Middle School building — even the size of the new elementary school on Sullivan's Island.

And then, the watermelon.

It's easy to say the reason the board fired McGinley — and make no mistake, this was a resignation in name

Please see HICKS, Page A10



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The Post and Courier

Politics, not policy, have doomed McGinley

A lot of smart people think that losing Nancy McGinley would be horrible for Charleston County schools.

But apparently not even five people on the school board feel the same way.

The board is about to cut the superintendent loose, fire her after seven years on the job. The only real question is how much of our money they will be contractually obligated to give her — and whether they will allow her the dignity of resigning.

Other than that, there is very little question here. It is almost certainly over. So long, Nancy.

Several local leaders have tried to talk the board out of this, but their calls have largely gone unanswered. And even those far too diplomatic to lobby have made no secret of their support for McGinley.

"As we are a government entity, and the school board is a government entity, I would never try to interfere in their business," North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey says. "I will say that we have a better working relationship with the schools now than we have had in my 20 years as mayor. She is responsive, her staff is responsive."

By most accounts, McGinley has been a good administrator. But that's not the issue.

It's politics that have done her in.



BRIAN HICKS

PR nightmare

Even McGinley supporters will tell you that she handled that Academic Magnet fiasco poorly.

When she learned the high school's football team was smashing a watermelon dubbed "Bonds Wilson" she was absolutely right to look into it.

Whether the kids recognized how that could be perceived, the coach should have.

But McGinley's staff overreacted by firing coach Bud Walpole, and that made a lot of people mad.

And then the district made the other side mad by giving him his job back two days later.

By any measure, it was a public relations disaster.

It wasn't a firing offense, however — for either the coach or McGinley. It is, ultimately, a really good excuse for some school board members who have wanted the superintendent gone for a long time.

Make no mistake, the flip-flop severely disappointed some board members who have been generally supportive of McGinley. It may be the last straw. And it doesn't help that it all happened a week before her scheduled performance review.

McGinley has never been a politician. She's an administrator, an educator from a family of them.

And she says what she means. She's not perfect, but then nobody is.

She has been critical of some board decisions (Lowcountry Tech, most recently), and often with good reason. She has never been great at hiding her feelings about other board decisions, even when she probably should have.

One of her most admirable qualities has always been her willingness to stand up for what she believes is right with little regard to how it might affect her job.

Of course, it looks like that has come back to bite her.

Administrator or pol?

Charleston Mayor Joe Riley believes McGinley is nothing less than one of the best superintendents in America.

"I think she is the best superintendent this county has had during my time as mayor, and we've had some very good superintendents," Riley says.

"The success of her work speaks for itself."

Riley points to her reading initiatives, her ability to attract good teachers and principals, and the declining number of failing schools in the district. Enrollment in public schools is up now more than at any time since desegregation.

He's right. The schools are getting better.

Sure, her detractors would say that one of the reasons the number of failing schools has declined is because McGinley closed some of them. Fair point. And reasonable people have made good arguments against some of her decisions.

Again, no one's perfect.

But a lot of folks believe having an educator in that job has been a good thing. And she brought some stability to a district that not so long ago was going through superintendents like disposable contacts.

Now that stability is out the window, and it could have serious repercussions for the district.

This unrest and upheaval could be all the excuse some people need to vote against next week's sales tax referendum for school building projects.

Hard to blame them if they don't know who is going to be spending the money.

But if that happens, it will set the district back years.

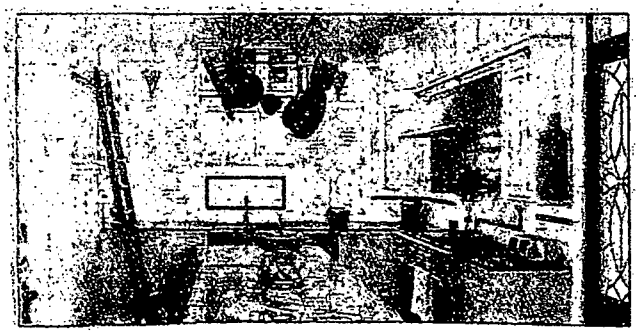
Not to mention the fact that, if the board gets rid of McGinley, they have to find someone who can replace her — someone willing to put up with some volatile and, let's face it, some pretty crazy politics.

McGinley had to bite her tongue so often she probably has scars.

They might find a politician willing to take on that sort of job, but try to find a professional educator willing to put up with the circus.

That could end up being an expensive lesson for local schools.

Reach Brian Hicks at bhicks@postandcourier.com.



Academic Magnet coach fired over celebration

COACH, from A1

"It was our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults and that the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned," she said.

Walpole, the Raptors' football coach for the last 10 years, also has been removed as the school's girls basketball coach, but he will keep his job as a physical education teacher at Liberty Hill Academy.



Nwokike

Andrew Rusciolelli will be the Raptors' interim head football coach for the remaining two games of the season. Members of the media were kept away from the Raptors practice Tuesday as they prepared for Friday's game against Battery Creek.

Walpole said Tuesday that "he would love nothing more than to continue my coaching career at Academic Magnet" and that the players' celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone."

Said Walpole, "It was in celebration of winning the game. I would never condone or approve of any activity that I knew to be offensive to anyone."

Initial complaint

McGinley said she first learned of a possible issue involving the Academic Magnet team from school board member Michael Miller on Oct. 13. Miller raised concerns about allegations the team had been participating in a "watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds as part of a post-game celebration" following a victory against Military Magnet Academy.

Miller told The Post and Courier he received the initial complaint from a parent of a Military Magnet student "a week or two after" Military Magnet's 53-30 loss to Academic Magnet on Sept. 5 at North Charleston High School.

"I told Dr. McGinley I wasn't going to shy away from saying I was the one who brought this to the district's attention," Miller said. "If I were to do that, it would be the same as if I were participating in the actions that brought the issue to the forefront in the first place."

McGinley said she asked Academic Magnet principal Judith Peterson to look into the issue. Peterson, McGinley said, reported back that the coaches were aware of the ritual and that they "did not observe any cultural insensitivity."

McGinley said the tone of Peterson's report "implied it was an innocent ritual" and that the coaches "had no concerns about the potentially racially sensitive overtones or perceptions" of the tradition.

Despite Peterson's report, the district conducted its own investigation on Oct. 16, questioning 29 football players as well as Walpole and the assistant coaches. District Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who oversees some of the district's middle and high schools, and Kevin Clayton, who McGinley described as an adviser for the district's diversity committee, interviewed the students over a period of several hours.

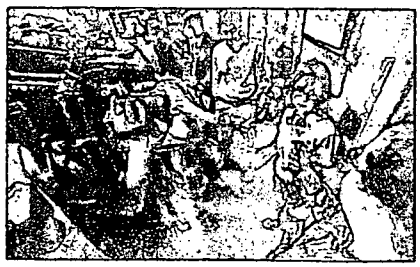
The students, McGinley said, told Martin and Clayton that the team had participated in a ritual multiple times this season where two students would smash a watermelon with a face drawn on it with a black marker, while the remainder of the team would stand in a circle around the fruit making chanting sounds. McGinley said the image on the watermelon could be considered a "caricature."

Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, McGinley said, which is a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston on the Bonds-Wilson Campus that pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

McGinley said Tuesday that she had not spoken with Walpole, nor had she spoken with any of the parents from Military Magnet who had raised concerns to Miller. She said neither the principal nor the football coach of Military Magnet had seen the ritual performed after the game on Sept. 5.

McGinley said she plans to meet with Walpole and report back to the school board, whom she briefed on the watermelon investigation in executive session Tuesday. There is no formal appeals process for Walpole to take as a coach, but McGinley said she could choose to uphold or change Walpole's status following their meeting. The school board could also choose to take action regarding Walpole's status as a coach.

Parents of both current and former students of Academic Magnet High School attended the news conference where they peppered McGinley with questions about why the students were interviewed by district officials who were strangers without their parents present. Some parents shouted that the students were coerced and scared.



WADE SPEES/STAFF

Connie Biggs, president of the Academic Magnet High School Booster Club, speaks with reporters about wanting to reinstate Bud Walpole as football coach.

Connie Biggs, president of Academic Magnet High School's athletic booster board, who doesn't have children on the football team, said the district came in like a "freight train" and took the players one by one into a room with two men they didn't know.

"They trusted you and you have the trust of all the students in the district and you're mismanaging that trust," she said.

'Just celebrating'

In interviews with The Post and Courier, Walpole and Nwokike spelled out the genesis of the ritual that the players used to mark each of their victories during a 6-2 start to a season that's already one of the best in school history.

"We were just celebrating a victory," Nwokike said. "It was just something we could look forward to during the week. It really started by accident. We'd go to the Subway before games, and before the second game of the season, one of the players saw a watermelon stand. He thought it would be cool to buy one and maybe we could eat it after the game if we won.

"Well, we won and we broke the watermelon because we didn't want to wait to cut it. It was a tradition that lasted six games."

Nwokike said the players' chants were "football shouts."

"I've heard people say they were monkey chants, which is absolutely not true," Nwokike said. "They were just football shouts, like any you would hear on a football field."

Nwokike called the faces drawn on the watermelons "smiley faces."

"They were just faces, they weren't provocative at all," he said. "They were just like simple smiley faces."

Nwokike said he missed two periods of class time last week while he and his teammates were interrogated about the celebration. His mother, Barbara, is among the Academic Magnet parents advocating Walpole's reinstatement.

"He should not have missed any classes over this crazy thing here," she said. "This is nothing to waste time on. Nobody was offended on the team, and I definitely don't see it as a racist thing. When Darius came home and told me about it, I could not believe that they kept him out of class for two periods to talk about it.

"I'm really appalled that so much energy has been wasted on this, and the coach losing his position should never have happened. If somebody was offended, all they had to do was tell the boys to stop. That would have been it. The school board should definitely reinstate Coach and we should be done with this."

Walpole, 57, is a 1979 Citadel graduate who has worked at Lowcountry schools First Baptist, Middleton and for the last 10 years at Academic Magnet. He released a statement Tuesday saying "how truly sorry I am to anyone whom my actions or inactions may have offended."

"One of the things we teach our players is responsibility, and I bear ultimate responsibility for any actions our players take as a group," he said.

The father of former Raptors standout Stuart Walters Jr., now a sophomore football player at Johns Hopkins University, was among those who came to Walpole's defense.

"I don't have enough information to assess what's going on there now," said Stuart Walters Sr. "But I will tell you about Bud Walpole. My son is an African-American and we never had any problem with Bud Walpole. He's an excellent person, a good coach and I enjoyed my son playing for him for four years. And my son would say the very same thing.

"At times, my son was the only African-American on the team and we never experienced anything like that. I'm sorry to see this happen."

Former Academic Magnet player Harry Griffin posted a statement on CNN's iReport defending Walpole.

"I played for him for four years and gained so much respect for this man," wrote Griffin, now a cadet at The Citadel. "He cared so much about the players and the parents. His record at the school does not show the time and effort he put into coaching. Never in my six years of knowing Coach Walpole would I ever speak badly of him. He has so much integrity and honor. His team motto each year was 'Do the right thing.' He taught us to be better people. ... You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing."

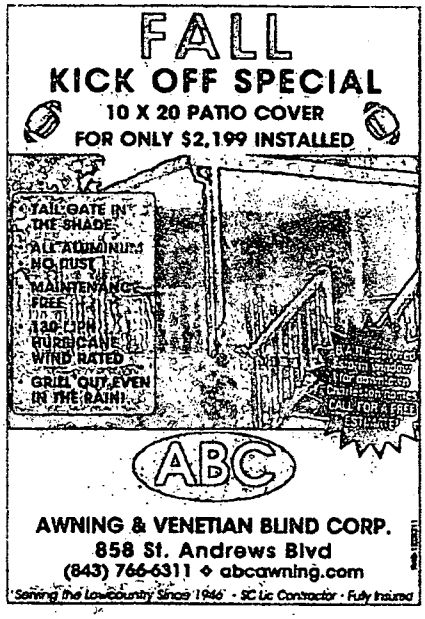
Military Magnet football coach Gene Ross said he saw no watermelon celebration after his team's game against the Raptors.

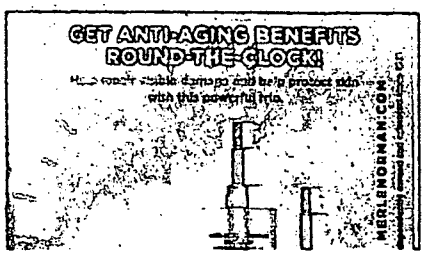
"I never witnessed anything like that after our game. I have never seen anything that I am reading about after any of our games with Academic Magnet," Ross said. "Bud Walpole is a gentleman, always first-class and gracious. It hurts me to know that all of this negative stuff has cost him his job as a football coach. I have never heard Bud make a disparaging remark about anyone in all of the years that I have known him. I hope this gets resolved soon."

Gene Sapakoff and **David Shelton** contributed to this report.

Poll

Should Bud Walpole be reinstated as head football coach at Academic Magnet? Find this story at **postandcourier.com/polls** to vote.





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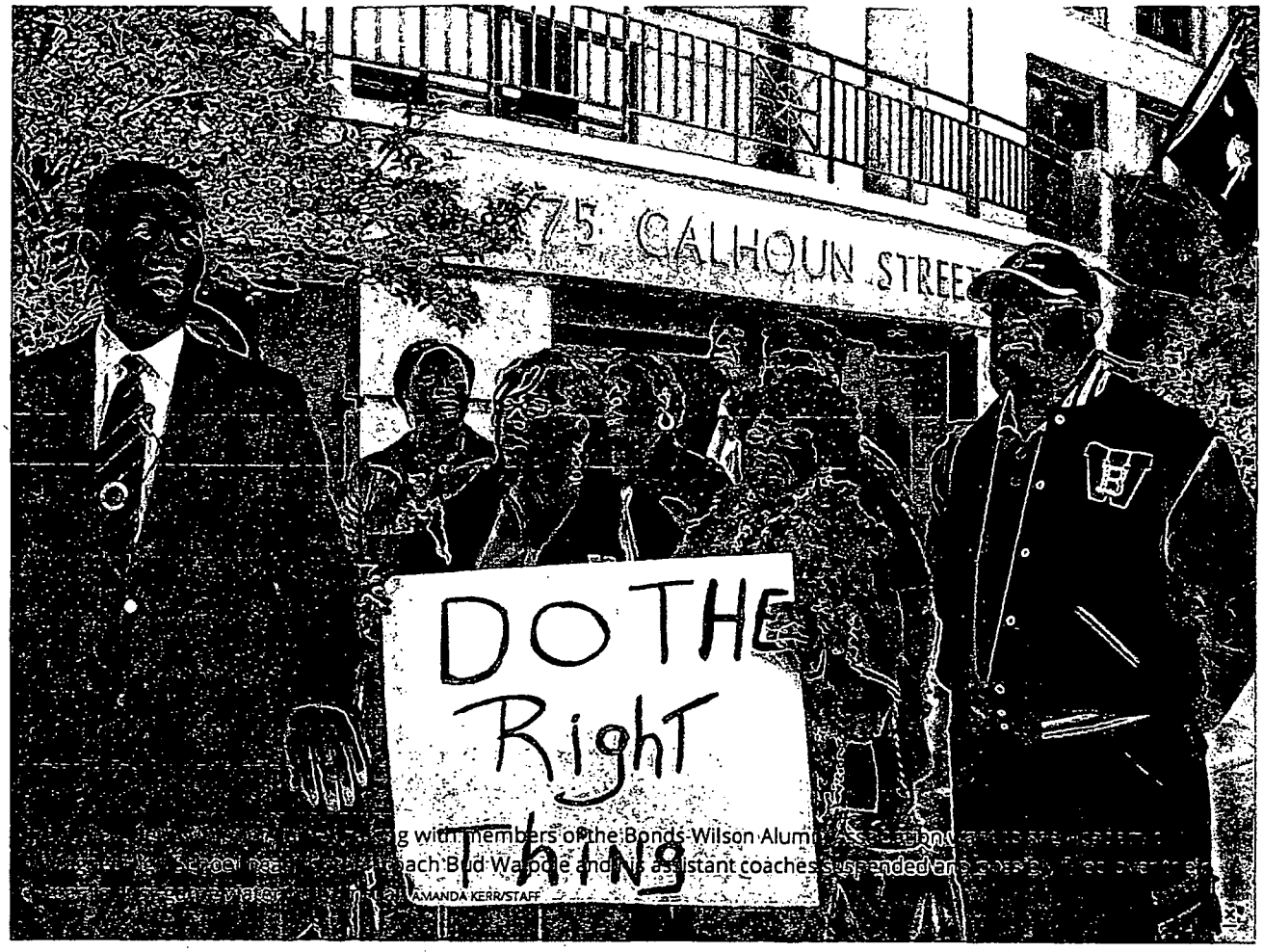
S.C. Rep. Seth Whipper calls for suspension, firing of Academic Magnet coach



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Amanda Kerr (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195) Email (mailto:akerr@postandcourier.com) @PCAmandaKerr (https://twitter.com/#!/PCAmandaKerr)

Oct 23 2014 1:33 pm Oct 23 6:17 pm



AMANDA KERR/STAFF

Less than 24 hours after Academic Magnet High School head football coach Bud Walpole got his job back, a state lawmaker and Bonds-Wilson Alumni Association members called for the suspension and possible firing of Walpole and his assistant coaches over what some considered a racially offensive post-game watermelon ritual.

State Rep. Seth Whipper, D-North Charleston, whose district includes the Academic Magnet High School campus, held a press conference Thursday outside the Charleston County School District headquarters in downtown Charleston where he and several Bonds-Wilson alumni said they plan to attend a school board meeting Monday to press for the "true facts" regarding the post-game tradition.

"If the facts are that this particular act did occur, then we're going to ask that everybody be terminated," Whipper said. "I cannot see how we minimize how an adult person (Walpole) who is more than 50 years old could forget what has happened in this country and allow young men to practice the kind of behavior we know has been established by (the district's) investigation."

Whipper said sanctions may need to be taken against the players as well, including an immediate

What do you think?

Do you think any further action needs to be taken in the case of the Academic Magnet High School football team's watermelon ritual?

Bud Walpole and all the other coaches should be suspended or fired.

The team should be educated on the history of Bonds-Wilson.

Both of these options.

No, nothing else needs to be done about this issue.

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end to the team's season.

"I feel that we're at the point where if the young men who are on that football team believe they've done the right thing, their season should be suspended," he said.



Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley reinstated Walpole on Wednesday as head football and head girls basketball coach two days after district administrators fired him from his coaching duties in connection with the post-game ritual in which players chanted while smashing watermelons. McGinley has said the district never considered taking punitive actions against the players on the team.

As part of his reinstatement Walpole was required to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to better respect the differences of others; attend sensitivity training; and to counsel his players before games to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

Whipper said Thursday he was not familiar with the stipulations Walpole was required to make as part of his reinstatement.

School Board member Michael Miller reported the team's tradition to the district on Oct. 13 after hearing from a parent of a Military Magnet Academy student who was offended by the ritual, which the team performed following its defeat of Military Magnet on Sept. 5. District officials questioned the 29 players on the team as well as Walpole and his assistants about the ritual two days after Miller reported his concerns.

The team's victory ritual involved the group chanting in a circle and smashing a watermelon decorated with a caricature face drawn with black marker. Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston. The Bonds-Wilson Campus pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who spoke with the players as part of the district's investigation, said some players had no idea why the watermelon was named Bonds-Wilson. A few, he said, considered using the name Bonds-Wilson as a 12th man on the team and were doing it "kind of as a unity for support."

Attorney Dwayne Green, who is representing Walpole, said Thursday afternoon that Walpole did not know about the "negative connotations" of his team's ritual of smashing watermelons. Watermelons are tied to racial stereotypes that were prevalent after the Civil War that, according to Citadel history professor Marcus Cox, perpetuated the idea that African-Americans were simple-minded and inferior.

"If he had known, he most definitely would have put the practice to a stop," Green said.

Green invited Whipper to meet with the coach to make his "own assessment on what type of person the coach is."

"I'm confident that if he went beyond the second- and third-hand accounts of what happened that he'd come to the same conclusion that I have and he would work to make sure something like this never happens again rather than punishing an exemplary role model," he said.

Bonds-Wilson almunus Kevin Williams, who was among the group who attended the press conference, said he feels the players' decision to use the name Bonds-Wilson reflects their lack of knowledge about the school's history. Bonds-Wilson opened in the 1950s as a segregated school, and was integrated in 1971. The school was closed in 1985 and has since been demolished.

Bonds-Wilson has produced several notable alumni including former Raiders coach Art Shell and jazz percussionist Alphonse Mouzon.

"They don't really understand the history and what the school stood for," said Williams, a 1983 graduate of Bonds-Wilson. "It's a historical name and means a lot to the black community."

Some graduates of the school as well as the black community, Whipper said, are upset to see the school's name associated with a watermelon when the district did not include the name Bonds-Wilson as part of the magnet school's name when the school moved to that location.

"The Bonds-Wilson community is really disturbed about this that somehow the name Bonds-Wilson is not good enough to name the school in that way, but good enough to name a watermelon," Whipper said. "We can't accept that so something will be done."

Attorney Larry Kobrovsky, who is representing the Academic Magnet School Improvement Council, said Thursday the students did not perceive that their post-game tradition had racial connotations.

"These are kids who had no racial intention, no ideas that it would be perceived this way by anybody," he said. "These are children who had no baggage racially who can't even comprehend of what they're being accused of because it wasn't in their minds eye."

Kobrovsky is also planning to attend the school board meeting on Monday to ask McGinley and Martin for an apology on behalf of the students for making the inference of racially provocative behavior against the players and for the manner in which the players were interrogated about the ritual.

"This is why you don't unleash the genie of racial accusations casually because you can't put it back in again," he said. "All the adults need to act responsibly to calm things down."

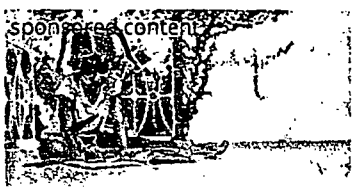
Reach Amanda Kerr at 937-5546 or at Twitter.com/PCAmandaKerr.

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NEWS

S.C. coach fired for 'inappropriate postgame celebrations' offered job back

By **USA TODAY High School Sports** October 22, 2014

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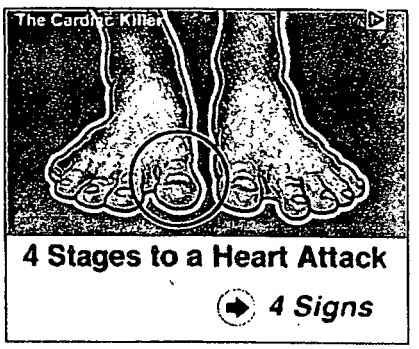


Charleston Academic Magnet coach Bud Walpole was fired after allegations about an inappropriate postgame celebration by his team were raised — WCIV screen shot

A South Carolina football coach who was dismissed over allegations of a racially insensitive postgame celebration that allegedly included both smashing watermelons and making "ape sounds" while eating the remnants of the fruits that were deemed offensive to African-American members of the team has been offered his job back.

Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley met with fired Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole on Wednesday and "he agreed that we will work together on increasing diversity awareness for students and the community," McGinley said in a statement issued by the school district, according to the Charleston Post and Courier.

Walpole can return to the job effective Thursday. As part of the offer, the statement said Walpole had to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to respect the differences of others, attend sensitivity training and to counsel his players to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."



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The team has two games remaining.

According to the statement, Walopole "acknowledged" that the celebrations could be perceived in a negative way.

Several school board members said they were in favor of the 10th-year coach returning and added that the decision to fire him was an overreaction.

More than 4,200 people had signed a change.org petition by Wednesday afternoon.

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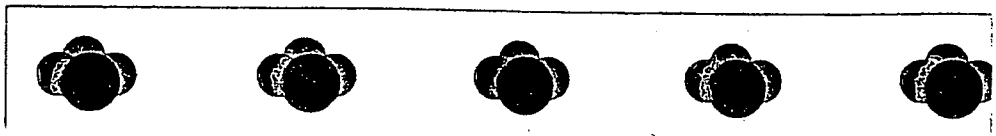
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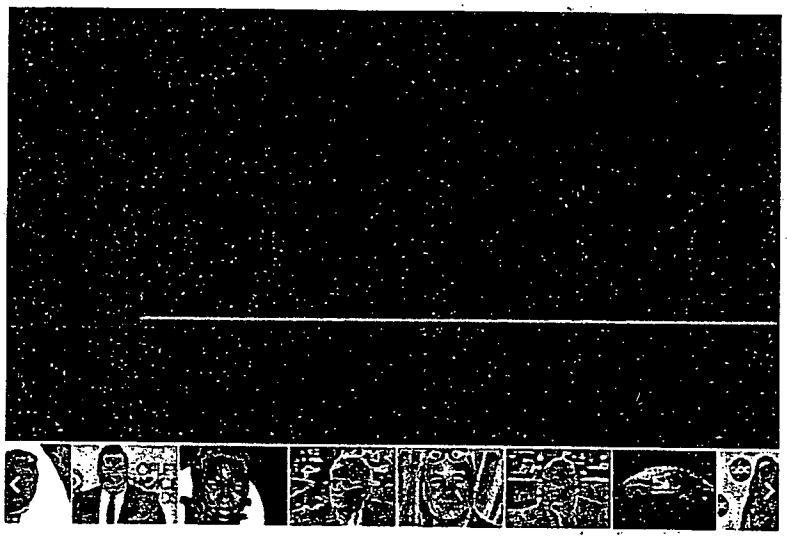
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Was This High School Football Team's Watermelon-Smashing Ritual Racist?

10/27/2014 11:39 am ET | Updated Oct 27, 2014

132

Chris Branch



The saga of South Carolina high school football coach Bud Walpole is a strange one: first, he was fired for his team's reported watermelon-smashing ritual, after the school board found out about the practice and was understandably worried about the racial stereotypes attached.

Then, after more than 4,000 people signed a petition, Walpole was reinstated as head coach at Academic Magnet. The story has sparked outrage and debate nationwide.

HuffPost Live hosted a three-member roundtable — the lawyer for the team's parents, Larry Kobrovsky, Dr. Greg Carr, professor of African-American studies at Howard University and L'Heureux Lewis-McCoy, sociology and black studies professor at CUNY — to discuss whether the ritual was racist or not.

Kobrovsky, who the team's parents hired to help reinstate the coach, maintains there were no racist motives behind the tradition.



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Was This High School Football Team's Watermelon-Smashing Ritual Racist?

"A watermelon by itself is not a racial or hostile fruit. In the consciousness of these students, I'm not sure if they even comprehend what you're talking about," he told host Marc Lamont Hill. "Used in a certain contexts, in a cartoon or something to show people, that's a different story than the context that you eat a watermelon then stomp on it after you eat it, I don't see a racial context in that."

Carr and Lewis-McCoy did not agree, to say the least.

"Once again, the artificiality of color blindness protects and preserves this notion of whiteness," Carr said. "There is no such thing as color blindness."

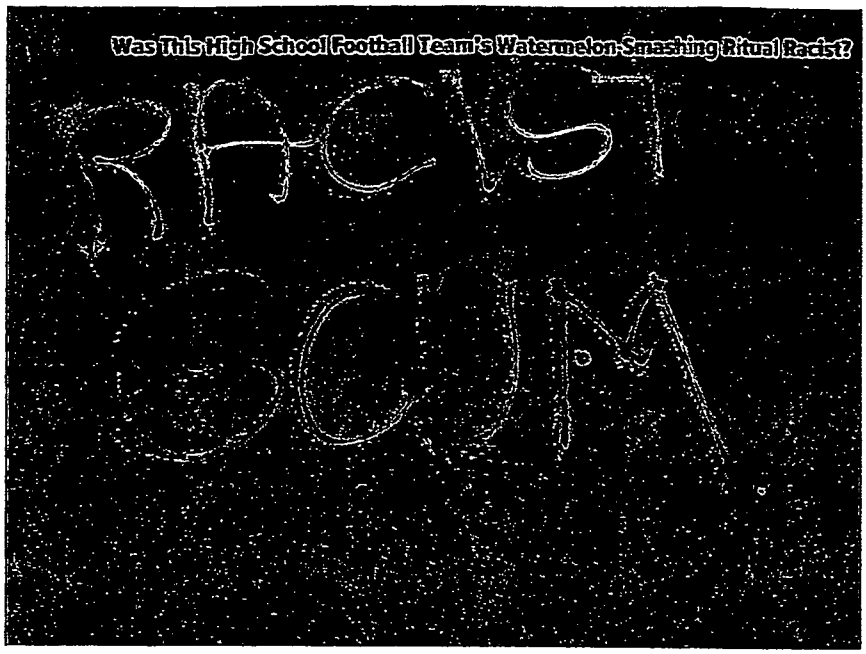
The idea that these kids were unaware that there may be a racial connotation to anything that they did, that is patently false," Lewis-McCoy added. "When we look at what young people actually understand about race, starting from five years old — really three years old — we see them understanding and working around race."

Catch the rest of the discussion above, and watch the full HuffPost Live conversation here.

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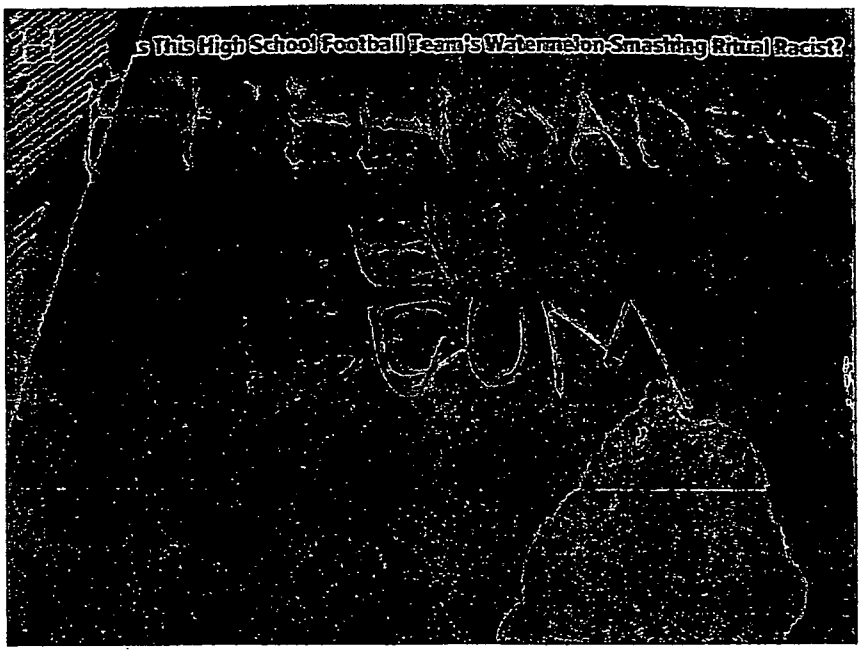
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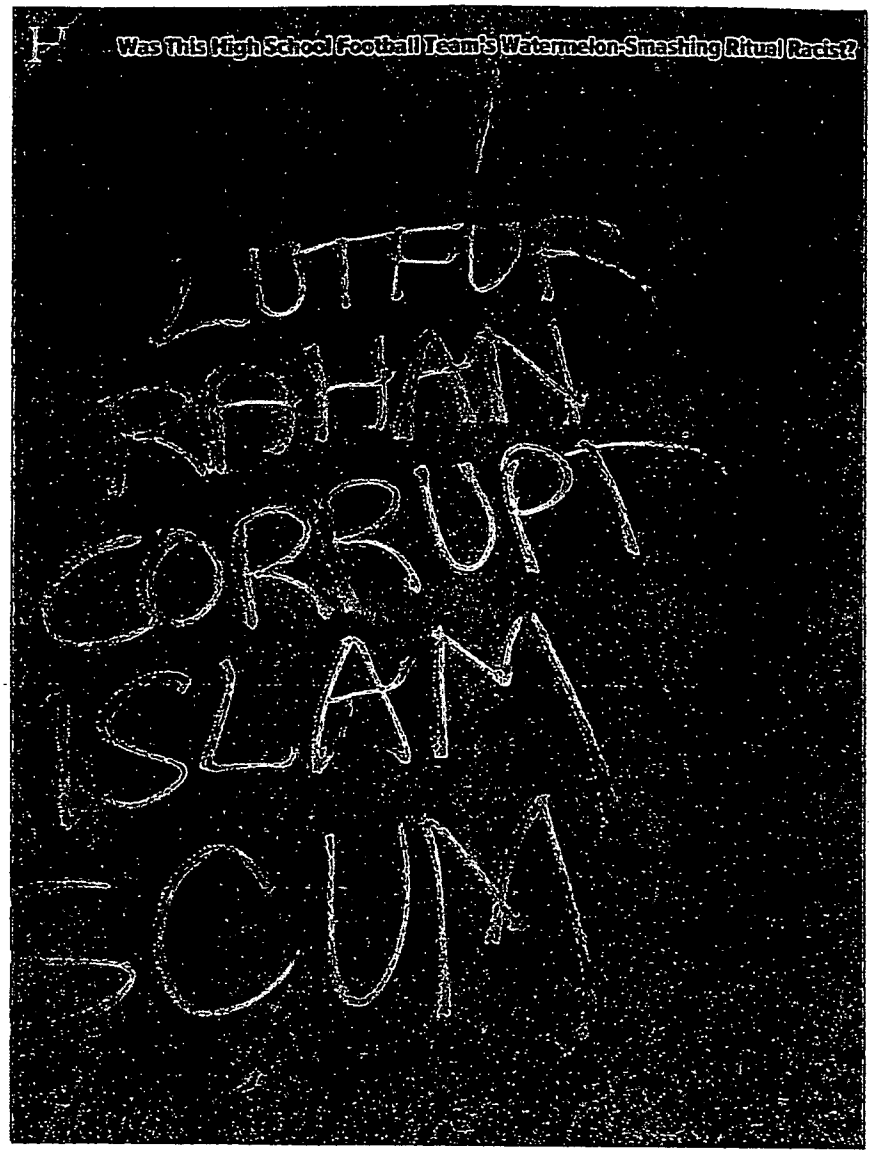



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5 Comments **Was This High School Football Team's Watermelon-Smashing Ritual Racist?** Sort by Oldest

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RonandGloria Page · Franklin High School (New Jersey)
They are only doing just what they are teaching them. To take out into this F--KED UP WORLD. And then try to say that the kids don't know any better. LIERS

Like · Reply · 3 · Oct 27, 2014 11:44am

Peter DeMars
"Dr. Greg Carr"? Is he a physician? If not, then simply "professor Greg Carr or Greg Carr, PhD".

Why on earth would anyone give not one but TWO academics whose job relies on social conflict theory a platform? "African-American Studies" is about as weak a science as can be.

Like · Reply · 3 · Oct 27, 2014 11:52am · Edited

Hannibal Pace · University of Illinois at Chicago
If it weren't for my African American Studies courses, I would still be under the mistaken thinking that Abraham Lincoln "freed the slaves" to correct a 400 year wrong and not as a strategic tactic to cripple the South during the civil war. African American Studies courses are the last bastion for truth as 'Murica sterilizes the history books.

Like · Reply · 9 · Oct 27, 2014 1:50pm

Lesa L. Tatum
I doubt anyone would call African American studies a science. It's a educational curriculum and a good one. I personally learned so much more than I was ever taught in regular high school history classes but I could say the same for all the history courses I took in college to earn my degree. There were a lot of whites in those African American history classes I took and you would be surprised how many times I heard a white person say "Wow" or "I didn't know that". That's the purpose of the curriculum as it is for Asian history or classes or any other type of history class, which is to teach you things you never knew before.

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Ryan-Michele D. Eagleton · Litigation Paralegal at Law Firm
Maybe because people with PhDs are generally given the title Doctor? Are you the last person to catch the memo on that?

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Danny Anderson · Works at Retired
Get over this and move forward.

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Victor Barney · Southern Connecticut State University
All depends if they were black or white doesn't it? I still believe that everything is black and white, don't you know? I'm just saying...

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Linda Pritchard · Southeast High School (Ravenna, Ohio)
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H **Was This High School Football Team's Watermelon-Smashing Ritual Racist?**

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Football coach fired amid allegations of racist behavior (update)

Oct 22, 2014

by Theresa Edwards



Image: Screenshot/WCIV

Print

High school coach fired for encouraging players to make racist jokes

A football coach in South Carolina has been relieved of his position following complaints from opposing teams that say he encouraged his players to engage in racist behavior.

WCIV-TV | ABC News 4 - Charleston News, Sports, Weather

Good morning, everyone. Just checking, is it still 2014? It is? Great! If that's the case, can someone please explain to me how a grown-ass adult in South Carolina didn't see why it would be an issue if he encouraged the kids on his football team to taunt their black opponents with "monkey sounds" and a watermelon-smashing ritual that involved drawing a "Sambo" face on the fruit before smashing it to bits?

Anyone?

Bud Walpole, the football coach in question, didn't see a problem with it, and now he's out of a job. This follows the investigation of a complaint made by a parent of one of the players on a team that players at Academic Magnet — the school Walpole was coaching at — would make "animalistic or monkey-like chants" post-game. They also kept a watermelon with that oh-my-gosh-guys-totally-not-racist-how-dare-you face you see up there drawn on it, which they would smash after a victory.

People are already upset. The "it's just harmless fun, stop pulling the race card" folks are out in full force. If you don't know why monkeys and watermelons are both instances of imagery entrenched in racism, I'd like to suggest that you use this brand new invention called the internet to look it up.

I'm not willing to give Walpole the benefit of the doubt. If you want to be a bigot, fine. When you make children the target of your bigotry and encourage other children to participate in leveling that bigotry at their peers, then it's time for you to go away.

I went to a very mixed high school, race-wise, and at every sporting event, there was always an all-white or predominantly white team more than willing to bust out a great chant that made frequent use of the "N-word," all while a coach looked on, smilingly.

I remember even as teenagers, we would ask why no one made them stop. People forget, sometimes, that high schoolers are still very young. These are things that are capable of denigrating and hurting an adult, so yes, they do incredible damage to kids. Talking about race with your kids is uncomfortable and you might not know where to start, but you have to. I think it's clear you have to address things like racist imagery, too, so that one day when they get older, they don't think it's totally fine to hoot like an ape at their black peers.

I would be pissed if I found out my child was participating in this kind of crap, and she would have hell to pay at home if she did. I would also want the garbage "adult" person who led the charge, particularly if they were in a mentor role, to have to own up to their dickery, too.

The superintendent in this situation, Dr. Nancy McGinley, agrees, saying in a statement that, "It is our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults. That the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned, and therefore we took action yesterday."

Because yes, I might be able to buy, for a split second, that a bunch of kids don't really understand why this isn't OK. But a middle aged man in, of all places, South Carolina? Nope. Also, nope.

I understand that I might get hammered here for being "too PC", but that's OK. I prefer to think of it as "meeting the absolute baseline for human decency", but if you'd rather fight for your right as an American to compare black folk to monkeys and draw racist faces on watermelon, you go ahead and do that. Maybe just don't bring kids into it.

Update 10-23-2014: As of today, Bud Walpole will resume his coaching duties with Academic Magnet. Superintendent McGinley asked Walpole for a statement of commitment, which he provided, and hopes the events can be used as a "teachable moment." Walpole used the statement to commit to being "extra vigilant when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds." Let's hope he follows through.

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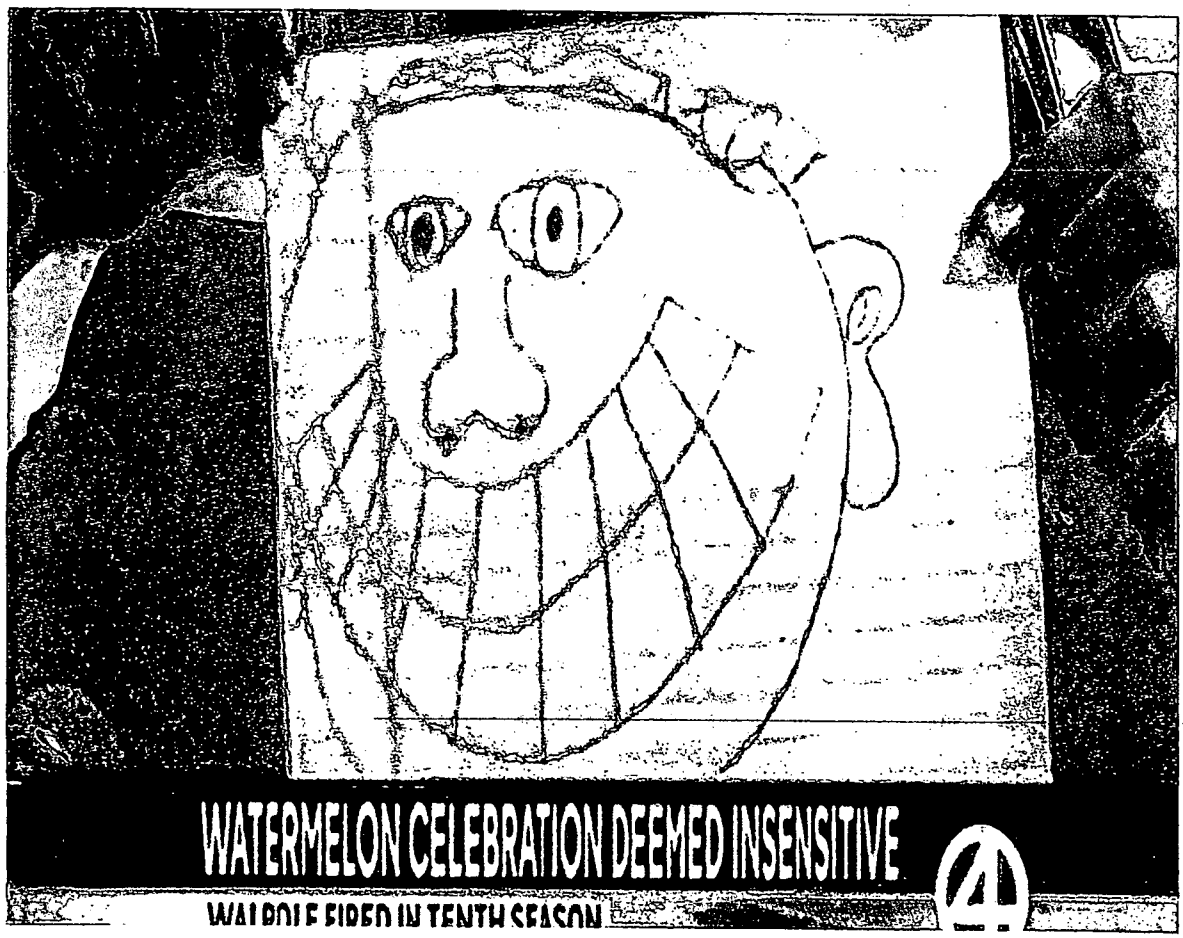


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Video: Racist SC High School Football Coach Fired After Team Mocks Black Opponents With Watermelons

DV The Bossman October 22, 2014 Videos



A Charleston, South Carolina high school football coach was fired on Monday after an investigation into a team ritual involving smashing watermelons to commemorate victories over opponents, WCIV-TV reported.

Charleston county school district superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley announced that Academic Magnet High head coach Bud Walpole was removed from his position after a district probe revealed that besides smashing the watermelons, players drew faces on the watermelons and named them. McGinley held up a drawing approximating the faces put on the watermelon.

"It is our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults," McGinley said in a statement on Tuesday. "That the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned, and therefore we took action yesterday."

The watermelons were also given names like "Junior" and "Bonds Wilson." The latter name was used by a school, which primarily taught Black students, that sat on Academic Magnet's current location.

The investigation began following a complaint from a parent at another school that Walpole's players were making "animalistic or monkey-like chants" after their games as part of the ritual. The Daily Kos reported that several of the school's recent opponents have fielded mostly-Black teams. Academic Magnet only has one Black player on its roster, junior defensive end Darius Nwokike.

But according to the Charleston Post and Courier, Nwokike took to the Internet to defend his coach, starting an online petition calling for him to be reinstated.

"It was just something we could look forward to during the week," Nwokike said. "It really started by accident. We'd go to the Subway before games, and before the second game of the season, one of the players saw a watermelon stand. He thought it would be cool to buy one and maybe we could eat it after the game if we won. Well, we won and we broke the watermelon because we didn't want to wait to cut it. It was a tradition that lasted six games."

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FOOTBALL

Group calls for suspended then reinstated S.C. football coach to be banned again

By Cam Smith, USA TODAY High School Sports October 23, 2014

82 SHARES SHARE TWEET EMAIL



South Carolina state representative Seth Whipper has called for Academic Magnet football coach to be investigated and potentially fired for a racially insensitive postgame celebration — YouTube screen shot

It is the story that just won't go away.

According to the Charleston Post and Courier, recently re-instated Academic Magnet head football coach Bud Walpole is under fire again, this time from the state politicain who represents his own district. Less than a day after Walpole was allowed to return to his job by Charleston Superintendent Nancy McGinley, South Carolina state representative Seth Whipper banded with a group of alumni from a former school that struggled with integration to call for Walpole to be suspended and, if full leaked details were proven to be true, to be fired.

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Whipper called for the "true facts" of the team's postgame watermelon ritual to be discovered via an investigation, with resulting penalties to follow accordingly and firing a distinct possibility.

"If the facts are that this particular act did occur then we're going to ask that everybody be terminated," Whipper told the media at an appearance in Charleston.

The involvement of alumni from the Bonds-Wilson school was an important development. One of the more disturbing (if less reported) details to come out of the internal investigation into Academic Magnet's postgame routine was the tendency for players to call some of the watermelons they would smash "Bonds-Wilson." That name is a reference to the Bonds-Wilson school, which began as a segregated school before being integrated in the 1970s, was eventually closed in 1985. As noted by the Post and Courier, it sat on a site near the present day Academic Magnet campus, hence the reference and concerns with racist overtones.

Walpole, who was initially fired when details of the postgame routine became public, has apologized to a local NAACP leader for the inappropriate celebrations and insisted that he did not see the celebrations as racially insensitive at the time.

Whipper insisted that the use of Bonds-Wilson as the moniker for the team's smashed watermelons was intentionally inflammatory, and questioned how district officials could reinstate a man who oversaw such a practice without immediately correcting his own student athletes.

"The Bonds-Wilson community is really disturbed about this that somehow the name Bonds-Wilson is not good enough to name the school in that way, but good enough to name a watermelon," Whipper said. "We can't accept that so something will be done."

Whipper plans to attend the Charleston County School Board meeting on Monday to air his concerns, two days after Walpole and Academic Magnet will take to the field again; the Raptors travel to Battery Creek on Friday, Oct. 24.

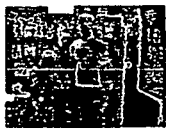


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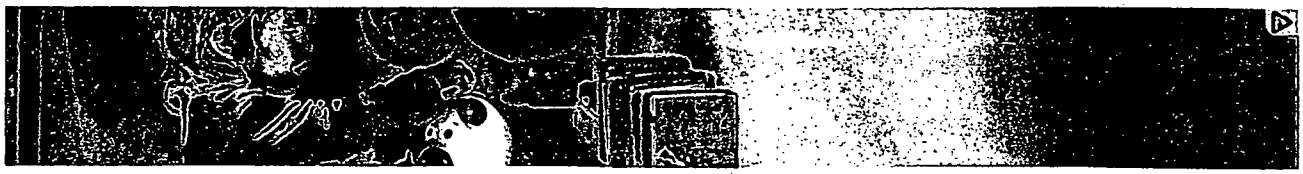
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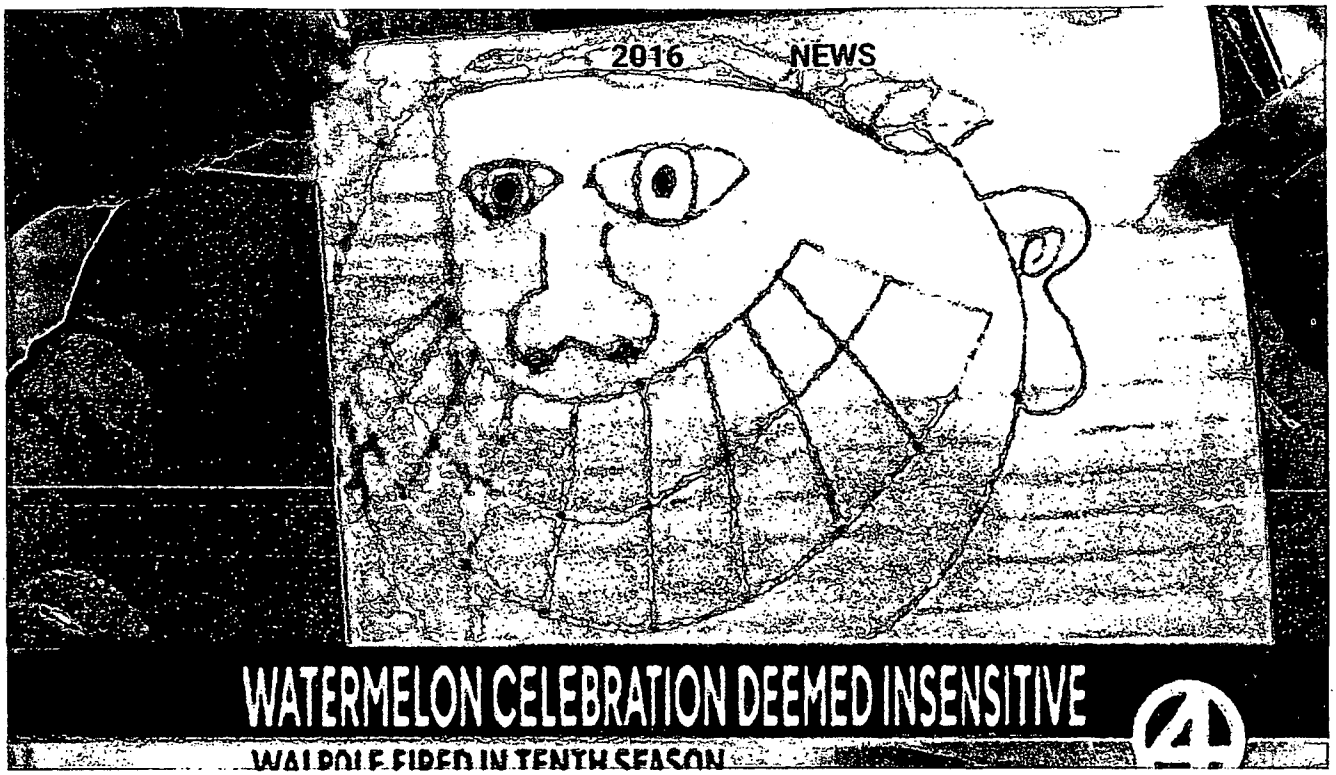
S. Carolina HS football coach fired after team mocks Black opponents with watermelons



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S. Carolina HS football coach fired for 'watermelon' ritual [WCIV-TV]

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A Charleston, South Carolina high school football coach was fired on Monday after an investigation into a team ritual involving smashing watermelons to commemorate victories over opponents, **WCIV-TV reported.**

Charleston county school district superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley announced that Academic Magnet High head coach Bud Walpole was removed from his position after a district probe revealed that besides smashing the watermelons, players drew faces on the watermelons and named them. McGinley held up a drawing approximating the faces put on the watermelon.

