

Press Release

Enclosed is an open letter from my daughter Catherine Rose Cortez from Louisiana. She has asked that this letter be printed in all New York newspapers as well as outside New York.

Any contributions to this project would be greatly appreciated. Send contributions directly to Ronnie Moore, Field Secretary, c/o Committee on Registration Education, 306 Ivey Street, Plaquemine, Louisiana.

Cathy is 18 years old....Born in New York City on October 6th, 1945. Attended public and private schools in New York. She graduated from Notre Dame High School on June 1963. Started her freshman year at Hunter. At this point she is more interested in helping others before continuing her career.

Home Address: 3555 Oxford Avenue
Bronx 63, New York
KI 9-1714

Mrs. Marie Witherspoon...Mother...same address as above
Chairman, Northwest New York Core Chapter

Press Release....

7/13/64

ONE MAN.....equals.....ONE VOTE

GIVE.....Your answer to the shocking events in Mississippi.

Provide the funds to carry on the work of Core task force workers Michael Schwerner, James Chaney, and student volunteer Andy Goodman, who made the awful sacrifice for freedom for all of us.....GIVE NOW.

The Northwest New York Core Chapter (Riverdale-Marble Hill and Kingsbridge) is coordinating a city-wide solicitation drive to obtain much needed funds for the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project. The City of New York Department of Welfare has issued permits enabling us to solicit with cannisters in stores, door-to-door, office buildings, etc.

All dedicated individuals, organizations, etc. are urged to participate in this drive. For cannisters and further information please call.....Philippa Poze, Coordinator, Kingsbridge 9-4448.

Let's join forces to make this project a tremendous success.

Yours for freedom.

Marie Witherspoon,
Chairman
Northwest New York Core

My personal experiences have only been brief run ins with the police in the line of "questioning" and "following me." Of course they feel it's in our protection!!! In Clinton I was riding around on the back roads and the Sheriff Manchester was following us. He could have stopped us then but he waited until he had an audience on Main Street before he threw his sirene. They he decided he'd put us on display so that everyone could get a good look at "Nigger Lovers" and ~~some of the best~~ "outside agitators" and in case they saw us alone some night they'd be sure and remember us. Things like this make up a few of our CORE Rules:

1. Always have identification
2. Never go anywhere alone
3. Don't walk in inter-racial couples at night
4. Remember all important phone numbers
5. Use protective position (knees to chest, elbows at knees and hands clasped tight behind neck)
6. Remember, "No sacrifice is too great for the moment."

You won't find these rules in any rule book but you soon find the things taken very much for granted anywhere else cannot be slighted upon here. As I said not too much has happened to me but as far as my friends go, well let me tell you of a few instances where Louisiana is different. In Monroe which is the Northern and most difficult section of Louisiana, Dave Kramer, Bill Yates Ruthie Wells and two Negro women were arrested. They had all been

out canvassing, trying to get the people to come to our clinics and learn how to register. The three Negro women were released and the two white men were held on charges of vagrancy "and that covers a world of things." In St. Francisville Ronnie Moore (Negro), Mimi Feingold(White), Rob Hurwitt(White), and Ronnie Segal(White) were with a woman who had just failed her test at the court house when the ex-sheriff, who swore, "I'll kill every Nigger who tries to register!!" threw a rock at Rob's back ripping his shirt and cutting his back. He was quickly pulled into the car when the ex-sheriff pulled a gun and fired aimlessly at the car. No one was hurt and nothing of ours was hit. In Clinton, Jim Van Matre (white) was waiting for a man outside the courthouse. Three white boys came up started a fight by a fake tripping over Jim's foot. They were joined by three other white boys and a group of mixed spectators about 40. He was knocked to the ground and immediately took the protective position. Jim was rolled down the steps and across Main Street. When they finally let him go his shirt was torn and he was dizzy from the kicks rendered on and about his back and head. He was pretty bruised up though. When he went to file a complaint he didn't have one witness not even one Negro, not even the man he had been waiting for admitted that he knew him. In West Monroe, Sunday, July 5th, Charles Fenton(white), Bill Ya (white) and Frank Agee (Negro) were in the home of Reverend Brown

and five carloads of white guys surrounded the house. The police refused to help and wouldn't respond in any way. Finally the sheriff agreed to escort them (Charlie, Bill and Frank) to the City line of Monroe where Chief Kelly of Monroe would take over (Chief Kelly was not waiting and had no intentions of waiting at the line). At the city line the sheriff let them go and Charlie got the Valiant to go 110 m.p.h. with those five cars after them. Of course, following CORE, they the heroes, escaped. These are just some of the things that have happened. For us it's been easy but when we look from Louisiana to Mississippi we wonder how civilized the United States is. No longer can I excuse the whites of New York or any place else. This whole business makes me ill. I won't preach hatred because as a Negro I've got to rise above the white mans childish standards. He's a fool though if he thinks we are going to wait any longer. The Negro in America is like a pregnant woman, who, when her time has come, is told to wait...We can't wait!!! We shall overcome and be the better man of it because we shall stick to our belief of non-violence no matter how hard that white man tries to bring us down.

I call this letter "ROAD TO NEW ROADS" and it is spiritually and litterally. We are making that journey now and I'm on my way and I won't turn back....

I'm going to keep on talking, keep on walking, marching up to freedom land....

Cathy