> "It is our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults," McGinley said in a statement on Tuesday. "That the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults

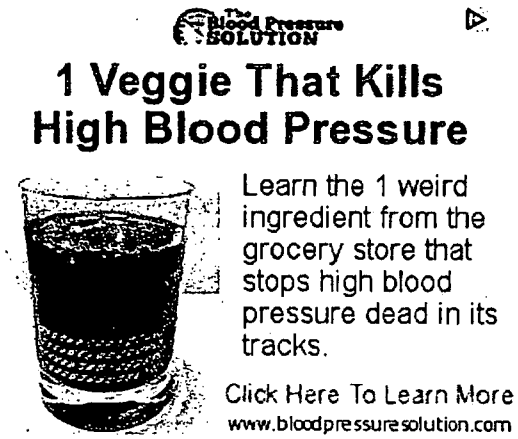


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But **according to the Charleston *Post and Courier,*** Nwokike took to the Internet to defend his coach, starting **an online petition** calling for him to be reinstated.



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Watch WCIV's report, as aired on Tuesday, below.

WORLD

American football coach fired over 'racist watermelon ritual'

Source: onenews

October 22, 2014 Share

A high school American football coach was reportedly fired because of a "racist" post-match celebration ritual involving a watermelon.



Top American football.

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"Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others were either standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds described as, 'Ooh, ooh, ooh,'" school district Superintendent Nancy McGinley told CNN.

The chant was described as "monkey sounds" and the watermelon was covered with caricatures, CNN reported.

A parent told the school board about the ritual, and the South Carolina Academic Magnet High School coach, Bud Walpole, was fired.

Walpole coached at the school for more than 10-years and has backing and support from many parents and students. A petition to reinstate him has more than 4000 signatures.

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"Coach Walpole was fired because his team had a harmless tradition that was made to seem prejudiced," Harry Griffin, a junior at The Military College of South Carolina, said in a CNN iReport.

"They had a post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon and eating it after every victory. A parent on an opposing team deemed this act as racist and the school board decided to interrogate the players."

CNN says the school is yet to make comment.

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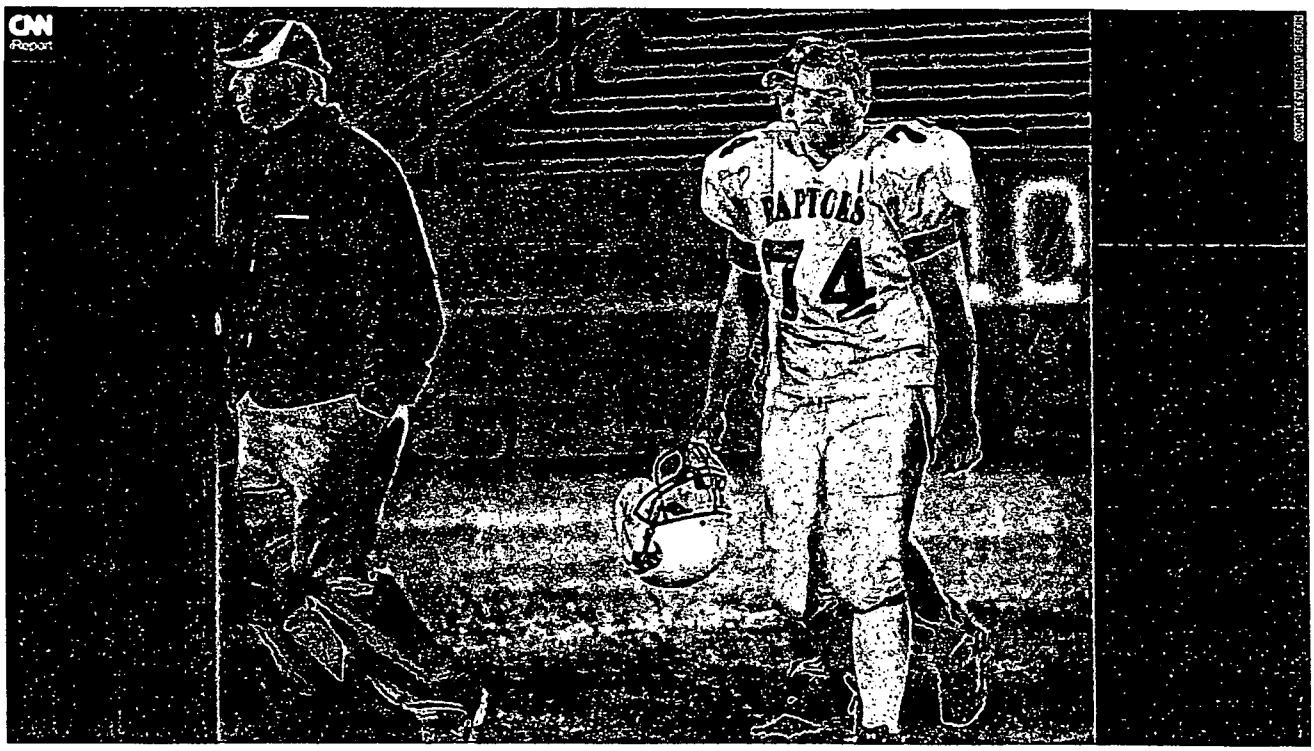
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Live TV

Football coach reinstated after controversial 'watermelon ritual'

By Christina Zdanowicz and Melonyce McAfee, CNN
Updated 8:44 AM ET, Thu October 23, 2014



Coach Bud Walpole, left, was fired after a controversial post-game ritual upset parents. iReporter Harry Griffin, right, played on the coach's team a few years ago.

Story highlights

High school football coach fired after controversial "watermelon ritual"

Players would smash a watermelon and make "monkey sounds" after games

Local NAACP supported the school's decision to fire Bud Walpole

UPDATE: *High school football coach Bud Walpole was offered his job back, effective Thursday, CNN affiliate WCBD reported. The school district superintendent invited him back Wednesday only after Walpole submitted a written commitment to focus more on diversity and sensitivity training, according to a statement.*

A high school football coach in Charleston, South Carolina, was fired after he permitted a post-game

Former football player Harry Griffin shared this story with CNN iReport

U.S. + Live TV

celebratory ritual involving a watermelon that some say is racist.

After a parent reported the "watermelon ritual" to the school board, the Charleston County School District launched an investigation and ultimately fired Academic Magnet High School coach Bud Walpole, according to CNN affiliate WCSC.

"Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others were either standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds described as, 'Ooh, ooh, ooh,'" school district Superintendent Nancy McGinley said, describing the noises as "monkey sounds." The watermelon was decorated with caricatures drawn with Sharpie markers, she added.

Dot Scott, president of the Charleston branch of the NAACP, said the organization supported the school's decision to fire Walpole. Scott thanked the superintendent at a Wednesday press conference "for her swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team."

The school district has not yet responded to CNN's request for comment.

A number of parents and students, however, are standing in support of Walpole, who coached at the school for 10 years. More than 4,000 people have signed a petition to reinstate the ousted coach, as of Wednesday afternoon.

Some say they don't see the ritual as racist.



10 photos: Photos: Coaches who went out of bounds

"I just don't understand why the school district is concerned this is an issue," Connie Biggs, the president of Academic Magnet's Booster Club told WCSC. "Is it because it's a watermelon? If it had been a pumpkin or a cantaloupe would that have been a different reaction from the district."

Harry Griffin, a junior at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, said he has known Walpole for six years and considers the coach a man of integrity. Griffin played for Walpole's high school team as a fullback and nose guard. CNN first learned of this story through an iReport Griffin uploaded.

"Coach Walpole was fired because his team had a harmless tradition that was made to seem prejudiced," Griffin wrote in a CNN iReport. "They had a post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon and eating it after every victory. A parent on an opposing team deemed this act as racist and the school board decided to interrogate the players."

Some parents are taking issue with how the investigation was conducted and how students were questioned about the ritual.

"The school district is not telling us what they said to these kids," Biggs said. "They're giving us two questions that they say that they asked but these interviews have lasted 10-20 minutes apiece, so I'm really unclear how two questions could take that long."

Griffin called Walpole's firing an injustice.

"I want to help my coach get his integrity back," Griffin said.

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"You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing."

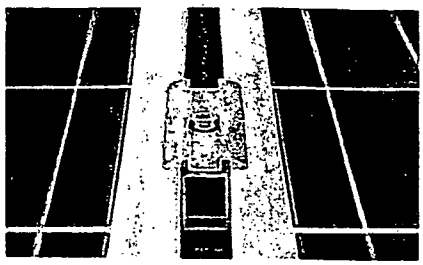
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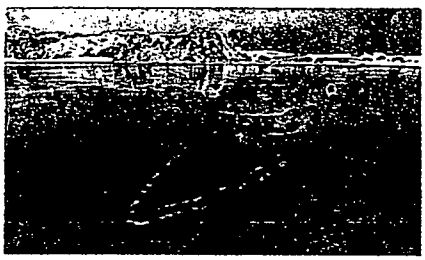
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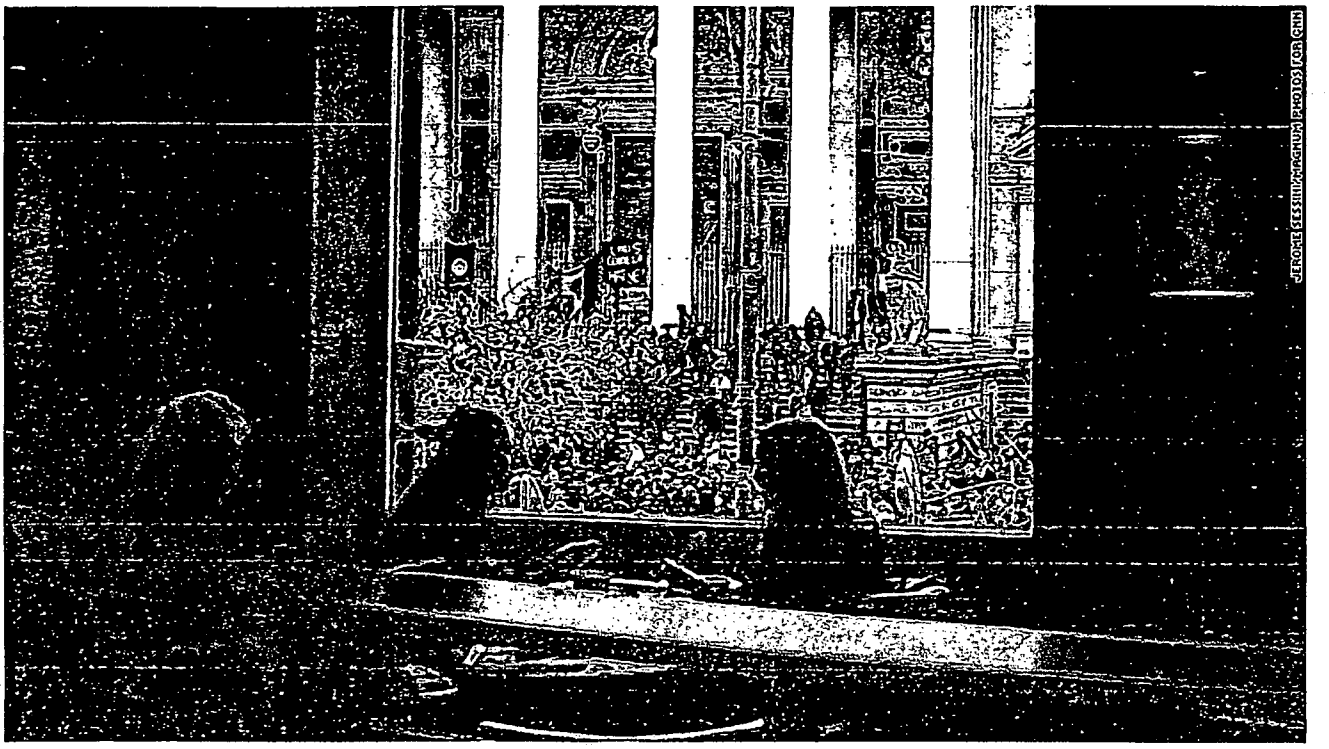
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Superintendent explains why Academic Magnet coach was fired over postgame celebrations

OCTOBER 21, 2014 BY SOUTH CAROLINA RADIO NETWORK

The varsity football coach at Academic Magnet High School in Charleston County has been relieved from his coaching duties because of postgame victory celebrations a school board member says involved players smashing watermelons and making ape-like sounds, according to the Charleston County School District superintendent.



Bud Walpole (Image: Charleston County School District)

But some parents were livid with the decision, saying the celebrations had no racial intent at all.

Superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley said that Academic Magnet High School football coach Eugene "Bud" Walpole will no longer coach the Raptors because

of what some in the district felt were inappropriate postgame celebrations that could be seen as having racial overtones.

"This is not an employee who has been fired for the district, he is still a teacher in the district," she said. "This relieving of the duties was related to the coaching position only."

McGinley said activities that were part of the celebrations were something the adults should have not let happen. "Therefore we took action to relieve the head coach of his responsibilities." McGinley said.

McGinley said school board member Michael Miller received a complaint from the parent of a Military Magnet High School student about the celebrations a week or two after Military Magnet's loss to Academic Magnet on September 5. She said a further investigation found the players also drew a face on the watermelon with a black Sharpie and gave it a different name for each week's game, including "Bonds-Wilson" numbers "1" through "5" the name of a predominantly black school that was located on Academic Magnet's current site (per Charleston City Paper, it is also the name given to the joint campus that AMHS shares with the Charleston County School of the Arts).

Academic Magnet is a predominantly-white magnet school, while Military Magnet and most of the Raptors' opponents are majority-black.

McGinley said an initial investigation by school officials found the coaches believed the celebration to be an "innocent ritual" that did not have racially-sensitive overtones. But McGinley said she decided to further investigate on the district level in October because Miller's complaint said the chants were "animalistic and monkey-like."

The superintendent said she and AMHS principal Judith Peterson told the team to stop the celebrations last week and then fired Walpole on Monday. But McGinley admitted that she had not personally spoken with Walpole prior to relieving him of his duties. She said she would talk to Walpole before presenting her findings to the school board at a later meeting.

Parents of some players angrily confronted McGinley during Tuesday's press conference, insisting the celebrations were not meant to be racist. They also demanded to know why the team's 29 players were taken out of class and individually questioned without their parents' knowledge. At one point, the parents became antagonistic enough that McGinley ended the press conference, saying "I think we're finished here."

An online petition to reinstate Walpole as head coach has been created on the website Change.org.

Walpole has declined to comment on the decision.

Bill Dubensky and Matt Long contributed to this report

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CCSD Report: Football players did not see post-game celebrations as racist

Published: Monday, November 3rd 2014, 10:39 pm EDT
Updated: Tuesday, November 4th 2014, 10:00 am EDT

CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) - Academic High School football players told school officials that they did not see their post-game celebrations involving watermelons as racist, according to a newly released report.

On Monday night, Charleston County School District officials released an investigative report by District Associate Superintendent Lou Martin which was given to Dr. Nancy McGinley prior to the firing of Head Football Coach Bud Walpole who was reinstated two days later.

The report, dated Oct. 16, states that school officials met with 29 members of the Academic Magnet football team at 8:30 a.m. with the players brought into the lecture hall and interviewed separately regarding reported post-game celebrations involving the smashing of watermelons which were given faces and names.

According to the report, the player interviews were completed at 2:45 p.m., then an assistant coach and Walpole were interviewed.

In the report's findings of player interviews, it states the watermelon "was intended to be a 'tradition' to represent team unity by smashing the watermelon after a victory and each player consumed some of the watermelon."

The report states the assistant coach acknowledged that he was aware of the watermelon and did not think it offensive "as he viewed it in the context of a team tradition."

According to the findings in the report, the assistant coach said he was unaware of any markings on the watermelon and "expressed remorse" for not being more alert or aware of the "ramifications of the watermelon and its connotations."

The report also states Walpole told officials that he knew of the "smashing" but was "too occupied with responsibilities to pay close attention." Officials state in the report that Walpole had been "very defensive until the final few minutes of the interview."

According to the report, Walpole acknowledged that he should have been more aware and taken an active intervention in the process.

The report states Walpole admonished players for smashing the watermelon in the quad but not any other activity; officials say one of the watermelons was smashed in the quad at the high school which drew the attention of staff at the school.

In a section of the report titled "Observations," officials said most of the football team did not associate any of the watermelon celebrations with "any negative connotation toward any race."

One observation stated that "Some of the seniors expressed an attitude of if 'someone is offended by the watermelon that is their problem and not ours.'"

Officials detailed several recommendations in the report with one of them being to suspend the remaining games.

The other recommendations were to have all players required to attend a "Dignity and Respect" series of seminars and participate in an activity tied to a cultural community event. The report also recommended issuing a letter of reprimand and removing coaches from their position.

Dr. McGinley resigned last week following the controversy and cited the incident in her address to principals and senior school leaders.

"You may have handled it differently," McGinley said."At this point, I cannot erase the impact that this incident has had on our district and community, and for that I am truly sorry."

Last Thursday, the CCSD Board of Trustees voted 8-1 to accept McGinley's resignation.

McGinley will stay on as a district employee in a consultant role through June 30, 2015.

To read the complete report, click here.

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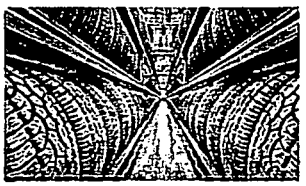
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OCTOBER 23, 2014

HIGH SCHOOL COACH FIRED FOR WATERMELON RITUAL TO BE REINSTATED

STEPH BAZZLE

A football coach at a South Carolina high school was dismissed from his job this week after complaints that a watermelon ritual his team performed after winning was a racist attack. However, the coach was offered his job back at Charleston's Academic Magnet High School on Wednesday after agreeing to undergo diversity and sensitivity training.

According to *CNN*, the team developed a ritual. They would draw a face on a watermelon, and give the watermelon a name. While the first watermelon used in the ritual was named "Junior," all five subsequent ones appear to have been named Bonds Wilson. (Bonds Wilson was once the name of the predominantly black school in the area, according to *Voices of Black America*. It was an Equalization School, one of many built to avoid desegregation. After it was demolished, the Academic Magnet school was built in its place, and the campus is called the Bonds-Wilson campus.)

After winning, the team would smash (rather than cut) the watermelon, and eat it. While two students smashed the watermelon, the team made sounds the school superintendent calls "tribal-like chanting," but a parent from an opposing team described as "monkey sounds."

It was this parent who first reported the watermelon ritual to the school board, which then investigated.

A debate raged over the watermelon ritual, with some arguing that it was called racist only because it involved a watermelon, and many calling the claim of "monkey noises" unsubstantiated and suggesting the offense had more to do with a loss than a watermelon.

However, parents say that the school board interviewed students extensively about the exact nature of the watermelon ritual, and came to a conclusion that included ending the celebration, and terminating Coach Bud Walpole's employment.

A petition circulated, garnering well over 4,000 signatures. Parents signing it stated that their children never knew of any connection between watermelon and racism (though the stereotype has not passed out of current use) until the school taught it to them in the process of their investigation, and calling the coach's termination a racist act itself.

In addition to maintaining that there were no intentional racist overtones to the watermelon ritual, parents complain about the way students were questioned, being pulled out of class with no notice to parents beforehand. While it isn't unusual for a principal to question students about an issue without parents present, many claim that they were pressured into giving the answers they felt were expected.

Whatever students and coach thought when carrying out the watermelon smashes, the pressure on the school board was successful. Coach Walpole was offered reinstatement to his job only two days after his termination, on the condition that he agree to diversity and sensitivity training, *WBTV* reports.

[photo credit: morgan childers]

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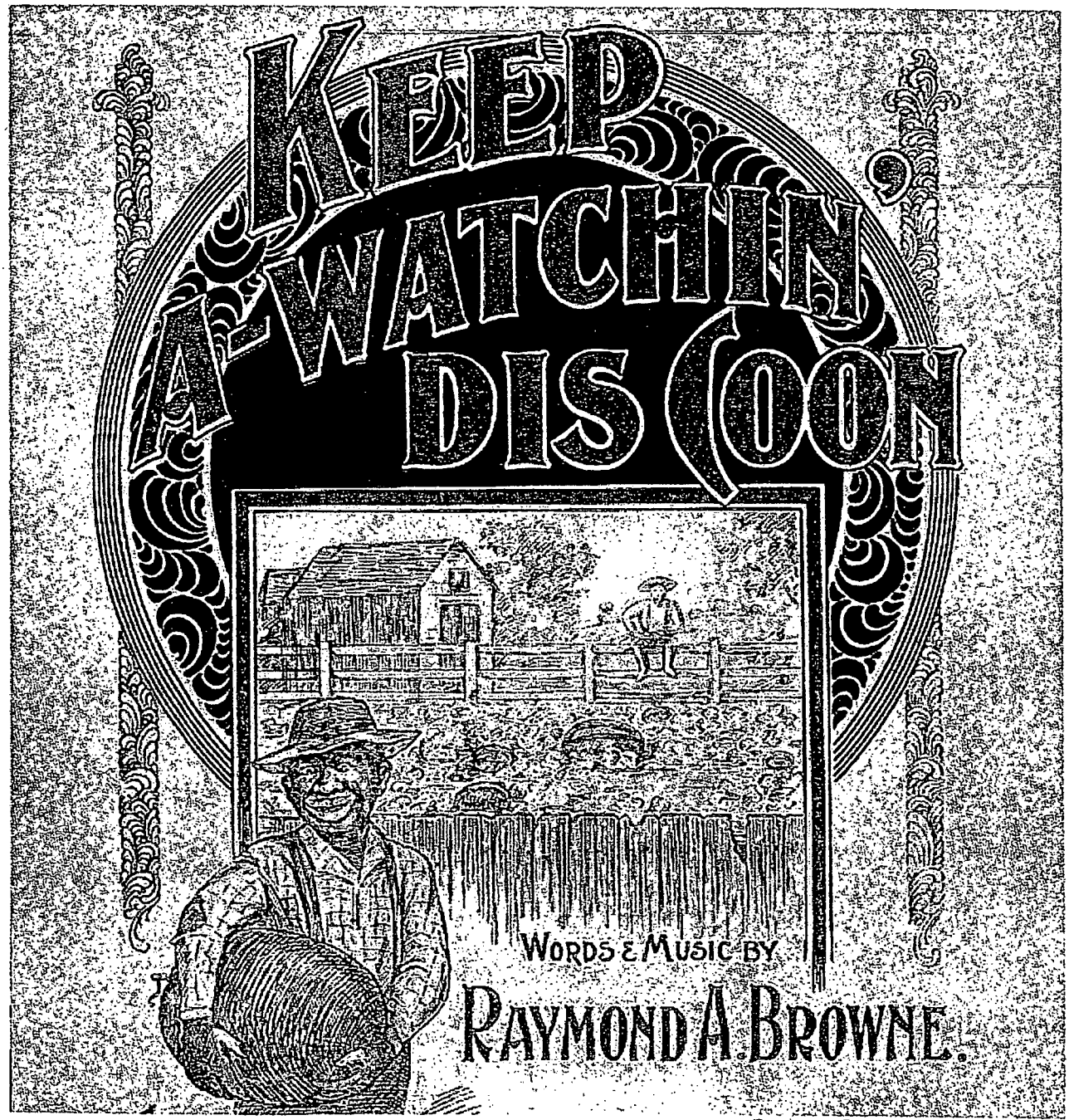
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U.S.

How Watermelons Became a Racist Trope

Before its subversion in the Jim Crow era, the fruit symbolized black self-sufficiency.



Courtesy Brown University Library

WILLIAM BLACK

ROA 694

DEC 8, 2014

It seems as if every few weeks there's another watermelon controversy. The *Boston Herald* got in trouble for publishing a cartoon of the White House fence-jumper, having made his way into Obama's bathroom, recommending watermelon-flavored toothpaste to the president. A high-school football coach in Charleston, South Carolina, was briefly fired for a bizarre post-game celebration ritual in which his team smashed a watermelon while making ape-like noises. While hosting the National Book Awards, author Daniel Handler (a.k.a. Lemony Snicket) joked about how his friend Jacqueline Woodson, who had won the young people's literature award for her memoir *Brown Girl Dreaming*, was allergic to watermelon. And most recently, activists protesting the killing of Michael Brown were greeted with an ugly display while marching through Rosebud, Missouri, on their way from Ferguson to Jefferson City: malt liquor, fried chicken, a Confederate flag, and, of course, a watermelon.

While mainstream-media figures deride these instances of racism, or at least racial insensitivity, another conversation takes place on Twitter feeds and comment boards: What, many ask, does a watermelon have to do with race? What's so offensive about liking watermelon? Don't white people like watermelon too? Since these conversations tend to focus on the individual intent of the cartoonist, coach, or emcee, it's all too easy to exculpate them from blame, since the racial meaning of the watermelon is so ambiguous.

Free black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons, and in doing so made the fruit a symbol of their freedom.

But the stereotype that African Americans are excessively fond of

watermelon emerged for a specific historical reason and served a specific political purpose. The trope came into full force when slaves won their emancipation during the Civil War. Free black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons, and in doing so made the fruit a symbol of their freedom. Southern whites, threatened by blacks' newfound freedom, responded by making the fruit a symbol of black people's perceived uncleanliness, laziness, childishness, and unwanted public presence. This racist trope then exploded in American popular culture, becoming so pervasive that its historical origin became obscure. Few Americans in 1900 would've guessed the stereotype was less than half a century old.

Not that the raw material for the racist watermelon trope didn't exist before emancipation. In the early modern European imagination, the typical watermelon-eater was an Italian or Arab peasant. The watermelon, noted a British officer stationed in Egypt in 1801, was "a poor Arab's feast," a meager substitute for a proper meal. In the port city of Rosetta he saw the locals eating watermelons "ravenously ... as if afraid the passer-by was going to snatch them away," and watermelon rinds littered the streets. There, the fruit symbolized many of the same qualities as it would in post-emancipation America: uncleanliness, because eating watermelon is so messy. Laziness, because growing watermelons is so easy, and it's hard to eat watermelon and keep working—it's a fruit you have to sit down and eat. Childishness, because watermelons are sweet, colorful, and devoid of much nutritional value. And unwanted public presence, because it's hard to eat a watermelon by yourself. These tropes made their way to America, but the watermelon did not yet have a racial meaning. Americans were just as likely to associate the watermelon with white Kentucky hillbillies or New Hampshire yokels as with black South Carolina slaves.



Soon after winning their emancipation, many African Americans sold watermelons in order to make a living outside the plantation system. (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)

This may be surprising given how prominent watermelons were in enslaved African Americans' lives. Slave owners often let their slaves grow and sell their own watermelons, or even let them take a day off during the summer to eat the first watermelon harvest. The slave Israel Campbell would slip a watermelon into the bottom of his cotton basket when he fell short of his daily quota, and then retrieve the melon at the end of the day and eat it. Campbell taught the trick to another slave who was often whipped for not reaching his quota, and soon the trick was widespread. When the year's cotton fell a few bales short of what the master had figured, it simply remained "a mystery."

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But Southern whites saw their slaves' enjoyment of watermelon as a sign of their own supposed benevolence. Slaves were usually careful to enjoy watermelon according to the code of behavior established by whites. When an Alabama overseer cut open watermelons for the slaves under his watch, he expected the children to run to get their slice. One boy, Henry Barnes, refused to run, and once he did get his piece he would run off to the slave quarters to eat out of the white people's sight. His mother would then whip

ROA 698

him, he remembered, "fo' being so stubborn." The whites wanted Barnes to play the part of the watermelon-craving, juice-dribbling pickaninny. His refusal undermined the tenuous relationship between master and slave.

Emancipation, of course, destroyed that relationship. Black people grew, ate, and sold watermelons during slavery, but now when they did so it was a threat to the racial order. To whites, it seemed now as if blacks were flaunting their newfound freedom, living off their own land, selling watermelons in the market, and—worst of all—enjoying watermelon together in the public square. One white family in Houston was devastated when their nanny Clara left their household shortly after her emancipation in 1865. Henry Evans, a young white boy to whom Clara had likely been a second mother, cried for days after she left. But when he bumped into her on the street one day, he rejected her attempt to make peace. When Clara offered him some watermelon, Henry told her that "he would not eat what free negroes ate."

Newspapers amplified this association between the watermelon and the free black person. In 1869, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* published perhaps the first caricature of blacks reveling in watermelon. The adjoining article explained, "The Southern negro in no particular more palpably exhibits his epicurean tastes than in his excessive fondness for watermelons. The juvenile freedman is especially intense in his partiality for that refreshing fruit."



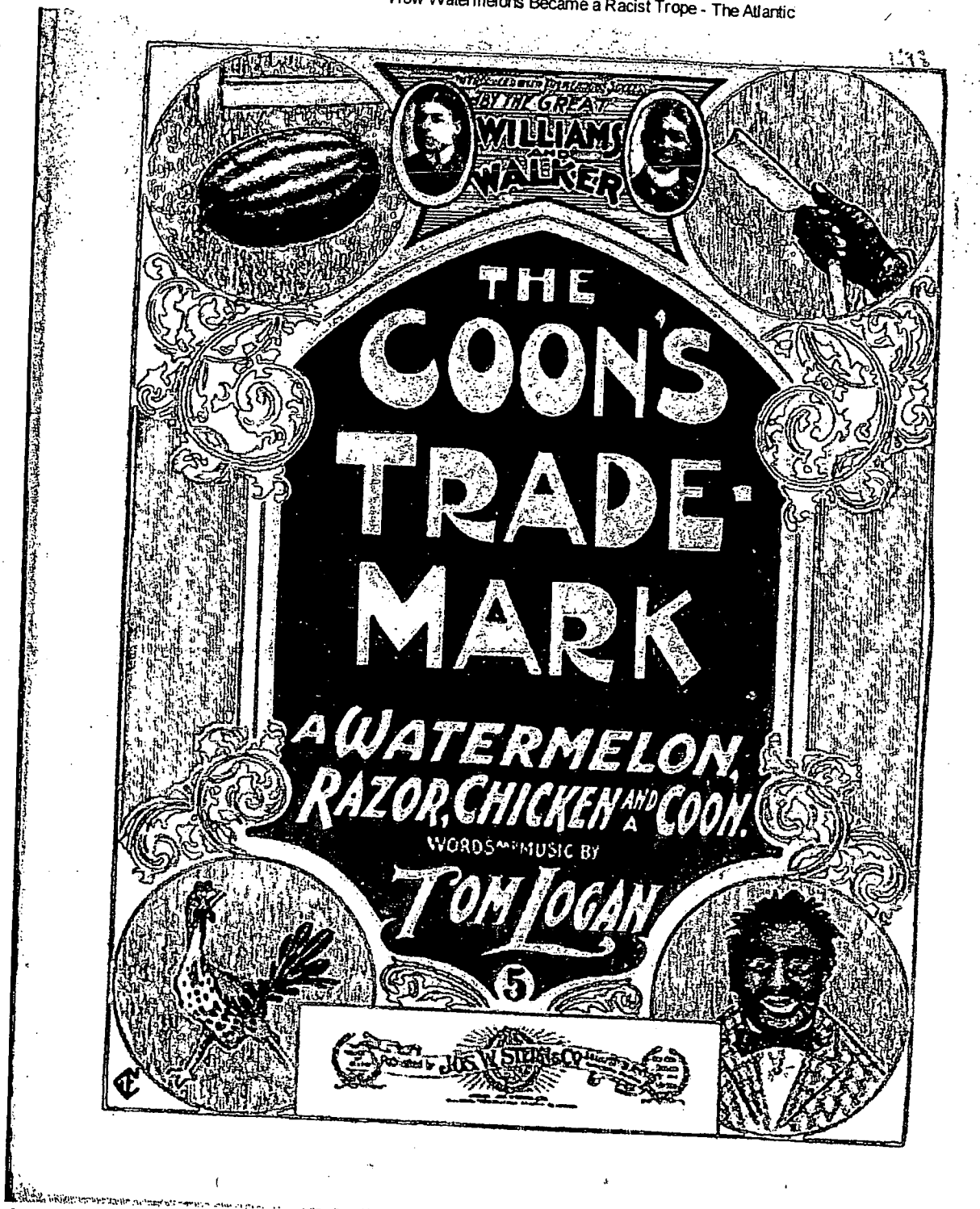
LOA 699



Perhaps the first printed illustration of the racist watermelon trope, c. 1869. (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)

Two years later, a Georgia newspaper reported that a black man had been arrested for poisoning a watermelon with the intent of killing a neighbor. The story was headlined "Negro Kuklux" and equated black-on-black violence with the Ku Klux Klan, asking facetiously whether the Radical Republican congressional subcommittee investigating the Klan would investigate this freedman's actions. The article began with a scornful depiction of the man on his way to the courthouse: "On Sabbath afternoon we encountered a strapping 15th Amendment bearing an enormous watermelon in his arms *en route* for the Court-house." It was as if the freedman's worst crime was not attempted murder but walking around in public with that ridiculous fruit.

The primary message of the watermelon stereotype was that black people were not ready for freedom. During the 1880 election season, Democrats accused the South Carolina state legislature, which had been majority-black during Reconstruction, of having wasted taxpayers' money on watermelons for their own refreshment; this fiction even found its way into history textbooks. D. W. Griffith's white-supremacist epic film *The Birth of a Nation*, released in 1915, included a watermelon feast in its depiction of emancipation, as corrupt northern whites encouraged the former slaves to stop working and enjoy some watermelon instead. In these racist fictions, blacks were no more deserving of freedom than were children.



As mass-produced pianos and sheet music became popular in the late nineteenth century, so did "coon songs," popular tunes that mocked African Americans for their lazy, shiftless, childish ways. (Courtesy Brown University Library)

By the early twentieth century, the watermelon stereotype was everywhere—potholders, paperweights, sheet music, salt-and-pepper shakers. A popular postcard portrayed an elderly black man carrying a watermelon in each arm only to happen upon a stray chicken. The man laments, "Dis am de wust

perdickermunt ob mah life." As a black man, the postcard implied, he had few responsibilities and little interest in anything beyond his own stomach. Edwin S. Porter, famous for directing *The Great Train Robbery* in 1903, co-directed *The Watermelon Patch* two years later, which featured "darkies" sneaking into a watermelon patch, men dressed as skeletons chasing away the watermelon thieves (à la the Ku Klux Klan, who dressed as ghosts to frighten blacks), a watermelon-eating contest, and a band of white vigilantes ultimately smoking the watermelon thieves out of a cabin. The long history of white violence to maintain the racial order was played for laughs.

It may seem silly to attribute so much meaning to a fruit. And the truth is that there is nothing inherently racist about watermelons. But cultural symbols have the power to shape how we see our world and the people in it, such as when police officer Darren Wilson saw Michael Brown as a superhuman "demon." These symbols have roots in real historical struggles—specifically, in the case of the watermelon, white people's fear of the emancipated black body. Whites used the stereotype to denigrate black people—to take something they were using to further their own freedom, and make it an object of ridicule. It ultimately does not matter if someone means to offend when they tap into the racist watermelon stereotype, because the stereotype has a life of its own.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WILLIAM BLACK is a graduate student of history at Rice University.

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High school football coach fired over 'racist' watermelon ritual

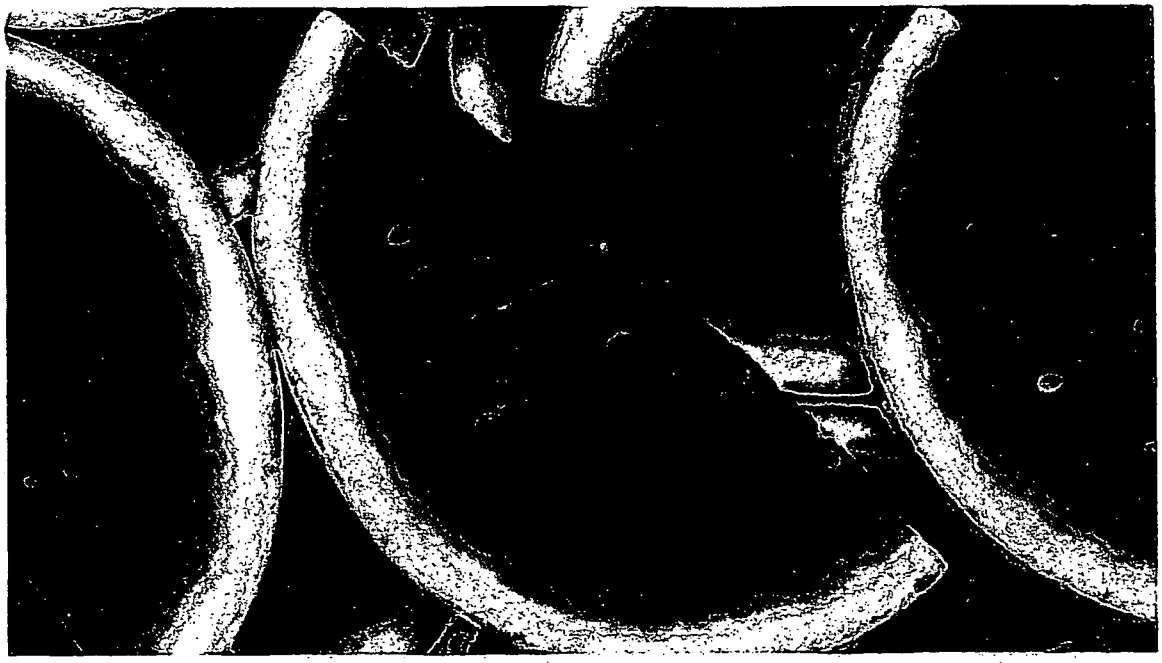


Image by YouTube

High school football coach fired over 'racist' watermelon ritual

By **Julianne Cassidy**. CREATED Oct 23, 2014
Former Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud Walpole in South Carolina has apologized to Charleston NAACP President Dot Scott over a controversial post-game ritual involving a watermelon. Walpole, who was fired over the incident, claims that he did not view the celebration as "racially insensitive."

A parent contacted the school board after witnessing the post-win ritual. "That sparked an investigation which revealed a 'watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds' that football team members engaged in after recent victories," WCSC details. "Each time, the watermelon was decorated with what [Superintendent Nancy] McGinley described as a caricature by a student using a Sharpie marker with the watermelon being named 'Bonds Wilson' at various times."

The NAACP's Scott has publicly commended McGinley of the Charleston County School District "for her swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team at Academic Magnet High School," WCSC reports.

In regards to a school community backlash over the firing of Walpole -- who had served both as Academic Magnet's head football coach and girls basketball coach -- the NAACP states, "All of those adults should ask themselves a simple question - would you take the same stance if an overwhelmingly black football team's 'victory ritual' was to urinate on and then stomp a Confederate Flag into the dirt when they have defeated an overwhelmingly white football team?," WCSC further reports.

After 10 years of coaching, Walpole had tied the school's win record this season before being fired.



Julianne Cassidy

A city girl gone country, Philadelphia-bred journalist Julianne Cassidy relocated to be a Nashville-based digital editor for Scripps Media, Inc.
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Football coach reinstated after controversial 'watermelon ritual' angered NAACP, others

POSTED 7:11 AM, OCTOBER 23, 2014, BY Q13 NEWS STAFF

CHARLESTON (CNN) — A high school football coach in Charleston, South Carolina, fired after he permitted a post-game celebratory ritual involving a watermelon that some say is racist was recently offered his job back.



Watermelon file photo.

Bud Walpole was offered his job back, effective Thursday, CNN affiliate WCBD reported.

The school district superintendent invited him back Wednesday only after Walpole submitted a written commitment to focus more on diversity and sensitivity training, according to a statement.

After a parent reported the "watermelon ritual" to the school board, the Charleston County School District launched an investigation and ultimately fired Academic Magnet High School coach Bud Walpole, according to CNN affiliate WCSC.

"Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others were either standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds described as, 'Ooh, ooh, ooh,'" school district Superintendent Nancy McGinley said, describing the noises as "monkey sounds." The watermelon was decorated with caricatures drawn with Sharpie markers, she added.

Dot Scott, president of the Charleston branch of the NAACP, said the organization supported the school's decision to fire Walpole. Scott thanked the superintendent at a Wednesday press conference "for her swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team."

The school district has not yet responded to CNN's request for comment.

A number of parents and students, however, are standing in support of Walpole, who coached at the school for 10 years. More than 4,000 people have signed a petition to reinstate the ousted coach, as of Wednesday afternoon.

Some say they don't see the ritual as racist.

"I just don't understand why the school district is concerned this is an issue," Connie Biggs, the president of Academic Magnet's Booster Club told WCSC. "Is it because it's a watermelon? If it had been a pumpkin or a cantaloupe would that have been a different reaction from the district."

Harry Griffin, a junior at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, said he has known Walpole for six years and considers the coach a man of integrity. Griffin played for Walpole's high school team as a fullback and nose guard. CNN first learned of this story through an iReport Griffin uploaded.

"Coach Walpole was fired because his team had a harmless tradition that was made to seem prejudiced," Griffin wrote in a CNN iReport. "They had a post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon and eating it after every victory. A parent on an opposing team deemed this act as racist and the school board decided to interrogate the players."

Some parents are taking issue with how the investigation was conducted and how students were questioned about the ritual.

"The school district is not telling us what they said to these kids," Biggs said. "They're giving us two questions that they say that they asked but these interviews have lasted 10-20 minutes apiece, so I'm really unclear how two questions could take that long."

Griffin called Walpole's firing an injustice.

"I want to help my coach get his integrity back," Griffin said.

"You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything

that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing."

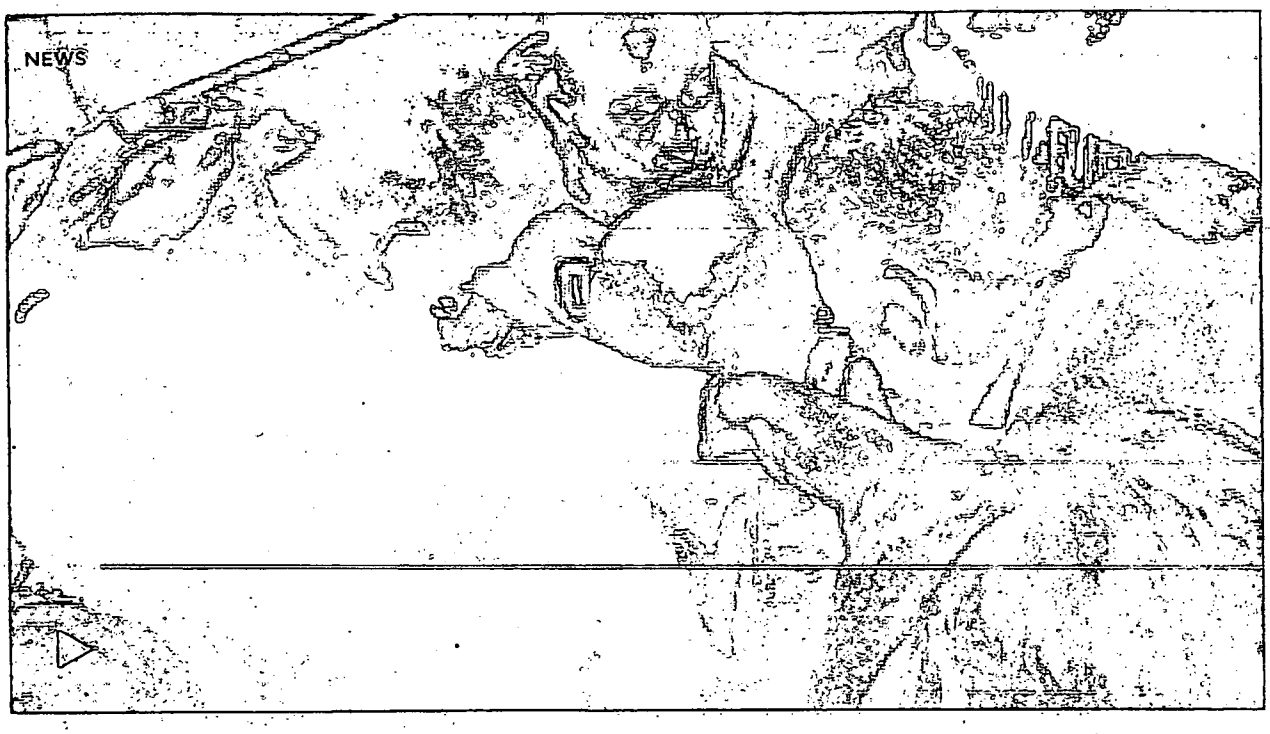
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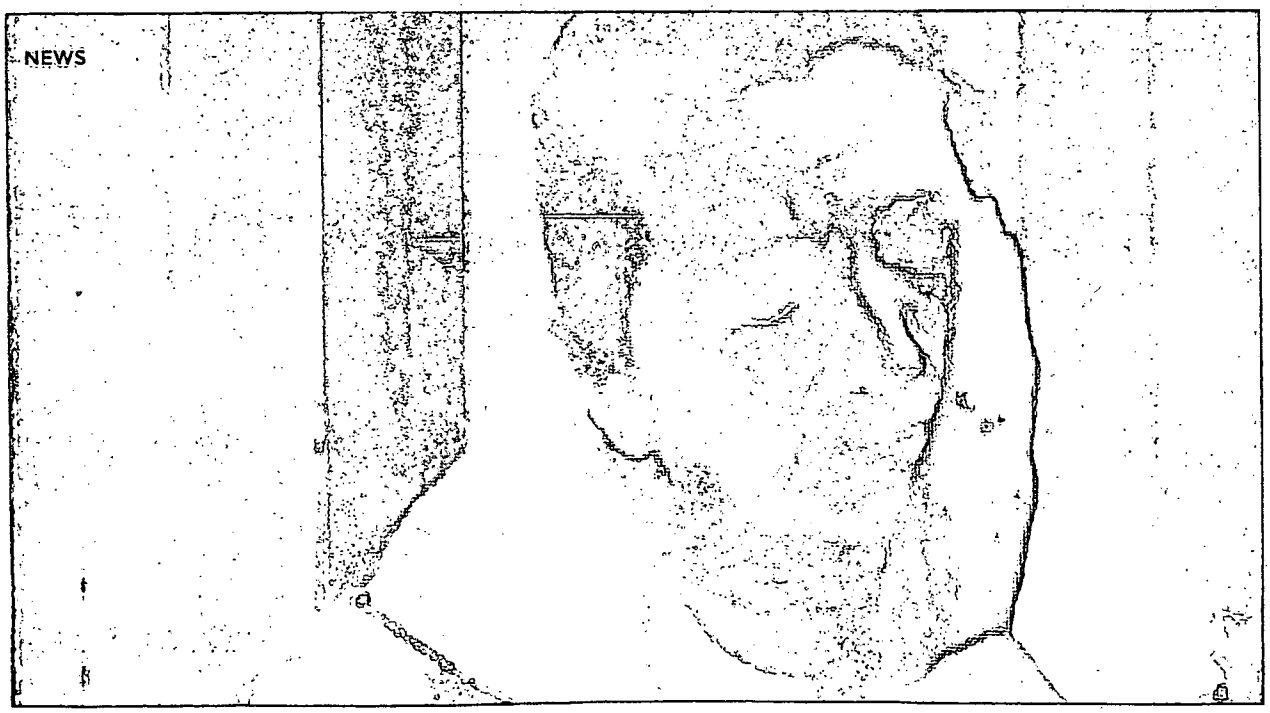
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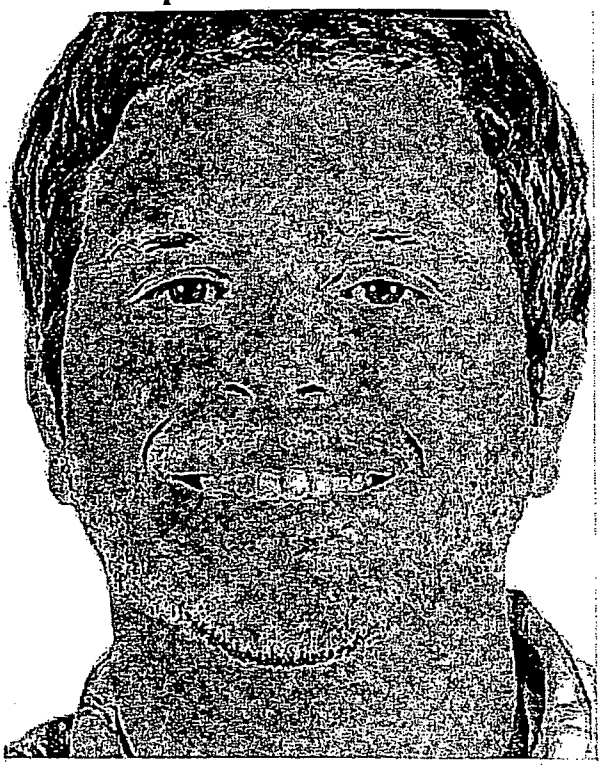

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NEWS


NEWS

Apology for questionable celebration restores coach's job

Edmundo Carrillo | Posted: Thursday, October 23, 2014 11:07 pm



edmundo carrillo

Bud Walpole was only out of a job for three days, but it was a very divisive three days.

Walpole, the head football coach at Academic Magnet in Charleston, S.C., was fresh off a loss to Whale Branch, his second of the season after winning six straight games.

It was an ugly 63-6 loss, but what was unearthed after was even uglier.

A parent came forward to the Charleston County School District and said they witnessed players partaking in a postgame ritual where they would smash a watermelon while making "monkey-like" noises.

The district launched an investigation and found that players did this several times after victories, and the players would sometimes draw caricatures on the watermelon with a marker. As one would imagine, many people found this to be racist.

The school board took swift action, and Walpole was relieved of his duties Monday.

He was reinstated Thursday.

Walpole has been coaching at Academic Magnet for 10 years with a less-than-excellent 29-70 record, but the 6-2 mark he had the Raptors at this season showed that he was moving the team in the right direction. Naturally, he had supporters.

A petition to reinstate Walpole gathered more than 4,000 signatures as of Wednesday, and several former players came out to back up their old head coach. To those people, the ritual was completely harmless and devoid of any racist intentions.

But others didn't see it that way.

President of the Charleston branch of the NAACP Dot Scott commended the Charleston County School District and Superintendent Nancy McGinley "for her swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team."

Walpole, who maintains that he didn't see the ritual as racially insensitive, also took immediate action.

He spoke with Scott on Wednesday morning to apologize and say that he didn't believe the ritual was racist.

It's not clear what else Walpole did to fix his broken image, but McGinley released a statement Wednesday saying that she invited Walpole to return to his job, so long as he gave her a written statement of commitment.

His commitment, which McGinley received less than three hours after their meeting, is to "teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings; to attend insensitivity training provided by the district and counsel my students before games to be extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

So all it took for Walpole to get his job back after allowing a seemingly racist ritual was two days and a written statement. Walpole has said several times that the act was not racist, but no one really knows the truth.

It's just too bad that race has to divide a community in this day and age. The only thing that we can hope for now is that the situation is done so that Walpole can go back to what he is supposed to do, which is turn boys into respectable young men.

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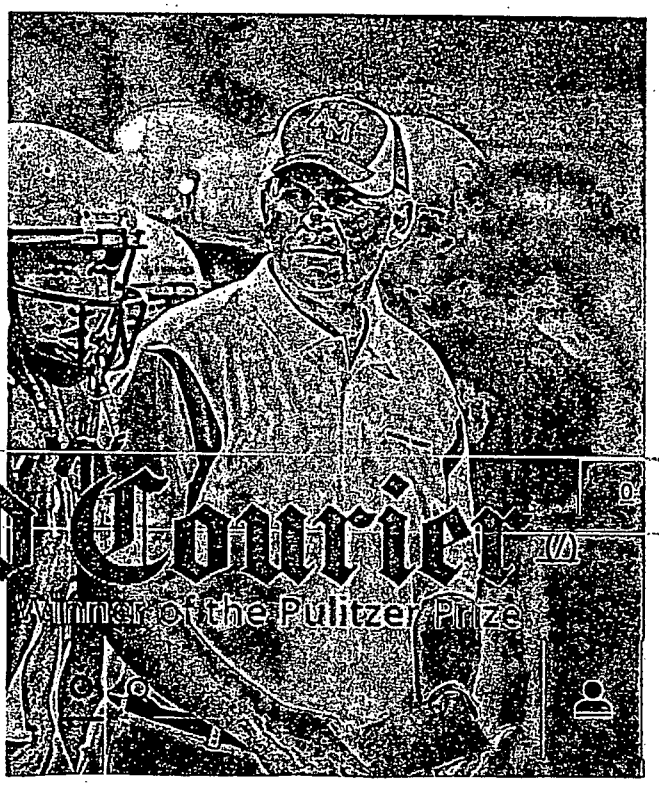
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Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole fired

By David Shelton
Special to The Post and Courier
Oct 20 2014 11:12 pm Oct 21 8:34 am

Academic Magnet is having one of the best football seasons in school history and will have to complete it without its head coach.

It was learned Monday night that Raptors head coach Bud Walpole has been relieved of his duties by the Charleston County School District. Though no official reason has been given, it is believed the dismissal centers around a postgame victory celebration that Academic Magnet started earlier this season after its 21st consecutive win.



The celebration involved the smashing of watermelons, which were then picked up by the

players and eaten as postgame snacks. Social media reports say a complaint was filed with the district, which deemed the celebration inappropriate.



Bud Walpole was in his 10th season as head football coach at Academic Magnet. FILE/STAFF/WADE SPEES

Players from the team were interviewed last week by school district officials about the postgame celebration, and Walpole was fired Monday.

Attempts to rereach Walpole on Monday night were unsuccessful and more information is expected to be released Tuesday by the Charleston County School District.



A petition to reinstate Walpole as head coach was found on change.org, and nearly 200 people had signed the online petition by 10 p.m. Monday.

Academic Magnet is in the midst of a 6-2 season, the school's second-winningest season ever.

Walpole is currently in his 10th season as head football coach and also serves as the school's girls varsity basketball coach. His status as the basketball coach is unknown.

The Raptors next play host to Battery Creek on Friday.

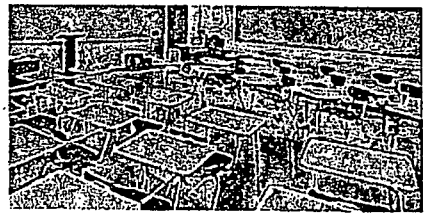
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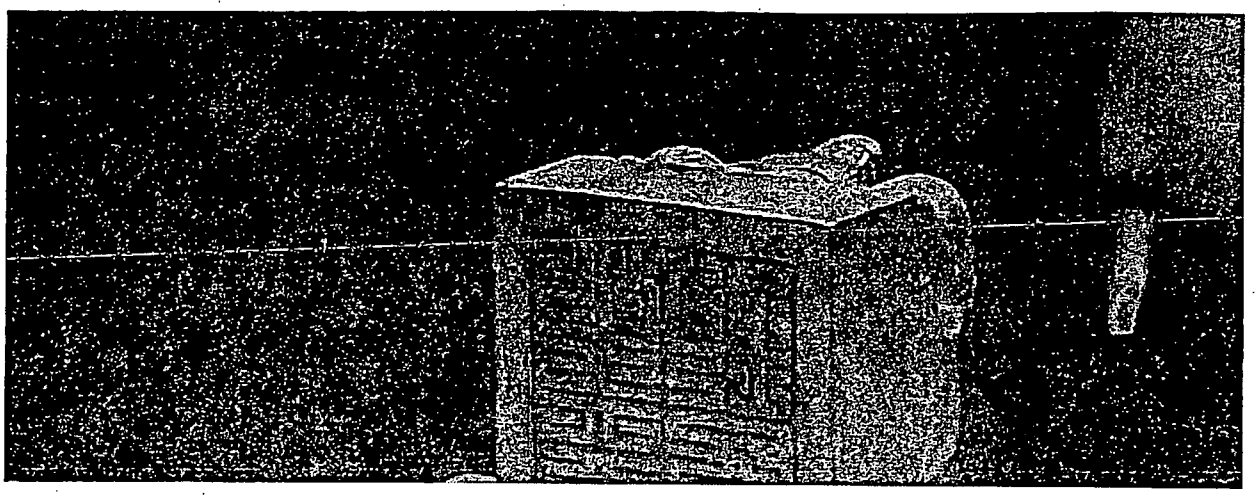
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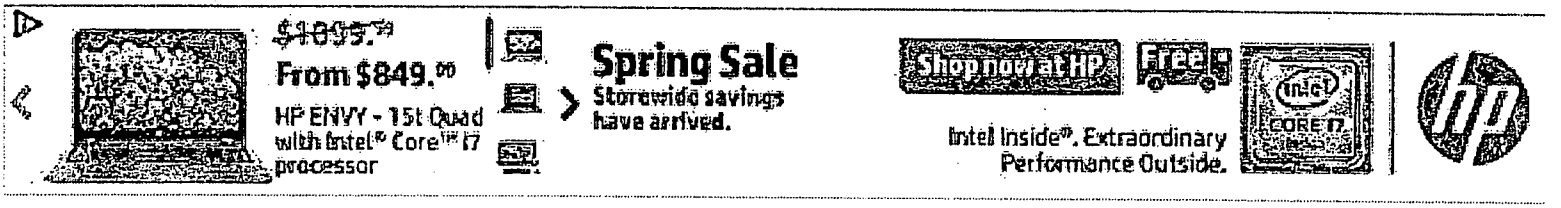






Another lawsuit filed over Academic Magnet





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Academic Magnet coach fired over watermelon celebration; players, parents defend coach

By Amanda Kerr (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195) and Jeff Hartsell (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=38)

Oct 21 2014 10:10 am Oct 21 10:51 pm





When Darius Nwokike learned Monday that his football coach at Academic Magnet High School had been fired, he went to his computer and logged on to the website change.org.

Nwokike, a junior defensive end and the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, started an online petition (http://www.change.org/p/charleston-county-school-district-reinstate-bud-walpole-s-coaching-eligibility) asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate coach Bud Walpole. By 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, the petition had more than 2,000 signatures.

What do you think?

Should Bud Walpole be reinstated as head football coach at Academic Magnet?

- Yes.
- No.
- No strong opinion.

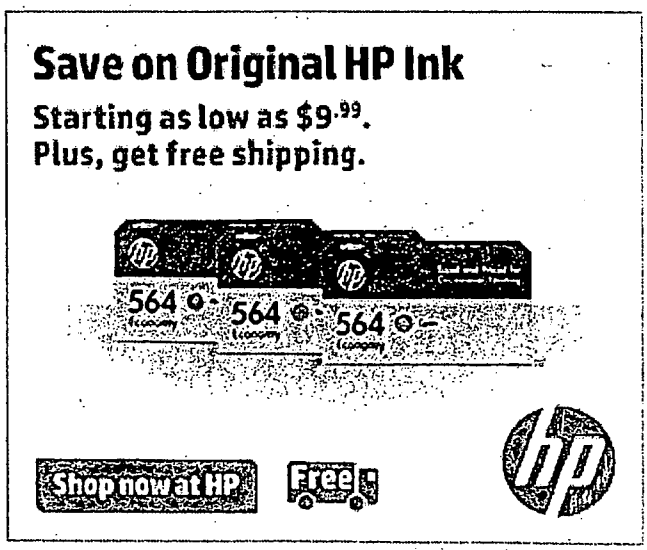
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McGinley offers fired Academic Magnet coach his job back effective Thursday (/article/20141022/PC16/141029813/1177)

"I thought the reasons that Coach Walpole got fired were an injustice," Nwokike said Tuesday afternoon. "I was thinking that if I got enough people to agree with me and sign the petition, it would pressure the school board into giving him his job back."



At a contentious news conference Tuesday, Charleston County schools superintendent Nancy McGinley faced angry parents and said Walpole was fired after an investigation into a postgame

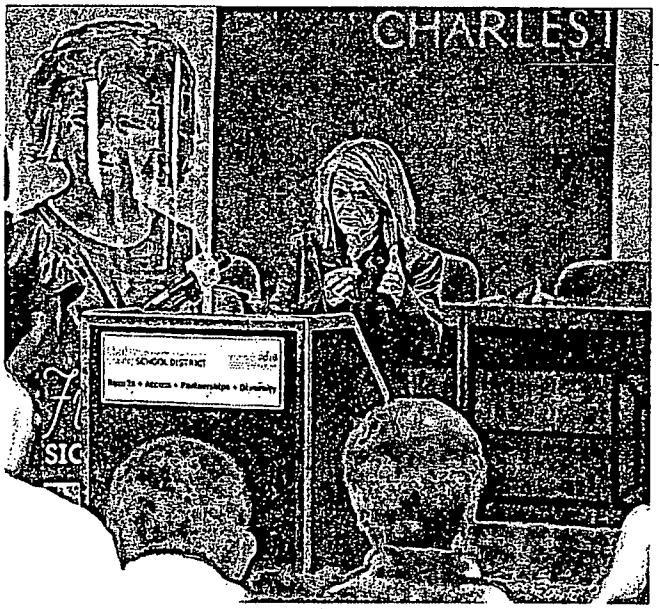
celebration in which Raptors players smashed watermelons and made "chanting sounds."

"It was our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults and that the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned," she said.

Walpole, the Raptors' football coach for the last 10 years, also has been removed as the school's girls basketball coach, but he will keep his job as a physical education teacher at Liberty Hill Academy.

Andrew Rusciolelli will be the Raptors' interim head football coach for the remaining two games of the season. Members of the media were kept away from the Raptors practice Tuesday as they prepared for Friday's game against Battery Creek.

Walpole said Tuesday that "he would love nothing more than to continue my coaching career at Academic Magnet" and that the players' celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone."



Enlarge Superintendent Nancy McGinley held a press conference Tuesday at the Charleston County School District office following Monday's suspension of Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud Walpole. Wade Spees/Staff

Said Walpole, "It was in celebration of winning the game. I would never condone or approve of any activity that I knew to be offensive to anyone."

Initial complaint

McGinley said she first learned of a possible issue involving the Academic Magnet team from school board member Michael Miller on Oct. 13. Miller raised concerns about allegations the team had been participating in a "watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds as part of a post-game celebration" following a victory against Military Magnet Academy.

Miller told The Post and Courier he received the initial complaint from a parent of a Military Magnet student "a week or two after" Military Magnet's 53-30 loss to Academic Magnet on Sept. 5 at North Charleston High School.

"I told Dr. McGinley I wasn't going to shy away from saying I was the one who brought this to the district's attention," Miller said. "If I were to do that, it would be the same as if I were

participating in the actions that brought the issue to the forefront in the first place."

McGinley said she asked Academic Magnet principal Judith Peterson to look into the issue. Peterson, McGinley said, reported back that the coaches were aware of the ritual and that they "did not observe any cultural insensitivity."

McGinley said the tone of Peterson's report "implied it was an innocent ritual" and that the coaches "had no concerns about the potentially racially sensitive overtones or perceptions" of the tradition.



Enlarge The celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone," Coach Bud Walpole said.

Despite Peterson's report, the district conducted its own investigation, during which officials questioning 29 football players as well as Walpole and the assistant coaches. District Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who oversees some of the district's middle and high schools, and Kevin Clayton, who McGinley described as an adviser for the district's diversity committee, interviewed the students over a period of several hours.

The students, McGinley said, told Martin and Clayton that the team had participated in a ritual multiple times this season where two students would smash a watermelon with a face drawn on it with a black marker, while the remainder of the team would stand in a circle around the fruit making chanting sounds. McGinley said the image on the watermelon could be considered a "caricature."

Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, McGinley said, which is a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston on the Bonds-Wilson Campus that pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

McGinley said Tuesday that she had not spoken with Walpole, nor had she spoken with any of the parents from Military Magnet who had raised concerns to Miller. She said neither the principal nor the football coach of Military Magnet had seen the ritual performed after the

game on Sept. 5.

McGinley said she plans to meet with Walpole and report back to the school board, whom she briefed on the watermelon investigation in executive session Tuesday. There is no formal appeals process for Walpole to take as a coach, but McGinley said she could choose to uphold or change Walpole's status following their meeting. The school board could also choose to take action regarding Walpole's status as a coach.

Parents of both current and former students of Academic Magnet High School attended the news conference where they peppered McGinley with questions about why the students were interviewed by district officials who were strangers without their parents present. Some parents shouted that the students were coerced and scared.



Enlarge Darius Nwokike

Connie Biggs, president of Academic Magnet High School's athletic booster board, who doesn't have children on the football team, said the district came in like a "freight train" and took the players one by one into a room with two men they didn't know.

"They trusted you and you have the trust of all the students in the district and you're mismanaging that trust," she said.

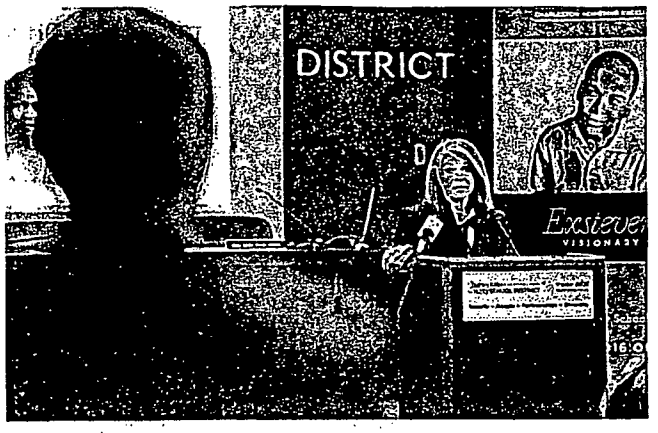
"Just celebrating"

In interviews with The Post and Courier, Walpole and Nwokike spelled out the genesis of the ritual that the players used to mark each of their victories during a 6-2 start to a season that's already one of the best in school history.

"We were just celebrating a victory," Nwokike said. "It was just something we could look forward to during the week. It really started by accident. We'd go to the Subway before games, and before the second game of the season, one of the players saw a watermelon stand. He thought it would be cool to buy one and maybe we could eat it after the game if we won.

"Well, we won and we broke the watermelon because we didn't want to wait to cut it. It was a tradition that lasted six games."

Nwokike said the players' chants were "football shouts."



Enlarge Superintendent Nancy McGinley held a news conference at the Charleston County School District office following the firing of Academic Magnet High School coach Bud Walpole. WaDe Spees/Staff

"I've heard people say they were monkey chants, which is absolutely not true," Nwokike said. "They were just football shouts, like any you would hear on a football field."

Nwokike called the faces drawn on the watermelons "smiley faces."

"They were just faces, they weren't provocative at all," he said. "They were just like simple smiley faces."

Nwokike said he missed two periods of class time last week while he and his teammates were interrogated about the celebration. His mother, Barbara, is among the Academic Magnet parents advocating Walpole's reinstatement.

"He should not have missed any classes over this crazy thing here," she said. "This is nothing to waste time on. Nobody was offended on the team, and I definitely don't see it as a racist thing. When Darius came home and told me about it, I could not believe that they kept him out of class for two periods to talk about it.

"I'm really appalled that so much energy has been wasted on this, and the coach losing his position should never have happened. If somebody was offended, all they had to do was tell the boys to stop. That would have been it. The school board should definitely reinstate Coach and we should be done with this."

Walpole, 57, is a 1979 Citadel graduate who has worked at Lowcountry schools First Baptist, Middleton and for the last 10 years at Academic Magnet. He released a statement Tuesday saying "how truly sorry I am to anyone whom my actions or inactions may have offended."

"One of the things we teach our players is responsibility, and I bear ultimate responsibility for any actions our players take as a group," he said.

The father of former Raptors standout Stuart Walters Jr., now a sophomore football player at Johns Hopkins University, was among those who came to Walpole's defense.

"I don't have enough information to assess what's going on there now," said Stuart Walters Sr. "But I will tell you about Bud Walpole. My son is an African-American and we never had any

problem with Bud Walpole. He's an excellent person, a good coach and I enjoyed my son playing for him for four years. And my son would say the very same thing.

"At times, my son was the only African-American on the team and we never experienced anything like that. I'm sorry to see this happen."

Former Academic Magnet player Harry Griffin posted a statement on CNN's iReport defending Walpole.

"I played for him for four years and gained so much respect for this man," wrote Griffin, now a cadet at The Citadel. "He cared so much about the players and the parents. His record at the school does not show the time and effort he put into coaching. Never in my six years of knowing Coach Walpole would I ever speak badly of him. He has so much integrity and honor. His team motto each year was 'Do the right thing.' He taught us to be better people. ... You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing."

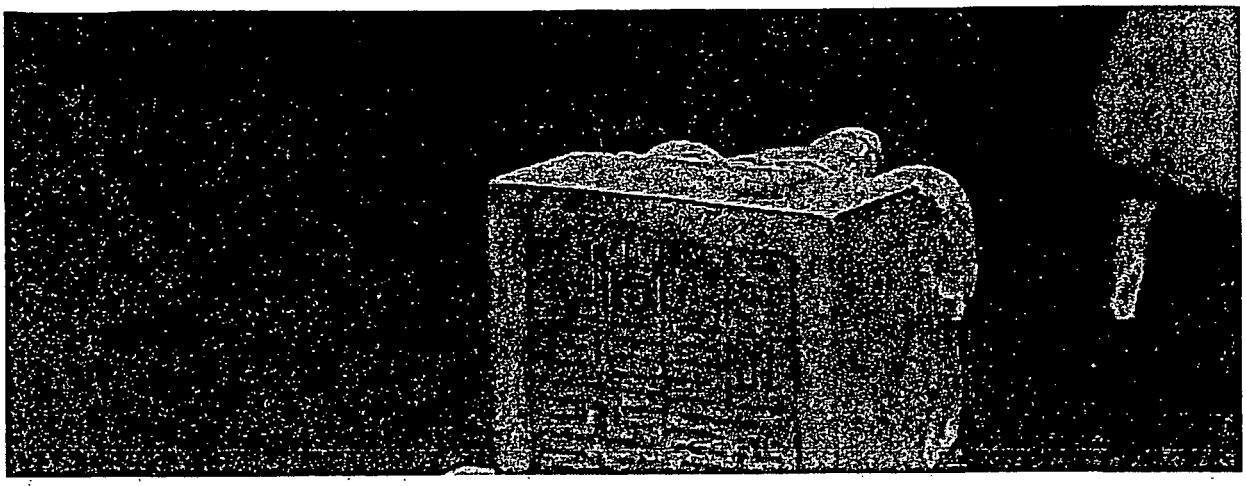
Military Magnet football coach Gene Ross said he saw no watermelon celebration after his team's game against the Raptors.

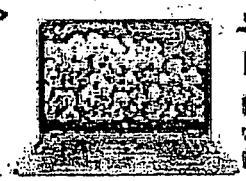
"I never witnessed anything like that after our game. I have never seen anything that I am reading about after any of our games with Academic Magnet," Ross said. "Bud Walpole is a gentleman, always first-class and gracious. It hurts me to know that all of this negative stuff has cost him his job as a football coach. I have never heard Bud make a disparaging remark about anyone in all of the years that I have known him. I hope this gets resolved soon."

Gene Sapakoff and David Shelton contributed to this report.

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Academic Magnet shrugs off watermelon controversy; team secures playoff spot

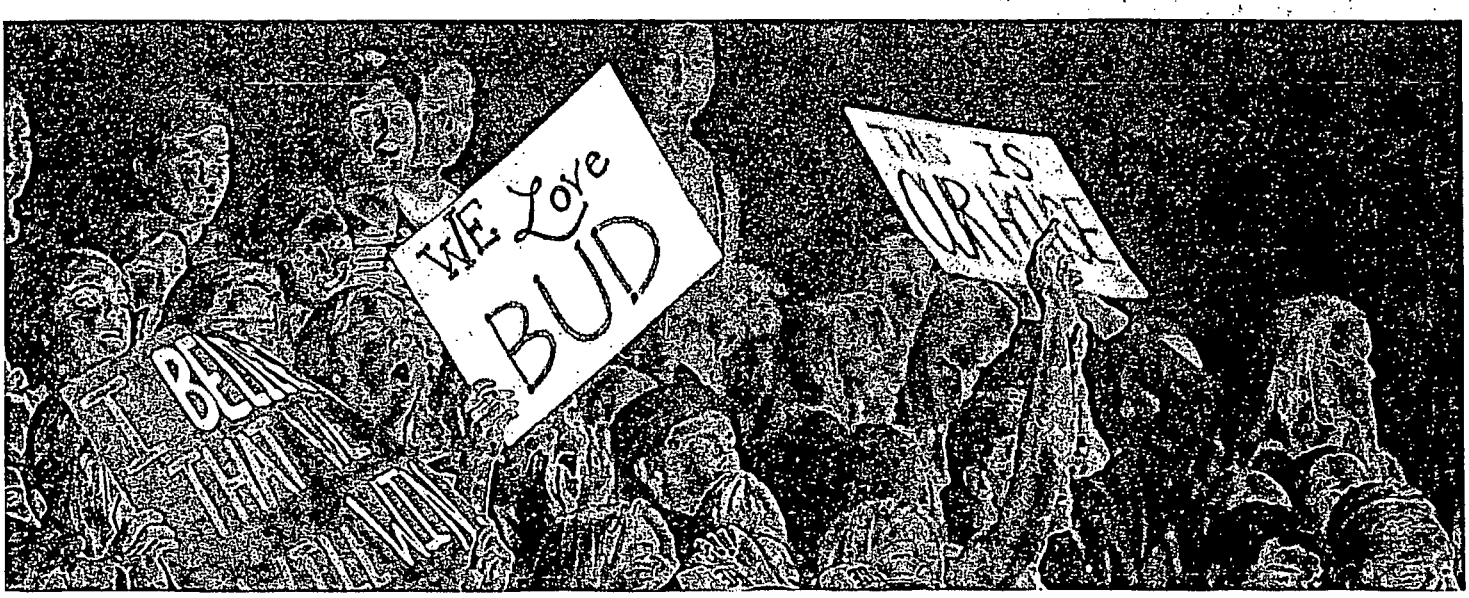


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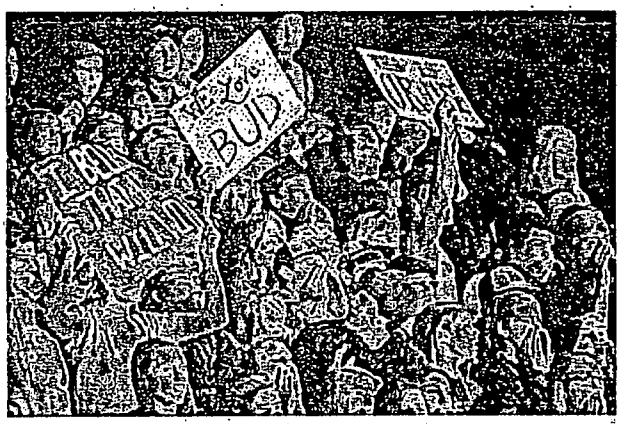


As the final seconds ticked off the clock at Danny Jones Field Friday night, the Academic Magnet student section began to chant.

"We back Walpole! We back Walpole! We back Walpole" they screamed at the top of their lungs as they bounced up and down on the makeshift wooden bleachers.

Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole, who was the recipient of the cheer, took a moment to acknowledge the crowd as he stepped off the field after the Raptors' 28-20 victory over Battery Creek, giving the program a school record seventh win on the season.

Photo Gallery



(/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Site=CP&Date=20141025&Category=PC20&ArtNo=102509999&Ref=PH&Profile=1177&Section=magnet-shrugs-off-watermelon-controversy-team-secures-playoff-spot) Academic Magnet, Walpole top Battery Creek (/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Site=CP&Date=20141025&Category=PC20&ArtNo=102509999&Ref=PH&Profile=1177&Section=magnet-shrugs-off-watermelon-controversy-team-secures-playoff-spot)

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S.C. Rep. Seth Whipper calls for suspension,

Walpole, the Raptors' coach for the past 10 years, was fired Monday and reinstated Wednesday by the Charleston County School District after officials judged a post-game watermelon celebration conducted by the players to be racially insensitive.

firing of Academic Magnet coach
(/article/20141023/PC16/141029731/1177)
McGinley offers fired Academic Magnet coach his job back effective Thursday
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Academic Magnet coach fired over watermelon celebration; players, parents defend coach
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After the traditional post-game handshake with the Battery Creek players, Raptor assistant coaches and players quickly gathered their equipment and were ushered off the field to the parking lot. Players' parents, students and Raptor supporters lined the exit and cheered as Walpole and the players made their exit.

Walpole's son, Gene, and a former Academic Magnet player acted as bodyguards for the embattled coach, warding off media members in their attempt to get a post-game comment from the coach. Walpole didn't make a public statement, but his son handed out index cards with a prepared statement just before the end of the game.

"I am proud of the effort our team put forth tonight," Walpole said in the statement. "I appreciate the support of our student body, parents and community."

There was no post-game celebration from the players and no watermelons. The only fruit to be found was some oranges the players had discarded on the sidelines during halftime.



Enlarge Raptors head football coach Bud Walpole takes to the field Friday night. Academic Magnet defeated Battle Creek, 28-20. Wade Spees/Staff

Other than a little extra security, there were seven North Charleston police officers on hand instead of the normal two, it was a typical night at Danny Jones Field.

The parents came early and lined the fences along the field as the players went through their pre-game warm-ups.

The Dirty Birds, a percussion group at the school, banged their drums and The Flock, the nickname for the Raptors' student section, did their best to support the team and its players.

The victory, which assures the Raptors a spot in next month's playoffs, was the beginning of what many on hand hope is a healing process for the school, the football program and the community at large.

"Obviously all the off-the-field stuff was pretty negative, but I thought it was pretty positive

that everyone at the school came together," said Academic Magnet senior Henry Flowers, a lacrosse player and the head of The Flock student section. "We all rallied around the cause and rallied around coach Walpole. The decision to bring him back was the right decision. It was harmless fun that was blown out of proportion. It snowballed into something that it wasn't."

Academic Magnet junior defensive lineman Darius Nwokike, the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, was instrumental in helping Walpole get his job back. He started a petition on the website change.org Monday asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate his coach.

His mother, Barbara, said she has been flooded with calls of support since Monday night.

"Darius was just so happy that he was able to help get his coach reinstated," Barbara Nwokike said. "I'm so proud of him. He's a shy kid, but he has really come out of his shell this week. We're so happy coach Walpole is back coaching this team. It's where he belongs."

Barbara Nwokike hopes that people on both sides of the issue will move forward.

"I think everyone has learned from this and hopefully everyone can move on and come together," she said. "I hope that everyone can settle down and be calmer moving forward. We are all humans and we're all trying to be good people and not to hurt anyone's feelings. We hope that this is a teachable moment. This was a misunderstanding. We've wasted so much energy on this and hopefully we can get back to dealings with things in a positive way. The boys didn't mean to harm anyone or offend anyone."

The players have traditionally put plastic cups on the fence near the entrance to the North Charleston campus that spell out a word. Normally that word has been "Raptors." That wasn't the case when Academic Magnet athletic director Curt Hoffman drove onto the school grounds Friday morning. The players and students had spelled out "Do Your Job."

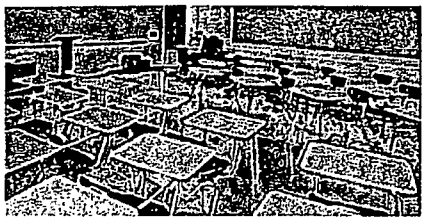
That summed it up for Hoffman.

"We've tried very hard to keep the kids focused on the game and not to let all the outside stuff bother them," Hoffman said. "The kids are normally very resilient. The kids have an amazing ability to focus on a goal. I'm so proud of them and the way they've handled it. I will go to my grave believing that Bud never crossed his mind that this would be offensive to anyone," Hoffman said. "I know it never crossed the kids mind. But it did offend some people and for that I apologize to them from the athletic department."

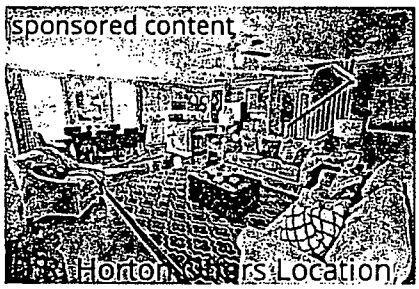
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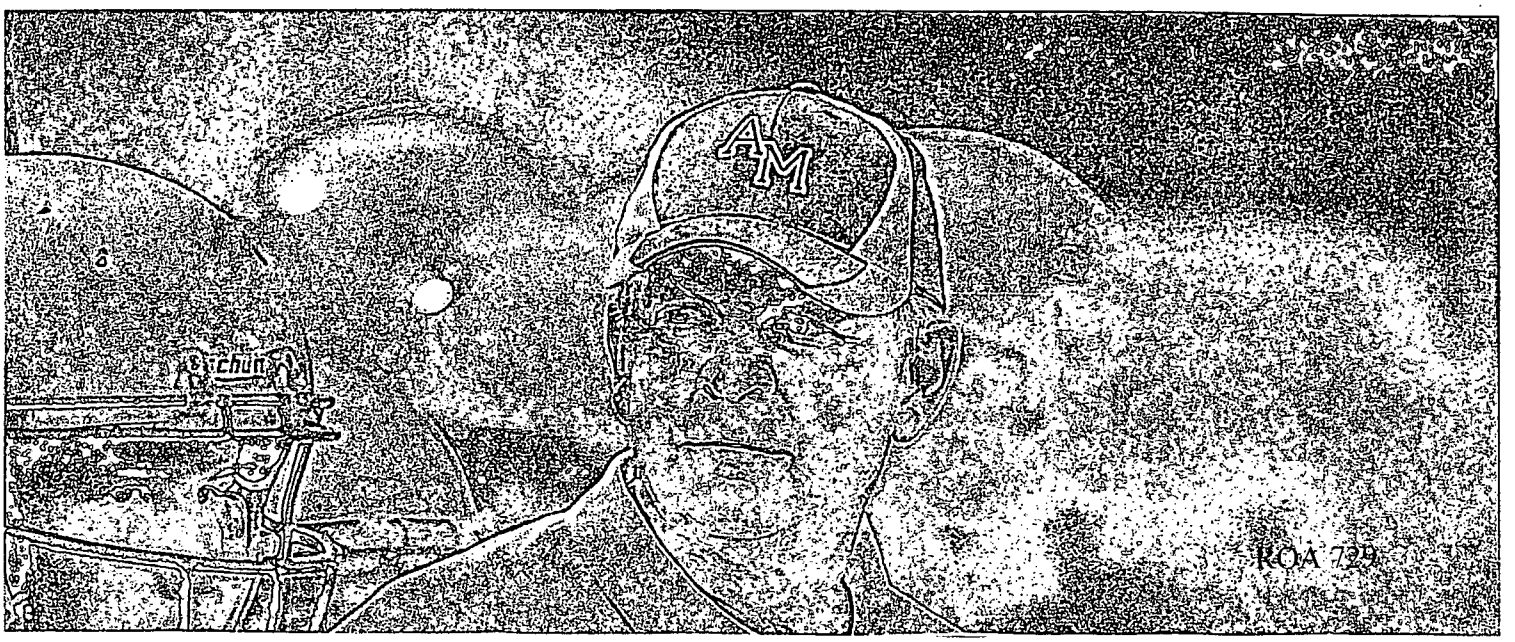
Academic Magnet coach Bud Walpole returns to practice field



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hat Coach Walpole would have wanted, and we re pretty determined to be successful."

thletic director Curt Hoffman told a local TV station that there will be extra security at iday's game against Battery Creek.

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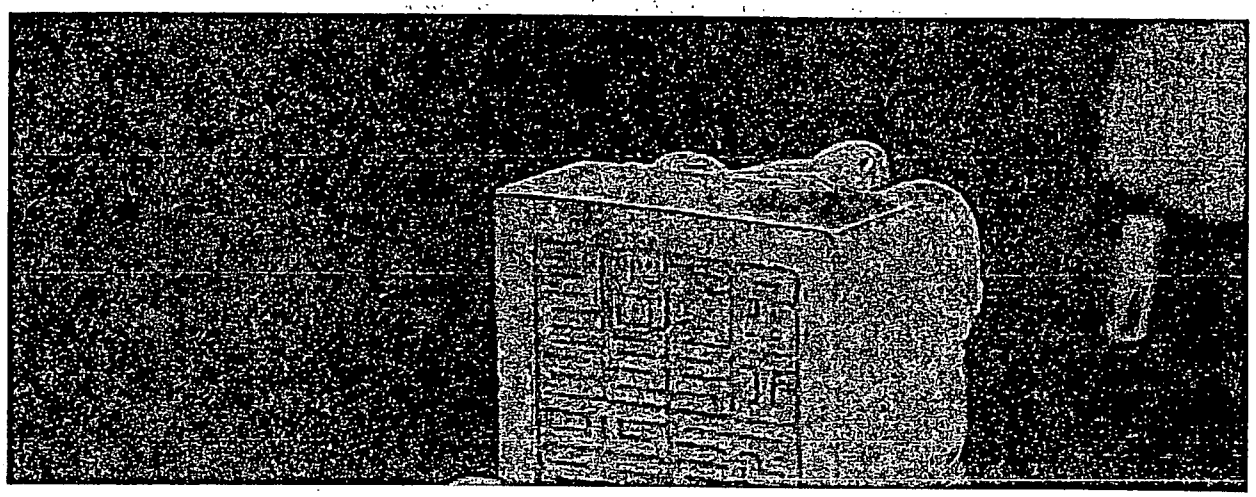
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S.C. Rep. Seth Whipper calls for suspension, firing of Academic Magnet coach

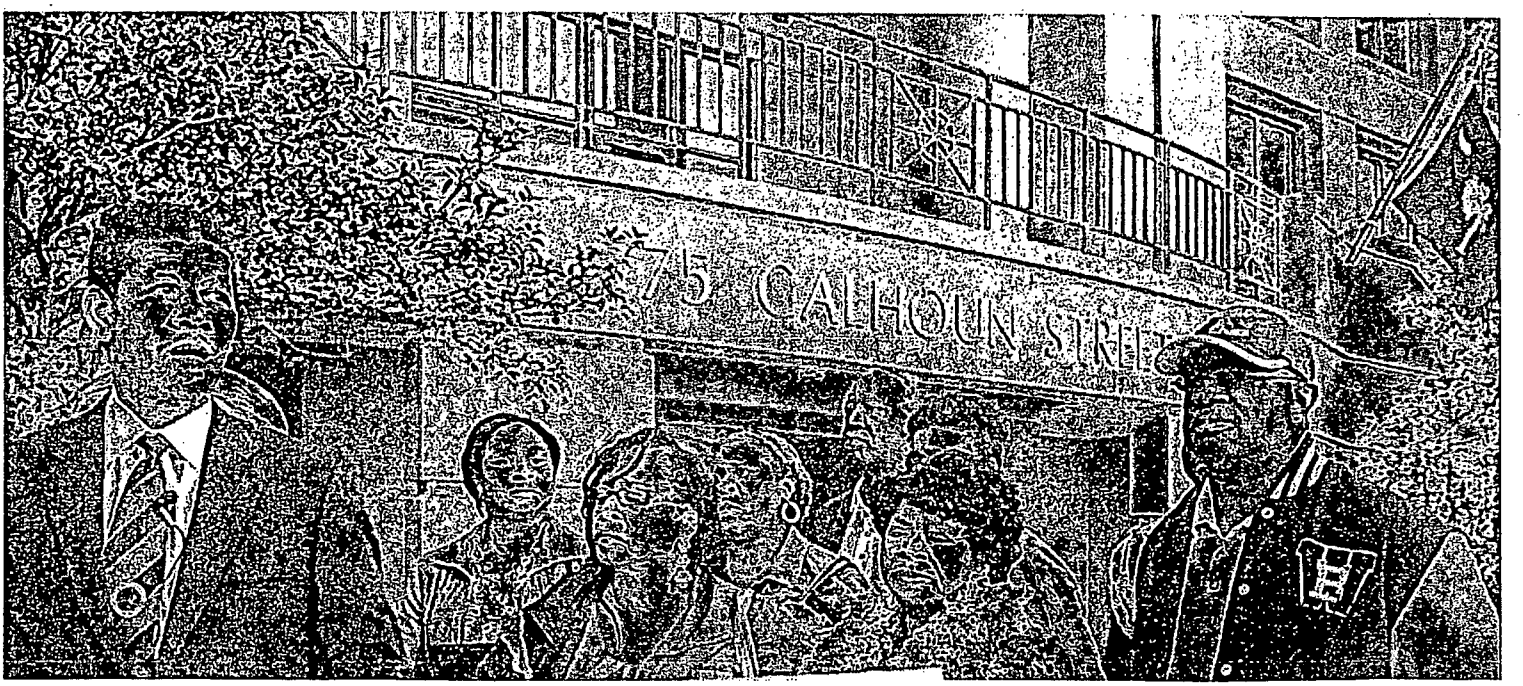


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Oct 23 2014 1:33 pm Oct 23 6:17 pm





Less than 24 hours after Academic Magnet High School head football coach Bud Walpole got his job back, a state lawmaker and Bonds-Wilson Alumni Association members called for the suspension and possible firing of Walpole and his assistant coaches over what some considered a racially offensive post-game watermelon ritual.

State Rep. Seth Whipper, D-North Charleston, whose district includes the Academic Magnet High School campus, held a press conference Thursday outside the Charleston County School District headquarters in downtown Charleston where he and several Bonds-Wilson alumni said they plan to attend a school board meeting Monday to press for the "true facts" regarding the post-game tradition.

What do you think?

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"If the facts are that this particular act did occur, then we're going to ask that everybody be terminated," Whipper said. "I cannot see how we minimize how an adult person (Walpole) who is more than 50 years old could forget what has happened in this country and allow young men to practice the kind of behavior we know has been established by (the district's) investigation."

Whipper said sanctions may need to be taken against the players as well, including an immediate end to the team's season.

"I feel that we're at the point where if the young

men who are on that football team believe they've done the right thing, their season should be suspended," he said.

Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley reinstated Walpole on Wednesday as head football and head girls basketball coach two days after district administrators fired him from his coaching duties in connection with the post-game ritual in which players chanted while smashing watermelons. McGinley has said the district never considered taking punitive actions against the players on the team.

As part of his reinstatement Walpole was required to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to better respect the differences of others; attend sensitivity training; and to counsel his players before games to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

Whipper said Thursday he was not familiar with the stipulations Walpole was required to make as part of his reinstatement.

School Board member Michael Miller reported the team's tradition to the district on Oct. 13 after hearing from a parent of a Military Magnet Academy student who was offended by the ritual, which the team performed following its defeat of Military Magnet on Sept. 5. District officials questioned the 29 players on the team as well as Walpole and his assistants about the ritual two days after Miller reported his concerns.

The team's victory ritual involved the group chanting in a circle and smashing a watermelon decorated with a caricature face drawn with black marker. Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston. The Bonds-Wilson Campus pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who spoke with the players as part of the district's investigation, said some players had no idea why the watermelon was named Bonds-Wilson. A few, he said, considered using the name Bonds-Wilson as a 12th man on the team and were doing it "kind of as a unity for support."

Attorney Dwayne Green, who is representing Walpole, said Thursday afternoon that Walpole did not know about the "negative connotations" of his team's ritual of smashing watermelons. Watermelons are tied to racial stereotypes that were prevalent after the Civil War that, according to Citadel history professor Marcus Cox, perpetuated the idea that African-Americans were simple-minded and inferior.

"If he had known, he most definitely would have put the practice to a stop," Green said.

Green invited Whipper to meet with the coach to make his "own assessment on what type of person the coach is."

"I'm confident that if he went beyond the second- and third-hand accounts of what happened that he'd come to the same conclusion that I have and he would work to make sure something like this never happens again rather than punishing an exemplary role model," he said.

Bonds-Wilson almunus Kevin Williams, who was among the group who attended the press conference, said he feels the players' decision to use the name Bonds-Wilson reflects their lack of knowledge about the school's history. Bonds-Wilson opened in the 1950s as a segregated school, and was integrated in 1971. The school was closed in 1985 and has since been demolished.

Bonds-Wilson has produced several notable alumni including former Raiders coach Art Shell and jazz percussionist Alphonse Mouzon.

"They don't really understand the history and what the school stood for," said Williams, a 1983 graduate of Bonds-Wilson. "It's a historical name and means a lot to the black community."

Some graduates of the school as well as the black community, Whipper said, are upset to see the school's name associated with a watermelon when the district did not include the name Bonds-Wilson as part of the magnet school's name when the school moved to that location.

"The Bonds-Wilson community is really disturbed about this that somehow the name Bonds-Wilson is not good enough to name the school in that way, but good enough to name a watermelon," Whipper said. "We can't accept that so something will be done."

Attorney Larry Kobrovsky, who is representing the Academic Magnet School Improvement Council, said Thursday the students did not perceive that their post-game tradition had racial connotations.

"These are kids who had no racial intention, no ideas that it would be perceived this way by anybody," he said. "These are children who had no baggage racially who can't even comprehend of what they're being accused of because it wasn't in their minds eye."

Kobrovsky is also planning to attend the school board meeting on Monday to ask McGinley

and Martin for an apology on behalf of the students for making the inference of racially provocative behavior against the players and for the manner in which the players were interrogated about the ritual.

"This is why you don't unleash the genie of racial accusations casually because you can't put it back in again," he said. "All the adults need to act responsibly to calm things down."

Reach Amanda Kerr at 937-5546 or at Twitter.com/PCAmandaKerr.

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Wando's Tucker Heffron, Academic Magnet's Jesse

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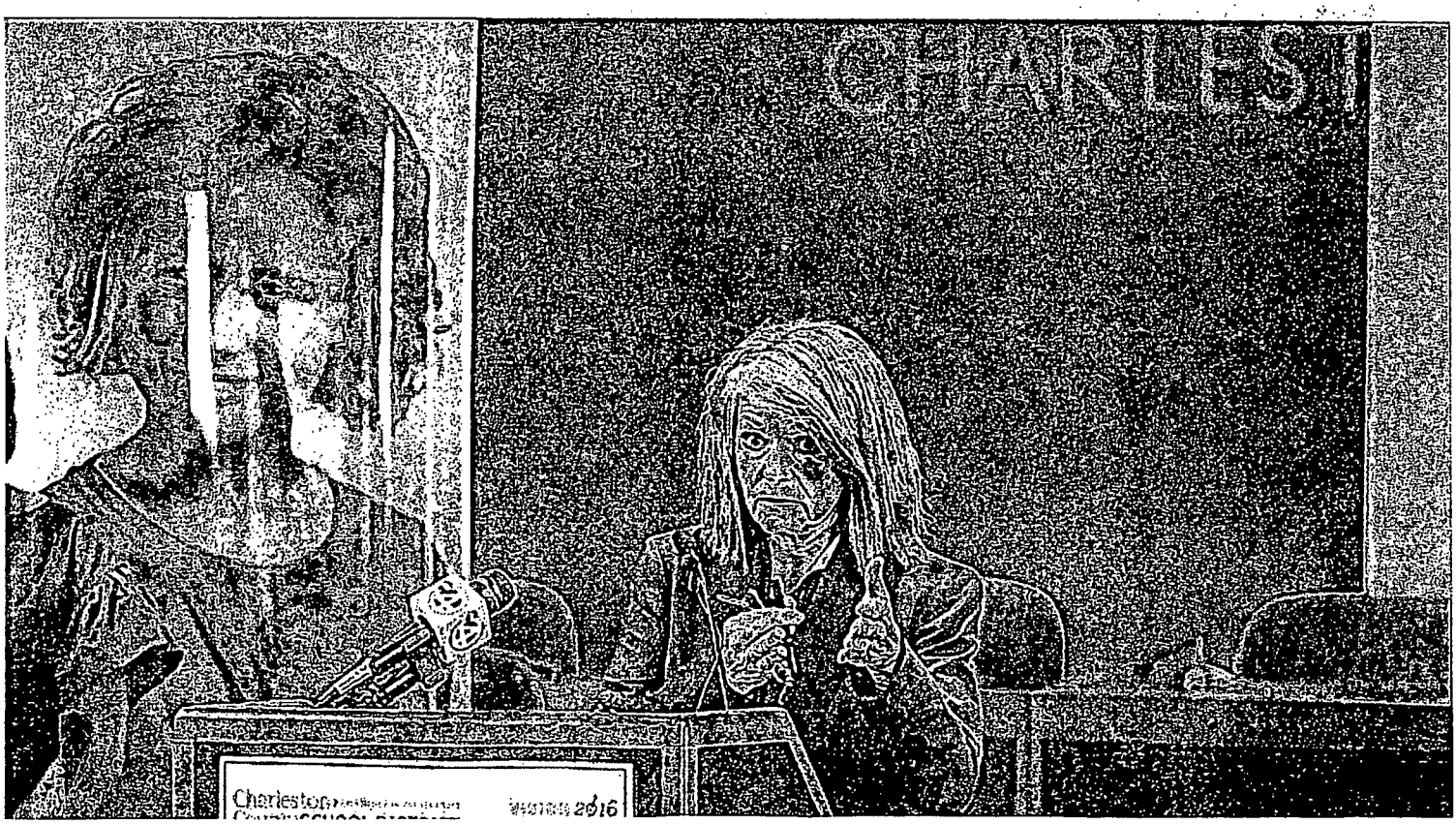
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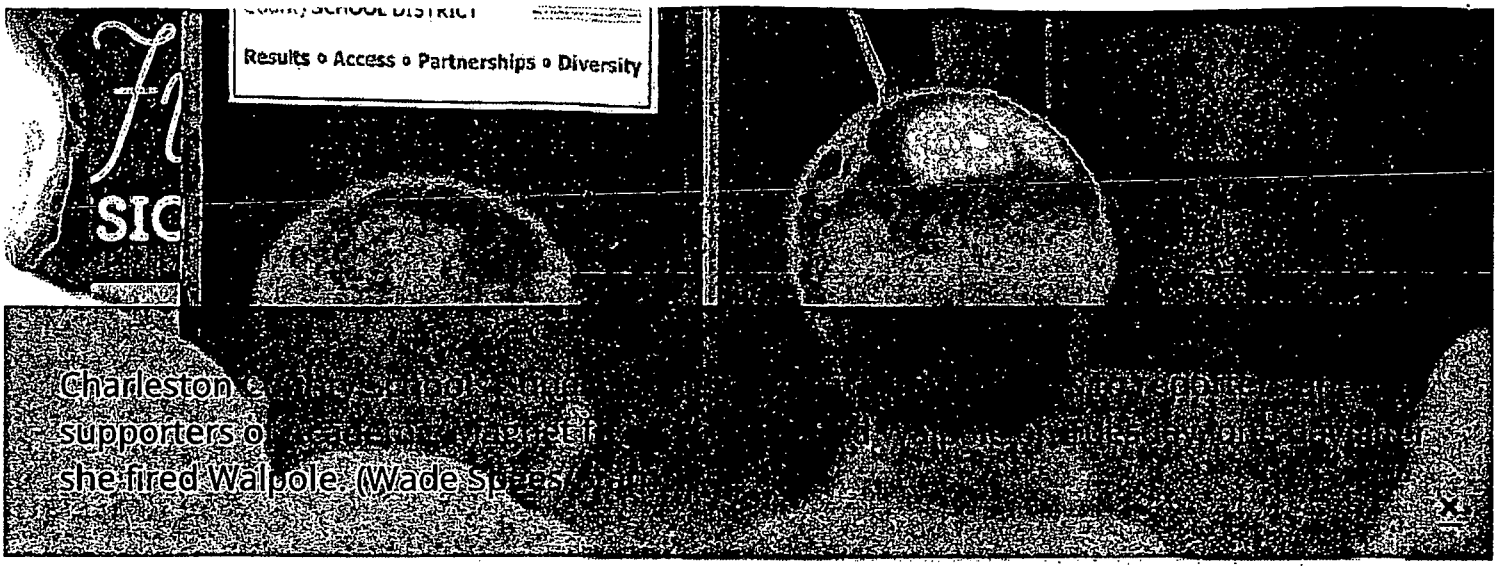
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Sapakoff: CCSD flunks Watermelon-gate logic test with Academic Magnet

Oct 21 2014 6:59 pm Oct 21 9:34 pm





Charleston [illegible] supporters o[illegible] she fired Walpole. (Wade S[illegible])

The scene from a Charleston County School District investigation that cost too much time and Bud Walpole's job took place inside a closed-door Academic Magnet High School classroom last Thursday, according to a student involved.

CCSD investigator: "Did you fondle the watermelon?"

Academic Magnet High School football player: "Did you just say ... fondle?"

Gene Sapakoff (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=73) Columnist



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Investigator: "Yes."

Player: "No, I did not fondle the watermelon."

Still, CCSD concluded that the Academic Magnet's playful postgame watermelon celebration routine was "inappropriate." CCSD Superintendent Nancy McGinley fired Walpole, 6-2 in his 10th season as

coach.

The parent of a Military Magnet Academy student complained that the Raptors smashed watermelons and made "ape-like" sounds after defeating Military Magnet, 53-30, on Sept. 5 at North Charleston High School. The complaining parent, and Charleston County School Board member Michael Miller, think the act was offensive to blacks.

McGinley added Tuesday that caricatures drawn on the watermelons and nicknames given the watermelons (Junior and Bonds-Wilson) also factored in her decision to dismiss Walpole.

Academic Magnet people insist that a watermelon simply started a win streak and was adopted as a good luck charm. Ape sounds? Actually either a "Raptor cheer" or basic whooping it up stuff, the Raptors say.

Bonds-Wilson is the name of the Academic Magnet campus area that also includes the Charleston County School of the Arts.

(And Wilson is the name of a caricature-faced volleyball in the movie "Cast Away").



Enlarge Bud Walpole was in his 10th season as head football coach at Academic

This whole thing is ridiculous, a misunderstanding that unraveled. Another example of dumb adults messing things up for good kids.

Give Walpole his coaching gig back, CCSD. Restore his reputation. Admit your mistake before lawyers get busy.

Think of this as a "teaching moment" in which we all learn to get along better through discussion, and perhaps a stern warning instead of an overreaction in which a coach and players essentially are labeled as racists.

This could have been handled more sensibly while honoring the sincere concern of the offended parent.

'Negative images'

ROA 742

Miller said he fielded the original complaint a

Magnet before being fired Monday. Wade Spees/staff

week of two after the Sept. 5 game and finally got around to reporting it to CCSD "two or three weeks ago."

It cannot be coincidental that the CCSD overreaction comes as New Jersey officials struggle to contain a Sayreville High School football hazing scandal that allegedly includes aggravated criminal sexual attacks, punching and kicking.

Plus, the backdrop of the NFL's sudden attention to domestic violence discipline and other forms of social responsibility.

But Miller isn't backing down.

"It depends on where you stand," Miller said. "If you don't think a person should draw a line between a watermelon and ape sounds or that a person doesn't think that is racially insensitive or thoughtless then, yes, you could say someone is being oversensitive. But if you know anything about American history or if you just Google the negative images of a watermelon, you will be able to read text about a historical relation to a negative depiction of African-Americans and watermelons. One can easily say someone is ultra-sensitive to an issue when the issue does not include them."

Miller makes excellent points, and he dutifully reported the parent phone call to CCSD. He fielded many more Academic Magnet-related calls Tuesday, including one from U.S. Sen. Tim Scott.

The 'cool it' option

Miller agreed that the "monkey sounds" might have been misinterpreted by the parent who just witnessed a 53-30 loss.

"Possibly," he said. "We won't really fully know until the District comes forward with full disclosure."

That's always a good idea.

But CCSD didn't release any kind of transcript of the questions and answers from its interrogation of Academic Magnet students.

And McGinley took the hard road Tuesday when I asked if Watermelongate could have been settled simply by asking Walpole to come down to CCSD headquarters. McGinley could have explained the perception of insensitivity and told him to cool it.

"There are some nuances with the (investigators') interview with the coach that are personnel issues," McGinley answered. "There were some issues that I'm not going to go into."

By the way, every college football team in the state received an annual visit from the South Carolina Watermelon Association in August. The reigning South Carolina Watermelon Queen brought lots of free watermelon.

High school football is supposed to be fun, too. But a society that would blow up a team's season over alleged misuse of fruit is a society not to be messed with.

Follow Gene Sapakoff on Twitter @sapakoff

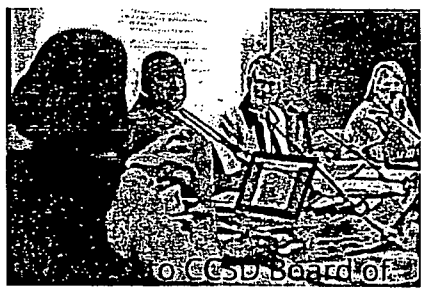
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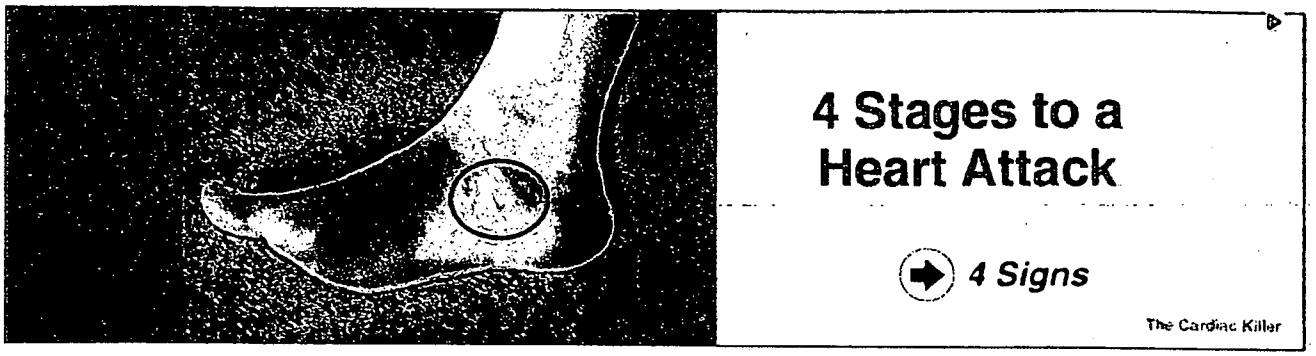
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FOOTBALL

S.C. superintendent resigns amidst postgame watermelon scandal fallout

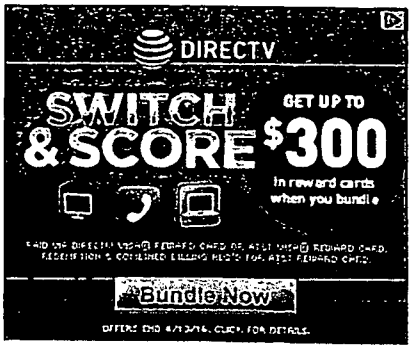
By Cam Smith, USA TODAY High School Sports October 30, 2014

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Charleston County Schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley was forced to resign in part due to continued fall out from the controversy over Academic Magnet coach Bud Walpole's ousting — Charleston County School District

A superintendent of a South Carolina school district was unceremoniously ousted after more than a decade on the job in the continued fall out from the brief dismissal and reinstatement of a high school football coach.



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As reported by the Charleston Post and Courier, Nancy McGinley resigned as superintendent of Charleston County Schools following a two-hour closed door meeting on Thursday in which the board voted to accept her resignation. The board said that it would not discuss the reason for McGinley's ouster, but momentum had been building to end her reign at the helm of the schools ever since the she initially dismissed Academic Magnet coach Bud Walpole.

"You may have handled it differently," McGinley told the board in a presentation."At this point, I cannot erase the impact that this incident has had on our district and community, and for that I am truly sorry."

As covered in detail here and elsewhere, Walpole was fired from his coaching position because of a bizarre and ultimately inflammatory postgame practice of smashing watermelons painted with faces named after a former segregated school.

Walpole was reinstated after a concerted campaign of support launched by players, their parents and alumni, but debate has continued over whether the new postgame ritual actually was racist. Those who feel the watermelon smashing underscored racist overtones shifted their focus on Thursday to support McGinley, who they insist has done nothing wrong.

"She has done nothing to deserve termination and we oppose such a decision," Rev. Robert Kennedy, chairman of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, told the Post and Courier. "Firing of Dr. McGinley will send a message to our community that the Charleston County School Board condones disrespect within this school system."

In the end, that support couldn't save the superintendent, with some members of the board insisting this decision was a long time coming.

"The district (administration) has been insubordinate to this board, and Nancy ignores us," Charleston County board member Elizabeth Moffly said. "Hopefully, that will change. If you get rid of the leader, they (in the administration) want to keep their jobs, and they will fall in line."

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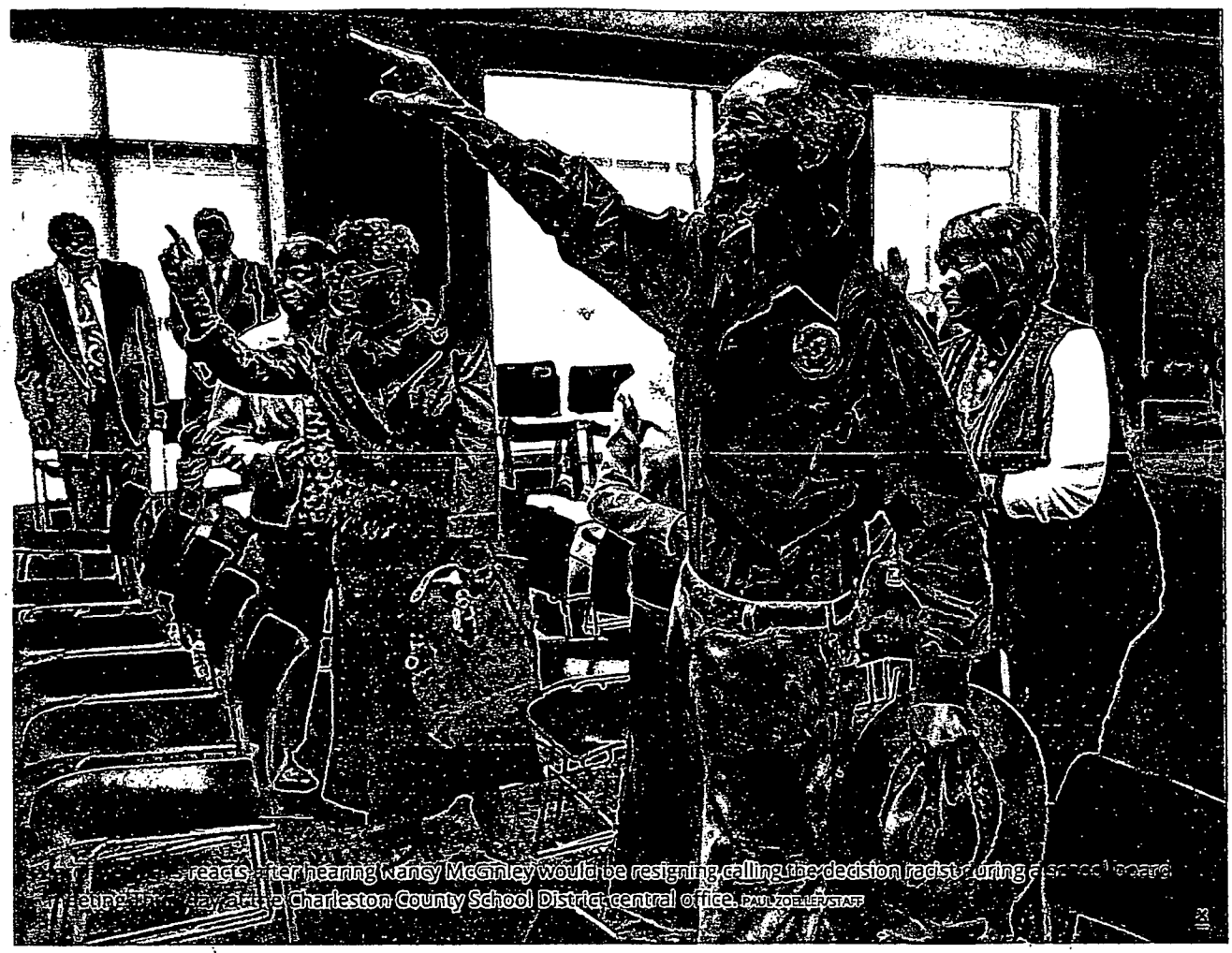
Nancy McGinley out: Board accepts Charleston schools chief's resignation



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reacts after hearing Nancy McGinley would be resigning, calling the decision rad[illegible] during a [illegible] school board [illegible] at the Charleston County School District central office. PAUL ZOELLER/STAFF

Nancy McGinley went from being superintendent of a 48,000-student school district to an undefined consultant following an emergency meeting Thursday of the Charleston County School Board.

The board voted 8-1 to accept McGinley's resignation after meeting in closed session for more than an hour and a half. Michael Miller cast the dissenting vote.

What they said

"It is so unfortunate. She is the best superintendent we have had since I've been in office. She's the best superintendent in the country."

- Charleston Mayor Joseph Riley

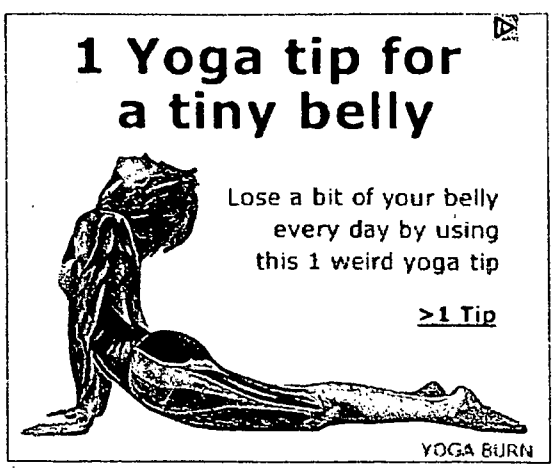
"Nancy McGinley is a proven strong leader, advocate and has worked to improve our schools and our community. She has set an example for women, in particular, but all of us as we strive to make Charleston a great place to live, work and raise our children. Her presence will be missed."

- Amy Brennan, executive director of

School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats, reading from a prepared statement, said the board had authorized her to accept McGinley's resignation, "which we believe will be forthcoming."

Later, Coats said the board had to vote to accept McGinley's resignation before she officially tendered it as part of the negotiation process, which involves outside counsel. McGinley had two years remaining on her contract.

A couple dozen people who had gathered in the boardroom at the school district headquarters in downtown Charleston



the Center for Women

"I am obviously disappointed that this unfortunate situation has developed to this point. We are losing a terrific superintendent, but for our children's sake, we will find a way to move forward. No matter who is at the helm of the school district, we must remain focused on Charleston County's students, their education and their learning environment."

- North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey

"If I had my way, I would go ahead and remove her and bring in somebody else to take these schools in another direction. We are not seeing enough progress with the schools."

- Peninsula Constituent School Board Chairman Edward Jones

"Dr. McGinley always said she supported Charleston School for Math and Science, but in fact she did everything she could to kill it. The only reason this high-performing, diverse public school has successfully educated 530 students and finally secured a building for its future is because five members of the Charleston County school board voted to override her very unfortunate recommendations concerning the school in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2014."

- Park Dougherty, member 2008 Memminger Neighborhood Planning Teams and chairman of group that founded Charleston Charter School for Math and Science

"Even though I feel Mount Pleasant had a good relationship with the superintendent I'm sure Dr. McGinley's decision to resign today was in the best interest of her and her family. I'm looking forward to moving on and making sure that the sales tax extension for capital improvement projects gets passed on Election Day."

- Mount Pleasant Mayor Linda Page

"As much as constituents we deserve to know what is going on, we also need to return to a time where there was patience for a process to be

erupted as Coats read her statement. Jerome Smalls began chanting "down with the racists," while Dot Scott, president of the Charleston branch of the NAACP, shouted "We will see you at the polls." Some district employees wept at the announcement of McGinley's departure.

McGinley will remain as a district employee and be available for consultation through June 30, 2015. She will continue to receive her salary and benefits through that date. McGinley's annual salary is $226,278 and she will also receive a payment of eight months' salary and benefits after July 1, 2015.

Michael Bobby, the district's chief financial officer, was named acting superintendent. He will work alongside Lisa Herring, the district's chief academic officer.

"I'm honored to be here under circumstances that I wish weren't here at this time," Bobby said. "The district had been doing some very, very good work under Dr. McGinley. What Dr. Herring and I will continue very hard to do is continue that good work."

Before her impending resignation was announced, McGinley, who did not attend the emergency board meeting, declined comment at her Isle of Palms home.

McGinley has been with the school district for 10 years, the past seven as superintendent. She is the longest-serving superintendent in the district's history.

Following the meeting, Scott said she was devastated about McGinley's resignation.

"I think this is a travesty to both Dr. McGinley and the goodwill of the 48,000 kids," she said.

Scott said in her opinion, the board wanted to "send a statement that if you didn't do what we want you to do, you're gone."

"It's been an uphill battle with her since she got on," Scott said.

Beverly Gadson-Birch, a member of the NAACP and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, was visibly upset about the board's decision to accept McGinley's resignation.

"It's terrible, it's terrible," she said, shaking her head. "We haven't always agreed with the decisions made by the superintendent ... but this is a ridiculous outcome for Dr. McGinley."

"They have made their decision because she acted on behalf of those minority students," she said. "It's wrong what this board is doing."

Gadson-Birch was referring to the recent incident involving the Academic Magnet High School football team's postgame victory ritual of chanting and smashing watermelons with caricatures drawn on them, which has been denounced as perpetuating a racial stereotype demeaning African-Americans. After the coach was fired and rehired, McGinley and other district officials came under criticism for mishandling the situation and its racial overtones.

Earlier Thursday, black leaders with the NAACP, National Action Network and Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance as well as state Rep. Seth Whipper backed McGinley after they feared the board would fire McGinley after a special meeting Monday held to discuss her contract behind closed doors.

carried through without media interference. ... It is an extremely delicate balance, but we have one teacher/coach reinstated who will never be able to leave this behind and a public official who is forced out of office and will also be forever scarred from this incident. It is all very disheartening and doesn't really address any of the issues."

- Charleston parent Jennifer Cole

"We are saddened and disappointed to hear the news of Dr. McGinley's resignation today. We're very proud to have been a part of Dr. McGinley's vision of rigor, and diversity and progress in Charleston County. She's brought so much to the district. She's been here for seven years and we've seen nothing but progress."

- Ashley River Creative Arts Teacher Lisa Trott

"Dr. McGinley has been a strong advocate for every child in every neighborhood. We have lost a very effective superintendent, and it is a sad day for all of us in Charleston County."

- Rev. Jeremy Rutledge, senior pastor of Circular Congregational Church

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Whipper said the groups have filed a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights with the U.S. Department of Education to investigate the football team's ritual as well as a lack of diversity at both Academic Magnet and the Charleston County School of the Arts.

In a presentation released by the school district, McGinley outlined her vision to principals and senior leadership Thursday afternoon and explained her decision to resign.

"Within the last two weeks our fleet got hit by a tidal wave that has torn us apart," her presentation said. "As the commander, I am responsible and need to do whatever is necessary to pull us back together and get us back on course.

McGinley said the School Board has "the right to pick the superintendent and make a leadership change."

"It is time to take the focus off of me and put it back where it belongs - on children," she said.

Chairwoman Coats said Thursday that the board did not ask McGinley to resign and that the issues involving Academic Magnet High School were not part of the board's discussions. She declined to say what factors led to McGinley's planned resignation.

"That's not something I, as the chair, can comment on," she said.

Board member Elizabeth Moffly, who is not seeking re-election next week, said prior to Thursday's meeting that she has been trying to enlist support from other school board members for years to oust McGinley.

"The district (administration) has been insubordinate to this board, and Nancy ignores us," Moffly said. "Hopefully, that will change. If you get rid of the leader, they (in the administration) want to keep their jobs, and they will fall in line."

Miller, who voted against accepting the resignation, had reported the Academic Magnet football team's ritual to the district. He said he was against accepting the resignation because he didn't think the district should change leadership at this time, especially amid the racial tensions.

"For Dr. McGinley to leave our school district in this manner, I was not willing to support that," he said.

Not all the board members who voted to accept the superintendent's resignation wanted to see her leave.

"My vote to accept her resignation is not my wish to see her leave," said board member Craig Ascue. "My vote reflects the fact that I know she's ready to go. I think she was tired of the fight. If she wanted to stay she would have stayed and fought; she's a fighter. I think she felt like if she had stayed she would have gotten knocked down every time she tried to do what was right and I think she wanted the freedom to do what she felt was right."

Staff reporters David Slade, Melissa Boughton and Christina Elmore contributed to this report.















Keywords
- Academic Magnet High School (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Academic%20Magnet%20High%20School)
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S.C. coach fired for 'inappropriate postgame celebrations' offered job back

By USA TODAY High School Sports October 22, 2014

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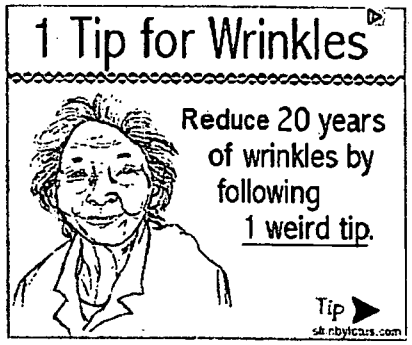


Charleston Academic Magnet coach Bud Walpole was fired after allegations about an inappropriate postgame celebration by his team were raised — WCIV screen shot

A South Carolina football coach who was dismissed over allegations of a racially insensitive postgame celebration that allegedly included both smashing watermelons and making "ape sounds" while eating the remnants of the fruits that were deemed offensive to African-American members of the team has been offered his job back.

Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley met with fired Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole on Wednesday and "he agreed that we will work together on increasing diversity awareness for students and the community," McGinley said in a statement issued by the school district, according to the Charleston Post and Courier.

Walpole can return to the job effective Thursday. As part of the offer, the statement said Walpole had to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to respect the differences of others, attend sensitivity training and to counsel his players to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."



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The team has two games remaining.

According to the statement, Walpole "acknowledged" that the celebrations could be perceived in a negative way.

Several school board members said they were in favor of the 10th-year coach returning and added that the decision to fire him was an overreaction.

More than 4,200 people had signed a change.org petition by Wednesday afternoon

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An Underdog Football Team On a Hot Streak Loses Coach When Its Watermelon Ritual Deemed Racist

BY CAROLINE SCHAEFFER *(1 MONTH AGO) |*
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Academic Magnet, a charter school in North Charleston, SC, is known for its rigorous academic standards and for the excellence its students have achieved.

And this year, they're known for their football team.

Head coach Bud Walpole has led his team on a six-game winning streak, putting their record at 6-2. It's the best start in the school's history, *Moultrie News* **reports**

, as the team had previously gone 29-70 over the past ten years.

But a tradition the team started when the hot streak began has

But a tradition the team started when the hot streak began has brought the team under fire and has cost Walpole his job: smashing a watermelon and eating it.

The parent of a player on an opposing football team complained to a Charleston School Board member, claiming the tradition was racist: the parent said the act of smashing a *watermelon* was racist, and claimed that the team was making "monkey noises" as they were doing it.

The school board member brought it to the principal, Dr. Nancy McGinley, who investigated the matter, *The Post and Courier* **reports**

> *The students, McGinley said, told Martin and Clayton that the team had participated in a ritual multiple times this season where two students would smash a watermelon with a face drawn on it with a black marker, while the remainder of the team would stand in a circle around the fruit making chanting sounds. McGinley said the image on the watermelon could be considered a "caricature."*

Though the principal said the tradition was "innocent," the school board conducted their own investigation and fired Coach Walpole on Monday.

The football team, parents, and supporters have rallied behind Walpole. One member of the team, Darius Nwokike, who happens to be African American, began a petition on **change.org** that asks to reinstate Walpole's coaching eligibility. As of this writing, it has garnered over 3,800 signatures.

Nwokike explained to *The Post and Courier* that those "monkey noises" and the faces drawn on the watermelons were anything

but racist.

> *"I've heard people say they were monkey chants, which is absolutely not true," Nwokike said. "They were just football shouts, like any you would hear on a football field."*
>
> *Nwokike called the faces drawn on the watermelons "smiley faces."*
>
> *"They were just faces, they weren't provocative at all," he said. "They were just like simple smiley faces."*

The firing has roiled the community, with hundreds of parents, former players, and students coming to Walpole's defense. An **editorial**

written in the Charleston City Paper referring to the collective student body as "racist douchebags" prompted **emails**

and letters from students addressing the situation.

Coach Walpole, in the meantime, just wants to return to doing what he loves – coaching the Raptor football team:

> *Walpole said Tuesday that "he would love nothing more than to continue my coaching career at Academic Magnet" and that the players' celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone."*

The Raptors have two remaining football games this season. As of this writing, the team will be playing without their beloved coach.

Image credit: The Post and Courier

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Academic Magnet shrugs off watermelon controversy; team secures playoff spot



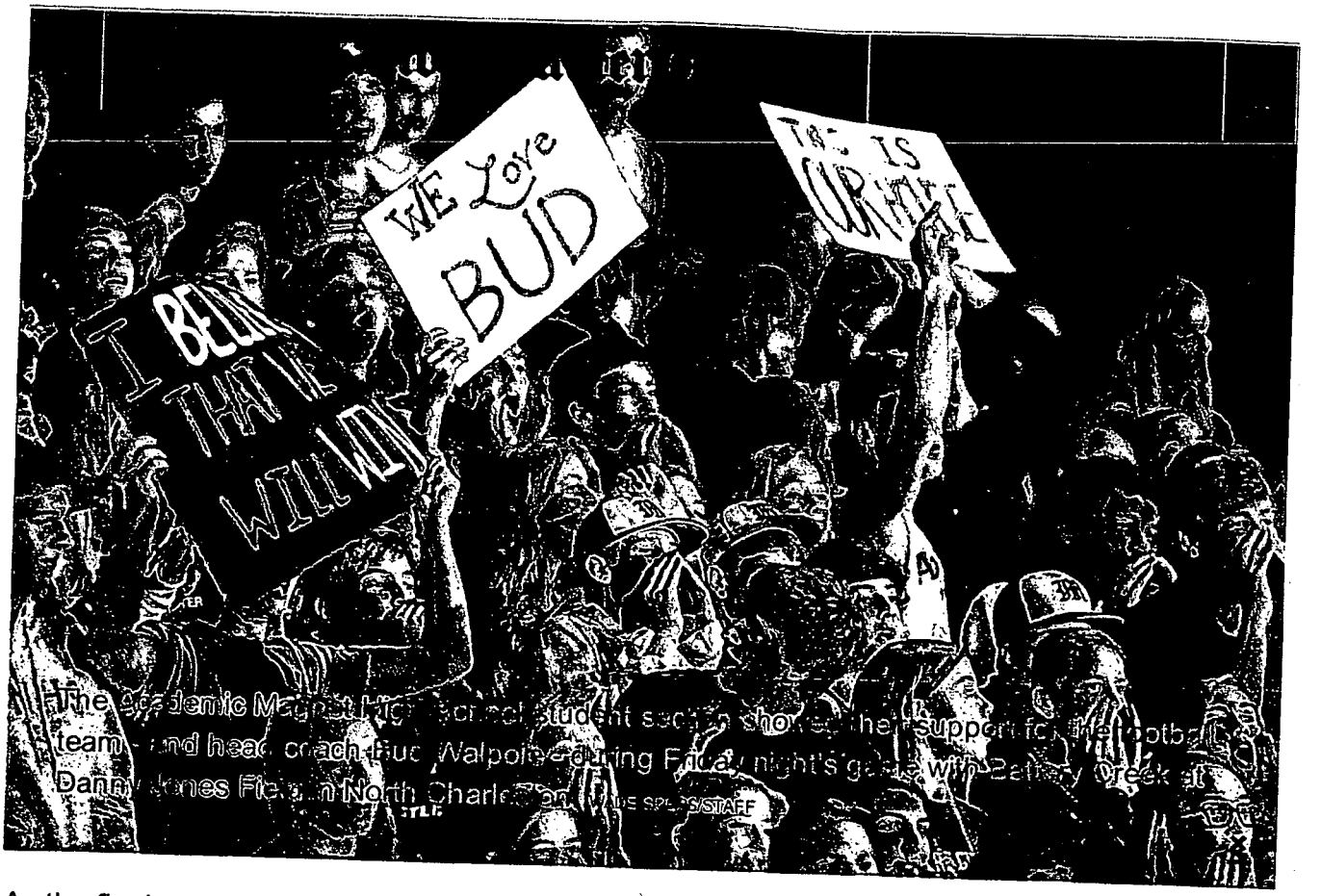
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Oct 24 2014 11:34 pm Oct 24 11:55 pm



As the final seconds ticked off the clock at Danny Jones Field Friday night, the Academic Magnet student section began to chant.

"We back Walpole! We back Walpole! We back Walpole" they screamed at the top of their lungs as they bounced up and down on the makeshift wooden bleachers.

Photo Gallery



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Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole, who was the recipient of the cheer, took a moment to acknowledge the crowd as he stepped off the field after the Raptors' 28-20 victory over Battery Creek, giving the program a school record seventh win on the season.

Walpole, the Raptors' coach for the past 10 years, was fired Monday and reinstated Wednesday by the Charleston County School District after officials judged a post-game watermelon celebration conducted by the players to be racially insensitive.

Magnet Walpole top Battery Creek (/apps/pbcs.dll/gallery?Site=CP&Date=20141025&Category=PC20&ArtNo=102509999&Ref=PH)

The Post and Courier

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traditional post-game handshake with the Battery Creek players, Raptor assistant coaches and players quickly gathered their equipment and were ushered off the field to the parking lot. Players' parents, students and Raptor supporters lined the exit and cheered as Walpole and the players made their exit.

Walpole's son, Gene, and a former Academic Magnet player acted as bodyguards for the embattled coach, warding off media members in their attempt to get a post-game comment from the coach. Walpole didn't make a public statement, but his son handed out index cards with a prepared statement just before the end of the game.

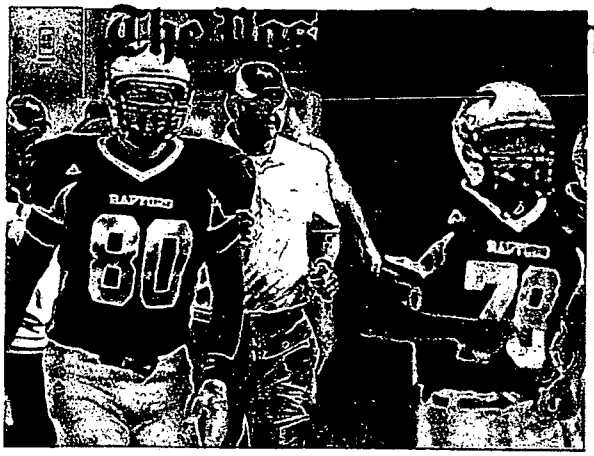
"I am proud of the effort our team put forth tonight," Walpole said in the statement. "I appreciate the support of our student body, parents and community."

There was no post-game celebration from the players and no watermelons. The only fruit to be found was some oranges the players had discarded on the sidelines during halftime.

Other than a little extra security, there were seven North Charleston police officers on hand instead of the normal two, it was a typical night at Danny Jones Field.

The parents came early and lined the fences along the field as the players went through their pre-game warm-ups.

The Dirty Birds, a percussion group at the school, banged their drums and The Flock, the nickname for the Raptors' student section, did their best to support the team and its players.



Enlarge Raptors head football coach Bud Walpole takes to the field Friday night. Academic Magnet defeated Battle Creek, 28-20. Wade Spees/Staff

The victory, which assures the Raptors a spot in next month's playoffs, was the beginning of what many on hand hope is a healing process for the school, the football program and the community at large.

"Obviously all the off-the-field stuff was pretty negative, but I thought it was pretty positive that everyone at the school came together," said Academic Magnet senior Henry Flowers, a lacrosse player and the head of The Flock student section. "We all rallied around the cause and rallied around coach Walpole. The decision to bring him back was the right decision. It was harmless fun that was blown out of proportion. It snowballed into something that it wasn't."

Academic Magnet junior defensive lineman Darius Nwokike, the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, was instrumental in helping Walpole get his job back. He started a petition on the website change.org Monday asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate his coach.

His mother, Barbara, said she has been flooded with calls of support since Monday night.

"Darius was just so happy that he was able to help get his coach reinstated," Barbara Nwokike said. "I'm so proud of him. He's a shy kid, but he has really come out of his shell this week. We're so happy coach Walpole is back coaching this team. It's where he belongs."

Barbara Nwokike hopes that people on both sides of the issue will move forward.

"I think everyone has learned from this and hopefully everyone can move on and come together," she said. "I hope that everyone can settle down and be calmer moving forward. We are all humans and we're all trying to be good people and not to hurt anyone's feelings. We hope that this is a teachable moment. This was a misunderstanding. We've wasted so much energy on this and hopefully we can get back to dealings with things in a positive way. The boys didn't mean to harm anyone or offend anyone."

The players have traditionally put plastic cups on the fence near the entrance to the North Charleston campus that spell out a word. Normally that word has been "Raptors." That wasn't

the case when Academic Magnet athletic director Curt Hoffman drove onto the school grounds Friday morning. The players and students had spelled out "Do Your Job."

The Post and Courier

That summed it up for Hoffman.

"We've tried very hard to keep the kids focused on the game and not to let all the outside stuff bother them," Hoffman said. "The kids are normally very resilient. The kids have an amazing ability to focus on a goal. I'm so proud of them and the way they've handled it. I will go to my grave believing that Bud never crossed his mind that this would be offensive to anyone," Hoffman said. "I know it never crossed the kids mind. But it did offend some people and for that I apologize to them from the athletic department."

Keywords Academic Magnet High School (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Academic%20Magnet%20High%20School)

Bud Walpole (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Bud%20Walpole)

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Walpole rejoins Academic Magnet, 'thankful' to be coaching again

Posted: Oct 22, 2014 3:46 PM EDT
Updated: Oct 23, 2014 2:31 PM EDT

CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) - Bud Walpole announced Thursday he has accepted the offer to return as the head football coach at Academic Magnet High School.

"I'm relieved and thankful to the school board and community to be coaching again," said Walpole in a statement. "I'm looking forward to working with the players to make this a learning experience for everyone."

The Raptors' head football coach was fired Monday following an investigation by the Charleston County School District into "**inappropriate post game celebrations**," by the team.

Charleston County School Superintendent Nancy McGinley says the celebrations involved upperclassmen smashing a watermelon on the ground while the team chanted that sounded "animalistic or monkey-like."

According to Walpole's attorney Dwayne Green, the coach never pursed legal action. Green says he was only brought on as an advisor.

McGinley said Wednesday she asked Walpole to resume his coaching duties effective Thursday.

"Taking into consideration the potential value that he will add to our students and the community, given this experience, I am asking him to resume his coaching duties effective Thursday, October 23, 2014," McGinley said.

That announcement followed a meeting between McGinley and Walpole and reports that the school board was pushing for Walpole to get his coaching job back.

In a statement issued after the 2 p.m. meeting, McGinley said she "went into this meeting with an open mind prepared to listen to both his perspective and his appeal."

"During the meeting, he acknowledged that the facts that emerged surrounding the celebratory practices of the Academic Magnet High School football program could be viewed in a negative way. He agreed that we will work together on increasing diversity awareness for students and the community," McGinley said.

McGinley said she asked Walpole to provide a written statement of commitment, after which she would consider his position as head football coach. She said she received his statement at 4:45 p.m. Wednesday.

Walpole's written statement included three specific commitments, according to McGinley's statement:

> *1. I commit to teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings.*
>
> *2. I will attend and participate with students in any sensitivity training sponsored or initiated by the district.*
>
> *3. I will counsel my students before games to be extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds.*

"While there are, and may continue to be, different perspectives on this chain of events," McGinley continued, "I would like to invite our community to join together with me and Coach Walpole to use this as a 'teachable moment' for the benefit of our children."

"This is not about winning or losing, this is about enhancing our commitment to dignity and respect, regardless of our differences," McGinley said.

Elizabeth Moffley says the board gave McGinley a chance to reverse the decision of firing a Walpole over a celebration involving watermelons which the school district said had racial overtones.

Moffley says the majority of the board feels McGinley made the wrong decision, and were ready to reverse the decision with a vote if McGinley doesn't act.

Earlier today the NAACP held a press conference in downtown Charleston regarding Walpole. **Charleston NAACP President Dot Scott said she spoke to Walpole who apologized for the celebrations and said he did not see them as racially insensitive.**

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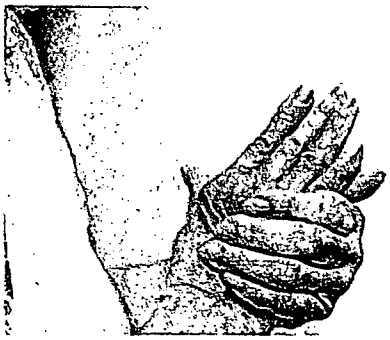
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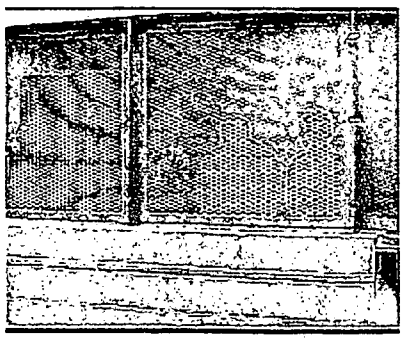
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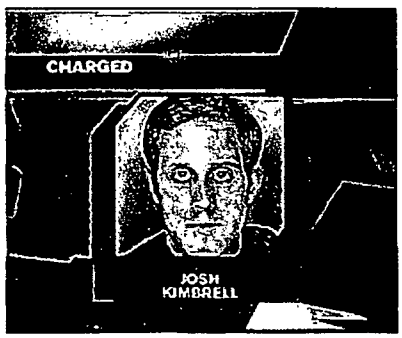


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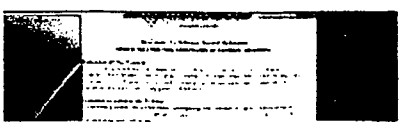
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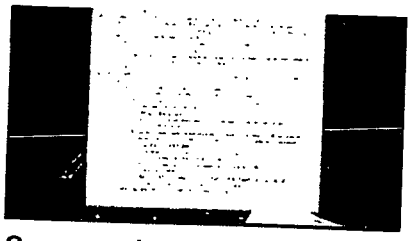


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Football coach reinstated after controversial 'watermelon ritual'

By Christina Zdanowicz and Melonyce McAfee , CNN
updated 8:44 AM EDT, Thu October 23, 2014

CNN.com



Coach Bud Walpole, left, was fired after a controversial post-game ritual upset parents. iReporter Harry Griffin, right, played on the coach's team a few years ago. Mike Rice, pictured in 2011, was fired from his head coaching position at Rutgers University after a video surfaced of him verbally abusing his players, shoving them and throwing basketballs at them. Click through the gallery to see which coaches also crossed the line. New Orleans Saints head coach Sean Payton was suspended for the entirety of the 2012 NFL season after his players were accused of taking part in a bounty program, rewarding them for intentionally injuring opposing players. Payton still claims that the accusations are unfounded. Saints defensive coordinator Gregg Williams was also linked to the bounty scandal and suspended indefinitely. Williams was reinstated by the NFL and hired as a senior assistant defensive coach for the Tennessee Titans in February. He is now the defensive coordinator for the St. Louis Rams. In March 2000, a video was released of Indiana head basketball coach Bobby Knight choking former player Neil Reed. After more claims were made, the hot-headed coach was fired. Here, Knight talks to Indiana player Ted Kitchel during a game against Northwestern University in February 1983. Longtime Penn State head football coach Joe Paterno was linked to the sex scandal surrounding former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, second from right in 1999. Sandusky was convicted of 45 of the 48 counts against him, including unlawful contact with minors and involuntary deviate sexual intercourse. Court testimony showed that Paterno was aware of the misdeeds but failed to report them, leading to Paterno's termination and the revoking of all his records and titles as Penn State head coach. Former baseball star and manager Ozzie Guillen has made headlines more than once for his controversial statements. Guillen used an anti-gay term to describe a Chicago Sun-Times columnist in 2006 and expressed sentiment for Fidel Castro in 2012. He apologized for both comments after backlash in the press. Mike Price was fired from his head football coaching position at the University of Alabama before the team played their first game for him. In 2003, Price admitted propositioning and bringing two women back to his hotel room after attending a golf tournament in Florida. One of the women ordered room service, which was charged to Price's university-issued credit card. In 2004, video of the head coach of Spain's national soccer team, Luis Aragones, showed him using racist language in describing the opposing team's star player, Thierry Henry. Aragones -- here in 2008 -- claimed that he was trying to "motivate" his players to be aggressive and that he was not a racist. Despite public outcry, he was fined but not fired. In 1978, Ohio State University head football coach Woody Hayes punched a Clemson University player in the throat immediately after he intercepted an OSU pass. Hayes, here in 1970, was given the chance to resign but refused and was fired. University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill head football coach Butch Davis was fired in July 2011 in the midst of an NCAA investigation into a cheating scandal involving tutors writing papers for players and a recruiting scandal involving players accepting impermissible benefits. In announcing the move, the university cited the damage that the controversies were causing to UNC's reputation, but Davis maintained that he himself had not done anything wrong. HIDE CAPTION

(CNN) -- ***UPDATE:*** *High school football coach Bud Walpole was offered his job back, effective Thursday, CNN affiliate WCBD reported. The school district superintendent invited him back Wednesday only after Walpole submitted a written commitment to focus more on diversity and sensitivity training, according to a statement.*

A high school football coach in Charleston, South Carolina, was fired after he permitted a post-game celebratory ritual involving a watermelon that some say is racist.

After a parent reported the "watermelon ritual" to the school board, the Charleston County School District launched an investigation and ultimately fired Academic Magnet High School coach Bud Walpole, according to CNN affiliate WCSC.

"Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others were either standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds described as, 'Ooh, ooh, ooh,'" school district Superintendent Nancy McGinley said, describing the noises as "monkey sounds." The watermelon was decorated with caricatures drawn with Sharpie markers, she added.

Dot Scott, president of the Charleston branch of the NAACP, said the organization supported the school's decision to fire Walpole. Scott thanked the superintendent at a Wednesday press conference "for her swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team."

The school district has not yet responded to CNN's request for comment.

A number of parents and students, however, are standing in support of Walpole, who coached at the school for 10 years. More than 4,000 people have signed a petition to reinstate the ousted coach, as of Wednesday afternoon.

Some say they don't see the ritual as racist.

"I just don't understand why the school district is concerned this is an issue," Connie Biggs, the president of Academic Magnet's Booster Club told WCSC. "Is it because it's a watermelon? If it had been a pumpkin or a cantaloupe would that have been a different reaction from the district."

Harry Griffin, a junior at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, said he has known Walpole for six years and considers the coach a man of integrity. Griffin played for Walpole's high school team as a fullback and nose guard. CNN first learned of this story through an iReport Griffin uploaded.

"Coach Walpole was fired because his team had a harmless tradition that was made to seem prejudiced," Griffin wrote in a CNN iReport. "They had a post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon and eating it after every victory. A parent on an opposing team deemed this act as racist and the school board decided to interrogate the players."

Some parents are taking issue with how the investigation was conducted and how students were questioned about the ritual.

"The school district is not telling us what they said to these kids," Biggs said. "They're giving us two questions that they say that they asked but these interviews have lasted 10-20 minutes apiece, so I'm really unclear how two questions could take that long."

Griffin called Walpole's firing an injustice.

"I want to help my coach get his integrity back," Griffin said.

"You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing."

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NAACP: Academic Magnet football coach apologized, did not see celebrations as racially insensitive

Posted: Oct 22, 2014 7:09 AM EDT
Updated: Oct 22, 2014 2:55 PM EDT

By Philip Weiss **CONNECT**

By Live 5 News Web Staff **CONNECT**

CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) - Charleston NAACP President Dot Scott said she has spoken to former Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole who she says has apologized for the alleged post-game celebrations involving a watermelon which led to Walpole's removal from the football team.

During a press conference in downtown Charleston on Wednesday, Scott said she spoke to Walpole Wednesday morning.

According to Scott, Walpole apologized for the celebrations and said he did not see them as racially insensitive.

Scott also commended the Charleston County School District, specifically Superintendent Nancy McGinley, "for her swift attention to an inappropriate and racially insensitive ritual performed by the football team at Academic Magnet High School."

McGinley said a parent contacted a school board member after witnessing a post-game celebration involving a watermelon following a win by the Academic Magnet football team.

That sparked an investigation which revealed a "watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds" that football team members engaged in after recent victories. Each time, the watermelon was decorated with what McGinley described as a caricature by a student using a Sharpie marker with the watermelon being named "Bonds Wilson" at various times.

As a result of the investigation, Walpole, who is a physical education teacher at Liberty Hill Academy, was removed Monday as head football coach and girls basketball coach at Academic Magnet.

"We understand the upset on the part of the football team about the firing of the coach since they're in the midst of a winning season, but even those who are successful must be accountable for their bad behavior," read a statement released on Wednesday by the NAACP."The parents and adults involved - who should set a standard of positive behavior for our children - are old enough to know that and should re-examine their values if they try to excuse away a blatant insult to many in our community, regardless of race or culture."

In addition, the statement by the NAACP compared the celebrations to desecrating the Confederate flag.

"All of those adults should ask themselves a simple question - would you take the same stance if an overwhelmingly black football team's "victory ritual" was to urinate on and then stomp a Confederate Flag into the dirt when they have defeated an overwhelmingly white football team?"

The NAACP is calling on the school district and the city to create a task force to "bring equity and fairness in public education, in employment, in business development, in housing and in everything that will make ours a fair and balanced community."

Walpole has coached the Raptors to a 6-2 record this season, tying the school's win record. He went 29-70 during his 10 years coaching the team.

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An open letter to Academic Magnet students

Racism exists

Posted by Chris Haire on Wed, Oct 22, 2014 at 7:26 AM

Dear students,

I would like to thank you for taking the time to write me such thoughtful and well-written letters. However, I think it's important to note that the stings you feel pale in comparison to the stings th town feel regarding this incident.

Believe it or not but they live in a world where racism very much exists. They live in a world wher fellow African Americans with no just cause, and I say this because I regularly read the details of

They live in a world where state legislators, if not the majority of the white population of South C acceptable to not only allow the Confederate flag to fly on Statehouse grounds but have statues c Tillman, whose armies of Red Shirts murdered black South Carolinians; J. Marion Sims, the so-cal horrible experiments on slaves; and Strom Thurmond, the South's pre-eminent defender of segre

They live in a world where the biggest barbecue chain in the the Midlands, Maurice's BBQ, offers t

They live in a world where the GOP candidate for lieutenant governor, Henry McMaster, is a meml

They live in a world where one 2012 GOP presidential candidate has a vacation home called Nigg Obama as a "food stamp president" and a "Kenyan, anti-colonialist."

They live in a world where the former most powerful lawmaker in Columbia and the current head McConnell, not only ran a Confederate memorabilia store but remains a staunch Confederate flag Confederate general with two African American dressed in slave-era garb.

They live in a world where their city leaders refuse to fix flooding issues in their neighborhoods, walk home from school in knee-high dirty water; instead the city engages in beautification projec

They live in a world where gentrification is pushing them out of the neighborhoods that they call

They live in a world where the state continues to allow mostly black schools to languish.

They live in a world where black men are thrown in jail for non-violent drug crimes in droves whil

They live in a world where far too many people act as if racism no longer exists when it's clear th many ways it's as bad as it has been in decades.

I urge each and every one of you to think about how the parents of Military Magnet and Garrett A the vast majority of them are hurt in ways that are vastly more painful than what you may feel re column.

As for charges that I have been misinformed, all that I can offer is that my comments are based c reported at her press conference regarding the events that led up to Coach Walpole's removal, in

Bowers uncovered. McGinley's findings came after an extensive investigation of students and coa
that McGinley has launched a witch hunt built on lies and half-truths and is honestly trying to ad
students at the best school in the state engaged in activities that most Americans find racially of

Thank you for your time.

CWH

P.S. I don't think you all are dumbasses. Just the ones who continue to deny how racially offensiv
this incident causes the African American community.

This portion of

Coach fired over watermelon celebration is rehired

The Associated Press | Posted: Thursday, October 23, 2014 12:46 pm

CHARLESTON, S.C. — A South Carolina high school football coach has been reinstated after his firing over postgame celebrations that officials said had racial overtones, with players smashing watermelons and making ape-like sounds.

In a statement Wednesday, Charleston County School Superintendent Nancy McGinley said she reinstated Bud Walpole of Academic Magnet High School in Charleston County after meeting with him.

The statement says Walpole agreed to participate in any district sensitivity training and counsel players before games to be vigilant of their actions in dealing with those of different races or backgrounds.

Walpole was fired this week after McGinley was notified that celebrations offended the parent of an opposing player. The players from the predominantly white school were smashing watermelons with smiling faces drawn on them before eating them as a postgame snack.

Whites and Watermelons

Posted By Chief on Oct 21, 2014 in Commentary
Comments

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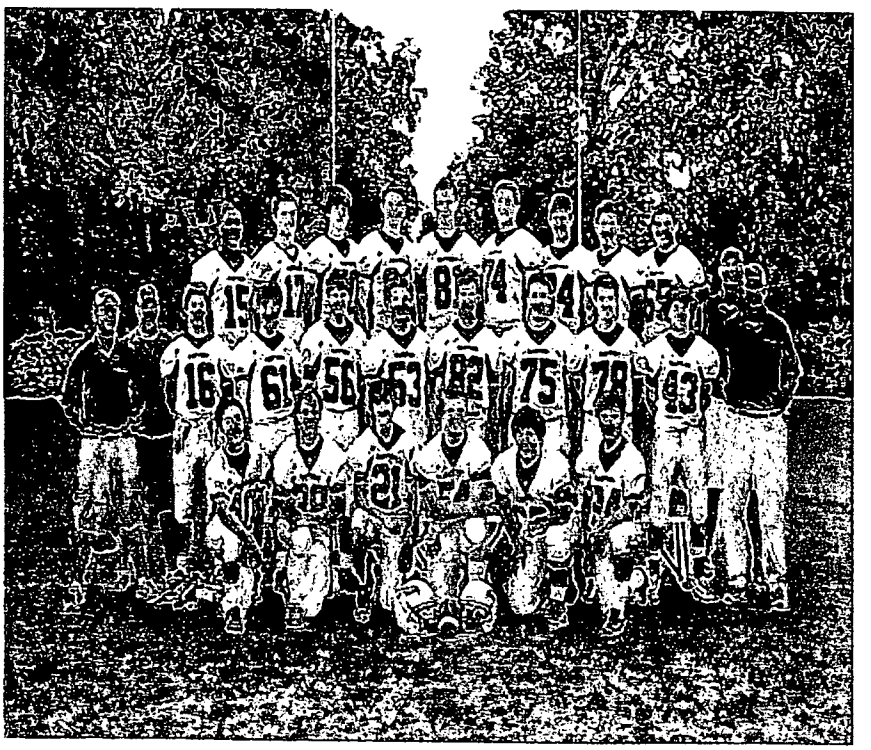
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We awoke this morning to a story about whites and watermelons. Because, you know, it's rac smash a watermelon. In fact, it's sacrilege. What was Coach Walpole thinking?

In their customary rush to accuse white folks of being racists , the Charleston County School Walpole as the football coach for Academic Magnet High School. Apparently some racist par from another Charleston County school complained to a black school board member after wa Raptors smash a watermelon as part of their victory celebration. A major investigation was ur team members were hauled in for questioning. When they asked what the big deal was, they Nancy McGinley, CCSC superintendent, that issue was "above their pay grades".

McGinley should worry less about "pay grades" and more about academic grades in the rest

We couldn't figure out what all the fuss was about, so we dug up a fairly recent picture of on teams. See if you can figure out what the problem is.



Can you see the real problem? It would appear there is a serious lack of melanin on that tea winning. They have been beating teams which field a ton of melanin. That is what the perpet are so upset about.

And there you have the crux of the problem when it comes to CCSD and Nancy McGinley. In can expect to see a concerted effort to diversify the Academic Magnet High School's sports t of those lily white football players will have to attend some sort of diversity training where the people can smash those racist watermelons without fear of retribution.

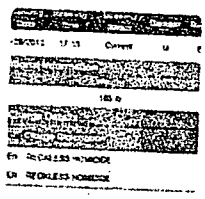
During the intensive CCSD investigation, everyone involved in the smashing of hapless wate racial component to the activity. That did not matter to Nancy McGinley, though. Black peopl

We have reported in the past how CCSD railroaded a white graduating senior for using the w personal Twitter feed when she quoted a rap song. However, when we pointed out the same student athletes on their social media feeds, not to mention the gang affiliations of those athl called in by their coaches and advised to scrub their pages and not use the word publicly an student athletes were black basketball players. And we all know how CCSD gives special dis

And you folks wonder why CCSD catches so much hell from us, talk radio and just about ev sense.

Oh, and all you white kids better stop sucking your teeth, too. Keep that up and you won't b

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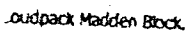
Bond Hearings for April 7th



Yes She Did



A Pattern



Charleston County School District Reaction



Lowcountry Violence

Author: Chief

Owner and Author of Charleston Thug Life. Chief started this website back in M
light on the Criminals of Charleston.

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Injustice in Charleston, SC

By hgriffi1 | Posted October 21, 2014

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CNN PRODUCER NOTE A high school football coach in Charleston, South Carolina, was fired after he permitted a post-game celebratory ritual involving a watermelon that some say is racist.

After a parent reported the "watermelon ritual" to the school board, the Charleston County School District launched an investigation, according to CNN affiliate WCSC. "Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others were either standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds described as, 'Ooh, ooh, ooh,'" school district superintendent Nancy McGinley said. The watermelon was decorated with caricatures drawn with Sharpie markers, she added.

Harry Griffin, a junior at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, says he has known coach Bud Walpole for six years. Griffin played for Walpole's high school team as a fullback and nose guard.

"I want to help my coach get his integrity back and I want people to read this," Griffin said. "It's not the kind of a firing you would ever see out of a coach, especially when it's associated with any type of racism. It became a bigger issue and it entrenched an entire community. I wanted to get the perspective of somebody who knows him out there."

Know the coach or have something to say? Share your thoughts in the comments or upload your own perspective to iReport.

Read the full story on CNN.com
- zdan, CNN iReport producer

Academic Magnet Football Coach Bud Walpole was fired on Monday, October 21, 2014 because The Charleston Country School Board says he allowed racism on his team. That is a headline that makes a man of integrity sound evil. Coach Walpole was fired because his team had a harmless tradition that was made to seem prejudice. The team was in the middle of a six game winning streak; the best such streak in school history. They had a post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon and eating it after every victory. A parent on an opposing team deemed this act as racist and the school board decided to interrogate the players. These high school athletes were forced into a room one by one and questioned about their "racist" acts. Since when is eating watermelon racist? Since when does a school board have the right to interrogate students without notifying their parents? The way this situation has been handled can only be described as despicable.
Coach Walpole has been the coach at Academic Magnet for a decade. I played for him for four years and gained so much respect for this man. He cared so much about the players and the parents. His record at the school does not show the time and effort he put into coaching. Never in

my six years of knowing Coach Walpole would I ever speak badly of him. He has so much integrity and honor. His team motto each year was "Do the right thing." He taught us to be better people. He has stuck by the Academic Magnet program through thick and thin. This is a story that needs attention. Our nation is heading down a slippery slope if this is something that causes someone to be fired. What are we teaching people if we label innocent things with no harm as racist?

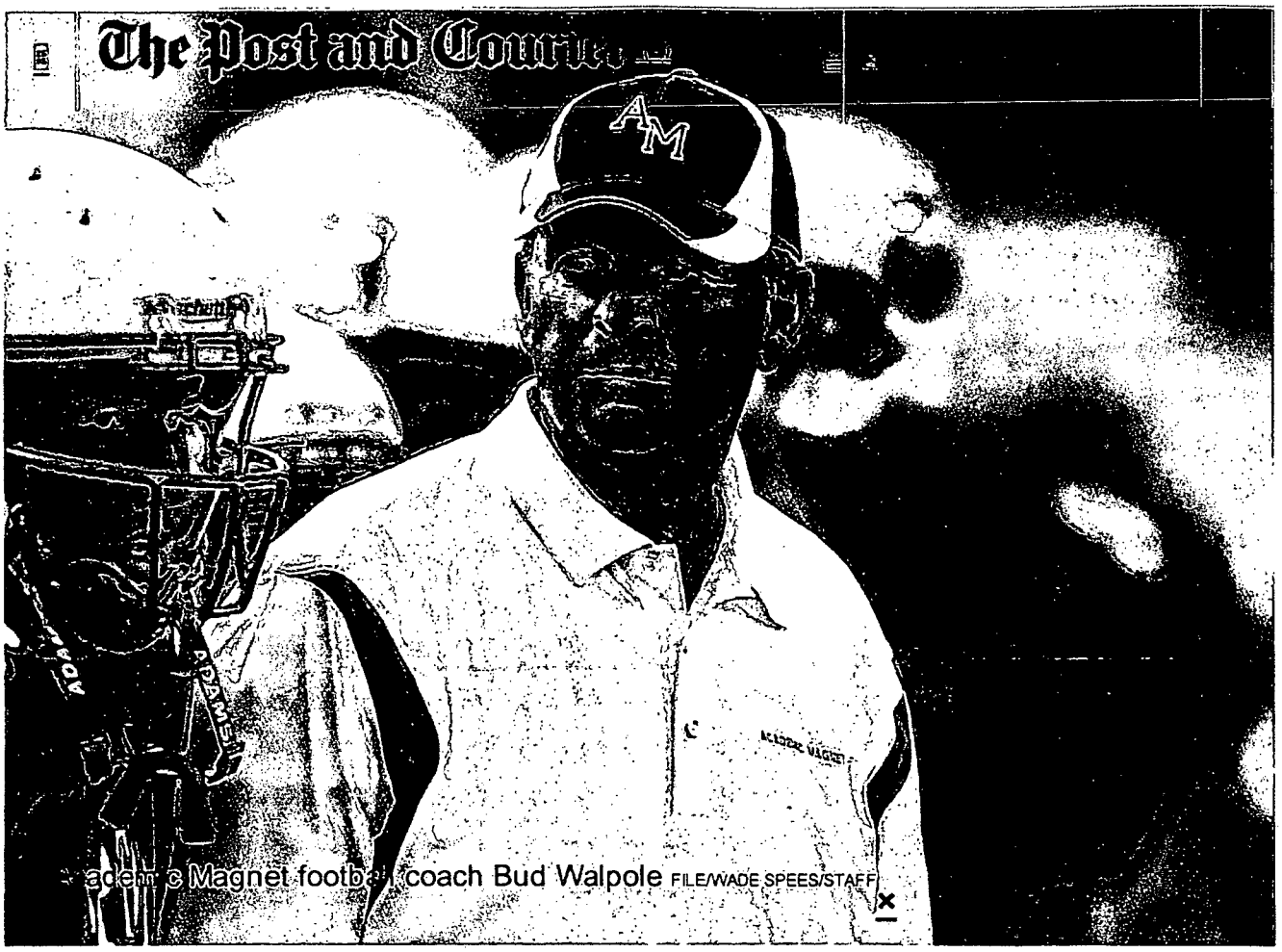
You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing. This is a man who attended The Citadel and followed in its core values of honor, duty, and respect. He is a man of his word, a man who would give you the shirt off his back, and a man who loves so many people with his whole heart. Never could I imagine this happening. The Charleston County School Board needs to be held responsible. We need to look at this story and reevaluate what racism is. Is this nation going to become one that allows wrongful termination over a very petty argument with no merit? Or are we going to step up as Americans and fight for individuals who sacrifice their time to be outstanding members of our community. I, for one, will stand up against this injustice.

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McGinley offers fired Academic Magnet coach his job back effective Thursday

By Amanda Kerr (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195) and Jeff Hartsell (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=38)

Oct 22 2014 1:46 pm Oct 22 10:46 pm



After firing him Monday, Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley offered Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud Walpole his job back Wednesday. The reversal came after two tumultuous days of intense scrutiny over the school district's decision to fire the longtime coach for his team's postgame watermelon ritual.

McGinley and Walpole met Wednesday afternoon and, according to McGinley's statement, the coach acknowledged that his team's tradition of smashing watermelons as part of a postgame victory celebration "could be viewed in a negative way."

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Nancy McGinley out: Board accepts Charleston schools chief's resignation (/article/20141030/PC16/141039968)

Academic Magnet shrugs off watermelon controversy; team secures playoff spot (/article/20141024/PC20/141029549)

"He agreed that we will work together on increasing diversity awareness for students and the community," McGinley said.

As part of the district's job offer, the statement said that Walpole was required to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to better respect the differences of

The Post and Courier (/)

others; attend any sensitivity training sessions offered by the school district; and to counsel his players before games to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

"I would like to invite our community to join together with me and Coach Walpole to use this as a teachable moment for the benefit of our children," McGinley said in the statement.

Walpole has accepted McGinley's offer, said attorney Dwayne Green, a family friend who has been advising the coach.

"He's very happy, relieved and excited to get back to coaching," Green said.

Raptor players were just as happy to have their coach back.

"All day, the only thing the whole student body could think about was coach Walpole and getting him back and making everything right," said Adam Ackerman, a senior. "I think it would be good for us, because we knew we lost something big when we lost coach Walpole. He led the team, and his main point every day was to do our job. We did our job to get him back and I think he'll be proud of us."

The players learned of Walpole's return just after practice. The Raptors are 6-2 this season and in the midst of one of the best seasons in school history.

"We're pretty ecstatic about it," said senior Kyle Saavedra. "It's been hard to focus on school and homework, because we were so fired up about trying to get our coach back."

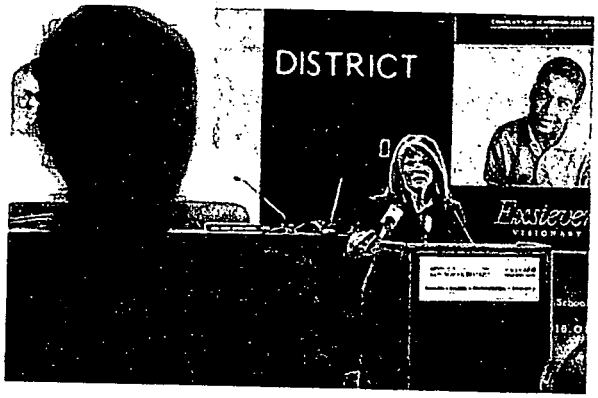
The district dismissed Walpole from his coaching duties Monday following an investigation last week into allegations the team had been participating in a "watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds" as part of a post-game celebration.

McGinley at a news conference Tuesday said players told two school district representatives

that following a victory the team would stand in a circle chanting and smash a watermelon with a caricature face drawn on the fruit with black marker. Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, McGinley said, which is a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston. The Bonds-Wilson Campus pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

School Board member Michael Miller reported the team's tradition to the school district on Oct. 13. He raised concerns about the racial overtones of the tradition after hearing from a parent of a Military Magnet Academy student who was offended by the ritual, which the team performed following its defeat of Military Magnet on Sept. 5.

Miller, on Tuesday, called Walpole's removal as coach a "fair outcome," saying that the coach's decision to allow the team to practice a "racially insensitive" ritual was an "error in judgment."



Enlarge Superintendent Nancy McGinley is seen at a press conference at the Charleston County School District office on Tuesday, following Monday's suspension of Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud Walpole. Wade Spees/Staff

Following Walpole's reinstatement Wednesday, Miller said he accepted McGinley's authority to give Walpole his job back, but he wondered what message the district was sending.

"The question is if something is perceived as being inappropriate, how then do we hold those accountable?" Miller asked. "I believe in second chances, but what's our stance on a zero tolerance policy when it comes to being sensitive to the dignity and respect of others?"

Perceptions

The Charleston Branch of the NAACP, whose members came out in support of Walpole's firing, issued a statement Wednesday calling the team's tradition "inappropriate and racially insensitive." The group likened the students' actions to an overwhelmingly black football team urinating and stomping on the Confederate flag as a victory ritual.

"All of the elements of the ritual reflect familiar and insulting stereotypes about African-Americans," the group's statement said.

Charleston NAACP President Dot Scott said the district and the community need to focus on finding a way to address the issue so that students are more sensitive to potentially hurtful racial

"What are we going to do to fix this so we don't have another incident where people say 'I didn't know it was (offensive) and if it is we weren't aware of it'," Scott said. "Let's get deliberate about the fact that what may not offend you, very well may offend other people."

Racial connotations between watermelons and African-Americans date back to stereotypes and images that were prevalent after the Civil War, said Marcus Cox, professor of history at The Citadel.

"Watermelons were used to symbolize the idea that African-Americans were simple-minded and only needed rest and a little watermelon to be happy," Cox said. "It goes to perpetuate the idea that slaves were happy with their state. It was really perpetuated after the Civil War, as a way to demonstrate that blacks were not suitable for freedom, that they were in fact inferior and not good citizens.

"These negative images that many white Americans might not think much about are still offensive and hurtful to African-Americans," he said.

Whether or not teenagers have an appreciation of the historical and emotional context of those images, Cox said, is another matter.

"I won't say that many young people are not aware of stereotypes like this, but I will say they don't have any clue as to how they got started," he said. "Most of the kids I teach, black and white, have little sense of history. When these kind of things happen, a lot of students will ask, 'What's the big deal?' If they had a better sense of not just African-American history but American history, they'd have a better understanding."

Von Bakanic, associate professor of sociology at the College of Charleston, said it's also important to consider whether the stereotype that associates race with watermelons is one that is relevant to teens today.

"Cultural stereotypes change over time," Bakanic said. "People may or may not be aware of the stereotypes that were there for their generation, and they don't mean the same things, not only to people based on their age, but also every person is interpreting things from a different standpoint.

"To take anything about watermelon and say it is racist is responding to the stereotype rather than the melon itself," Bakanic said. "Anything can be perceived in any way anyone chooses to."

Cox's take is that the students didn't intend for their actions to have racial connotations, but that's when someone should have brought it to their attention.

"Based on my limited knowledge, the kids didn't have any real idea of what they were doing in terms of being offensive to the black community," he said. "I got the sense they didn't really understand, but that's when an adult steps in and says, 'This could be taken the wrong way.'"

Reinstatement

Support for Walpole's reinstatement was almost immediate. Academic Magnet junior defensive end Darius Nwokike, the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, started a petition on the website change.org Monday asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate his coach. By Wednesday evening, the petition had more than 4,000 signatures, nearly doubling from the day before.

Several School Board members, who were briefed on the situation in a closed meeting Tuesday, also came out in support of Walpole, including Todd Garrett, Tripp Wiles, Chris Fraser and Elizabeth Moffly.

"I'm in complete support of the opportunity for him to find a way back to coaching the kids," Fraser said.

Moffly, Garrett and Wiles said they disagreed with Walpole's firing in the first place.

"We totally took this out of context," Moffly said. "It's silly and unfortunate and it needs to be reversed."

Garrett said the district's hypersensitivity to the issue of race is understandable, but feels administrators missed the mark on how to deal with the situation.

"In this instance it looks like the initial reaction was to overreact," he said. "It took a harmless student-led sports team celebration out of context. I think that this is a teachable moment, not a time for heads to roll."

Wiles agreed, saying he has "strong concerns" over the district's investigation and the speed with which a decision was made.

"Assuming the worst in others without evidence of wrongdoing and then hastily acting on those assumptions is always a poor policy," he said in a statement. "In my opinion, Coach Walpole should not have been relieved of his coaching duties."

School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats and board members Tom Ducker and Chris Collins declined to say whether they thought Walpole should be reinstated, although Coats said she expected a 'correct and right outcome' as a result of Walpole's meeting with McGinley. School Board member Craig Ascue did not return a phone call seeking comment.

The decision to bring Walpole back, McGinley said in her statement, was based in part on his experience and the "potential value that he will add to our students and the community."

"This is not about winning or losing, this is about enhancing our commitment to dignity and respect, regardless of our differences," she said.

Keywords

- Academic Magnet High (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Academic%20Magnet%20High)
- Bud Walpole (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Bud%20Walpole)
- CCSD (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:CCSD)
- Charleston County School Board (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Charleston%20County%20School%20Board)
- Charleston County School District (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Charleston%20County%20School%20District)
- Nancy McGinley (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Nancy%20McGinley)

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Academic Magnet students respond to Haire of the Dog's 'M

The students speak

Posted by Chris Haire on Tue, Oct 21, 2014 at 7:38 PM

As expected, the response to my post earlier today on the firing of Coach Bud Walpole at Academ heated, particularly among AMHS students. Some posted in the comments section, but some tool are the ones I've received thus far:

Mr. Haire,

I am completely shocked by your allegations in the article you posted about the recent events that ha a senior and have attended magnet for almost four years now. My school is not solely composed of s white family" and am offended that you would stereotype it to be that way. Don't you think stereotyp in this situation? Maybe a little hypocritical? My school prides itself on its accepting nature and our to be snobby rich kids with our futures just being handed to us. We work hard to get into colleges, ju other school. Academic Magnet is also a charter school that receives students from all over the Char

Maybe you should think about what you write before calling over 600 students "grade-A dumbasses students, most below the age of 18, dumbasses?

The football team started a practice of eating a watermelon after they win, something that has neve After two games of winning, the team had a tradition, a sort of ritual they deemed to be contributing "monkey noises", have you ever been to a football game? There was no notion of the team making m that. The team was grunting. They're boys who were hyped up on pure adrenaline after finally being picture? They drew a face on a watermelon. How can that be considered racist?

However, that last paragraph is not the reason I am emailing you. I know my school's football team racist. And neither did their coaches. Because maybe, just maybe, they are above the thoughts of ra silly to celebrate. That is not why I'm spending my time writing you. I'm writing you because your a entire student body that you do not know. Name calling is not going to make you a respectable write one reader today after that article.

Please, consider your words and how you have treated young students and adults in your article.

I appreciate your taking time to read this email.

Chandler Anderson
Academic Magnet High School

As a student at Academic Magnet, I am abhorred at the accusatory and hateful rant you levied agai players and coaches are at fault for not connecting arbitrary dots between a harmless, innocent pos the United States. I can say, with complete confidence, that you have no idea what you are talking a by buying a watermelon being sold on the side of the road before their second game, and the noises "ape-like" were nothing more than normal football team hype. If you have ever watched an NFL or

those instead. Furthermore, if you have ever used the Internet, you would know that watermelons ai endeavor. Are you going to label YouTube racist know? The players did not recognize this as "racisn generation is the first in modern American history in which racism is not an epidemic. They therefo they perform in their daily lives. Just because your generation, and all those preceding it, experienc become overly-sensitive regarding any actions that have any potential whatsoever of being "offensiv The students of Academic Magnet do not see race, yet because you do you vehemently commit libel students alike. You, sir, and people like you, are the true problem in Charleston, the United States, a

Zachary Zuber

Mr. Haire,

I am so thankful that we live in America, a place where each individual is free to speak his or her ow someone somewhere won't like it, but with the right to do so nonetheless. I don't aim to attack your j fault with your blatant portrayal of conjecture as absolute fact in the article you recently wrote abou than this pathetic excuse for journalism is your disgustingly sweeping statements about the culture her students. Mr. Haire, I consider it a privilege to be an alumna of one of our nation's best high sch degradation of the school that provided me with not only an amazing education but an appreciation community beyond compare. A community that you disparage unrelentingly in a piece you wrote fo I will not speak to the actions of the Raptors football team, while I will say that I believe some facts h monumental race issue, this is not my intention in writing you. I simply wished to convey my offense you felt it was necessary to attack an entire institution, an institution of which I am proud to be a me garnered from several unconfirmed sources. I am proud of the education I received from Academic yourself for degrading such a reputable institution.

Sincerely,
Haley Cottingham
Academic Magnet class of 2013
"Grade - A Dumbass"

I am currently a student at Academic Magnet High School and I would like to address the recent art City Paper about the incident with our football team. First of all, you seemed to quickly breeze right American guy on our football team was okay with the watermelon smashing. Yes, he was okay with i our generation is not as big of a problem as all of your generation seems to think it is. But what reall racism of the entire situation was not racist until someone said it was. People being people just tend themselves makes sense. It was not thought of a racist until an adult, who was raised in a different ti Kids of my time generally are not concerned with racism. If you look back in history at all of the hat generation can be considered the most accepting of them all. Also, the fact that you generalized the "nothing more than grade-A dumb*****' is highly offensive considering we are all individuals. We'r kids. I, personally, have experienced being homeless three times in my life. I try hard to be the best things. I am a teenager. My fellow raptors on the football team are teenagers too. We all do crazy sti trying to enjoy the little things and have fun. All of us at Magnet are pleading that you and everyone being taken away because of a situation that has been determined only off of interpretation. We wor downgrade the students of AMHS so boldly is selfish, cold, and heartless. You are clearly uninforme Please recognize that.

Dear Mr. Haire,

I am writing to you to inform you of my opinion on the article you wrote in the City Paper about the . entitled to my opinion under the constitution of this country and respect yours as I hope you do min

As a student of Academic Magnet, I cherish the friendships I have made with my peers and teachers most caring individuals you will ever have the privilege of meeting. I am also a personal friend to ev promise YOU (who probably doesn't know a single one of them), that they are nothing but respectfu beings. For you to have the audacity to call the whole student body "grade-A dumbasses" and our fo You are making nothing but general biased insults about our school and whole athletic program bas taken completely out of context from what is the truth. Mr. Haire, I recognize the fact that you write But, nevertheless, I can say that the whole Academic Magnet community is offended and disagrees v come sit in on a history class and recognize that we are indeed historically knowledgeable about rac also say that you need to check up on your facts about our school diversity. I hope you can realize ho are anything but racially insensitive. I also hope after this realization you can eventually apologize tc team.

I would like you to email me back with your opinion in greater depth if possible, for I am interested

Sincerely,
Jakob Cumins

Dear Mr. Haire,

I am writing to you in regards to the article you have just published for the Charleston City Paper en from Academic Magnet High School and currently attend Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem from this controversial issue at my former high school, I feel as though I am capable of taking a slig current students at AMHS.

While I understand that it is in fact your job to write about social and political issues that our society Magnet has been grossly misrepresented by your article. Although we happen to possess a mostly af demographic fact does not immediately discount our actions. In hindsight, the consumption of wate to be an unfortunate mistake. However, I do not think this entitles you to declare the entire student l be "racist douchebags." Isn't this type of generalization exactly what put us in this situation in the fi awareness of cultural and societal differences. To make generalized statements about any group, wh group, contribute to tension just as we are experiencing here. For you to generalize the the misunde of 600 thoroughly undermines your illustrious journalism career.

I truly believe that my high school's football team was in no way intending to be racist. I'm sorry tha know their intentions were nothing but innocent. I attended Academic Magnet for four years, and al population of minorities, I rarely, if ever, saw any semblance of racial tension among students. We v harmoniously, regardless of race, age, gender, or sexuality. In fact, I have never felt more comfortal

AMHS prides itself, and will continue to pride itself, on producing socially, culturally, and politically

was lucky enough to be one of those students, as well as the thousands of others that worked tireless
School diploma upon graduation. Had I been surrounded by a bunch of racist and "grade-A dumb a
would be where I am today, at one of the best universities in the country. I can attribute almost my e
education I was fortunate enough to receive from the wonderful faculty members and school of Aca

I am very unhappy that my school has been forced into the spotlight under such negative circumsta
administration and socially conscious students will do their best to solve this as best they can. While
both team and school board, that should not serve to reflect poorly on a student body that has been
to yesterday. I understand that you are doing your job and writing a heated opinion piece, but I beli
generalization upon the current students and graduates of Academic Magnet High School of which

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Kellen Datta

Dear Mr Haire:
I have just had the "privilege" of reading your article concerning the ignorant douchebags at my for
to read it earlier today because I was focused on my studies. I am one of the white privileged racist c
Academic Magnet, and I am currently at Mercer University majoring in Global Health and on track
sophomore year. Isn't it ironic that a school full of racist dumbasses produced someone who is inter
psychological, and political health and wellbeing of others around the world? And isn't it ironic that
emphasize the importance of foreign language so much that I will have a minor in Spanish before m
after school tutoring program academic magnet supports at local schools comprised mostly of the A
"look down upon"? Are you aware of CHEW, the healthy eating initiative focused on improving the r
Are you aware of the weekly trips taken by Spanish classes to the predominantly Hispanic elementa
aware of the degree to which academic magnet students hold class, respect, comradery, and diversi
pathetic that your "article" as a PROFESSIONAL WRITER is arguably more tasteless than the so ca
our football team. Sure, we could stoop to accusations and name calling, kicking someone when the
their flaws, when we win a football game. But we don't. We choose to blow off steam by smashing a
old boys. In your professional academic opinion, is it "normal" for a man of your age to call a bunch
"dumbasses" in a professional article? The football team had no intention of being racist whatsoeve
unified, supportive student body and no false accusations could ever change that. But perhaps the fo
some people. You on the other hand, chose to consciously degrade what is an upstanding and life ch
is the single best thing that has ever happened to anyone who has attended it. We learned about har
learned about acceptance, we learned about community, and we learned about respect. Perhaps ins
beautifully cultured student body, you should take some pointers. Read the letters written to you by
of their professional, respectful, educated, dignified manners of expressing their opinions. Despite a
from the school district, and completely immature unprofessional slanderous articles by reporters l
their inherently rock solid morals. Despite your attempt to bully some high school students for an in
managed to represent what magnet is truly about- respecting ourselves and others of all classes, rac
upstanding way regardless of the circumstance.

Thank you for your time,
Chase Laudenslager
Proud douchebag/dumbass Alumna

Dear Mr. Haire,

I am a student at Academic Magnet High School. I appreciate the recognition that you have given th stereotypes that you have made about the student body are not accurate. We are not all made up of futures are not being given to us. We have to work just as hard as any other student to get where we student be treated differently because of their race or color. Academic Magnet has an amazing com I hope that you can now perceive it this way.
The so called "monkey noises" were not actually monkey noises. Our football team was merely getti you've ever been to a football game or seen a football movie, then you know what I am talking about
Respectfully,
Michael Arnold

Although I'm sure you're tired of your recent influx of emails from Academic Magnet students and f cents to this whole "Watermelongate" scandal. Maybe you're right. Students at a football game sma drawn-on face definitely is racist. Students having innocent fun in getting hyped up and yelling after interpreted as nothing else than racism. Or maybe once you finished your inflammatory (and clearl swig of your beer, and congratulated yourself on how you really told those grade-A dumbass high sc and asked yourself after more than the few shallow minutes of thought it took you to derive the arbit watermelons and a few grunts, and remember what racism really is. No, wait, apparently, we're the Buckwheat, and Birth of a Nation." However, why should those things not be forgotten? They are bl history of this nation, but people like you keep wanting to drag them out again, to remind us how ra country is still racist, but it's no longer a simplistic "white people are the oppressors" paradigm. Ra everything we are, everything we do, because ironically enough, people are attempting to fight racis racism, or any prejudice for that matter, is not to counteract it with searching for it at every turn, it' minorities, and it's hell as not firing a football coach because of an innocent post-game ritual. It's to something you have yet to learn, Mr. Haire. I know nothing of your race or your experiences with ra matter because race doesn't matter. And this is what the whole Academic Magnet community has a even consider that there may be racial implications in smashing watermelons (it's a fruit for god's s else could someone trying to antagonize privileged white racist douchebags be other than a racist th bringing it up is because we're white and middle-class? Is your piece really a commentary on the ra demonstration of how racist you truly are?

Katie Moseley

Mr. Haire,

Hello, My name is Keith Howard, and I debated within myself on whether or not I should write to yc October, primarily because I know of the mountains of responses you are already receiving. Finally, magnitude of responses must match the magnitude of incorrect abrasiveness you displayed in your achieved. I was introduced to the Charleston City Paper by my mother, and continued to be a reade down to earth reporting and journalism of the culture and society of Charleston, not to mention the However, and I hope you know, and you let your superior, which seems to only be the publisher, kn these other readers, that the integrity of your paper has been compromised, and it will take a signifi

rebuild it.

That being said, I am not an AMHS student or alum, but an alum of its neighbor, School of the Arts. together on Bonds Wilson, when our two cultures at the ends of the spectrum—one focused on acad —collided. Despite a rivalry forming initially, these two student bodies came quickly to respect each students of the other school worked hard to get where they were, whether that was hours studying, p class etc., and we united under our common ethic. I already know your response, "But you are midd easier for you to succeed due to your parents' income, environment, and other resources, and you a of others in Charleston."

I can understand that you, an overly-sensitive man, unfamiliar with the cultures of AMHS and SOA, schools' demographics, we students take these inherent advantages for granted. However, you are s schools make sure of promoting a mature understanding of equality in their educating. Thus these t most homogeneous across all races in their student bodies in Charleston County, united under excel needs some help to achieve that excellence. On this note, the fact that you called the underage stude Carolina "grade A dumbasses" should have you fired, and the fact that your article was published is journalism. I am a product of School of the Arts, which is ranked below AMHS (yay I am a megadu to my financial condition, Furman University through my music scholarship and academic scholar Arts, I volunteered in a program, the Liberty Hill Literacy Program, to promote literacy by reading students of Hursey Elementary, a school near Bonds Wilson in the impoverished part of North Char than 100 years of oppression on minority blacks in Charleston. These kids' hardworking parents we support them to be able to read them books when they were young, so we worked hands on to try an set by CCSD...because we all know that we could not have gotten where we are without the help and outlier story—every day you will see an AMHS or SOA student at that program.

But I am just a middle class white kid dumbass to you, so I know my opinions on the racial differenc digress. I do not know personally any members of the football team of AMHS simply because I have that the students had no racist intentions by smashing fruit and getting rowdy. Monkey noises? Seri THAT argument. The CCSD interrogation process of the students was disgusting, and their handlin repulsive, however it is not surprising. This administration has, in the years of my experience, react with a cat-in-the-corner reflex to fire/expel someone and worry about the validity later. Most of the the story and public interest dries up (wild outlandish stories are published in the beginning, so any interesting and fall back. Sound familiar?). All I ask is that someone like you, who somewhere along journalism and editing, fields in which all who pursue them wish for the truth to be reported, to not fresh catch. However, I ironically do hope you are fired promptly, because, unlike the case of "Melo hate to a culture you don't understand, and CLEAR evidence for your degradation of the Charleston

Thank you for your time,

Keith Howard

This portion of

Parents sound off after coach fired for post-game watermelon ritual

Posted: Oct 21, 2014 11:17 PM EDT
Updated: Oct 21, 2014 11:17 PM EDT

By William Joy **CONNECT**

NORTH CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) - Parents are sounding off after the Charleston County School District fired the head coach of Academic Magnet High School.

The district said coach Bud Walpole was fired because a post-game ritual where the team would smash a watermelon was racially insensitive.

Parents disagree and more than 2,500 people have signed a petition online asking to reinstate Walpole.

Tuesday, there were even students protesting the coach's firing at the school with chants and signs

"I just don't understand why the school district is concerned this is an issue," Connie Biggs, the President of Academic Magnet's Booster Club said. "Is it because it's a watermelon? If it had been a pumpkin or a cantaloupe would that have been a different reaction from the district."

Despite the backlash, Charleston County Superintendent Nancy McGinley said the investigation was done properly.

"When there is evidence or strong allegations of wrong-doing, we have to ascertain either that it happened or it didn't happen and do it in a systematic way and that's what this investigation is about," McKinley said.

Biggs said students were pulled out of class for four hours as part of the investigation.

"The school district is not telling us what they said to these kids," Biggs said. "They're giving us two questions that they say that they asked but these interviews have lasted 10-20 minutes apiece, so I'm really unclear how two questions could take that long."

The chairman of the school's improvement council has started talking to Larry Kobrovsky, an attorney who currently has sued the district multiple times before.

Kobrovsky says parents are concerned the district has defamed the reputations of both the school and its students.

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CCSD: SC football coach removed for post-game watermelon ritual

CHARLESTON, SC (WCSC) -

Charleston County School District Superintendent Nancy McGinley commented on the recent removal of Bud Walpole as head football coach of Academic Magnet High School following an investigation into allegations of inappropriate post game celebrations.

McGinley said the decision followed an investigation into a "watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds" that football team members celebrated after recent victories. A board member came forward with concerns after learning of the ritual and notified CCSD officials, McGinley said.

"This board member was clearly concerned about racial stereotypes related to this type of ritual," McGinley said. McGinley stated she immediately contacted the principal who interviewed the coaches and reported they said they were aware of the ritual but "did not observe cultural insensitivity."

"The tone of the report that was given to me implied that this was an innocent ritual and that the coaches had no concerns about the potentially racially-insensitive tones or perception," McGinley said. "However, based upon the information that I heard from the report from the board member, stating specifically that the team goes through a 'tribal-like chant that is animalistic or monkey-like,' I asked that we have further investigation by speaking to a cross-section of the team or the full team."

Students were individually interviewed about the ritual on Oct. 16, McGinley said.

Following those interviews, McGinley said they decided, accountability lies with the adults.The ritual occurred on four or five occasions based on a concept initiated by upperclassmen prior to the game against Military Magnet, McGinley said to a room of reporters and concerned parents.

"Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others were either standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds described as, 'Ooh, ooh, ooh,'" McGinley said. Each time, the watermelon was decorated with what McGinley described as a caricature by a student using a Sharpie marker.

McGinley said the ritual continued until last week, when the principal agreed the ritual should not happen again.

"Based upon interviews with 29 students and the head coach and two assistant coaches, it was our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults. That the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned, and therefore, we took action," she said.

Walpole was relieved of all coaching duties, including basketball, district officials say.

Officials say Andrew Rusciolelli will serve as interim head football coach, with Steven Kamp and Gary Weart serving as assistants for the remaining two games of the 2014 season.

Charleston County Schools first confirmed Monday evening Walpole was no longer with the football team, but did not provide a reason for the move.

Walpole was in the middle of his 10th year as the school's football coach and it was one of the most

successful so far. It's been a season that has seen the Raptors put together a 6-2 record; those six wins are tied for the most in school history. He had put together a record of 29-70. But the last three seasons, things have really turned around for the Raptors as they've gone 15-14.

Walpole is a physical education teacher at Liberty Hill, according to CCSD Executive Director Erica Taylor.

The post-game tradition reportedly began after wins this season. After winning their first game of the season back in September, the team smashed a watermelon in celebration. After winning their next game they began a tradition of smashing a watermelon and eating it after each win which continued for the team's 6 game win streak.

Mike Miller, who's a member of the school board in Charleston, said a parent from an opposing school came to him and complained that monkey sounds were being made during the watermelon smashing.

In an email on Monday night, a current Raptors player said the tradition started when some players bought a watermelon off a man selling them from the back of his truck on the way to a game. The team decided they would eat it if they won their game against Military Magnet. After the victory they smashed it open since the team didn't have a knife on the sideline.
"Coach Bud Walpole has been nothing but a caring supportive man to this team, even when we get absolutely destroyed on the football field, he only had positive and upbeat words for us during practice," the player said of his now-former coach.

A parent of a player, a former player and an Academic Magnet student all said they stood behind Coach Walpole. They each said on Thursday of last week, members of the Charleston school board went to the school and held meetings with the players on the football team for more than three hours. The team was asked whether the watermelon ritual had any racial undertones, which the kids denied.

Walpole was allowed to travel with the team to their game against Whale Branch last Friday, which they lost, but was told Monday that he was being relieved. The team members met with McGinley later in the day and asked why their coach was fired. But they say they were not given a straight answer with one source saying McGinley told them the decision was "above [their] pay grade".

A petition on Change.org calling for Walpole to be reinstated as the head coach has already climbed to over 3,000 signatures.

"My focus right now is to help the players and coaches in any way I can. All matters concerning Bud Walpole are personnel matters and as such will not be commented on," Academic Magnet Athletic Director Curt Hoffman said in a text message sent on Tuesday morning.

Attempts to reach Walpole have been unsuccessful.

Breaking News All lanes of Ashley Phosphate Road open again after train strikes car (/article/20141204/PC16/141209769/1180/all-lanes-of-ashley-phosphate-road-open-again-after-train-strikes-car)

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Academic Magnet coach fired over watermelon celebration; players, parents defend coach

By Amanda Kerr (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195) and Jeff Hartsell (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=38)

Oct 21 2014 10:10 am Oct 21 10:51 pm



When Darius Nwokike learned Monday that his football coach at Academic Magnet High School had been fired, he went to his computer and logged on to the website change.org.

Nwokike, a junior defensive end and the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, started an online petition (http://www.change.org/p/charleston-county-school-district-reinstate-bud-walpole-s-coaching-eligibility) asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate coach Bud Walpole. By 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, the petition had more than 2,000 signatures.

"I thought the reasons that Coach Walpole got fired were an injustice," Nwokike said Tuesday afternoon. "I was thinking that if I got enough people to agree with me and sign the petition, it would pressure the school board into giving him his job back."

At a contentious news conference Tuesday, Charleston County schools superintendent Nancy McGinley faced angry parents and said Walpole was fired after an investigation into a postgame

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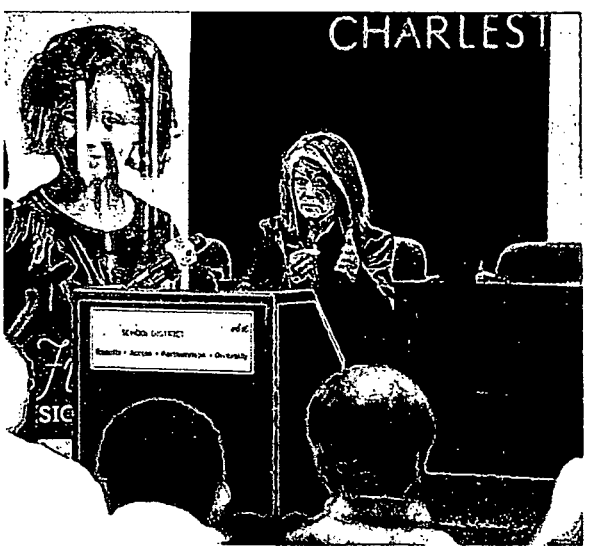
celebration in which Raptors players smashed watermelons and made "chanting sounds."

"It was our conclusion that the accountability lies with the adults and that the perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned," she said.

Walpole, the Raptors' football coach for the last 10 years, also has been removed as the school's girls basketball coach, but he will keep his job as a physical education teacher at Liberty Hill Academy.

Andrew Rusciolelli will be the Raptors' interim head football coach for the remaining two games of the season. Members of the media were kept away from the Raptors practice Tuesday as they prepared for Friday's game against Battery Creek.

Walpole said Tuesday that "he would love nothing more than to continue my coaching career at Academic Magnet" and that the players' celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone."



Enlarge Superintendent Nancy McGinley held a press conference Tuesday at the Charleston

Said Walpole, "It was in celebration of winning the game. I would never condone or approve of any activity that I knew to be offensive to anyone."

Initial complaint

McGinley said she first learned of a possible issue involving the Academic Magnet team from school board member Michael Miller on Oct. 13. Miller raised concerns about allegations the team had been participating in a "watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds as part of a post-game celebration" following a victory against Military Magnet Academy.

County School District office following Monday's suspension of Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud Walpole. Wade Spees/Staff

Miller told The Post and Courier he received the initial complaint from a parent of a Military Magnet student "a week or two after" Military Magnet's 53-30 loss to Academic Magnet on Sept. 5 at North Charleston High School.

"I told Dr. McGinley I wasn't going to shy away from saying I was the one who brought this to the district's attention," Miller said. "If I were to do that, it would be the same as if I were participating in the actions that brought the issue to the forefront in the first place."

McGinley said she asked Academic Magnet principal Judith Peterson to look into the issue. Peterson, McGinley said, reported back that the coaches were aware of the ritual and that they "did not observe any cultural insensitivity."

McGinley said the tone of Peterson's report "implied it was an innocent ritual" and that the coaches "had no concerns about the potentially racially sensitive overtones or perceptions" of the tradition.



Enlarge The celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone," Coach Bud Walpole

Despite Peterson's report, the district conducted its own investigation on Oct. 16, questioning 29 football players as well as Walpole and the assistant coaches. District Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who oversees some of the district's middle and high schools, and Kevin Clayton, who McGinley described as an adviser for the district's diversity committee, interviewed the students over a period of several hours.

The students, McGinley said, told Martin and Clayton that the team had participated in a ritual multiple times this season where two students would smash a watermelon with a face drawn on it with a black marker, while the remainder of the team would stand in a circle around the fruit making chanting sounds. McGinley said the image on the watermelon could be considered a "caricature."

said.

Several of the watermelons were named Bonds-Wilson, McGinley said, which is a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston on the Bonds-Wilson Campus that pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

McGinley said Tuesday that she had not spoken with Walpole, nor had she spoken with any of the parents from Military Magnet who had raised concerns to Miller. She said neither the principal nor the football coach of Military Magnet had seen the ritual performed after the game on Sept. 5.

McGinley said she plans to meet with Walpole and report back to the school board, whom she briefed on the watermelon investigation in executive session Tuesday. There is no formal appeals process for Walpole to take as a coach, but McGinley said she could choose to uphold or change Walpole's status following their meeting. The school board could also choose to take action regarding Walpole's status as a coach.

Parents of both current and former students of Academic Magnet High School attended the news conference where they peppered McGinley with questions about why the students were interviewed by district officials who were strangers without their parents present. Some parents shouted that the students were coerced and scared.



Enlarge Darius Nwokike

Connie Biggs, president of Academic Magnet High School's athletic booster board, who doesn't have children on the football team, said the district came in like a "freight train" and took the players one by one into a room with two men they didn't know.

"They trusted you and you have the trust of all the students in the district and you're mismanaging that trust," she said.

"Just celebrating"

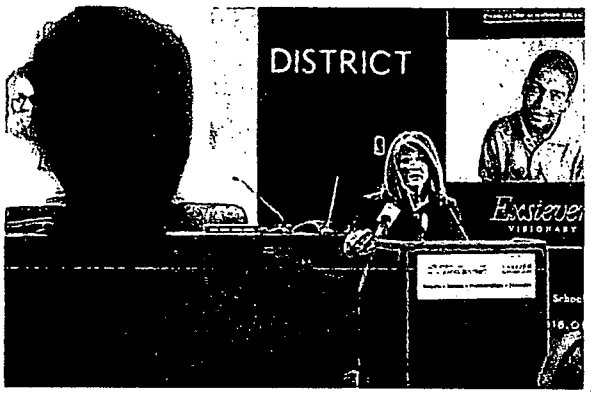
In interviews with The Post and Courier, Walpole and Nwokike spelled out the genesis of the ritual that the players used to mark each of their victories during a 6-2 start to a season that's already one of the best in school history.

"We were just celebrating a victory," Nwokike said. "It was just something we could look forward

to during the week. It really started by accident. We'd go to the Subway before games, and before the second game of the season, one of the players saw a watermelon stand. He thought it would be cool to buy one and maybe we could eat it after the game if we won.

"Well, we won and we broke the watermelon because we didn't want to wait to cut it. It was a tradition that lasted six games."

Nwokike said the players' chants were "football shouts."



Enlarge Superintendent Nancy McGinley held a news conference at the Charleston County School District office following the firing of Academic Magnet High School coach Bud Walpole. WaDe Spees/Staff

"I've heard people say they were monkey chants, which is absolutely not true," Nwokike said. "They were just football shouts, like any you would hear on a football field."

Nwokike called the faces drawn on the watermelons "smiley faces."

"They were just faces, they weren't provocative at all," he said. "They were just like simple smiley faces."

Nwokike said he missed two periods of class time last week while he and his teammates were interrogated about the celebration. His mother, Barbara, is among the Academic Magnet parents advocating Walpole's reinstatement.

"He should not have missed any classes over this crazy thing here," she said. "This is nothing to waste time on. Nobody was offended on the team, and I definitely don't see it as a racist thing. When Darius came home and told me about it, I could not believe that they kept him out of class for two periods to talk about it.

"I'm really appalled that so much energy has been wasted on this, and the coach losing his position should never have happened. If somebody was offended, all they had to do was tell the boys to stop. That would have been it. The school board should definitely reinstate Coach and we should be done with this."

Walpole, 57, is a 1979 Citadel graduate who has worked at Lowcountry schools First Baptist, Middleton and for the last 10 years at Academic Magnet. He released a statement Tuesday saying "how truly sorry I am to anyone whom my actions or inactions may have offended."

"One of the things we teach our players is responsibility, and I bear ultimate responsibility for any actions our players take as a group," he said.

The father of former Raptors standout Stuart Walters Jr., now a sophomore football player at Johns Hopkins University, was among those who came to Walpole's defense.

"I don't have enough information to assess what's going on there now," said Stuart Walters Sr. "But I will tell you about Bud Walpole. My son is an African-American and we never had any problem with Bud Walpole. He's an excellent person, a good coach and I enjoyed my son playing for him for four years. And my son would say the very same thing.

"At times, my son was the only African-American on the team and we never experienced anything like that. I'm sorry to see this happen."

Former Academic Magnet player Harry Griffin posted a statement on CNN's iReport defending Walpole.

"I played for him for four years and gained so much respect for this man," wrote Griffin, now a cadet at The Citadel. "He cared so much about the players and the parents. His record at the school does not show the time and effort he put into coaching. Never in my six years of knowing Coach Walpole would I ever speak badly of him. He has so much integrity and honor. His team motto each year was 'Do the right thing.' He taught us to be better people. ... You can ask anyone that has ever met Bud Walpole if he has ever said or done anything that would cause you to think he was racist. Nobody would ever say such a thing."

Military Magnet football coach Gene Ross said he saw no watermelon celebration after his team's game against the Raptors.

"I never witnessed anything like that after our game. I have never seen anything that I am reading about after any of our games with Academic Magnet," Ross said. "Bud Walpole is a gentleman, always first-class and gracious. It hurts me to know that all of this negative stuff has cost him his job as a football coach. I have never heard Bud make a disparaging remark about anyone in all of the years that I have known him. I hope this gets resolved soon."

Gene Sapakoff and David Shelton contributed to this report.

Keywords Academic Magnet High School (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Academic%20Magnet%20High%20School)

Andrew Rusciolelli (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Andrew%20Rusciolelli)

Academic Magnet football coach Walpole fired

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Tuesday, October 21, 2014



Academic Magnet head football coach Bud Walpole was fired Monday. WADE SPEES/POST AND COURIER

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Academic Magnet head football coach Bud Walpole was fired Monday amidst controversy surrounding a postgame celebration allegedly deemed inappropriate.

Charleston County School District released a statement Tuesday revealing, "There was an allegation related to inappropriate postgame celebrations by the Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) football team. An investigation was conducted and, as a result of the investigation, the head football coach will no longer be serving as a coach for Charleston County School District."

The celebration in question reportedly involves players smashing a watermelon after the game. The act became a postgame ritual of sorts as Academic Magnet went on a six-game winning streak this season.

Mike Miller, a Charleston County School Board member, reportedly told Live 5 News (http://www.live5news.com/story/26835720/academic-magnet-high-school-football-coach-fired) that a parent from an opposing school came to him and complained about the watermelon act and that the kids were making monkey sounds.

Academic Magnet is off to its best start in program history this season at 6-2 overall and tied for second place in Region VI-2A. Walpole was 29-70 in 10 seasons as head coach of Academic Magnet.

Andrew Rusciolelli will serve as interim head coach through the remainder of the season with Steven Kamp and Gary Weart as assistant coaches.

A change.org petition (http://www.change.org/p/charleston-county-school-district-reinstate-

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4 ›

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9:00 AM



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bud-walpole-s-coaching-eligibility?recruiter=168471014&utm_campaign=twitter_link_action_box&utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=share_petition) to reinstate Walpole has more than 1,000 signatures as of 11 a.m. Tuesday.

Academic Magnet closes its regular season against Bishop England Oct. 31 at home.

Former Academic Magnet football player Harry Griffin released a statement (http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-1181496)Tuesday voicing his opinion in the firing. Griffin played for Walpole from 2009-12.

In the statement, Griffin says, "Coach Walpole was fired because his team had a harmless tradition that was made to seem prejudice. ... They had a post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon and eating it after every victory. A parent on an opposing team deemed this act as racist and the school board decided to interrogate the players. These high school athletes were forced into a room one by one and questioned about their "racist" acts. Since when is eating watermelon racist? Since when does a school board have the right to interrogate students without notifying their parents? The way this situation has been handled can only be described as despicable."

Comments

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Charleston High School Football Coach Fired Because Team Smashes Watermelons After Wins

5:48p ET

Posted by Clay Travis

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A Charleston, South Carolina area high school has fired a football coach for inappropriate watermelon celebrations after victories. (Am I the only person who read that sentence and thought players were screwing the watermelons "American Pie" style? Yes, I am. Okay, nevermind, I didn't think it either). Anyway, after wins the team would get together and smash the watermelons. A school superintendent decided that smashing watermelons was racist. Seriously, she did. (Wait until she hears about the band Smashing Pumpkins. She is going to be so pissed.) They did a multiple hour investigation into the watermelon smashing. My God, every time I think people in positions of power can't get any dumber, they do.

Quoth the article:

"District officials released a brief statement Tuesday morning on the matter, only saying an investigation was conducted that led to Walpole's dismissal. The statement classified the post-game celebrations described by a student and parent as "inappropriate."

The district also named the interim coaching staff.

"Coach Andrew Rusciolelli will serve as the interim head football coach and Coach Steven Kamp and Coach Gary Weart will be assistants for the two remaining games of the 2014 season," the statement reads.

Meanwhile, the Academic Magnet student body is being vocal in trying to get Walpole reinstated, including an online petition with more than 1,200 signatures as of 1 p.m. Tuesday. The petition was started by Darius Nwokike.

The Post and Courier
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EDITORIALS

Talk about bad timing

In less than a week, Charleston County voters will head to the polls to make the call on whether to extend sales tax funding for the school district's ambitious school construction program.

Also on Tuesday, Nov. 4, voters will select candidates for four school board seats. With open seats at stake, at least three new members will be chosen.

And the current school board? Why, some members are considering getting rid of the school superintendent who has, on the whole, successfully led the school district for seven years.

What in the world are they thinking?

No question, Dr. Nancy McGinley has had difficult relations with some members of the school board during her years as superintendent. It comes with the territory.

Yet she has managed to negotiate that minefield to achieve big things in public education in Charleston County — sharply reducing the number of at-risk schools, improving student literacy and carrying out a massive building program that uses innovative financing to save taxpayers millions of dollars.

But never mind all that. The tipping point for Dr. McGinley apparently has been reached in the controversy over the "watermelon ritual" by the football team at Academic Magnet High School. First, coach Bud Walpole was fired last Monday from his coaching job at Academic Magnet. Two days later, he was rehired after a public outcry over his dismissal. Then the coach's rehiring angered yet another constituency.

Granted, the district did not exactly cover itself with glory in the controversy. But Dr. McGinley ultimately made the right decision by reinstating Mr. Walpole to his Academic Magnet coaching duties provided he take sensitivity training.

Suffice it to say it was a "teachable moment" for all involved, including the district administration.

Meanwhile, the school board should be able to draw some reasonable conclusions of its own about the need to move on, in view of the pending referendum and board election.

Dr. McGinley is the longest serving superintendent in the history of the consolidated district, and the primary reason for her longevity has been her record of accomplishment. So many good things have been achieved for the district that her opponents on the board have been unable to gain the traction necessary to put her on the wrong end of a 5-4 vote.

The board should let the Academic Magnet controversy fade into memory, and give the district an opportunity to do more under Dr. McGinley's experienced leadership.

Indeed, recent events likely have made our superintendent all the wiser.

McGinley would be owed more than $200K if fired

MCGINLEY, from A1

fire McGinley she will be due a year's salary or the balance due on her contract, whichever is less. McGinley's current salary is $226,278, but she can also earn up to $20,000 annually in additional compensation in bonuses. The contract does not state whether she would be due any bonus pay if she is fired.

The contract isn't specific regarding a payout if the board and McGinley negotiate a mutual parting of the ways. According to her contract, the board would pay the superintendent's "unpaid salary through the termination of the contract" and, if applicable, "terminal benefits," which are not defined.

McGinley has been with the 48,000-student district for 10 years, the past seven as superintendent. She came to the district from Pennsylvania, where she had been a teacher, principal and administrator. She has been lauded for reducing the district's low-performing "at-risk" schools and increasing school choice.

Severance packages such as the one in McGinley's contract are common and intended to protect public employees, including school superintendents or city managers, who work at the pleasure of elected boards that can change along with job expectations, said DuBose Kapeluck, chairman of the political science department at The Citadel.

"With civil servants, you want to protect them from the political process by making it extremely difficult to fire them," Kapeluck said. "We want competent people and how do you get competent people? You pay them well and you protect them from the political process so they can administer the law or school board policy competently."

Kapeluck said severance packages also give administrators, such as McGinley, the ability to manage their institutions without fear of immediately losing their jobs.

"You've got to be able to offer them some sort of job security or people that would otherwise be good superintendents would find another line of work," he said.

While speculation is rife that the board is in the midst of negotiations with McGinley, board members have either not responded to requests for comment or declined to say what if any action regarding McGinley is being discussed.

School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats, did not return calls Tuesday. Board members Craig Ascue and Todd Garrett declined to comment on the nature of the board's discussions or whether they are related to McGinley's handling of the recent controversy involving Academic Magnet High School football team.

Ascue and Garrett as well as board members Chris Collins, Michael Miller, Elizabeth Moffly and Tom Ducker said Tuesday there were no updates regarding the board's discussions on Monday and that no other meetings had been scheduled except the board's next regular meeting on Nov. 10.

"I know there's a process going on and it's not finished," Ducker said. "I don't know what the outcome is going to be. Discussions are still going on."

Ascue, who is not seeking re-election next week, said he is disappointed his time on the school board is ending under a controversy. He said he hopes to continue to work toward helping heal the community which has become racially divided over Academic Magnet.

"I hate leaving like this," he said, "I'm looking forward to engaging people in looking at our differences and how we can move forward."

Some school board candidates addressed the recent issues facing the school district at a forum Tuesday night at Charleston Charter School for Math and Science in downtown Charleston.

School board candidate Sarah Shad Johnson, who is running for a seat in Mount Pleasant, said she felt that the key to easing racial tensions in the county's schools is "good communication and good leadership." Johnson said a failure in communication and leadership has lead to the escalation of racial tensions at several schools including Academic Magnet High School.

"If we don't have strong communication and leadership it just falls apart," she said.

West Ashley candidate Edward Pennell said he thought school district employees deserved the "expectation of fair treatment," but didn't specifically mention Walpole.

"I don't believe that a coach, teacher or principal should be fired by an administrator," he said. "Where there's a problem it should come to the elected board. Only the elected board should be dismissing people."

School Board Chairwoman Coats, who is running for re-election next week, declined to comment on McGinley's status prior to the forum and didn't address the issue during the event.

ROA 811

9586-D-027

McGinley due over $200,000 if fired

Unclear if board will end contract after coach dust-up

BY AMANDA KERR
akerr@postandcourier.com

If the Charleston County School Board votes to fire its longest serving superintendent, the district will owe Nancy McGinley at least $226,278, according to the terms of her current contract.

The board took no action involving McGinley Tuesday, a day after meeting for more than an hour behind closed doors to discuss the superintendent's performance amid rumors that some board members were dissatisfied with the district's handling in the past week of the firing and rehiring of Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole.



McGinley

Walpole was fired Oct. 29 over his team's postgame victory ritual involving chanting and the smashing of watermelons decorated with a caricature face, which some considered perpetuating an offensive stereotype of African-Americans. He was rehired last Wednesday after parents and players rallied to his side, with McGinley requiring the coach to attend sensitivity training.

When the board emerged from its executive session, a meeting and workshop that included McGinley's evaluation scheduled for later in the day were canceled, angering some in the community who had hoped to attend to speak out about the controversy involving the postgame celebration.

Since then, only board member Chris Collins has commented, confirming that McGinley's contract, which runs through 2016, was discussed with outside counsel during the closed-door meeting. He would not say if there was any discussion about firing McGinley or asking her to resign.

Firing McGinley could be costly for the district. Under the contract, if the majority of the school board votes to

Please see MCGINLEY, Page A6

Inside

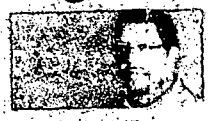
Brian Hicks: Politics, not policy, have doomed McGinley. A2

Editorial: Talk about bad timing. A12

The Charleston Cup
Admission package for four: $100 for 4 general admission and infield Reserved Space ($200 value). See A2

The Post and Courier

Overreaction at Academic Magnet overlooking a different problem



BRIAN HICKS

So Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole will be back on the sidelines for Friday's game against Battery Creek, and parents of the school are relieved and overjoyed.

That is the right outcome after a week of consternation and over-the-top politics. But the reaction to the district's initial decision to fire the coach proved that our troubles aren't over.



Walpole

A lot of people still have a lot to learn.

Walpole was reinstated on Wednesday after being relieved of his coaching duties following an investigation into his team's post-game ritual of smashing a watermelon with an ugly caricature drawn on it. Some parents complained that this was insensitive and, as is the tendency around here, racial politics blew up.

What else would you expect in the town that started the Civil War?

The district investigated and decided to fire the coach. Some people still that overreaction, others said it was a real overreaction.

Well, of course the district overreacted. A lot of those football players have no clue about that chapter of history, the racial stereotypes associated with blacks and watermelons. And that is a good thing, a sign that the world is slowly moving past an ugly period in our past.

But the coach is a middle-aged man who grew up in the South. He had to recognize that this was potentially a big problem and should have told them to stop.

That's not a firing offense, just poor judgment. The reprimand, the request for more sensitivity was the appropriate response (which at least a couple of Academic Magnet parents wisely suggested).

After a little political pressure, the district got it right.

But if everyone had just said that from the start — something like "Yeah, you're right, that's probably not a good thing to do" — all this could have been avoided.

Instead, some people made it worse.

It's the context

Even a lot of liberal white folks did not see the big deal. The kids didn't mean anything by it, they said.

They're right, and that might surprise the politically unsophisticated people who think all Democrats are evil. Basically, most whites across the political spectrum said it's just a watermelon — what's the problem?

True. Of course, a cross is just a symbol of Christianity until you set it on fire. You see, it's all about context. And the context here was the problem all along.

The people who brought this up — specifically school board member Michael Miller — got accused of race-baiting, of making something out of nothing. No, he wasn't.

Sure, some people — black and white — couldn't care less about such things. But it offended others (black and white) and if Miller and the district had ignored it, there would have been another controversy, perhaps even worse. You can bank on that.

The district was stuck and chose overreaction to underreaction. They should have known the best course, as usual, was something in the middle.

The instant cliché around here was that this is a "teachable moment." Yeah, somebody should have explained to the football team why this might be offensive to some. That would have been a commendable, educational thing.

Instead we wasted a week for essentially nothing.

Try a little empathy

The parents and students at Academic Magnet were just defending their coach, nothing more.

Their allegiance to Walpole doesn't make them racists any more than the coach and his football players, who apparently don't know much about civil rights history.

To a one, the parents say Walpole is a good man, that he shouldn't have been put through this. That is how they see this, and it's hard to argue from a white perspective.

But Walpole is the coach, the buck stops with him, and as he said, smashing watermelons after beating a predominately black team "could be viewed in a negative way."

You think?

The sad thing is that some people with no connection to Academic Magnet tried to use this to claim that the district, and blacks, are the real racists here.

Here's a question: has empathy been erased from our DNA or do these folks have it surgically removed?

They should think about this the next time something bothers them that their neighbor doesn't give a hoot about.

The Charleston branch of the NAACP on Wednesday — which, by the way, did not ask for Walpole's firing — said people should "re-examine their values if they try to excuse away a blatant insult to many in our community."

As usual, some people said the NAACP was just stirring things up, race-baiting.

Then some morons on the Internet actually said, "What does this mean we can't eat fried chicken anymore?"

Which shows, beyond a shadow of a doubt, why we still have to have these conversations.

Some people just don't get it.

Reach Brian Hicks at bhicks@postandcourier.com

Challengers welcome opportunity to participate in superintendent search

BY BRENDA RINDGE
brindge@postandcourier.com

Like many in the Lowcountry, the challengers running in the Charleston County School Board saw the writing on the wall and weren't surprised by the announced resignation of longtime Superintendent Nancy McGinley.

"I definitely feel relieved that change is happening within Charleston County School District," said Kelvin Curtis.

Even so, most felt that they couldn't pass judgment on the board's decision.

"I don't know all of the facts that went on in that room and I don't know what's been going on for the last week behind the scenes," said Chris Staubes. "As an outside observer ... I would like to know what happened in that room to find out why we ended up with this result."

Shante Ellis, who is running against Curtis and board chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats, said she supports the decision, if not the way it happened.

"I think that it's unfortunate that it had to happen in the way that it did," she said. "I hate that it came after what happened the other week with Academic Magnet, but I feel like it is what the board thought was in the best interest for our children, so I have to agree with whatever they ended up deciding."

Most of the candidates said they are comfortable with Michael Bobby's appointment as acting superintendent, and with McGinley consulting through the end of the school year.

"I don't think we are going to have a breakage in the district continuing to move forward," said Eric Mack. "The district is going to continue on. I'm glad to hear that she's going to give some insight and she's not just going to walk away."

Change in leadership

"I think any time somebody leaves it's an opportunity to look at what the needs are," said Kate Darby. "This is certainly an opportunity for the school board to look at what the opportunities are for the district."

In looking for a new superintendent, "It's going to be important to have a strong board that's able to lead and communicate well," said Sarah Shad Johnson. "And we need board members who have the time in work on this because it's going to take a lot of time."

The opportunity to find a new leader could result in other changes in district administration, said Eddie Fennell.

"It should result in a wholesale change in the direction and attitudes of the superintendent's office," he said. "This is a golden opportunity for Charleston County School District to go in a new direction."

The candidates expect the search for McGinley's replacement to be protracted.

"I anticipate that the search should take months at the minimum and be very thorough," said Fennell. "I think we should look outside the box, not just inside the traditional educational community. There could be corporate leaders or school principals who might be ready to step up."

Curtis agreed with searching within the district but also said the search should be statewide.

"I would also research other districts and see who's doing great and see if they possibly want to come to South Carolina's second biggest district," he said.

Johnson said she believes the superintendent should be an educator.

"Nationally, people are saying that we need to pick business leaders, but I disagree with that," she said. "It would be very important to me that the superintendent be someone with a strong history of being an educator."

Staubes said the board should leave the hiring to professionals.

"I believe we are going to have to hire a headhunter, a professional to go out and assist us in locating the person," he said. "It needs to be a deliberate process. I think it has to be a nationwide search and the board is going to have to define what qualities and skills it is looking for."

Keeping an open mind is key, Ellis said.

"A lot of times, we get stuck in a mind where we think we have the best solutions," she said. "We are afraid of bringing outsiders in, but at some point we have to admit that we're not doing the best job. We need to be willing to take a deeper look and make sure that all of our resources are being best allocated."

Mack said he thinks it will take the entire community to find a replacement for McGinley.

"I think it's going to take everybody coming to the table and saying, 'What do we need in our next superintendent?'"

Brenda Rindge can be reached at 937-5713 or on Twitter.

Charleston County School board candidates

School board candidates are elected from specific areas but are selected by voters county-wide.

East Cooper Seat

Kate Darby, 48

Occupation: Director of Administration at J. Henry Stuhr Funeral Chapels and Crematory

Goals: Improve student achievement – we live in a world class community and every one of our students deserves a world class education; increase focus on fiscal responsibility and transparency – more money in the classroom, less everywhere else



Darby

Sarah Shad Johnson, 44

Occupation: Educational Advocate, Charleston Area Community Voice for Education

Goals: Give our higher-performing schools more autonomy, and help our lower-performing and rural schools become self-sufficient by recruiting strong leaders and providing additional resources; bring the voice of parents and teachers to the decision-making table, so the actual needs of the classroom can be addressed.



Johnson

Chris Staubes, 44

Occupation: Attorney heading up the corporate law and business litigation departments at Clawson & Staubes.

Goals: The School District owes the duty of fiscal responsibility to the taxpayer. The goal is to maximize the amount going to the classroom. I am an advocate for School Choice, and will make sure that these offerings are effectively promoted to families throughout the District.



Staubes

North Area Seat

Cindy Bohn Coats, 50 (incumbent)

Occupation: Business Specialist, Patriots Point Development Authority

Goals: To continue to achieve and work toward our Vision 2016 goals by expanding the programs that are working for our students and revamping/revising/relinquishing the programs that are not moving our students forward.

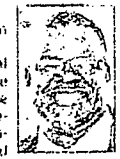


Coats

Kelvin D. Curtis, 31

Occupation: City of Charleston Recreation Supervisor

Goals: Build a professional working relationship with the board members; improve the communication deliverance between the District to our team members, parents, students and our community; Demonstrate to our principals and teachers that we truly care by asking them, what I can do for you?

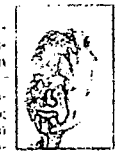


Curtis

Shanté Ellis, 28

Occupation: Recreation Administrative Manager, Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission

Goals: Improving communication deficit, raising Scholastic Achievement by focusing on student promotion policy/procedures, and embracing new technologies and partnerships that allow students to be better prepared for the new millennial work environment



Ellis

West Ashley Seat

Edward C. Fennell, 64

Occupation: retired Post and Courier reporter

Goals: Reading improvements. I have always believed schools can be better at teaching reading. Reading is absolutely fundamental to education – and without an ability to read, can not advance to other subjects. Also, it's important to equip our urban schools with the same advanced technology and vocational opportunities the suburban schools are getting.



Fennell

Eric L. Mack, 42

Occupation: Postal Robotics Coordinator at MUSC, Business Owner

Goals: To bring total transparency to the board. To be a voice for the teachers, students, parents, and the community. To help find ways of getting funding to our rural and low performing schools. To bring back vocational programs to the community schools.



Mack

West Ashley Seat

Tripp Wiles, 41 (incumbent, unopposed)

Occupation: Business Owner/Attorney

Goals: Work with other board members to: formulate policies that reflect the values of the community and ensure the district carries out those policies; develop policies that both support the success that is currently occurring in charter schools in our county and implement their best practices in our failing schools; ensure the district is a good steward of taxpayer dollars.



Wiles

ROA 814

9586-D-022

McGinley, board part ways over irreconcilable differences

HICKS from Page A1

only — all came down to her decision to dismiss Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole for allowing his team to smash a watermelon after beating a predominately black school.



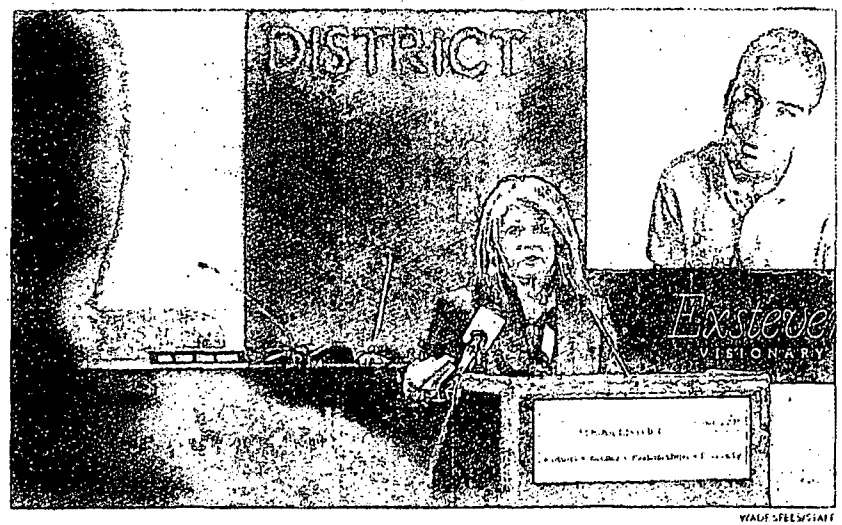
Moffly



Miller

It's a fair point, because before that no one was seriously talking about getting rid of McGinley. But it didn't help that the handling of the incident opened some old wounds.

And Elizabeth Moffly, in her final weeks in office, saw the chance to accomplish something she had wanted to do for four years.



WADE SPEES/STAFF

Superintendent Nancy McGinley held a news conference at the Charleston County School District office following the suspension of Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud Walpole.

Bad blood

Some say McGinley could have survived the Academic Magnet fiasco if it wasn't so reminiscent of other problems the board has had with her.

School board members have long complained that McGinley didn't keep them in the loop, did not respect them, was dismissive of their suggestions. Some were still upset at her criticism of their decision to move Lowcountry Tech out of the Rivers building, and suspected she was trying to delay any action until she got a new board after the election.

From McGinley's perspective, however, the board often went beyond its role of setting policy, and some members seemed to be little more than constant district critics — but with power.

Board members showed up for meetings unprepared, asked the same questions over and over, and then demanded all-day workshops on issues that ate up her staff's time. And then, it was rare that more than a couple of members even attended.

Eventually McGinley chastised board members in a letter to all of them. It was a dangerous move — these were her bosses — but one that showed just how frustrated she had become.

Some McGinley supporters on the board believe years of constant criticism from Moffly and former board member Elizabeth Kandrac had gotten the superintendent's back up, that she became defensive.

To be sure, Kandrac — a former teacher who joined the board after winning a settlement from the district in another racially charged incident — was a constant thorn in McGinley's side. Kandrac belabored minor points and had a knack for turning board meetings into five-hour marathons.

Jim Kandrac was never as savvy or on-point as Moffly, who picked apart many district decisions. Moffly took the side of Sullivan's Island residents who did not want a 500-student school on their island and criticized the district for expanding Wando High instead of building a second high school for Mount Pleasant.

Moffly criticized "editorial" thinking that, she believed, did little to improve education in local schools.

Slowly, more board members began to think like Moffly. And even McGinley supporters on the board felt their inquiries, requests and suggestions were met with just slightly less disdain than Kandrac's had been.

But there was never a strong sentiment to fire McGinley, not until the district bungled the watermelon incident.

And then, when McGinley's board support was at its lowest point ever, Moffly was ready.

The coup

Moffly polled board members, according to several district sources, and found there was not a lot of love for McGinley at the moment.

Academic Magnet parents had bombarded board members with questions, most of which they couldn't answer. They only knew what they had read or heard on the news. Board members felt that, once again, they were intentionally left out of the loop.

Clearly, McGinley's decision to relieve Walpole of his coach's duties was unpopular with the board. Several members thought it a severe overreaction. In fact, many of them did not even understand what all the fuss was about.

Of course, they hadn't been briefed, nor had they seen what the district's investigation had found. Some board members didn't even seem to understand the racial insensitivity in bashing a watermelon with a caricature named "Boards Wilson" drawn on it.

Within days of the Walpole announcement, board members let McGinley know they did not agree with her stance — although it's unclear who has the ultimate say in personnel matters.

Board members told McGinley to speak with Walpole and report back. They wanted to give him his job back. The superintendent met with Walpole and offered his job back on the spot.

But again, board members were furious that they only heard about this from news reports.

At that moment, McGinley was gone.

After Monday's meeting, local leaders spent days trying to reason with the board. Most members refused to take them calls. As one board member said, if the superintendent is going to ignore board directives, she'll better not make stupid decisions (a reference to the Walpole case).

By the first of the week, even Moffly adversaries had to agree, if McGinley had lost her school board support.

Over the course of four years, Moffly had just nearly every battle, but she was about to win the war.

On Thursday, when the board convened a special meeting, all that was left to hash out, behind closed doors, was the terms of the agreement with McGinley and to make sure Michael Bobby would temporarily take over the job.

When they emerged from executive session nearly an hour and a half later, board member Michael Miller — who had brought the watermelon incident to McGinley's attention — was the lone vote against accepting her resignation.

"I wasn't in support of it, not like that, not in the wake of what had been going on," Miller says. "What caused the board to lose confidence in her? Was it that Burns Elementary has been a failing school for 20 years, or that the five high schools that scored lowest on the ACT test are in Charleston County?"

Once again, it appears to be more about race than educating our children (even if most board members say it was more about those "irreconcilable differences" that have lingered for years).

McGinley's dismissal has left the community divided on the eve of an important referendum, and many local leaders are simply in shock. For the people who pay attention to these things, there is no middle ground. People either cheered McGinley's firing or they are ready to vote the entire board out of office.

Moffly says the community needs to accept the decision and move on, and one of her new guiding comments on the entire incident subtly hints at the problems the board and the superintendent had.

"We're a team," Moffly says. "We don't need to be divided, we need to be united."

That's a noble goal, but one that doesn't appear to be on the horizon for Charleston schools anytime soon.

Reach Brian Hicks at bhicks@postandcourier.com

ROA 815

9586-D-021

CCSD flunks Watermelon-gate logic test



WADE SPEES/STAFF

Bud Walpole was in his 10th season as head football coach at Academic Magnet before being fired Monday.



GENE SAPAKOFF

The scene from a Charleston County School District investigation that cost too much time and Bud Walpole's job took place inside a closed-door Academic Magnet High School classroom last Thursday, according to a student involved.

CCSD investigator: "Did you fondle the watermelon?"

Academic Magnet High School football player: "Did you just say ... fondle?"

Investigator: "Yes."

Player: "No, I did not fondle the watermelon."

Still, CCSD concluded that the Academic Magnet's playful postgame watermelon celebration routine was "inappropriate." CCSD Superintendent Nancy McGinley fired Walpole, 6-2 in his 10th season as coach.

The parent of a Military Magnet Academy student complained that the Raptors smashed watermelons and made "ape-like" sounds after defeating Military Magnet, 53-30, on Sept. 5 at North Charleston High School. The complaining parent, and Charleston County School Board member Michael Miller, think the act was offensive to blacks.

McGinley added Tuesday that caricatures drawn on the watermelons and nicknames given the watermelons (Junior and Bonds-Wilson) also factored in her decision to dismiss Walpole.

Academic Magnet people insist that a watermelon simply started a win streak and was adopted as a good luck charm. Ape sounds? Actually either a "Raptor cheer" or basic whooping it up stuff, the Raptors say.

Bonds-Wilson is the name of the Academic Magnet campus area that also includes the Charleston County School of the Arts.

(And Wilson is the name of a caricature-faced volleyball in the movie "Cast Away").

This whole thing is ridiculous, a

Please see SAPAKOFF, Page C4

Poll

Should Bud Walpole be reinstated as football coach at Academic Magnet? Find this story at **postandcourier.com** to vote.

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Academic Magnet firing stirs uproar

Parents angry after coach loses job over watermelon ritual



The celebration was "never intended to be offensive to anyone," Coach Bud Walpole said.

BY JEFF HARTSELL and AMANDA KERR
jhartsell@postandcourier.com
akerr@postandcourier.com

When Darius Nwokike learned Monday that his football coach at Academic Magnet High School had been fired, he went to his computer and logged on to the website change.org.

Nwokike, a junior defensive end and the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, started an online petition asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate coach Bud Walpole. By late Tuesday night, the petition was approaching 3,000 signatures.

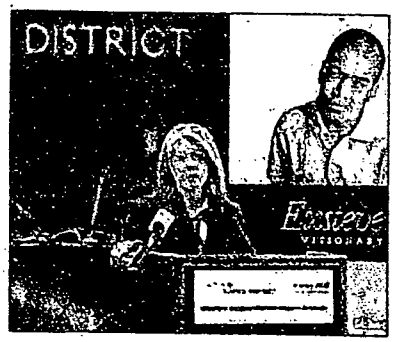
"I thought the reasons that Coach Walpole got fired were an injustice," Nwokike said Tuesday afternoon. "I was thinking that if I got enough people to agree with me and sign the petition, it would pressure the school board into giving him his job back."

At a contentious news conference Tuesday, Charleston County schools superintendent Nancy McGinley faced angry parents and said Walpole was fired after an investigation into a postgame celebration in which Raptors players smashed watermelons and made "chanting sounds."

Please see COACH, Page A5

Inside

Gene Sapakoff: School district flunks Watermelon-gate logic test. C1



Superintendent Nancy McGinley held a news conference at the Charleston County School District office following the firing of Academic Magnet High School coach Bud Walpole.

WADE SPEES/ STAFF

CCSD flunks Watermelon-gate

SAPAKOFF, from C1

misunderstanding that unraveled. Another example of dumb adults messing things up for good kids.

Give Walpole his coaching gig back, CCSD. Restore his reputation. Admit your mistake before lawyers get busy.

Think of this as a "teaching moment" in which we all learn to get along better through discussion, and perhaps a stern warning. Instead of an overreaction in which a coach and players essentially are labeled as racists.

This could have been handled more sensibly while honoring the sincere concern of the offended parent.

'Negative images'

Miller said he fielded the original complaint a week or two after the Sept. 5 game and finally got around to reporting it to CCSD "two or three weeks ago."

It cannot be coincidental that the CCSD overreaction comes as New Jersey officials struggle to contain a Sayreville High School football hazing scandal that allegedly includes aggravated criminal sexual attacks, punching and kicking.

Plus, the backdrop of the NFL's sudden attention to domestic violence discipline and other forms of social irresponsibility.

But Miller isn't backing down.

"It depends on where you stand," Miller said. "If you don't think a person should draw a line between a watermelon and ape sounds or that a person doesn't think that is racially insensitive or thoughtless then, yes, you could say someone is being oversensitive. But if you know anything about American history or if you just Google the negative images of a watermelon, you will be able to read text about a historical relation to a negative depiction of African-Americans and watermelons. One can easily say someone is ultra-sensitive to an issue when the issue does not include them."

Miller makes excellent points, and he dutifully reported the parent phone call to CCSD. He fielded many more Academic Magnet-related calls Tuesday, including one from U.S. Sen. Tim Scott.

The 'cool it' option

Miller agreed that the "monkey sounds" might have been misinterpreted by the parent who just witnessed a 53-30 loss.

"Possibly," he said. "We won't really fully know until the District comes forward with full disclosure."

That's always a good idea. But CCSD didn't release any kind of transcript of the questions and answers from its interrogation of Academic Magnet students.

And McGinley took the hard road Tuesday when I asked if Watermelongate could have been settled simply by asking Walpole to come down to CCSD headquarters. McGinley could have explained the perception of insensitivity and told him to cool it.

"There are some nuances with the (investigator's) interview with the coach that are personnel issues," McGinley answered. "There were some issues that I'm not going to go into."

By the way, every college football team in the state received an annual visit from the South Carolina Watermelon Association in August. The reigning South Carolina Watermelon Queen brought lots of free watermelon.

High school football is supposed to be fun, too. But a society that would blow up a team's season over alleged misuse of fruit is a society not to be messed with.

Follow **Gene Sapakoff** on Twitter @sapakoff.

School chief's future remains unclear

Chas. County board holds closed-door session to discuss McGinley's contract

BY AMANDA KERR
akerr@postandcourier.com

Nancy McGinley's future as superintendent of Charleston County schools appeared uncertain Monday after a closed-door meeting at which the Charleston County School Board discussed her contract, according to one member.

The executive session lasted about an hour and a half, during which Charleston Mayor Joe Riley waited briefly at district headquarters on Calhoun Street for board members to emerge.

Riley was gone by the time the board reconvened in open session and announced only that it was canceling Monday afternoon's work session and regular meeting.



McGinley

Poll

Should Charleston schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley resign? Find this story at postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

Riley did not return a phone call seeking comment.

Board member Chris Collins said Monday afternoon that the board received legal advice on McGinley's contract from outside counsel. Collins would not say what, specifically, the board discussed or whether it involved negotiating McGinley's resignation.

McGinley has been criticized for the district's handling in the past week of the firing and rehiring of Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole. Walpole was fired Oct. 20 over his team's postgame victory ritual involving chanting and the smashing of watermelons decorated with a caricature face, which some considered perpetuating an offensive stereotype of African-Americans.

The players crushed several of the watermelons Bonds-Wilson, a reference to the high school's location in North Charleston.

The Bonds-Wilson Campus pays tribute to a historically black school previously on that site.

After parents and players rallied to the coach's side, McGinley rehired Walpole last Wednesday with the requirement that he sign a "written statement of commitment" to attend sensitivity

Please see MCGINLEY, Page A4

McGinley's future as Chas. County schools chief unclear

MCGINLEY from Page A1

training and counsel his players before games to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

Collins said Monday's meeting follows several months of concerns he's had regarding communication, leadership and public trust with McGinley.

He said he was also disappointed with how McGinley handled Walpole and the Academic Magnet football team controversy, which he said "got blown out of proportion."

Collins said he would have preferred McGinley to have briefed the board on the situation at Academic Magnet ahead of Walpole's firing and again before her decision to rehire him. Collins and several other board members thought so with them.

"It's those are cumulative aspects that led to this morning's meeting," he said.

School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats as well as board members Tripp Wiles, Michael Miller, Tom Ducker, Todd Garrett and Elizabeth Moffly declined to comment on the nature of the board's discussions during the meeting, although Moffly did say the group was "looking at our contractual responsibility" to McGinley. They also would not comment on McGinley's future with the district. Board members Chris Fraser and Craig Ascue did not return calls asking for comment.

McGinley's annual evaluation, which is based on a formula that reflects students' test scores, employee and parents surveys and school board members' ratings, was to have been discussed at the canceled workshop.



ISAAC HETTLER/STAFF

Charleston County School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats reads a statement canceling Monday's board meeting.

But after emerging from the closed meeting, school board chairwoman Coats read a prepared statement in open session saying the board "has determined it most appropriate to postpone the evaluation meeting and the board meeting until the board meets again."

"In the interim, we will continue appropriate discussions with the superintendent as to how the district and community may best move forward," Coats said.

McGinley, who has been with the district for 10 years, seven as superintendent, declined to comment. McGinley came to Charleston in 2004 to serve as the district's chief academic officer before being appointed superintendent in 2007. According to her biography on the Charleston County School District website, McGinley is the longest serving superintendent in the district's history. She came to Charleston after a lengthy career in education in Pennsylvania where she worked as a teacher, principal and administrator in The School District of Philadelphia and other surrounding districts. She also served as the chief executive officer of the Philadelphia Education Fund.

During McGinley's tenure in Charleston, the number of schools rated "at-risk" by the state has dropped from 22 to 5. She has overseen the implementation of reading academies in all of the district's elementary and middle schools to tackle poor literacy rates and pushed to expand school choice with new public Montessori programs as well as magnet and partial-magnet schools in all areas of the county.

McGinley's base salary was $214,000 when the board approved her evaluation last November. The school district did not immediately respond to a request for McGinley's current salary and contract, which runs through 2016.

McGinley has made many friends in the community, among them Anita Zucker, chief executive of The Inter-Tech Group, who on Monday said that any board action that resulted in McGinley's departure "would be a tremendous loss to our community."

Zucker applauded McGinley's successes, particularly the reduction in the number of at-risk schools in the county.

"I believe it shows her ability to connect with her community, and to connect with her educators and with the people that work with her in the district to be able to create that level of change," she said.

"Her number one goal is our children," Zucker said. "I work for every child in this county and I work with Nancy McGinley because she works for every child in this community as well. She's very effective in my opinion."

The cancellation of the workshop and later board meeting angered members of the community who went to the school district's headquarters on Monday afternoon to discuss the controversy surrounding the Academic Magnet High School football team.

Collins and Miller were the only two School Board members to object to the cancellation of the meetings, which they said violated the board's responsibility to the public.

"It's a public servant's duty and opportunity to hear from citizens when they have concerns," Miller said. "We're not allowing them to speak and I thought we shouldn't do that."

Dorothy Waring Barnes, who is a 1964 graduate of Bonds-Wilson High School, was among those who had come to the district's headquarters.

She said she had come to support her alma mater over concerns the school's name had been used as part of the football team's ritual. Barnes, who was unaware the board had canceled the meeting, was disappointed with the board's handling of the situation, calling the meeting's cancellation "a coward's act."

"It's all about owning up to the community and having that conversation about things stated or retracted and not hiding," she said.

Several parents of students at Academic Magnet High School along with their attorney Larry Kobrovsky, who represents Academic Magnet's School Improvement Council, also showed up to air their concerns about the meeting's cancellation and the district's handling of the watermelon controversy.

The Council and individual Academic Magnet parents have raised issues with the way the district interviewed football players over several hours and without their parents present.

"We publicly issued a response last week that we wanted to come and ask the superintendent for an apology," Kobrovsky said, noting his disappointment that the meeting was canceled. "Whether they have given her a raise, whether they've fired her or whether she's resigned, we still want the apology and the explanation of why she did what she did."

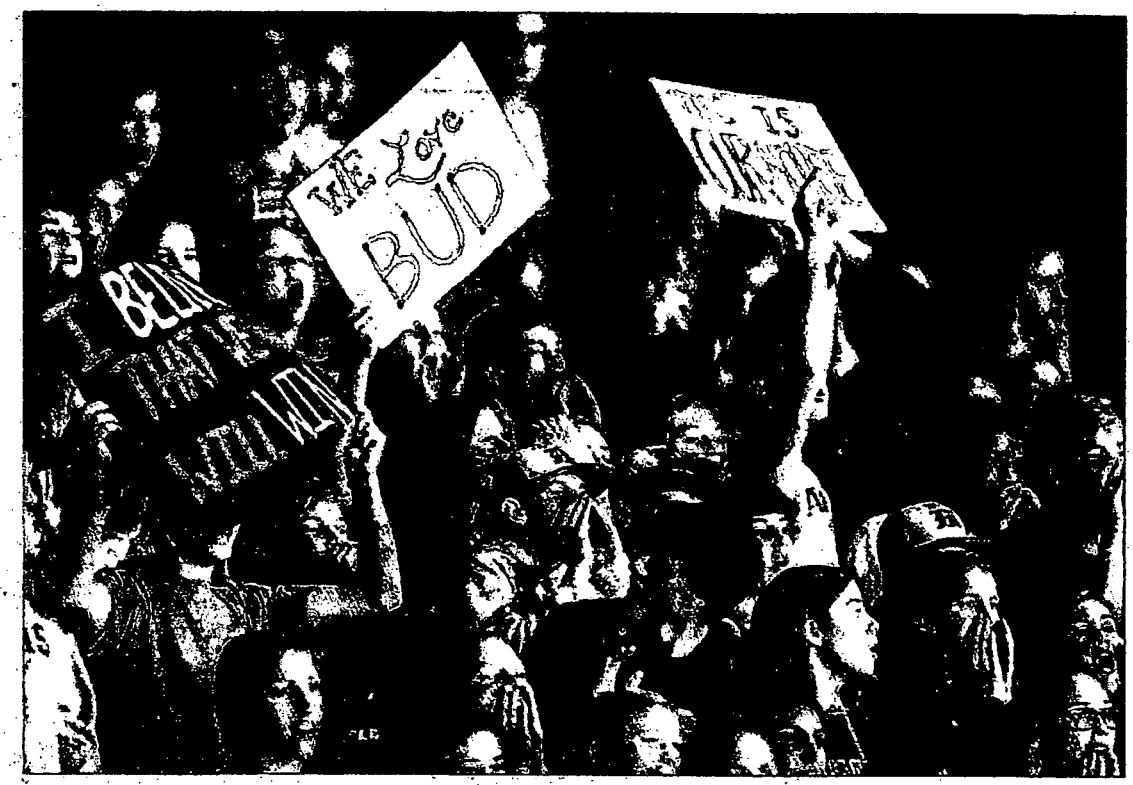
"It doesn't matter if the boys did something wrong or not, it's the way the investigation was handled," said Darlene Rawls, chair of the school improvement council.

The board's next move is unclear. The school board's next regular meeting is scheduled for Nov. 10. Several board members said they did not think they would wait that long to meet again, with some saying they hoped a decision would be made prior to election day on Nov. 4.

"The board will make a decision very soon," Miller said.

Academic Magnet shakes off controversy

School rallies around reinstated coach after watermelon episode



WADE SPEES/STAFF

The Academic Magnet High School student section showed their support for the football team — and head coach Bud Walpole — during Friday night's game with Battery Creek at Danny Jones Field in North Charleston.

BY ANDREW MILLER
apmiller@postandcourier.com

As the final seconds ticked off the clock at Danny Jones Field Friday night, the Academic Magnet student section began to chant.

"We back Walpole! We back Walpole! We back Walpole" they screamed at the top of their lungs as they bounced up and down on the makeshift wooden bleachers.

Academic Magnet football coach Bud Walpole, who was the recipient of the cheer, took a moment to acknowledge the crowd as he stepped off the field after the Raptors' 28-20 victory over Battery Creek, giving the program a school record seventh win on the season.

Walpole, the Raptors' coach for the past 10 years, was fired Monday and reinstated Wednesday by the Charleston County School District after officials judged a post-game watermelon celebration conducted by the players to be racially insensitive.

After the traditional post-game handshake with the Battery Creek players, Raptor assistant coaches and players quickly gathered their equipment and were ushered off the field to the parking lot. Players' parents, students and Raptor supporters lined the exit and cheered as Walpole and the players made their exit.

Walpole's son, Gene, and a former Academic Magnet player acted as bodyguards for the embattled coach, warding off media members in their attempt to get a post-game comment from the coach. Walpole didn't make a public statement, but his son

Please see WALPOLE, Page A6.

In Sports

Friday's high school football results. Section C



WADE SPEES/STAFF

Raptors head football coach Bud Walpole takes to the field Friday night. Academic Magnet defeated Battle Creek, 28-20.



PAUL ZOELLER/STAFF

Academic Magnet, in the midst of a 6-2 season, next hosts Battery Creek on Friday night.

Academic Magnet coach Walpole fired

BY DAVID SHELTON
Special to The Post and Courier

Academic Magnet is having one of the best football seasons in school history and will have to complete it without its head coach.

It was learned Monday night that Raptors head coach Bud Walpole has been relieved of his duties by the Charleston County School District. Though no official reason has been given, it is believed the dismissal centers around a postgame victory celebration that Academic Magnet started earlier this season and continued as the team went on a winning streak.

The celebration involved the smashing of watermelons, which were then picked up by the players and eaten as postgame snacks. Social media reports say a complaint was filed with the district, which deemed the celebration inappropriate.

Players from the team were interviewed last week by school district officials about the postgame celebration, and Walpole was fired Monday.

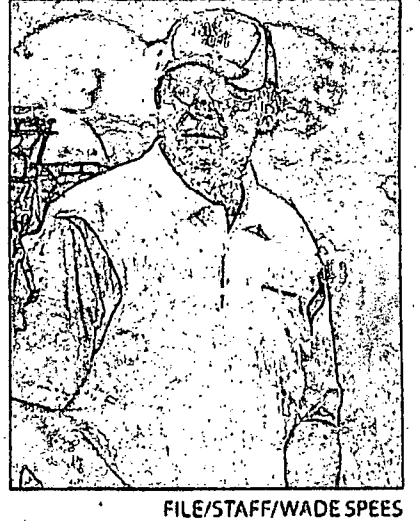
Attempts to reach Walpole on Monday night were unsuccessful and more information is expected to be released Tuesday by the Charleston County School District.

A petition to reinstate Walpole as head coach was found on change.org, and nearly 200 people had signed the online petition by 10 p.m. Monday.

Academic Magnet is in the midst of a 6-2 season, the school's second-winningest season ever.

Walpole is currently in his 10th season as head football coach and also serves as the school's girls varsity basketball coach. His status as the basketball coach is unknown.

The Raptors next play host to Battery Creek on Friday.



FILE/STAFF/WADE SPEES

Bud Walpole was in his 10th season as head football coach at Academic Magnet.

9586-D-015

Academic Magnet bounces back

WALPOLE, from A1

handed out index cards with a prepared statement just before the end of the game.

"I am proud of the effort our team put forth tonight," Walpole said in the statement. "I appreciate the support of our student body, parents and community."

There was no post-game celebration from the players and no watermelons. The only fruit to be found was some oranges the players had discarded on the sidelines during halftime.

Other than a little extra security, there were seven North Charleston police officers on hand instead of the normal two, it was a typical night at Danny Jones Field.

The parents came early and lined the fences along the field as the players went through their pre-game warm-ups.

The Dirty Birds, a percussion group at the school, banged their drums and The Flock, the nickname for the Raptors' student section, did their best to support the team and its players.

The victory, which assures the Raptors a spot in next month's playoffs, was the beginning of what many on hand hope is a healing process for the school, the football program and the community at large.

"Obviously all the off-the-field stuff was pretty negative, but I thought it was pretty positive that everyone at the school came together," said Academic Magnet senior Henry Flowers, a lacrosse player and the head of The Flock student section. "We all rallied around the cause and rallied around coach Walpole. The decision to bring him back was the right decision. It was harmless fun that was blown out of proportion. It snowballed into something that it wasn't."



WADE SPEES/STAFF

Academic Magnet High School parent Barbara Nwokike cheers for her son and the other Raptor football players at Friday night's game with Battery Creek at Danny Jones Field in North Charleston. "We're so happy coach Walpole is back coaching this team," Nwokike said. "It's where he belongs."

Academic Magnet junior defensive lineman Darius Nwokike, the only African-American player on the Raptors' roster, was instrumental in helping Walpole get his job back. He started a petition on the website change.org Monday asking the Charleston County School District to reinstate his coach.

His mother, Barbara, said she has been flooded with calls of support since Monday night.

"Darius was just so happy that he was able to help get his coach reinstated," Barbara Nwokike said. "I'm so proud of him. He's a shy kid, but he has really come out of his shell this week. We're so happy coach Walpole is back coaching this team. It's where he belongs."

Barbara Nwokike hopes that people on both sides of the issue will move forward.

"I think everyone has learned from this and hopefully everyone can move on and come together," she said. "I hope that everyone can settle down and be calmer moving forward. We are all humans and we're all trying to be good people and not to hurt anyone's feelings. We hope that this is a teachable moment. This was a misunderstanding. We've wasted so much energy on this and hopefully we can get back to dealings with things in a positive way. The boys didn't mean to harm anyone or offend anyone."

The players have traditionally put plastic cups on the fence near the entrance to the North Charleston campus that spell out a word. Normally that word has been "Raptors." That wasn't the case when Academic Magnet athletic director Curt Hoffman drove onto the school grounds Friday morning. The players and students had spelled out "Do Your Job."

That summed it up for Hoffman.

"We've tried very hard to keep the kids focused on the game and not to let all the outside stuff bother them," Hoffman said. "The kids are normally very resilient. The kids have an amazing ability to focus on a goal. I'm so proud of them and the way they've handled it. I will go to my grave believing that Bud never crossed his mind that this would be offensive to anyone," Hoffman said. "I know it never crossed the kids mind. But it did offend some people and for that I apologize to them from the athletic department."

Fresh Flounder.



Blame blitz throws logic for loss



FRANK WOOTEN



WADE SPEES/STAFF

Nancy McGinley

Baseball, basketball, football, soccer and most other sports have seasons — and offseasons.

But the blame game, like rasslin', never ends.

And over the last 12 days of finger-pointing turmoil in and about the Charleston County School District, there's been plenty of blame to go around — and even more accusations of blame thrown around.

For instance:

- Some folks, including me, blame district officials for overreacting by initially firing Bud Walpole as head football coach at Academic Magnet High School on Oct. 20, though they let him keep his Liberty Hill Academy teaching job.

Yes, Walpole should have stopped his team, which has only one black player, from starting a racially insensitive postgame-triumph "watermelon ritual" this season.

But no, Associate Superintendent Lou Martin shouldn't have fired Walpole for that offense.

And no, now-deposed Superintendent Nancy McGinley shouldn't have backed up Martin's heavy-handed decision in a news conference on Oct. 21 — despite not having talked to Walpole first.

Still, McGinley did reinstate Walpole as coach the next day after meeting with him, with the stipulation that he take sensitivity training.

- Some folks, including me, blame the school board for overreacting to the district's initial mistreatment of Walpole by forcing McGinley to "resign" as superintendent on Thursday.

Sure, the board said she will keep working for the district until June as a consultant.

Yet read between the lines of McGinley's "time for a new admiral" statement released Thursday. She wrote: "The school board has the right to pick the superintendent and make a leadership change. Therefore, I have determined that the best thing I can do for my beloved fleet is to step down effective today."

That "leadership change" sounds a lot more like a firing than a resignation.

So the bizarre tipping point in the ouster of the best superintendent the district has ever had was an overwrought — on all sides — controversy kicked off by a high school football team's victory celebrations.

- Some folks, not including me (at least not much), blame Coach Walpole for not nipping this ultimately highly consequential mess in the early-season bud.
- Some folks, not including me, blame the kids on the Academic Magnet football team.
- Some folks, not including me, blame talk radio, the NAACP, TV news, state Rep. Seth Whipper, and/or even this, the South's Oldest Daily Newspaper, for stirring hard racial feelings by dwelling on this story.

Opportunity lost

But enough — for now — about the costly fallout from the watermelon shots heard round the county.

In a much larger blame-game arena, too many Americans are too eager to pin the rap for any problem, real or perceived, on public (including elected) officials.

Along the buck-passing, unrealistic-demanding way, way too many Americans are shirking their self-governing duty of voting in our democratic republic because they're so fed up with so many Democrats and/or Republicans.

So would you prefer living under an absolute ruler whose word is law?

Breaking news: My previous offers, which you rejected, to serve as an all-powerful, mostly benevolent dictator are herby rescinded.

You had your chances.

And hey, at my age, who needs the awesome-responsibility hassle?

However, my current journalism gig does bring periodic reminders — as in lately — that nearly all of the candidates seeking our editorial endorsements mean well.

OK, so few of them deliver the inspiring insights of enlightened — and enlightening — columnists.

Then again, they do show admirable pluck just by running for office.

Back to school

Maybe, with at least three new members coming on the board after Tuesday's election, its members old and new will learn a valuable lesson from the blunder of dumping McGinley.

Maybe you can learn something important about your own school board vote Tuesday by checking out our editorial endorsements on Page A16.

Maybe you will learn that you don't agree with our choices.

But this much is certain:

If you don't vote Tuesday, somebody else will decide who's on the school board — and in other halls of power.

Another sure thing:

If you vote against Tuesday's extension of the one-cent sales tax for desperately needed school construction and renovation, you will aim misguided blame by taking your disdain for the school system out on children, parents, teachers and principals.

As for McGinley, she'll do fine — particularly with the annual $226,278 salary she still has coming and another eight months' pay and benefits after July 1, 2015.

And after all, as an avid surfer, McGinley knows how to ride through — or at least bounce back from — a rough wave.

Frank Wooten is assistant editor of The Post and Courier. His email is wooten@postandcourier.com.





WADE SPEES/STAFF

Bud Walpole was reinstated as head football coach at Academic Magnet on Wednesday.

Political correctness sacks fairness

Superintendent Nancy McGinley's recent public reaction (via video press conference) to allegations that Coach Bud Walpole of Academic Magnet High School allowed his team to engage in post-game "racially insensitive" activities, and firing him from his coaching position without any apparent due process, was irresponsible and shameful.

While she appropriately directed others to investigate the allegations, her decision to relieve the coach of his duties was premature since, as she admitted in the press conference, she had not personally spoken with the coach to hear his side of the story.

Shortly thereafter the local NAACP publicly weighed in against Mr. Walpole, likely having no more information than had been reported in local media.

Later, after the publicity had damaged Mr. Walpole's reportedly excellent reputation, Ms. McGinley reinstated him following a trip to her woodshed. So, he still has his coaching role, but how does he get his reputation back?

Her quick reversal only reinforces that she acted prematurely and her recent pronouncements have tarnished the semblance of fairness and due process within CCSD administration on matters of behavioral and disciplinary oversight.

Unfortunately, this story immediately got wide national media coverage, casting our district in a less than positive light. CCSD has now joined the many "zero tolerance" school districts across the country that throw common sense and fairness out the window by taking unreasonable actions based on one or two people's complaints.

While there is certainly no place in our schools for acts of racism, neither is there for allowing political correctness and unintended "insensitive acts" to trump common sense, thoughtfulness and due process.

Let's face it: Ms. McGinley mishandled this situation and is solely responsible for it being blown out of all reasonable proportion, by concluding prematurely and very publicly, that the team's post-game ritual was racial.

She should be reprimanded for this serious lapse in judgment, and as a minimum, the board should demand that she make a written, public commitment that her own future behavior will improve, just as she demanded "concessions" from Coach Walpole before his reinstatement.

She deserves to have her own "teachable moment," and the renewal of her contract should hang in the balance.

MIKE SCHWARTZ
Divot Court
Mount Pleasant

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Report: Team saw no racism in ritual

Academic Magnet coach described as 'very defensive' during interview

BY AMANDA KERR
akerr@postandcourier.com

An investigation into the Academic Magnet High School football team's postgame victory ritual found none of the players involved were aware their team's postgame watermelon ritual could be taken as racist, according to a Charleston County School District report.

District Associate Superintendent Lou Martin said in the two-page report obtained by The Post and Courier that the majority of the players said they understood the term racism, but they didn't perceive that the team's ritual of chanting and smashing watermelons with caricature faces could be construed as having "any negative connotation toward race."


Walpole

Martin and district consultant Kevin Clayton, who is an adviser for the district's diversity committee, questioned the players and coaches after School Board member Michael Miller raised concerns last month that the team's tradition perpetuated a racial stereotype demeaning to African-Americans.

The controversy over the ritual and the subsequent firing and rehiring of the head football coach, Bud Walpole, ultimately led to longtime Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley's resignation last week. The board voted 8-1 with Miller dissenting to accept McGinley's resignation last Thursday, with some members saying her support on the board evaporated over the handling of the Academic Magnet incident.

The district's Chief Financial Officer Michael Bobby was named acting superintendent following McGinley's departure.

Please see SCHOOL, Page A8

Poll

Do the new details in the Academic Magnet football team watermelon incidents change your opinion about the overall outcome? Find this story at **postandcourier.com/polls** to vote.

ROA 823

9586-D-009

Team saw no racism in ritual

SCHOOL from Page A1

McGinley formally tendered her resignation on Friday in a two-sentence letter to School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats.

"Please accept this letter as formal notice of my resignation as Superintendent for Charleston County School District effective October 31, 2014," the letter read. "It's been my great pleasure to serve the children of Charleston County and work with the finest principals, teachers and professional staff in the Country."

Martin and Clayton interviewed the team's 29 players over six hours on Oct. 16 before speaking with Walpole and an assistant coach.

The report describes Walpole as "very defensive" through much of the interview, saying he was "too occupied" to pay close attention to the specific details of his team's ritual.

Martin, in his notes from the investigation, said Walpole appeared to "not care" about the potentially offensive nature of the ritual, quoting the coach as asking "You mean my team can't eat watermelon?" and then "Maybe you want us to go behind the school to do it?"

Walpole "reluctantly acknowledged he should have been more aware and taken an active intervention in the process," the report said.

Walpole's attorney Dwayne Green said Monday his client had no comment on the details of the investigation, but reiterated Walpole "would not have allowed the players to celebrate in that manner if he had any idea that it was offensive to members of the community" and his "deep apologies to anyone who was offended by this incident."



McGinley

Some of the older players on the team also were defensive, stating, 'If someone is offended by the watermelon that is their problem and not ours,' " the report said, noting district officials believe some of the players may have gotten together beforehand to discuss what they were going to say.

One of the team's assistant coaches, who was not named in the report, told Martin he could see how the watermelon ritual could be considered offensive as a tradition and "expressed remorse for not being more alert and aware of the ramifications of the watermelon and its connotations."

The report indicates that district officials considered canceling the team's remaining games, requiring players to attend sensitivity seminars and participating in an activity tied to a cultural event. Consequences discussed for senior players who didn't comply included not allowing them to participate in any other sports for the rest of the school year or taking part in commencement when they graduated. Possible consequences for underclassmen included not participating in any sports for the remainder of their high school years.

It's unclear whether Martin or Clayton discussed any of the potential disciplinary actions with players or if any of the consequences outlined in the report have been required of the team. Martin, in an email Monday, said there were no consequences for players, but did not elaborate.

The report also recommended issuing a letter of reprimand to each of the coaches and removing them from coaching football. Martin did follow through on that recommendation when he fired Walpole from his coaching duties on Oct. 20.

But McGinley rehired the coach two days later after players and parents rallied in his defense.

Attorney Larry Kobrovsky, who is representing some parents of football players as well as Academic Magnet's School Improvement Council, said on Monday that he thought the report was Martin and Clayton's "interpretations" of the facts and comments made by the players.

"It's their perceptions," he said.

Reach Amanda Kerr at 937-5546

Academic Magnet coach sues over 'racist' watermelon ritual characterizations



Amanda Kerr Email @PCAmandaKerr

Dec 17 2014 11:13 am Dec 17 10:01 pm



Academic Magnet football coach Eugene "Bud" Walpole has filed a defamation lawsuit against several defendants, including the Charleston County School District and the parent company of the Charleston City Paper, claiming characterizations of his knowledge and involvement in his team's watermelon ritual wrongly labeled him as racist. Staff/File

×

Claiming descriptions about his role in a postgame watermelon ritual falsely portrayed him as racist, Academic Magnet High School's football coach is suing his employer and others for defamation.

Eugene "Bud" Walpole is suing the Charleston County School District, diversity consultant Kevin Clayton and his firm Axxis Consulting Co., and Jones Street Publishers LLC, parent company of the Charleston City Paper.

What do you think?

Do you think Bud Walpole should sue anyone over the Watermelon incident?

- Yes, his reputation was damaged and the defendants should pay.
- No, he should be grateful he has a job after his mishandling of the team's behavior.
- I have no strong opinion.

The lawsuit, filed Tuesday in the Court of Common Pleas, is seeking unspecified actual damages against all of the defendants as well as punitive damages from Clayton, Axxis Consulting and Jones Street Publishers.

This is the second suit filed in connection with the football team's ritual. Parents of three Academic Magnet High School football players filed a similar defamation suit against the same defendants last month claiming that characterizations of the team's ritual damaged their sons' reputations.

Walpole's lawsuit hinges on characterizations of his knowledge of and involvement in the team's postgame victory ritual of chanting and smashing watermelons with caricature faces drawn on them.

Concerns over what some saw as an offensive racial stereotype demeaning to African-Americans led to Walpole's firing from his coaching duties on Oct. 20. He was rehired two days later by former Superintendent Nancy McGinley after players and parents rallied to his defense, while members of the black community denounced the coach and the players' behavior. McGinley resigned as superintendent Oct. 31 in the wake of the controversy.

Walpole did not respond to an email Wednesday seeking comment.

The suit claims that Clayton and Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, both of whom questioned the team about its watermelon activities, falsely portrayed that Walpole "knowingly allowed the team to make monkey sounds and draw a monkey face on the watermelon ... intending to cast African-American opponents in a derogatory light."

McGinley, who is not a named defendant, later described the team as making noises that sounded like "ooh, ooh, ooh," which she further characterized as "monkey sounds," the suit said. Those statements, according to the suit, falsely accused Walpole of being racially prejudiced.

Interviews of the players and coaches revealed no evidence their actions were racially motivated, according to the suit, but Clayton, McGinley and Martin still published statements "with malice" that characterized the ritual as having racial overtones.

The suit also singles out several articles published in the Charleston City Paper that, according to the suit, wrongly accused Walpole of being prejudiced. Articles and headlines identified in the suit as defamatory include an article posted on the paper's website on Oct. 21 titled "Melongate: Big toothy grins, watermelons, and monkey sounds don't mix," and another published Nov. 5 titled "School district forces out superintendent who fired coach who condoned racist ritual. Mob rules."

Attorney Jay Bender, who teaches media law at the University of South Carolina, said Walpole and the players' parents may have a difficult time proving they were victims of defamation.

Under South Carolina law, Walpole, who would likely be considered a public official, would have to prove the characterizations made by the school district, Clayton and Jones Street Publishers were false and that they knew the statements were false or had serious doubts about their accuracy, said Bender, who also represents The Post and Courier.

Bender said because no individual football players were singled out, it will likely be difficult to prove the three players' reputations were damaged based on reports of what the team did.

If an individual player were to have a claim, Bender said the player would have to prove the defendants made false characterizations of their actions and that the characterizations were motivated by hatred, ill will or spite.

"That's a very high threshold," he said.

Erica Taylor, spokeswoman for the Charleston County School District, declined to comment on the suit. Clayton also had no comment, saying he hadn't seen the suit.

Noel Mermer, publisher and co-owner of the Charleston City Paper, said in a statement that he believes the suit has no merit and that the paper will, "at the appropriate time," ask the court to dismiss it.

"The publications that the lawsuit is attacking were editorials in which the author was expressing his opinions on the recent events involving the Academic Magnet High School's football program," Mermer said in the statement. "Coach Walpole may not like those opinions, and he is certainly free to disagree with them, but in our system of free speech he is not free to sue someone because they have expressed an opinion that he doesn't like."

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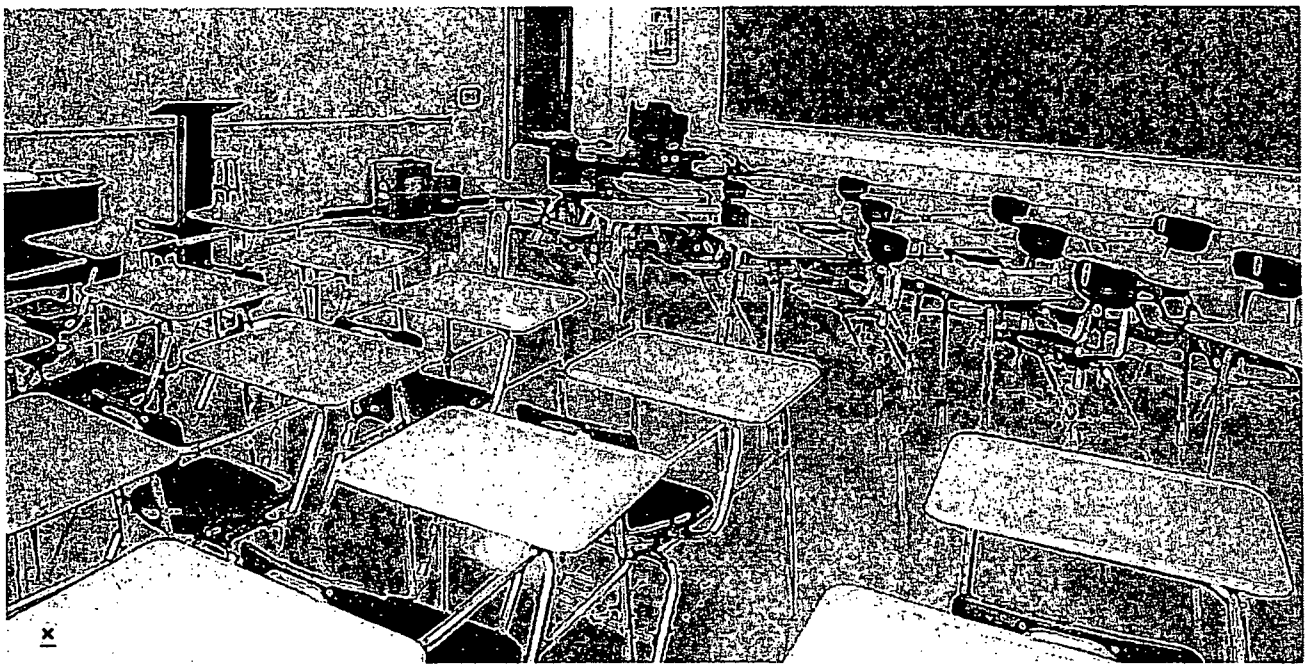
Another lawsuit filed over Academic Magnet watermelon controversy



(/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195)

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May 11 2015 12:01 am May 11 7:22 pm



Another Academic Magnet High School football player is asserting his reputation was damaged by characterizations last year of the team's controversial watermelon ritual as racially motivated.

The student is suing the Charleston County School District, diversity consultant Kevin Clayton and his firm Axxis Consulting Co., and Jones Street Publishers LLC, parent company of the Charleston City Paper. The football player is only identified in the lawsuit by his initials A.E.P. III.

Attorney John Parker of Hampton County confirmed the student was on the magnet school's football team last fall but did not identify him by his full name. Parker said the player, who recently turned 18, is suing on the grounds of defamation.

The lawsuit, filed April 27 in the Court of Common Pleas, is seeking unspecified actual damages against all of the defendants as well as punitive damages from Clayton, Axxis Consulting and Jones Street Publishers.

The lawsuit is the latest in a string of four nearly identical suits filed by Parker on behalf of Academic Magnet football players or parents of football players claiming they were defamed by school officials and media descriptions of the team's postgame victory ritual of chanting and smashing watermelons. Football player Adam Olsen Ackerman filed a lawsuit in February and Richard and Cheryl Nelson filed a lawsuit on behalf of their son in January. Betty and James R. Moore Jr., Amy and Lee Garrard, and Dean and Kathryn Frailey filed a joint lawsuit in December claiming their children were defamed.

Parker also represents Academic Magnet Coach Eugene "Bud" Walpole in a fifth lawsuit which hinges on characterizations of the coach's knowledge of and involvement in the team's behavior.

At the heart of the lawsuits is the school district's investigation last fall into the football team's postgame victory ritual of chanting and smashing watermelons with caricature faces drawn on them, which some saw as an offensive racial stereotype demeaning to African-Americans. Walpole was initially fired as head football coach but was rehired days later by former Superintendent Nancy McGinley after players and parents rallied in his defense. McGinley, who is not named as a defendant, resigned as superintendent in the wake of the controversy.

All of the lawsuits assert that Clayton, a former diversity consultant for the school district, and Associate Superintendent Lou Martin, who is not named as a defendant, "falsely published to others that the football team made animal sounds and drew a monkey face on the watermelon during these celebrations," even though an investigation by the pair revealed "no evidence of any racial reason" for the team's ritual. McGinley, according to the lawsuit, later described the team as making noises characterized as "monkey sounds" to the media.

Those descriptions falsely depicted the football team as racists, the lawsuit said.

One article published in the Nov. 5 edition of The Charleston City Paper entitled "Mob Rules" outlined the series of events surrounding the team's ritual that "when read as a whole, falsely accuses the football team and the plaintiffs of being racist." The publication of those statements, according to the lawsuit, "injured the plaintiffs' reputations."

School district spokeswoman Erica Taylor said the district doesn't comment on pending litigation. But the district, in court filings for all but the most recent lawsuit, denied any wrongdoing or claims of defamation, saying "any comments made by them were fair comments on a matter of public concern."

Clayton, in court filings for three of the lawsuits, denied publishing anything written or orally to third parties outside the school district regarding the findings of his investigation into the team's actions. The court documents acknowledge Clayton's characterization of the team's actions "to the extent the plaintiffs assert that the students and coaches indicated that they were acting in a racially derogatory manner regarding the postgame ritual of drawing a curly-headed caricature on watermelons that were smashed by the players."

Clayton's attorney, Stephan Futeral, said he has requested that the plaintiffs provide proof of the alleged statements and that, to date, no such proof has been offered to substantiate those claims. If no proof is produced, Futeral said he plans to file motions to dismiss the lawsuits.

Attorneys for The Charleston City Paper have filed motions to dismiss all but the April 27 suit on the grounds that all descriptions of the team's behavior mentioned in the editorial were "merely restatements of the public comments of school district officials concerning the watermelon controversy."

To the extent the editorial went beyond factual statements, the paper, in the motions, contends they were an "expression of the editorial writer's opinions, ideas and rhetorical commentary" protected by the First Amendment.

Those motions are pending before a judge. No court dates have been set in any of the lawsuits.

Keywords Academic Magnet football (/section/search&facet.filter=Keywords:Academic%20Magnet%20football)
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McGinley questioned Walpole's firing ahead of coach's dismissal, emails show

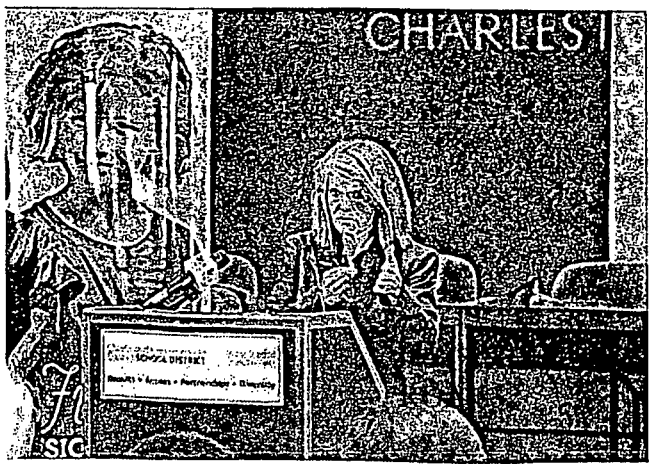


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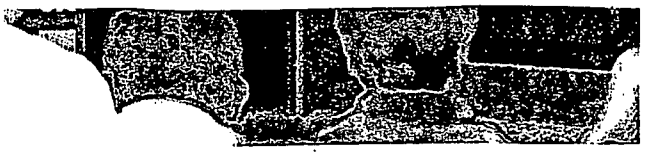
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As the situation surrounding the Academic Magnet High School football team's watermelon ritual escalated, former Charleston schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley's first instinct wasn't to fire the head football coach.



Instead, she thought that a reprimand and diversity training for Coach Bud Walpole and his assistant coaches might have been enough to

address the team's watermelon-smashing ritual that some saw as perpetuating racial stereotypes demeaning to African Americans.



Former Charleston school Superintendent Nancy McGinley last spoke publicly for the school district at a press conference on Oct. 21 where she discussed the Academic Magnet football team's watermelon ritual. File/Wade Spees/Staff

"How strongly do you feel about firing the coaches?" McGinley asked in an email to associate Superintendent Lou Martin and diversity consultant Kevin Clayton. "Would a letter of reprimand and probation be enough to get their attention? And, require them to attend training as well. Just my thoughts."

Emails The Post and Courier obtained through the Freedom of Information Act regarding the Academic Magnet football team reveal the divide among Charleston County school officials and School Board members over what action should have been taken regarding the football team's controversial tradition.



Enlarge Walpole

Martin fired Walpole from his coaching duties on Oct. 20. McGinley rehired him two days later after football players and their parents rallied in his defense. The School Board voted to accept McGinley's resignation eight days after the coach was rehired amid mounting tension from parents over how school officials questioned the players, while the black community denounced the team's actions.

Divide

The emails begin on Oct. 13 with School Board member Michael Miller's initial report of the team's ritual in which he said he had learned the team made "ape or monkey" noises while smashing a watermelon.

The emails show an immediate division between school officials and Miller over the nature of the team's actions and how to handle the situation.

Academic Magnet Principal Judith Peterson, in an email less than 24 hours after Miller's

report, acknowledged the potential "ramifications" of the team's actions, but said she believed "it was an innocent action that became superstition." Peterson, in an attached memo, recommended meeting with the team and coaches the next day to tell them to halt the ritual, a move McGinley supported in a corresponding email.

But Miller, in an email to McGinley, pressed for a deeper inquiry.

"There seems to be no remedy or accountability to what transpired," he wrote.



Enlarge

In an interview, Miller said, at the time he was concerned the district wasn't pushing for the "truth."

Two days later Martin and Clayton interviewed the football team and their coaches. That investigation revealed new details about the ritual, including that caricature faces had been drawn on the watermelons, which had been named for a historically black high school.

Martin, in an email on Oct. 17, recommended firing the coaches. That's when McGinley questioned whether firing the coaches was really necessary. Martin, in a response to McGinley, accepted her suggestion to limit the coaches' punishment to a reprimand, but Clayton in a separate email said he felt Walpole should be fired "because of his contempt and arrogance ... during the interview."

There are no emails that provide any insight into how McGinley arrived at supporting Walpole's firing. McGinley, in an email to The Post and Courier, declined to comment further on the matter.

There were very few emails from School Board members other than Miller among those released by the school district. It's unclear if any other board members were aware of the district's investigation into the ritual, although some have said they didn't know until McGinley briefed them in an executive session on Oct. 21 after Walpole had been fired.

Aftermath

After Walpole's dismissal, Miller again dominated the correspondence among board members and district staff. In one email on Oct. 20, Miller felt the district hadn't gone far enough in holding the players and assistant coaches accountable. He then wrote about his dissatisfaction after McGinley reappointed Walpole on Oct. 22.

"If we can agree that something was inappropriate, what message have we sent by reinstating the coach and holding no one accountable?" Miller wrote.

School Board Chairwoman Cindy Bohn Coats, in a response to Miller's email urged him to consider using Clayton's diversity program as a way to address any issues of racial insensitivity in the school district.

"Your job as a board member is leadership - shaping the future," Coats wrote. "Do you want to be in the punishment business or the prevention business?"

Coats in an interview said at that point she wanted the School Board to move forward, rather than dwelling on the fate of the coach. "I felt like 'are we here simply to find issues and punish people or are we here to make sure these incidents don't happen?'" Coats said. "The ultimate question was is this a teachable moment or a punishable moment?"

Two months later, Miller said he agrees that students should be taught about how to show dignity and respect to their peers, but more importantly a stand needs to be taken against intolerance.

"I think the end goal is to make sure we recognize issues like this or even issues similar to this as a district and that they should not be tolerated," he said. "How we get to that point I don't know?"

Reach Amanda Kerr at 937-5546 or on Twitter at @PCAmandaKerr.

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THE CHRONICLE

Only Six Blacks Entering Academic Magnet High's Freshman Class - Why?

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By Barney Blakeney

When sources earlier this summer revealed information only one African American student would be admitted to the incoming fall class at the Academic Magnet High School, the response was tempered discontent. And as the community challenges the process that resulted in a new schools superintendent last month, the district's revelation that six of the 190 students in the freshman call will be African American is being met with only a little more discontent.

In June, a source said after all the criticism over diversity at the AMHS which led to a firestorm involving its head football coach, the resignation of the former schools superintendent and a civil rights violation complaint filed with the U.S. Justice Department, it would seem logical for the entering freshman class to reflect the racial percentages of the district. That percentage is about 47 percent Black students. That would be evidence of a sincere effort to recruit a cross section of county residents, the source said.

This week, at the revelation there are six African Americans in the freshman class, the source said, "The difference between one Black student and six is inconsequential. All that tells me is the district perhaps saw the handwriting and redoubled its efforts. Still they only came up with six Black students."

Charleston NAACP President Dot Scott, whose organization led challenges to the lack of racial diversity at AMHS, said she thinks district officials are being deceptive.

"Still, six Black students among 190 is nothing to shout about," she said. "It's a royal embarrassment that we're still looking at continued

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segregation in our schools. But not only is there a problem with racial diversity among students, there's a problem with Black teachers too. Some people don't want Black teachers teaching their children. One reason all this continues is we for so long have accepted the status quo. We have to figure out what to do next," Scott said.

Last year Rev. Nelson Rivers, National Action Network Vice President for Religious Affairs & External Relations, filed a civil rights violations complaint with the Office of Civil Rights in the U.S. Justice Department over the lack of diversity at the county's specialty schools. He too is suspicious of the district's account of Black students in the upcoming freshman class. And like Scott, he says six Black students in the class still is unacceptable.

"It's immoral and I believe, it's illegal," Rivers said. "It shouldn't be acceptable in a district where about 48 percent of the students are Black that only about three percent of students at our best school are Black. That class, in four years, could easily end up with no Black graduates." He added, "Our school district officials operate as if they believe they're in some backwoods where nobody's watching. They believe that because so many of our leaders have accepted this nonsense."

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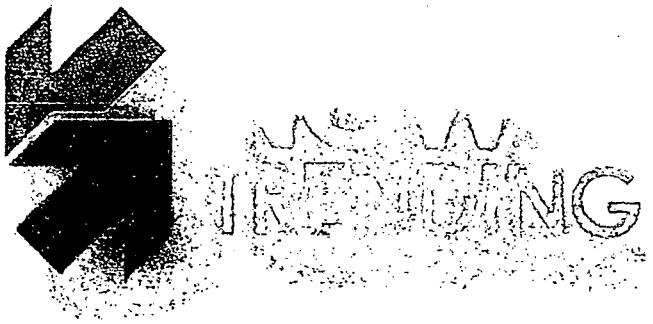
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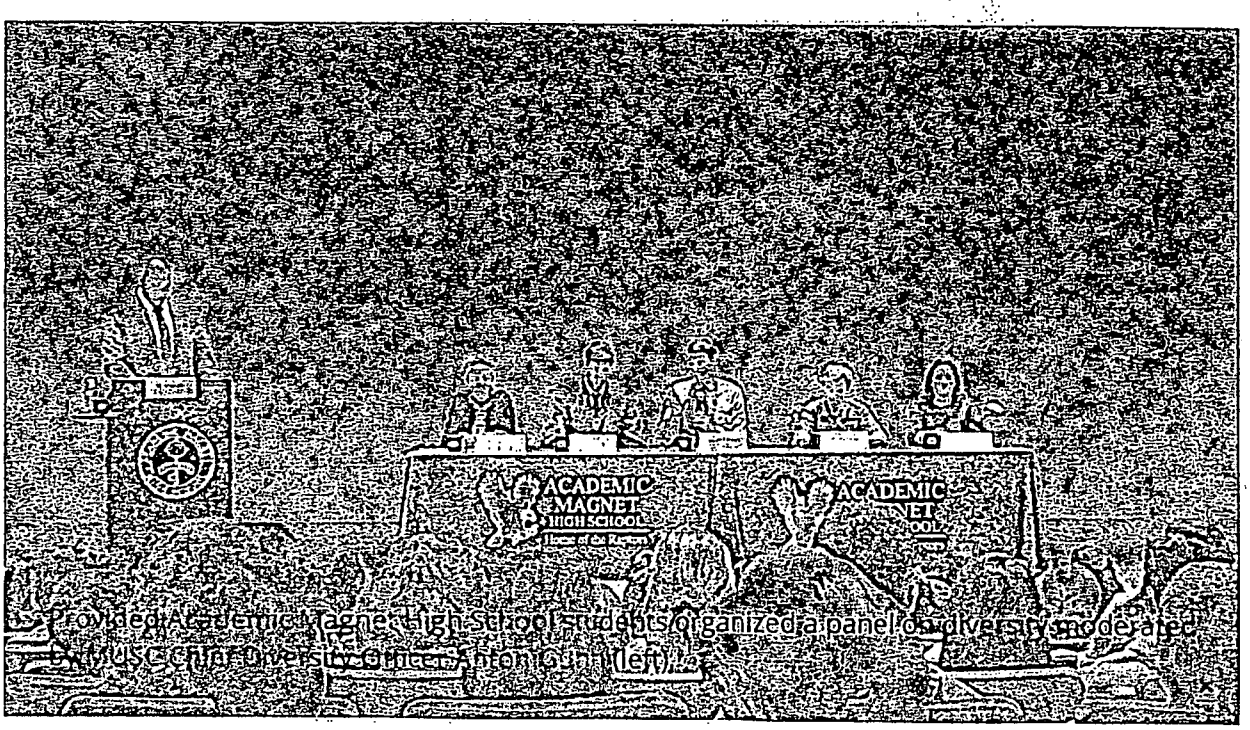
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At majority-white Academic Magnet, students address race and diversity head-on



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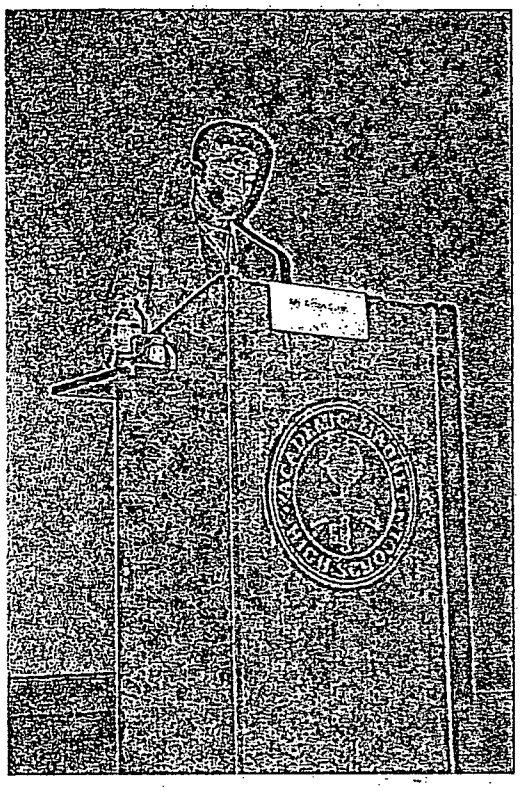
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Provided Academic Magnet High School students organized a panel on diversity moderated by USC Chief Diversity Officer Antonio Flores (left).

In the 14 months since Academic Magnet High School football players smashed a watermelon and set off a maelstrom of racial controversy, students at the school have reckoned with sticky issues of race and diversity on their own terms — in the halls, in the student newspaper and even in a panel discussion they organized themselves.

Speaking before the student-run Discovering Diversity Panel in a packed auditorium Dec. 2, AMHS Principal Judith Peterson praised the students for engaging in "courageous conversations" on uncomfortable topics.



Enlarge Academic Magnet High School senior William Pugh speaks before a panel on diversity in the school's auditorium. Pugh founded a new student organization, Students Advocating for Multicultural Education, in the wake of the watermelon incident at his school in 2014. Provided

"I'm not sure that we could have had this panel discussion without having the conversations that we had last year," Peterson said later.

In October 2014, reports arose that members of the AMHS football team were throwing watermelons on the ground as a post-game victory celebration during a particularly strong season. Most schools in AMHS's division are majority-black, and the imagery of players from majority-white AMHS smashing watermelons — which figured prominently in 20th-century minstrel shows and racist iconography — caused consternation among some black families and the local NAACP.

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For the adults involved, the incident had swift and far-reaching consequences. The district dismissed football coach Bud Walpole and then quickly reinstated him after students and parents rallied in his defense, ordering him to take racial sensitivity training as a condition for his return. School board members skirmished over the decision, and district Superintendent Nancy McGinley resigned amid the furor. Several parents sued the district and the owner of the Charleston City Paper for allegedly portraying their children as racist. Walpole sued district officials for allegedly treating him "in a racially disparate manner as a white male."

But for some students at the high-performing public school, the watermelon incident set off a year of personal reflection and hard conversations. From the day the news broke, the topic of race was suddenly unavoidable.

"Every corner was filled with incessant chatter, the school a glowing orb of whispered gossip," Laurel Cross, a senior at the school, wrote in a recent opinion column in the Talon student newspaper.

At first, Cross said in a phone interview, she didn't understand how anybody could take offense at an innocent post-game celebration. But then, as the media began to cover the incident, she broke the cardinal rule of consuming news on the Internet: She read the comments.

"I went and I read some of the things that people were saying, how it was an offensive thing, and whether we meant it to be or not, it still was," Cross said.

In school, one English teacher continued to challenge her views. "She would talk about it even when students didn't want to talk about it," Cross said. "I had lots of productive conversations in that class."

Cross wrote in her column that she now considers herself "a passionate advocate for equal treatment." After serving in an after-school tutoring program at nearby Dunston Primary School, she said she began to appreciate the challenges faced by low-income and minority students.



Enlarge Academic Magnet High School Principal Judith Peterson, seen here in a 2010 file photo, praised her students for having "courageous conversations" and taking actions on matters of racial inequality and diversity. File/Wade Spees/Staff

"I have no idea what it feels like to be an African American, or in that case a minority at all," Cross wrote in her column. "My history differs greatly [from] that of my peers, and although these events seem detached and irrelevant, they greatly affect the privileges I, and others respectively, experience today."

Taking action

Soon after the watermelon incident, Peterson said she started meeting with teachers to talk about how they would handle discussions of race in their classrooms. The topic was inevitably going to come up, particularly when every junior English class read Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" — and even more so as the police shooting of Walter Scott and the mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church brought racial issues to the forefront in 2015.

Peterson invited Rupert Nacoste, a psychology professor at North Carolina State University, to talk to the students in an assembly about race. After the students held their own assembly in December, Peterson said she was impressed by their eloquent conversation, but even more so by their concrete action to address issues of diversity and inequality.

One junior, she said, is working to create an electronic mentorship program as part of a senior thesis project, connecting AMHS students with elementary students via email to help with homework assignments.

A group of girls from the junior class approached Peterson to set up a peer mentoring program in the girls' academy at nearby Morningside Middle School, which has a large population of minority and low-income students.

Members of a pre-existing student ambassador program at AMHS invited top-ranking students from local middle schools to visit the high school's campus in North Charleston. Peterson said all she had to do was proofread the invitations.

"It's a good group of children," Peterson said. "I think they have a sense of community, and I do think they have a sense that they've got to help us make changes in the world. I really think they see themselves that way."

Hard conversations

Academic Magnet High has a predominately white student body. After a decade of dwindling black enrollment, the school of 644 included just 16 black students last school year — despite serving a district that is more than 40 percent black.

The school's poverty index, based on student enrollment in welfare programs, is also far lower than the district's, and nearly half of AMHS students came from the attendance zone of Wando High School in Mount Pleasant.

After the watermelon incident, students like AMHS senior William Pugh looked for their own solutions to racial imbalances in the district. Pugh formed a new organization, Students Advocating for Multicultural Education, or SAME, that he now estimates includes 100 members in chapters at Academic Magnet, Charleston County School of the Arts and Wando High.

On Dec. 2, SAME and The Talon invited MUSC Chief Diversity Officer Anton Gunn to moderate a discussion that included students, college professors and Millicent Brown, a longtime U.S. history professor and desegregation researcher who integrated all-white Rivers High School as the first black student there in 1963.

Across the board, the speakers discussed the benefits of diversity, from expanding world views to providing opportunities for disadvantaged students. But when Gunn and other speakers proposed policy changes ranging from geography-based seat allotments to lottery-based enrollment for qualified students, the students pushed back.

"Everybody that's here has earned it. I think we're diverse enough," said one black student on the panel. Students in the packed auditorium responded with enthusiastic applause.

The admissions process at AMHS includes teacher recommendations, standardized test scores and a writing sample. All classes are taught at the Honors or Advanced Placement level, and the school consistently places among the top high schools in the nation in rankings from U.S. News & World Report. Following the rise of magnet schools in the Charleston County School District, coupled with policies that allow parents to transfer their children out of failing schools, traditional schools like North Charleston High and Burke High have seen declining enrollment and stagnating test scores for years.

While AMHS's demographics partly reflect a persistent achievement gap along racial lines throughout Charleston County and the state, some students, including Pugh, think the school could do a better job of reaching out to minority students.

"People have an interesting belief that, by increasing diversity, that would lower the standards of the school," Pugh said. "I've talked to so many people about, 'Well, if we have these low-income and minority kids coming to our school' — and they use the term 'our school' — 'then we're not going to be No. 7 in the nation anymore.' I'm just blown away."

At a second panel discussion later in the day on Dec. 2, student Kevin Woods, whose family moved to the U.S. from the Cayman Islands, said he had certain advantages when it came time to take the entrance exam.

"I went to a private school, and I prepared for that test," Woods said. "But lots of kids don't have that opportunity. Lots of kids are more focused on seeing what they're going to eat for dinner that night instead of doing their homework."

Fellow student Sophie Brams added that all students should be given the tools to succeed in high school, regardless of socioeconomic status. At the private school she attended before AMHS, Brams said, "All the tools for success were put in front of me."

Reach Paul Bowers at 843-937-5546 or twitter.com/paul_bowers.

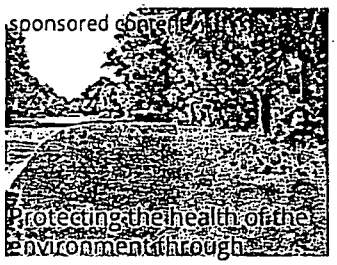
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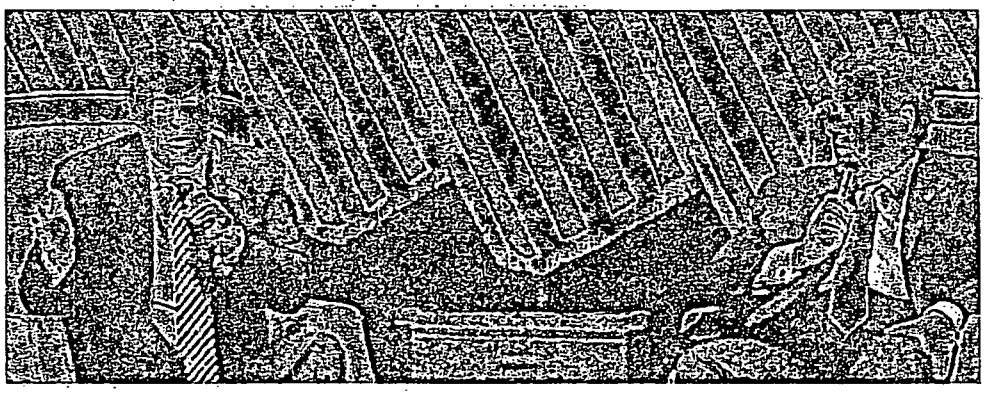

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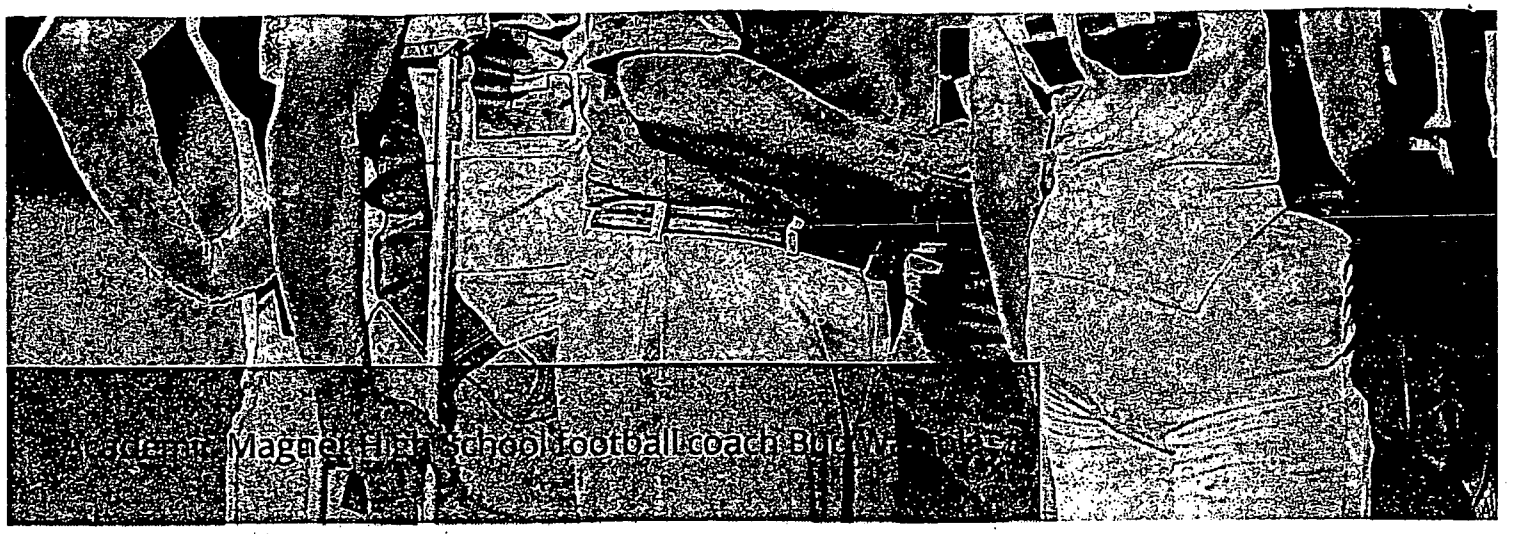


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Academic Magnet High School football coach Bud [illegible]

Academic Magnet High School's football coach claims he was a victim of racial discrimination in his latest lawsuit stemming from last year's controversy over his team's postgame watermelon ritual.

The suit, filed in U.S. District Court on Monday, names Charleston County School District Associate Superintendent Louis Martin and former Superintendent Nancy McGinley. It alleges that Martin and McGinley treated Coach Eugene "Bud" Walpole "in a racially disparate manner as a white male" after he was reprimanded, fired, subsequently rehired and forced to take sensitivity training as a condition of his reemployment.

Photos





Walpole suffered "public humiliation, emotional distress, depression, anxiety and physical symptoms of stress and anxiety," the complaint states, as a result of their actions. He is seeking [illegible] and punitive damages from Martin and McGinley for violating his civil and constitutional rights.

The [illegible] cites two cases in which non-white CCSD principals were accused of creating "racially hostile environments" for white teachers and students. In one case, a Brentwood Middle School principal was found guilty in 2006 of violating the rights of a white female teacher. The principal, who was a black woman, was not publicly fired, forbidden from entering the school, or required to undergo

from entering the school, or required to undergo sensitivity training, the lawsuit notes.

"I would say everybody deserves to be treated equally and the Constitution applies to everybody equally," said Walpole's attorney, Lawrence Kobrovsky.

In October 2014, Walpole came under fire after school board member Michael Miller complained about the team's postgame celebration, in which players chanted and smashed watermelons with caricatures of human faces drawn on them. Players named several of the watermelons Bonds-Wilson, apparently in homage to North Charleston's black equalization school. Academic Magnet is housed on the razed school's campus.

Many argued the tradition perpetuated racist stereotypes against African-Americans. McGinley fired and promptly rehired Walpole after players and parents rallied to his defense. McGinley resigned from her post soon after.

The controversy also highlighted declining racial diversity at the district's top-ranked school: In the past decade, enrollment of black students at Academic Magnet has plummeted — from 118 of 506 students 10 years ago to only 12 of nearly 650 students this year.

Walpole, along with several Academic Magnet football players and their parents, is also suing the parent company of Charleston City Paper, Charleston County Schools, and Atlanta-based diversity consultant Kevin Clayton and his firm Axxis Consulting for defamation. Jones Street Publishers, owner of Charleston City Paper, filed countersuits against Walpole, the football players and parents in July.

Walpole's latest lawsuit contends McGinley and Martin "magnified and inflated" the watermelon ritual as a racist act in order to make the "ideological and policy changes that they wished to make."

The suit also accuses Martin of attempting "to intimidate" Walpole "into confessing and admitting to condoning racist behavior."

In response to Walpole's allegations, McGinley said she had "no comment about a pending legal issue." A CCSD spokesman said the district does not comment on active litigation.

Reach Deanna Pan at (843) 937-5764.

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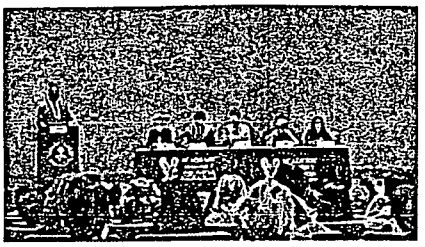
Letter: Academic Magnet's historic background

Mar 04, 2016

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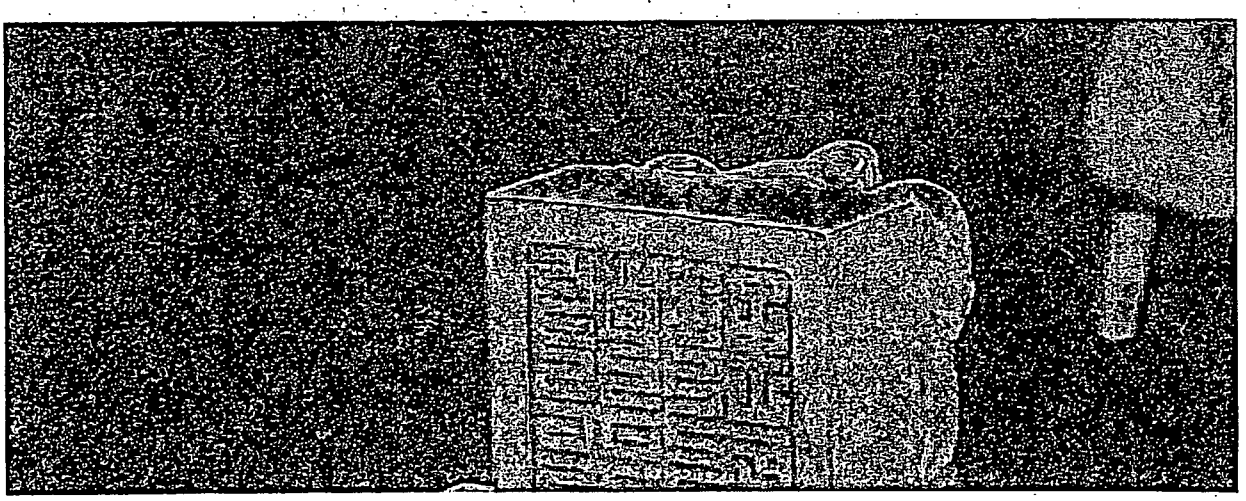
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At majority-white Academic Magnet, students address

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The Post and Courier

ROA 851

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STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

COUNTY OF CHARLESTON

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

JAMES R. MOORE, JR. and BETTY MOORE, Guardians Ad Litem for R.A.M., a Minor, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT, KEVIN CLAYTON, AXXIS CONSULTING COMPANY, and JONES STREET PUBLISHERS, LLC,

Defendants.

C.A. No.: 2014-CP-10-7203

AFFIDAVIT OF PAUL BOWERS IN SUPPORT OF MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT ON BEHALF OF JONES STREET PUBLISHERS, LLC

FILED
2016 APR 29 AM 11:40
JULIE J. ARMSTRONG
CLERK OF COURT

APPEARED BEFORE ME, Paul Bowers, who first being duly sworn, deposes and states as follows:

1. My name is Paul Bowers. I make this affidavit of my own personal knowledge. I am over 18 years of age and competent to give testimony in a court of law.

2. From 2011 through September 2015, I was a staff writer for the *Charleston City Paper*, a weekly newspaper published in the Charleston area by Jones Street Publishers, LLC. I am currently a writer for the *Post and Courier*, Charleston's daily newspaper. I left the *City Paper* to go to the *Post and Courier* in September because it presented a better opportunity for me. I had a good experience writing for the *City Paper* and think highly of that publication and the people who work there.

3. I was the author of a number of news articles published by the *City Paper* concerning the "watermelon ritual" that the Academic Magnet High School football team had performed after victories during the 2014 high school football season, the firing of Coach

Walpole because of the watermelon ritual, and his later reinstatement and Superintendent Nancy McGinley's resignation. A copy of the article referred to in the Walpole Complaint is attached as Exhibit A.

4. This story broke on October 21, 2014. On that day, the Charleston County School District issued a press release stating that, after hearing an allegation of "inappropriate post game celebrations" by the football team, an investigation was conducted by the District and "as a result of the investigation, the head football coach will no longer be serving as a coach for Charleston County School District." The press release stated that Superintendent Nancy McGinley would be holding an official press conference open to the public that day at the School District offices.

5. I attended the news conference and wrote the article attached as Exhibit A based on what I heard and observed at the conference. As reported in my article, Superintendent McGinley stated at the press conference that "Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others either were standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds that were described as 'Ooo ooo ooo,' and several players demonstrated the motion." Superintendent McGinley described the chanting sounds as "monkey sounds" and stated that School Board member Michael Miller had reported that the football team engaged in a "tribal-like chant that is animalistic or monkey-like." She also stated that the watermelon was nick-named "Bonds Wilson" and that it had a face drawn on it "that could be considered a caricature." A copy of the caricature drawn by the same football player who drew it on the watermelon was shown to the persons attending the press conference. A copy is attached as Exhibit B.

6. At the time of the press conference, I knew Superintendent McGinley in a professional capacity and considered her to be a completely credible and reliable news source,

especially in connection with official statements such as those made at the press conference. I accepted the statements she made during the press conference as accurate representations of the School District's official position and findings concerning the watermelon ritual.

7. A number of parents of Academic Magnet High School students were at the press conference to express support for Coach Walpole. My article included their comments. Before writing my article, I called Coach Walpole for comment and left a voice mail message for him asking him to call me, but he never called me back.

8. Numerous other news reports, commentary, and editorials concerning the watermelon ritual and the firing of Coach Walpole were published or broadcast by other writers and commentators, over television and radio, in other print media, and in a great many internet media sites, blogs, and commentary before and during the same time period as when my articles were published. The watermelon ritual was clearly a matter of substantial public interest, commentary, and debate during this time. Many of these other publications and broadcasts were made to a much greater audience, readership, or viewership than the relatively small readership of the *City Paper*.

9. Approximately a week after the first press conference, the School Board held a specially called public meeting in which they announced the resignation of Superintendent McGinley. I attended that meeting and wrote the article about it attached as Exhibit C. As noted in that article, a number of members of the public attended the conference and were quite vocal in expressing their disagreement with the School Board's actions.

10. Again, these events were the subject of widespread coverage in local, regional, and national news media and commentary, including radio, television, print and the internet.

Numerous commentators expressed the opinion that the behavior of the football players in the watermelon ritual was racist and racially offensive, and that either the players or the coaches had to have known or should have known that the ritual would be perceived as racist. Again, this commentary was published or broadcast through media with a much larger audience that the *City Paper's* readership.

11. In writing the articles that I wrote concerning this controversy, my sole intent was to report accurately on the events and comments concerning the controversy, including the official statements of the School District officials, and not to cause harm to any individual.

Further affiant sayeth not.

Paul Bowers

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 27th day of April, 2016.

Notary Public for South Carolina
My Commission Expires: OCT 17 2018

(SEAL) ABBEY GEHMAN ADAMS
Notary Public
State of South Carolina
Commission Expires Oct. 17, 2018

EXHIBIT A

CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

NEWS+OPINION » FEATURES

October 21, 2014

District: AMHS football team's watermelon ritual included 'monkey sounds,' 'caricature'

Coach removed after complaint of 'animalistic' sounds following defeat of majority-black team

By Paul Bowers Follow @paul_bowers



Paul Bowers

AMHS parents Connie and John Biggs were incensed by the district's decision to remove Coach Walpole. "There was nothing racial about this until it was made racial by someone else," John said.

Charleston County School District officials released more details this afternoon about a post-game ritual involving a watermelon that led the district to remove football coach Eugene "Bud" Walpole from his coaching position at Academic Magnet High School. The details were released during a press conference that became heated as parents from the school called for Walpole's reinstatement and demanded apologies from Superintendent Nancy McGinley.

According to McGinley, interviews with students indicated that upperclassmen on the AMHS Raptors football team came up with the post-game ritual prior to their Sept. 5 victory against Military Magnet Academy.

"It was reported to us that a player was selected to smash the watermelon ... Players would gather in a circle and smash the watermelon while others either were standing in a group or locking arms and making chanting sounds that were described as 'Ooo ooo ooo,' and several players demonstrated the motion," McGinley said.

McGinley said the watermelon was named at each game — "Junior" after the team's first victory against Military Magnet High School on Sept. 5, then "Bonds Wilson Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5" after the team's five subsequent victories. (Bonds Wilson is the name of the joint campus that Academic Magnet shares with Charleston County School of the Arts.) One of the players also drew a face on the watermelon with a Sharpie. "It was a face that could be considered a caricature," McGinley says.

McGinley said Walpole had not been fired from his teaching position at the school, but he was removed from his positions coaching the football team and the girls' basketball team. She said at the press conference that she had not yet spoken with Coach Walpole, but that she would meet with him and then report her findings to the school board at a later meeting.

"An allegation was brought to my attention from one of the board members that the Academic Magnet High School football team has practiced a watermelon ritual with students making monkey sounds as part of a post-game celebration," McGinley said. "This board member was clearly concerned about racial stereotypes related to this type of ritual."

McGinley presented her findings to school board members in an executive session today, but she said she would make another presentation to them after meeting with Walpole. It remained unclear at the meeting whether the school board would be able to reinstate Walpole as a coach. School board member Tom Ducker said the board "probably will make some kind of a decision on where we go from here" after hearing from McGinley following her meeting with Walpole.

"Everything's on the table, so it really will depend upon that conversation that they have with Dr. McGinley and what Dr. McGinley says after the interview with the coach and what her recommendation is," Ducker said.

The instigating incident

McGinley said that on Mon. Oct. 13, a parent from Military Magnet High School raised a concern about the postgame ritual with school board member Michael Miller. Miller brought the concern to McGinley's attention, and McGinley says she asked Principal Judith Peterson to investigate.

"She reported back to me that the coaches said they were aware of this ritual following victories and they did not observe cultural insensitivity," McGinley said. However, based on Miller's report that the team engaged in a "tribal-like chant that is animalistic or monkey-like," McGinley says she sent Associate Superintendent Louis Martin and a district Diversity Committee advisor to investigate at the school on Oct. 16.

According to McGinley, the football team was taken to a lecture hall and players were interviewed individually by Martin. McGinley says the two questions asked of every student were, "What do you know about the watermelon incident?" and "Do you see anything potentially sensitive about that issue?"



Paul Bowers

Superintendent Nancy McGinley held up a drawing that represented the figure drawn on a watermelon by a member of the AMHS football team.

McGinley says that according to the student interviews, the team brought a watermelon to games and traditionally kept it on the bench during every game this season. However, at an Oct. 10 game against Garrett Academy of Technology, the students accidentally left the melon on the bus and delayed their postgame ritual until they returned to the AMHS campus in North Charleston, where they proceeded to smash the watermelon in a courtyard. This took place during a freshman lock-in at the school, and McGinley says several school employees witnessed the incident and the team was disciplined for disruption.

McGinley said she and Principal Peterson told the team to cease the ritual last week, and Monday night the district notified Walpole that he had been relieved of his duties as head coach. Coach Andrew Rusciolelli will serve as interim head coach for the two remaining games of the season.

"The perceptions and the practices that were part of this ritual were not something that the adults should have sanctioned, and therefore we took action yesterday to relieve the head coach of his responsibilities," McGinley said.

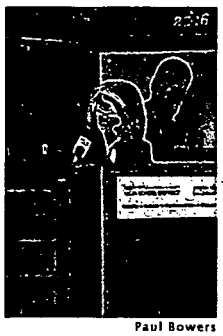
Military Magnet, the school from which the complaint originated, is majority-black, along with all but two of the teams on the AMHS football team's season schedule.

A member of the AMHS football team started an online petition to reinstate Walpole, and the petition has so far garnered more than 1,800 signatures.

Vocal opposition

Parents at the press conference angrily questioned McGinley about the decision to remove Walpole until she announced that the press conference was over and walked out of the room.

"Where are you going, ma'am?" one parent asked as McGinley headed for a side door in the school board room at 75 Calhoun St.



Paul Bowers

McGinley said at a press conference that AMHS players reportedly engaged in a "tribal-like chant that is animalistic or monkey-like" after defeating a team from a majority-black school.

Connie Biggs, president of the AMHS Booster Club, said the so-called "monkey sounds" from the ritual were "football grunts" reminiscent of what she had heard in the movie *Remember the Titans*. She told McGinley that the face drawn on the watermelon looked like "a happy celebration picture."

Biggs does not have a child on the football team, but she said parents were upset that district officials interviewed students without getting parental consent. She says district employees interviewed the team members for four-and-a-half hours.

Biggs' husband, John Biggs, said the team is multiracial and that there was nothing racist implied in the watermelon ritual. "There was nothing racial about this until it was made racial by someone else," John said. "To me, these are the people that are racist. They're trying to turn an innocent bonding experience of a high school football team into some kind of racial slur that it's not."

Jenifer Lake, a parent whose son played football under Walpole's coaching in a previous seasons, says she saw Walpole discipline players for acting in an unsportsmanlike manner.

"If anyone did anything that was not sportsmanlike or of the proper conduct, they got benched," Lake said. "He didn't put up with anything. He's a true Southern gentleman who believes in good sportsmanship."

Larry Kobrovsky, a state school board member and former member of the Charleston County school board, attended the meeting to stand in opposition to the decision and to ask McGinley questions. He said he thought the school district owed Walpole and the team an apology.

"It's absurd, I think. Racism is real, but when you stretch it to the point of absurdity you diminish the reality of it," Kobrovsky said. "I think they need to act like adults and apologize to the parents and their kids."

At the press conference, Kobrovsky asked school board chair Cindy Bohn Coats if she thought the district had made the right decision in relieving Walpole of his coaching duties. "I feel we need to continue to have the conversation," Coats said.

Tags: Academic Magnet High School, Bud Walpole, Charleston County School District, football, Nancy McGinley, Larry Kobrovsky, Sports, Race

EXHIBIT B

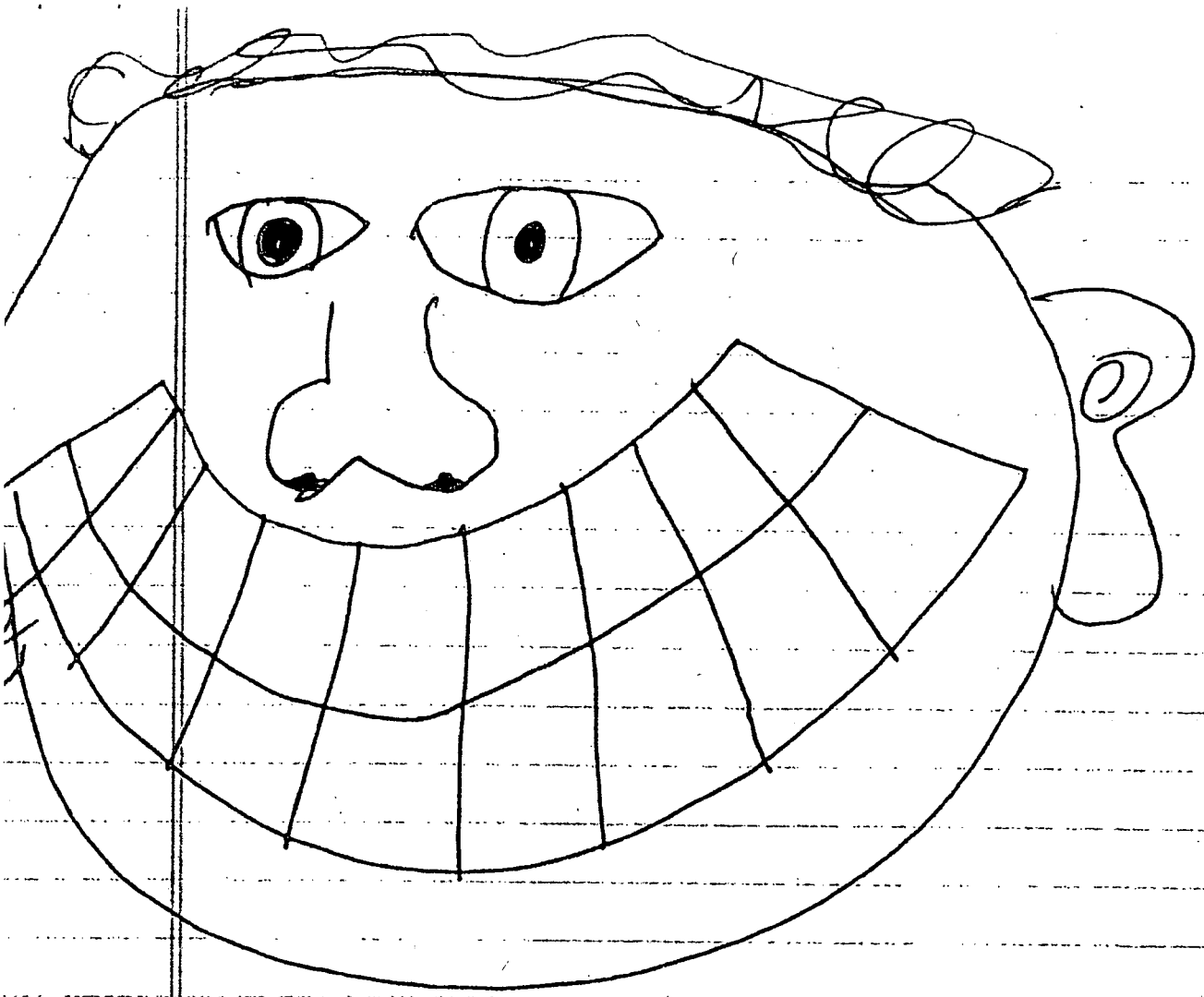


EXHIBIT C

CHARLESTON
CITY PAPER

NEWS+OPINION » FEATURES

October 30, 2014

CCSD Board: Superintendent McGinley will resign

Decision comes one week after McGinley suspended a football coach over racially controversial post-game ritual

By Paul Bowers



Paul Bowers

Some members of the audience responded with loud opposition to the board's decision to accept Superintendent Nancy McGinley's resignation.

In a near-unanimous vote at a special called meeting Thursday afternoon, the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees decided to accept the resignation of Superintendent Nancy McGinley. The board also voted to appoint Michael Bobby, the district's chief financial and operations officer, as an interim superintendent.

The decision came just over a week after McGinley made the controversial decision to relieve Eugene "Bud" Walpole of his football coaching duties at Academic Magnet High School. McGinley initially removed him from the position due to a post-game ritual among Academic Magnet players involving watermelons and alleged "monkey sounds" that offended some African-American parents. Walpole was removed from coaching duty last Monday night, but after hearing opposition from parents of Academic Magnet students, McGinley reinstated Walpole last Wednesday under the conditions that Walpole attend sensitivity training and "teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings."



Adam Chandler file photo

Nancy McGinley

The public uproar over the Walpole decision came just as McGinley was up for evaluation by the school board. The board held a hastily called meeting Monday morning to discuss personnel matters in executive session and then held another meeting Thursday at 1 p.m. The only school board member who voted against accepting McGinley's resignation was Michael Miller, who initially brought the watermelon ritual to McGinley's attention after a parent at a school with a majority African-American student population approached him about it.

Miller was not immediately available for comment after the meeting. Other board members would not discuss the specific reasons for McGinley's resignation.

When asked if the resignation had to do with the Academic Magnet incident, board chair Cindy Bohn Coats said, "It was not discussed in anything I've talked about with our attorneys or the district since Saturday when this began." She clarified that Saturday was when she called the special meeting for Monday morning.

Board member Chris Collins said the board "didn't force her to resign at all." When asked if McGinley had given a reason for her resignation, he said, "We don't know why she offered to resign, other than she felt it was time to go to advance her career somewhere else."

NAACP Charleston Branch President Dot Scott led a chorus of opposition against the decision in the board chamber. As the board members exited the room following their vote, she shouted, "I will gladly leave now, but I want to make sure you understand this is not the end of this."

Afterward, in the lobby at the district office, Scott called on voters to vote against the upcoming ballot referendum to extend the penny sales tax, which would ensure funding for planned capital improvement projects in the district.



Paul Bowers

Board Chair Cindy Bohn Coats said the board would accept McGinley's resignation "on very generous and harmonious terms."

"If these people, who are going to be responsible for the decision of how the money is spent, make this kind of decision, how do we now go and recruit for a good superintendent to come to South Carolina if this is the way you treat your superintendent?" Scott said.

Scott said it was obvious McGinley's resignation had to do with the Academic Magnet controversy and the district's investigation of the watermelon incident.

"This is what's scary: The coach obviously knew about it. This board had the opportunity to get the result of the investigation. They didn't even want to hear about the investigation," Scott said. "Prior to the Academic Magnet stuff, there was no discussion about the firing of the superintendent, so if anybody wants to believe that this has nothing to do with that, well, then I do have some property to sell."

Under the terms of the resignation announced at today's meeting, McGinley will continue to be employed by the district as a consultant through June 30, 2015, and she will also be paid eight months' benefits and salary starting July 1, 2015. Coats said that the board would accept McGinley's resignation "on very generous and harmonious terms," a phrase that elicited laughter from several members of the audience present in the boardroom. Coats also said that McGinley and the board "have agreed to a non-disparagement clause."

McGinley has not responded to a request for comment.



Paul Bowers

District CFO Michael Bobby will be appointed interim superintendent in McGinley's absence.

Tags: Charleston County School District, Nancy McGinley, NAACP, Dot Scott, Cindy Bohn Coats, Michael Bobby, Michael Miller

A.E.P., III, et al. v. Charleston County School District et al.

Valentine
Greetings
H. G. TONG



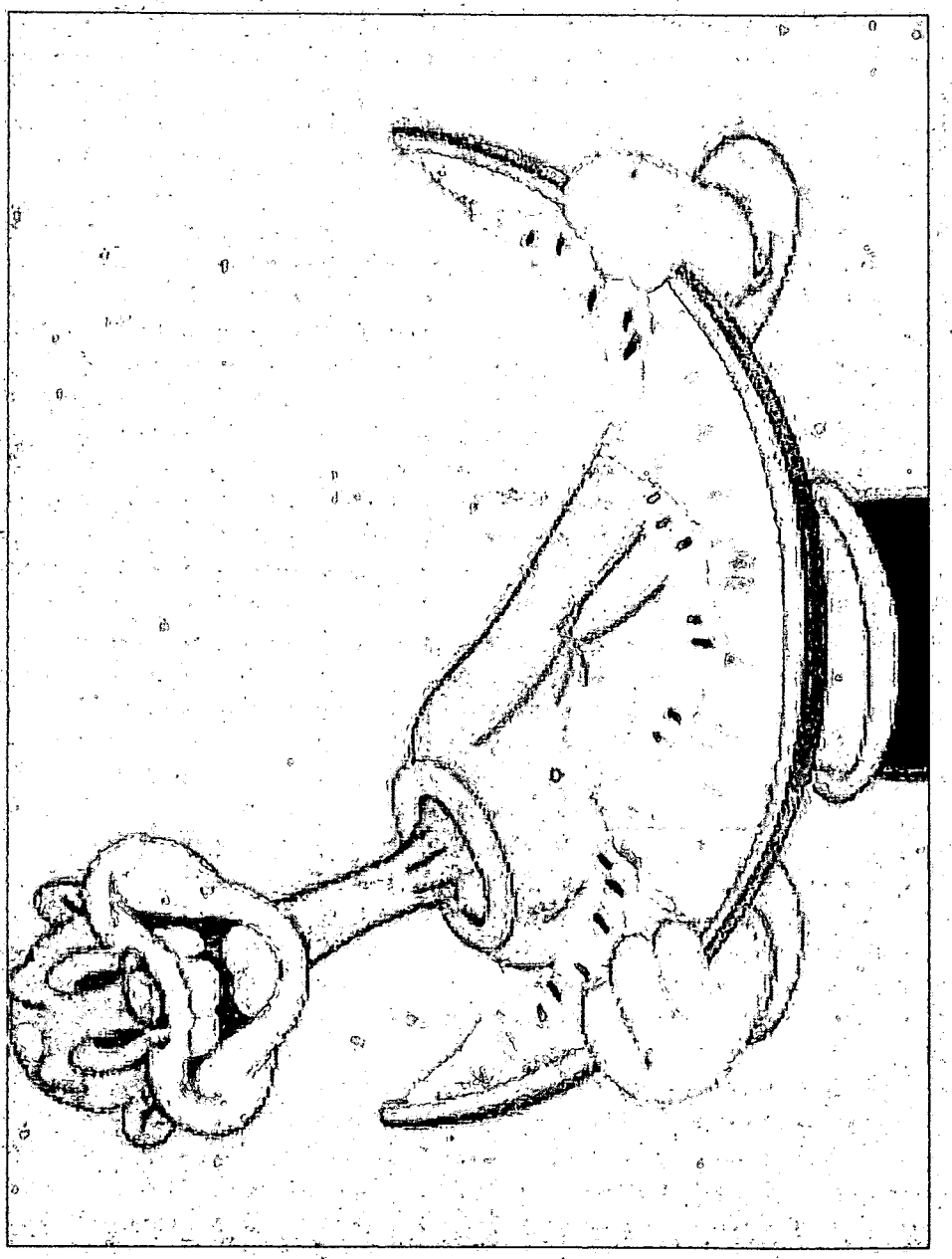
"I'SE SO HAPPY!"

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ROA 867


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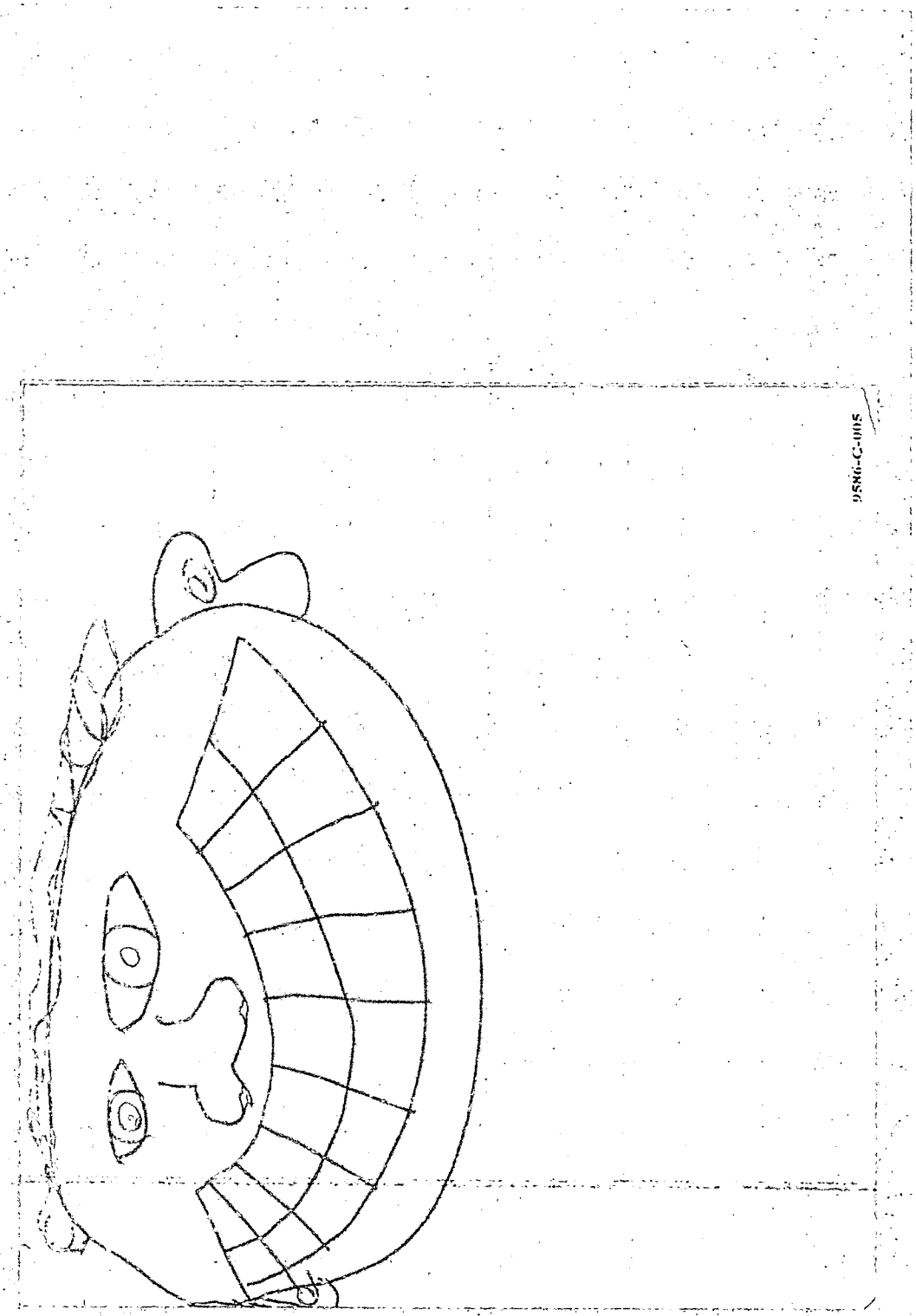
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ROA 871

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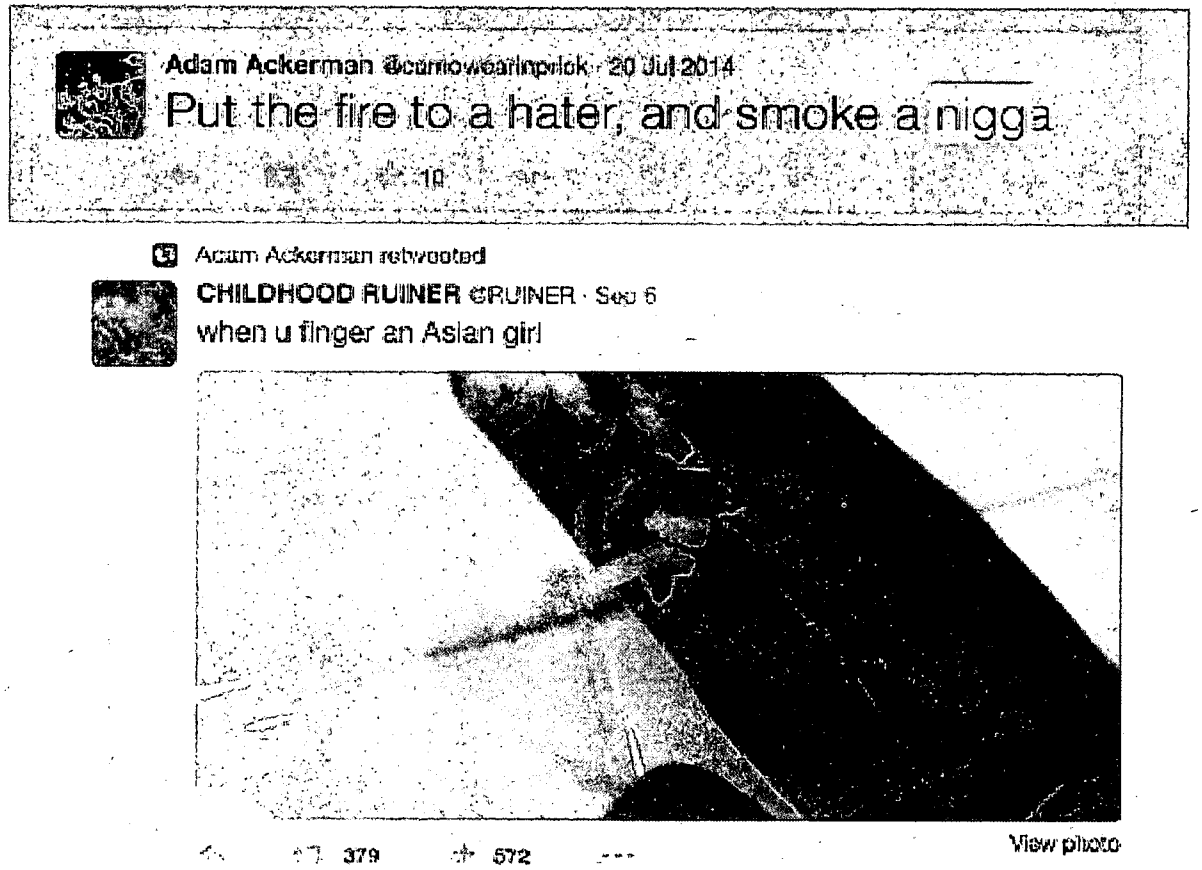

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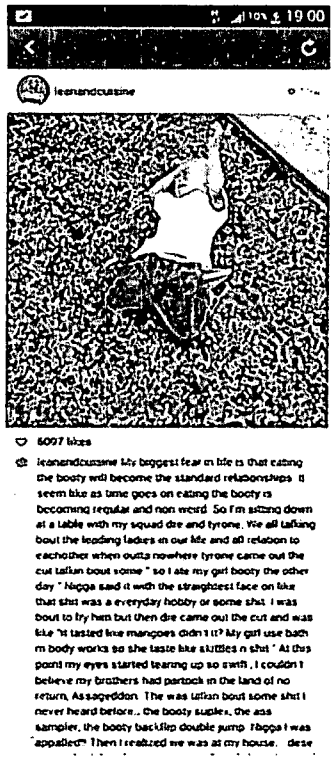
Reece Moore @NoMooreReece · Nov 1

Shoutout to the janitor who stole my phone and took it to the local crack/whore house last night..at least someone enjoyed their Halloween

1 12

Reece Moore
@NoMooreReece

For educational purposes



ROA 880

Public Account - [Redacted]
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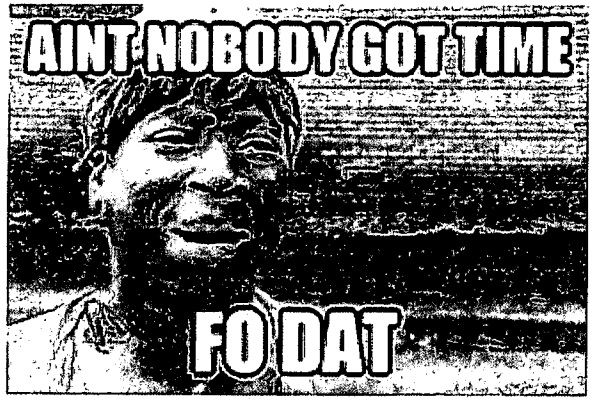
Adam Ackerman



Timeline Photos
Album (23 photos)

1/26/2014

0 comments



Facts

- Watermelon
- Caricature face
- Monkey sounds
- Bonds Wilson

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- Behaved like racist douchebags
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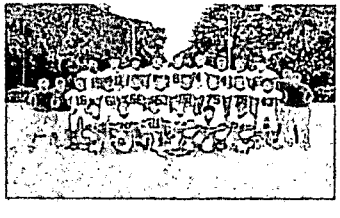
TUE OCT 21, 2014 AT 01:18 PM PDT

White SC High School Football Team Celebrates Win by Making Monkey Sounds and Smashing Watermelons

Grizzard

186 Comments / 0 New

Meet the football team at Academic Magnet High School, a public school near Charleston, South Carolina.



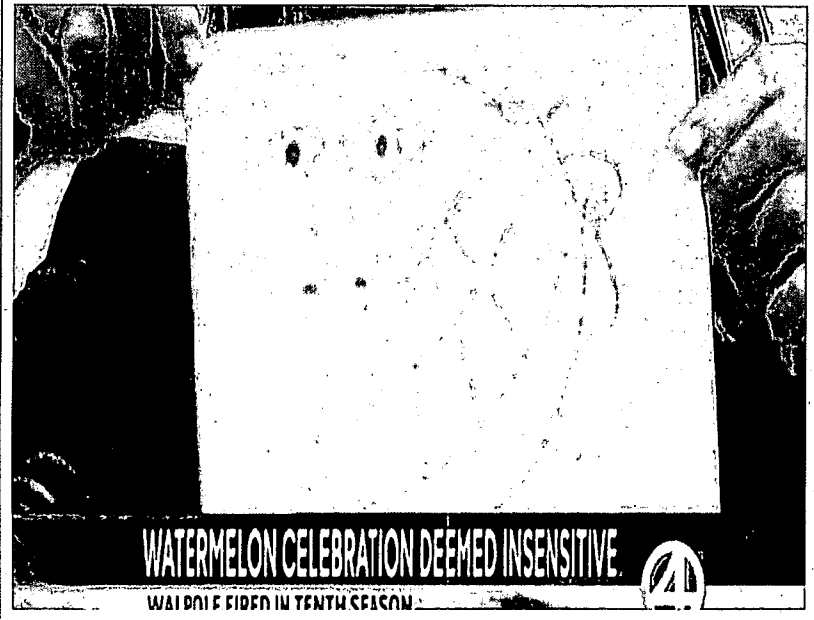
As you can see here, they're almost entirely white, with the exception of a single teammate. Recently, they've played a number of games against teams that look like this:

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Video: Racist SC High School Football Coach Fired After Team Mocks Black Opponents With Watermelons

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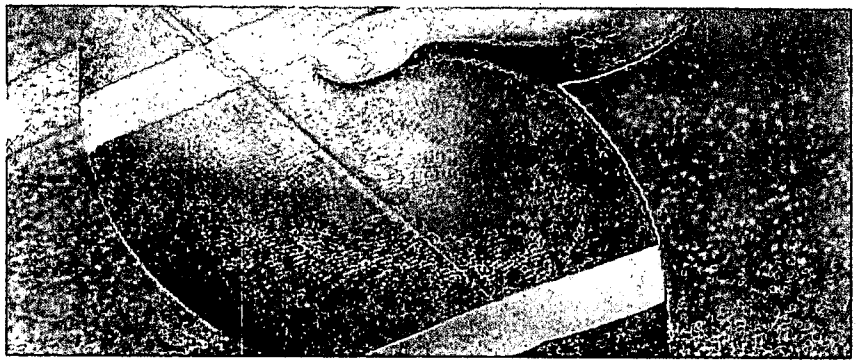
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posted on October 9, 2015

ROA 886

S.C. coach fired over watermelon, ape-like celebrations

By Associated Press
Published: October 21, 2014, 6:37 pm Updated: October 21, 2014, 6:37 pm



(Photo Credit: WPBN/WTOM)

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) – A high school football coach has been fired because of postgame victory celebrations the district superintendent says involved players smashing watermelons and making ape-like sounds.

Nancy McGinley said Tuesday she was contacted last week by a board member who said the parent of an opposing player was offended by the celebrations by the mostly white Academic Magnet High School football team in Charleston County. The Raptors were smashing watermelons with smiling faces drawn on them and eating the fruit as a postgame snack.

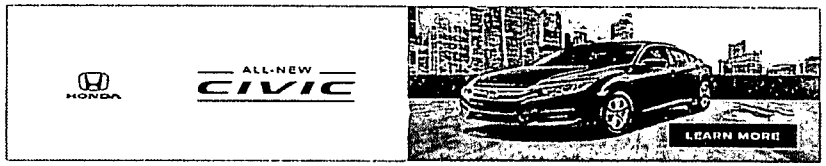
The district announced that Bud Walpole will no longer coach the football team or the girls' basketball team. He is still a teacher at the school.

A phone listing for Walpole could not be found. On online petition had 1,500 names late Tuesday seeking his reinstatement.

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Football Coach Canned After Mocking Black Opponents With Watermelons

NEWS VIDEO

• by D.L. Chandler 10/22/2014 12:34pm

SHARE THIS TWEET THIS EMAIL THIS

A high school football coach in Charleston, S.C. was fired this past Monday after allegations of racist behavior by his mostly-white squad came to the surface. With the team performing a watermelon-smashing ritual after game wins, it appears that the team was mocking Black players.

Charleston County School District superintendent Dr. Nancy McGinley said Tuesday that Academic Magnet High football head coach Rod Walpole was fired after an investigation into the post-game ritual and news of "chanting sounds" being made.

More from WCIV

Early information about the scandal only showed the students were breaking open watermelons and eating them after victories. McGinley said reports from people at other schools suggested they were making "animalistic or monkey-like chants" after the games.

Further, the students also drew a face on each watermelon and named them, according to McGinley. She said the investigation revealed the students also named the watermelons Junior and Bonds Wilson.

Bonds Wilson is the name of the formerly predominantly-black school in North Charleston where Academic Magnet now sits.

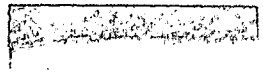
The Charleston branch of the NAACP announced this morning plans for a press conference. The conference will be held at the NAACP's downtown facility in the city at 1130 p. m. ET.

McGinley says that school officials called the watermelon smashing an "innocent ritual" and didn't see the potential for harm in it. A Charleston County School District board member then added the complaints of the "animalistic or monkey-like chants" during games.

Academic Magnet's one lone Black player, Darius Nwokike, started a Change.org petition to reinstate Coach Walpole.

Watch WCIV's news report below.

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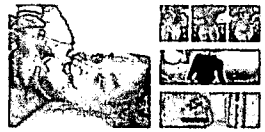
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Racism in America

Coach Fired After Horribly Racist Postgame Parties Involving Acting Like Monkeys, Smashing Watermelons

October 23rd, 2014 mdesmond Racism in America 0 comments

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I played football back in middle school, so I can understand that sometimes post game celebrations can get out of hand. However, it's the job of the coach to keep them from spinning out of control and disciplining the players when they do stupid and offensive things as fit — not encouraging them. American Magnet Football coach Bud Walpole found this out the hard way when he was dismissed by the Charleston County School District on Tuesday following post game celebration that allegedly involved smashing watermelons and making "ape sounds" that were offensive to the African Members of the team.

The allegations were first brought to district officials by a parent of the opposing team. The allegations led to an investigation, which unearthed details of the coach and his players smashing watermelons and having the players eat the fruit remains, in addition to making "ape-like noises" while smashing the aforementioned fruit.

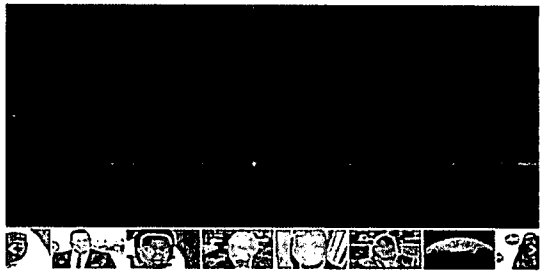
Watermelons and ape-like noises; it doesn't take a lot to see why, after a century or more of stereotypes, those would be offensive to the African American players. It's not rocket science, it's basic media exposure and understanding American history. It's disingenuous to insist that they're somehow "innocent" or "good fun;" a century plus of stereotypes doesn't go away because you're *uncomfortable* with them at that moment in time — try living with them, day in and day out.

ROA 889

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Was This High School Football Team's Watermelon-Smashing Ritual Racist?

132



The saga of South Carolina high school football coach Bud Walpole is a strange one: first, he was fired for his team's reported watermelon-smashing ritual, after the school board found out about the practice and was understandably worried about the racial stereotypes attached.

Then, after more than 4,000 people signed a petition, Walpole was reinstated as head coach in all but name. The story has sparked outrage and debate nationwide.

HuffPost Live hosted a three-member roundtable — the lawyer for the team's parents, Larry Kobrovsky, Dr. Greg Carr, professor of African-American studies at Howard University and L'Heureux Lewis-McCoy, sociology and black studies professor at CUNY — to discuss whether the ritual was racist or not.

Kobrovsky, who the team's parents hired to help reinstate the coach, maintains there were no racist motives behind the tradition.



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Sections

Football coach fired amid allegations of racist behavior (update)

Oct 22, 2014

by Theresa Edwards



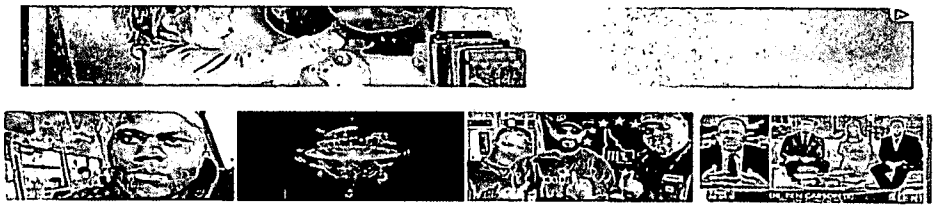
Image: Screenshot/WCIV

Print

High school coach fired for encouraging players to make racist jokes

A football coach in South Carolina has been relieved of his position following complaints from opposing teams that say he encouraged his players to engage in racist behavior.

2016 NEWS



S. Carolina HS football coach fired after team mocks Black opponents with watermelons

ARTURO GARCIA
21 OCT 2014 AT 23:55 ET

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FOOTBALL

Group calls for suspended then reinstated S.C. football coach to be banned again

By Cam Smith, USA TODAY High School Sports October 21, 2014

82 SHARE TWEET EMAIL



South Carolina state representative Seth Whipper has called for Academic Magnet football coach to be investigated and potentially fired for a racially insensitive post/game card/request on YouTube screen shot

It is the story that just won't go away.

According to the Charleston Post and Courier, recently re-instated Academic Magnet head football coach Bud Walpole is under fire again, this time from the state politicain who represents his own district. Less than a day after Walpole was allowed to return to his job by Charleston Superintendent Nancy McGinley, South Carolina state representative Seth Whipper banded with a group of alumni from a former school that struggled with integration to call for Walpole to be suspended and, if full leaked details were proven to be true, to be fired

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Whipper seeking coach's ouster

Lawmaker, alumni from Bonds-Wilson speak out on ritual

BY AMANDA KERR
akerr@postandcourier.com

Less than 24 hours after Academic Magnet High School head football coach Bud Walpole got his job back, a state lawmaker and Bonds-Wilson Alumni Association members called for the suspension and possible firing of Walpole and his assistant coaches over what some considered a racially offensive post-game watermelon ritual.


Whipper

State Rep. Seth Whipper, D-North Charleston, whose district includes the Academic Magnet High School campus, held a press conference Thursday outside the Charleston County School District headquarters in downtown Charleston where he and several Bonds-Wilson alumni said they plan to attend a school board

Please see COACH, Page A4

Inside

Brian Hicks: Overreaction at Academic Magnet overlooks a different problem. A2

Football coach Bud Walpole returns to practice field. C3

9586-D-028

Whipper seeking ouster of Magnet football coach

COACH, from A1

meeting Monday to press for the "true facts" regarding the post-game tradition.

"If the facts are that this particular activity, then we're going to ask that everybody be terminated," Whipper said. "I cannot see how we minimize how an adult person (Walpole) who is more than 50 years old could forget what has happened in this country and allow young men to practice the kind of behavior we know has been established by (the district's) investigation."

Whipper said sanctions may need to be taken against the players as well, including an immediate end to the team's season.

"I feel that we're at the point where if the young men who are on that football team believe they've done the right thing, their season should be suspended," he said.

Charleston County schools Superintendent Nancy McGinley reinstated Walpole on Wednesday as head football and head girls basketball coach two days after district administrators fired him from his coaching duties in connection with the post-game ritual in which players chanted while smashing watermelons. McGinley has said the district never considered taking punitive actions against the players on the team.

As part of his reinstatement Walpole was required to provide a "written statement of commitment" to teach students to better respect the differences of others, attend sensitivity training; and to counsel his players before games to be "extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

Whipper said Thursday he was not familiar with the stipulations Walpole was required to make as part of his reinstatement, but said he would work to make sure something like this never happens again rather than punishing an exemplary role model," he said.

Poll



Do you think any further action needs to be taken in the case of the Academic Magnet High School football team's watermelon ritual? Find this story at postandcourier.com/polls to vote.

Bonds-Wilson alumnus Ken in Williams, who was among the group who attended the press conference, said he feels the players' decision to use the name Bonds-Wilson reflects their lack of knowledge about the school's history. Bonds-Wilson opened in the 1950s as a segregated school, and was integrated in 1971. The school was closed in 1985 and has since been demolished.

Bonds-Wilson has produced several notable alumni, including former Raiders coach Art Shell and jazz percussionist Alphonse Mouzon.

"They don't really understand the history and what the school stood for," said Williams, a 1983 graduate of Bonds-Wilson.

"It's a historical name and means a lot to the black community."

Some graduates of the school as well as the black community, Whipper said, are upset to see the school's name associated with a watermelon when the district did not include the name Bonds-Wilson as part of the magnet school's name when the school moved to that location.

"The Bonds-Wilson community is really disturbed about this that somehow the name Bonds-Wilson is not good enough to name the school in that way, but good enough to name a watermelon," Whipper

State rep: Fire all the coaches at Academic Magnet

Posted: Oct 20, 2014 10:01 PM EDT
Updated: Oct 23, 2014 3:50 PM EDT

NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C. (WCIV) – Last Friday, Bud Walpole stood on the sidelines hoping his Academic Magnet Raptors could pick up a seventh win. This Friday, he'll do the same. But it's what happened in the last week that really shapes those first steps on the field in North Charleston.

That's because Walpole was fired Monday, alternately defended and vilified Tuesday and Wednesday, and asked to return to his job on Thursday. He said yes, according to his attorney Dwayne Green.

Green said Walpole was both thankful and grateful for the opportunity to return to the sidelines and will take this week as a learning opportunity.

But the issue seems to be far from over after a strange press briefing Thursday morning in front of the school district's headquarters involving District 113 Rep. Seth Whipper and members of the Bonds Wilson Alumni Association.

Whipper called for the re-firing of Academic Magnet head coach Bud Walpole on Thursday. He also called for the firing of all of the football team's assistant coaches.

He also wants Academic Magnet to suspend the rest of the season.

McGinley said in a release early Wednesday evening she had asked Walpole to return to work. She met with Walpole at 2 p.m. and asked him for a statement of commitment which he provided nearly three hours later.

"I feel good about our meeting, and I am confident that in his position as teacher, mentor and coach he will use the experience to deliver on his commitments," McGinley said in the letter.

Part of Walpole's commitment, if he accepts the district's offer, will be to "teach all of the students to better respect the differences of others and to be sensitive to their feelings;" to attend in sensitivity training provided by the district; and "counsel my students before games to be extra vigilant in their actions when dealing with others of different racial or ethnic backgrounds."

McGinley said this ordeal was not about winning or losing, but bout ensuring that everyone gets respect and dignity in the community.

While Walpole and McGinley were meeting at district headquarters, attorneys Andy Savage and Larry Kobrovsky met with parents at Academic Magnet.

Notes from that meeting show parents are looking for CCSD officials to define its current procedures for handling investigations as well as assurances these procedures are carried out evenly for everyone across the district.

The shift in Walpole's employment came after Charleston NAACP officials likened the post-game watermelon ritual that led to the firing of the coach to a black football team urinating on the Confederate flag after games.

Chapter president Dot Scott compared the ritual by Academic Magnet's football team to a predominantly black football team urinating on a Confederate Flag as a "victory ritual" when they beat a predominantly white team. The Academic Magnet watermelon celebration being defined as "fun" was also compared to the "fun" whites used to have lynching blacks.

She said Wednesday the NAACP would not comment on that statement, however.

McGinley's departure teaches familiar lesson in unfairness

BY THE REV. JOSEPH A. DARBY

I'd like to offer a few thoughts on the untimely "resignation" of Charleston County School Superintendent Nancy McGinley in the wake of the Academic Magnet High School football team controversy. I considered writing in her defense last week, but my sense of the school board's obvious goal led me to believe that it would probably be published after her dismissal or "resignation."



Darby

An Oct. 31 letter to the editor helped shape these thoughts. The writer noted how South African President Nelson Mandela embraced the all-white apartheid-era Springboks rugby team, as depicted in the movie "Invictus." He hailed that as the kind of thing that generates "teachable moments" and suggested that the community embrace what happened to the aforementioned football team and their coach as a teachable moment.

The writer went on to suggest that a teachable moment would involve state Rep. Seth Whipper — who called for the coach's dismissal — supporting the Academic Magnet football team, attending its next game, feeding them afterward and then talking about the history of Bonds-Wilson High School. He concluded his call for a teachable moment and forgiveness by lamenting the "... race baiters and PCers [who] are now perpetuating this blight on society."

I'd also like to share a few "teachable moments." I begin with a reminder of what happened before President Mandela embraced that rugby team.

Soon after becoming president, Mandela formed a "Truth and Reconciliation Commission" — a "court" that heard testimony about the atrocities of apartheid from the victims and the perpetrators — not to fix blame or punish, but to "clear the air," promote forgiveness and understanding and move forward.

Any good teachable moment requires those on both sides of an issue to hear and respect what each side sees as injustice. That's never happened when it comes to race in America and that didn't happen in this case. The school board's statement on Dr. McGinley's resignation called it a "win-win," but even Stevie Wonder could see that one side got their way.

The teachable moment in this instance wouldn't begin with Rep. Whipper supporting the Academic Magnet football team. The writer said that he should because "they are his people too."

If the writer had Mr. Whipper's constituents in mind, then he's mistaken. The 600 student school is in Mr. Whipper's majority black House district, but only 18 black students attend the school now — if any — students live in his district and, beyond being fellow human beings, they're not "his people."

The teachable moment in this case should include an awareness of Bonds-Wilson High School's history, but should also explore a number of questions:

Why does a school that was racially balanced in its formative years now have a profound racial imbalance?

Why does a football coach in his mid-50s not understand that a "victory celebration" featuring a watermelon — with a caricature and the name of a legendary black high school drawn on it — is patently offensive to the overwhelming majority of the black community?

Why do angry and aggressive parents and supporters not understand that as well, and instead temperately model respect, dignity and diversity for their children?

And why do they wield so much privileged influence that a superintendent, who weathered seven demanding years in her position, is rudely forced out in roughly one week?

A teachable moment should also lead to reflection on a couple of questions: Why does "forgiveness" have to be one-sided — especially hereabouts where, as the song says, "old times there are not forgotten"? How do you achieve reconciliation while dismissing those who don't share your views as "race baiters and PCers" without hearing or respecting what they think?

All of those things are elements in potential teachable moments in this case, but this case generated one clear teachable moment. Those who fired Dr. McGinley for standing against racial insensitivity — and who named the district's chief financial officer instead of the district's chief academic officer as interim superintendent — are elected officials who are accountable to the people on Election Day.

Perhaps by the next school board election, they'll also be elected not at-large, but from real single-member districts so that they can more easily be held accountable.

The Rev. Joseph A. Darby is presiding elder of the Beaufort District of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and first vice-president of the Charleston Branch NAACP.

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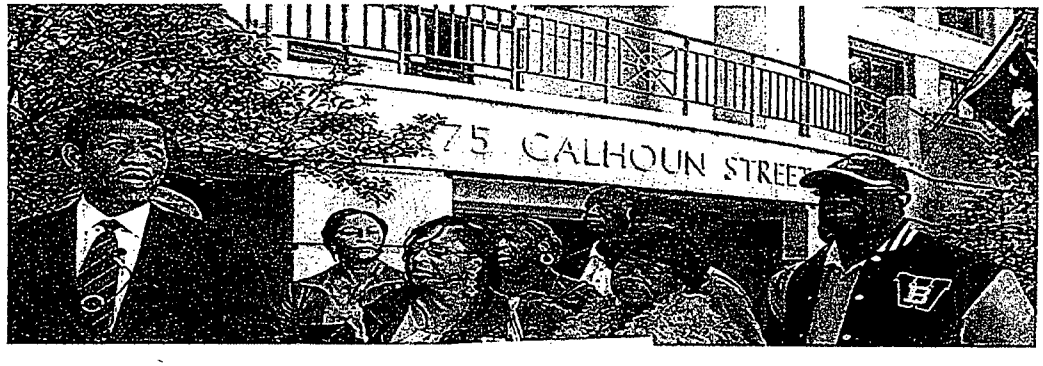
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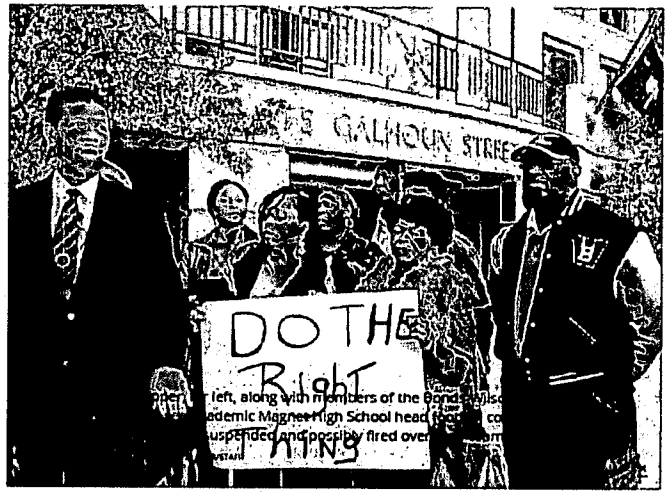
S.C. Rep. Seth Whipper calls for suspension, firing of Academic Magnet coach



(/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195) Amanda Kerr (/apps/pbcs.dll/personalia?ID=195) Email (mailto:akerr@postandcourier.com) @PCAmandaKerr (https://twitter.com/#!/PCAmandaKerr)

Oct 23 2014 1:33 pm Oct 23 6:17 pm





Less than 24 hours after Academic Magnet High School head football coach Bud Walpole got his job back, a state lawmaker and Bonds-Wilson Alumni Association members called for the suspension and possible firing of Walpole and his assistant coaches over what some considered a racially offensive post-game watermelon ritual.

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What do you think?

Do you think any further action needs to be taken in the case of the Academic Magnet High School football team's watermelon ritual?

Bud Walpole and all the other coaches should be suspended or fired.


ADAMS





ROA 904

IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Court of Appeals

APPEAL FROM CHARLESTON COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

Jean H. Toal, Circuit Court Judge

Consolidated Civil Action No.: 2015-CP-10-2389

FILED
2016 DEC 19 PM 1:33
JULIE J. ARMSTRONG
CLERK OF COURT
BY

Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor; and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F., A Minor, Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., A Minor; Adam Olsen Ackerman; and A.E.P., III, ...Appellants,

-v-

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company, and Jones Street Publishers, LLC, Defendants,

Of whom, Jones Street Publishers, LLC is .....Respondent.

NOTICE OF APPEAL

PLEASE take notice that Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor; and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F., A Minor, Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., A Minor; Adam Olsen Ackerman; and A.E.P., III ("Appellants"), pursuant to Rule 203, SCACR, appeals the Order of the Honorable Jean H. Toal signed November 15, 2016 and filed November 18, 2016, granting Defendant Jones Street Publishers, LLC's Motion for Summary Judgment. (Exhibit A).

Appellants file this Notice of Appeal under the consolidated case number used by the lower court in the Order on appeal. The underlying cases – *Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor, and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F., A Minor v. Charleston County School District, et al., Civil Case No. 2014-CP-10-7203; Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., A Minor v. Charleston County School District, et al., Civil Case No.: 2015-CP-10-605; Adam Olsen Ackerman v. Charleston County School District, et al., Civil Case No.: 2015-CP-10-1044; and A.E.P., III v. Charleston County School District, et al., Civil Case No.: 2015-CP-10-2389* – were consolidated in the lower court by an Order signed October 23, 2015. Appellants appeal all of the referenced cases under the consolidated case number 2015-CP-10-2389.

Appellant received written notice of entry of the Order granting Defendant Jones Street Publishers, LLC's Motion for Summary Judgment on November 21, 2016. This Notice is timely filed. A copy of the Order appealed is attached to this Notice.

Respectfully submitted,

PETERS, MURDAUGH, PARKER, ELTZROTH & DETRICK, P.A.

December 16, 2016
Hampton, South Carolina

BY: _____

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IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Court of Appeals

APPEAL FROM CHARLESTON COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

Jean H. Toal, Circuit Court Judge

Case No.: 2014-CP-10-7655

Eugene H. Walpole .....Appellant,

-v-

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company, and Jones Street Publishers, LLC, Defendants,

Of whom, Jones Street Publishers, LLC is .....Respondent.

NOTICE OF APPEAL

PLEASE take notice that Eugene H. Walpole ("Appellant"), pursuant to Rule 203, SCACR, appeals the Order of the Honorable Jean H. Toal signed November 15, 2016 and filed November 18, 2016, granting Defendant Jones Street Publishers, LLC's Motion for Summary Judgment. (Exhibit A).

Appellant received written notice of entry of the Order granting Defendant Jones Street Publishers, LLC's Motion for Summary Judgment on November 21, 2016. This Notice is timely filed. A copy of the Order appealed is attached to this Notice.

[SIGNITURE PAGE TO FOLLOW]

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JULIE J. ARMSTRONG
CLERK OF COURT
BY

Respectfully submitted,

PETERS, MURDAUGH, PARKER, ELTZROTH & DETRICK, P.A.

December 16, 2016
Hampton, South Carolina

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IN THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
In the Court of Appeals

APPEAL FROM CHARLESTON COUNTY
Court of Common Pleas

Jean H. Toal, Circuit Court Judge

Appellate Case No.: 2016-002525
Consolidated Civil Action No.: 2015-CP-10-2389

Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor; and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F., A Minor, Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., A Minor; Adam Olsen Ackerman; and A.E.P., III, ... Plaintiffs,

v.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company, and Jones Street Publishers, LLC, ... Defendants,

And

Eugene Walpole, ... Plaintiff,

v.

Charleston County School District, Kevin Clayton, Axxis Consulting Company, and Jones Street Publishers, LLC, ... Defendants,

Of Whom Eugene Walpole, Amy Garrard and Lee Garrard, Guardians Ad Litem for R.C.G., A Minor; and Dean Frailey and Kathryn Frailey, Guardians Ad Litem for C.F., A Minor, Richard Nelson and Cheryl Nelson, Guardians Ad Litem for D.G.N., A Minor; Adam Olsen Ackerman; and A.E.P., III, are the ..... Appellants,

And

Of Whom Jones Street Publishers, LLC is the ..... Respondent.

CERTIFICATE OF COUNSEL

RECEIVED
JUL 18 2017
SC Court of Appeals

The Undersigned hereby certifies that the Record on Appeal contains all material proposed to be included by any of the parties and not any other material.

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July 12, 2017
Hampton, South Carolina