

The September edition of *Focus Magazine* was my school's first-ever magazine produced over the summer. It was the largest magazine produced in my school's history. It was also my first magazine as editor-in-chief.

During production of that magazine, I had the privilege of interviewing, growing close with and telling the story of Lee Smith, who in 1964 became the first Black student at my recently desegregated school.

Furthermore, I wrote an editorial, praising my school's recent advances towards racial equality and increased diversity and inclusion. I also wrote opening and closing "from the editor" statements — the former highlighting the importance of reporting on the Black Lives Matter Movement and the latter offering hope that our country is moving in a positive direction. I wanted the reader to have a clear understanding of the purpose and intended takeaways of my magazine to maximize its community impact. It worked.

"I Can't Breathe" has become a crucial landmark of my school's approach to diversity and inclusion. The magazine is featured front-and-center in the Community Conversations section of my school's Community, Inclusion & Diversity webpage, and it was featured in a school news article. It was named the best In-Depth News Feature package in the state of Texas.

After a successful first magazine, I wanted to take on a more lighthearted subject for the December issue. As a half-Mexican, half-Cuban member of the Latino community, I've had exposure to a wide array of human experiences. And as a journalist, I believe everybody has a story to offer — so I made that the topic of my next magazine. I created a system that randomly selected forty community members and asked them questions specifically written to discover stories. Narrowing it down to ten to write stories on, I discovered stories about love, family, sports, and even the finding of a human femur on the shore of a lake — a story which I told in an alternative, first-person format.

After a successful lighthearted magazine, I wanted, for my third magazine, to return to what *Focus* does best — serious, informative, conversation-sparking journalism. The storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 was a perfect incentive to create something that, as a staff, we had wanted to create for a long time — a magazine about the current political scene.

The magazine ended up larger than September's, breaking a record I had already set. I coordinated two essays written by faculty at my school with PhDs in history to include scholarly perspectives. I also coordinated a guest column from a Georgetown University student to provide a perspective from a Washington, D.C. resident. I wrote the two editorials at the end of the magazine and I once again provided opening and closing copy to introduce readers to the purpose and intended takeaways. I once again ended the magazine with a message of hope — that the great American experiment was not a failure.

Being editor-in-chief of *Focus* is the most comprehensive opportunity I have received thus far to make a difference with my writing. I am proud of my work, and am grateful to my community for such fantastic reception.

1. In an opening statement at the beginning of the magazine, I implored readers to “never be satisfied with the knowledge they have,” and that “there is always a new perspective, a new idea, a new story to embrace.” As I built a publication on such a difficult topic, I wanted to make sure readers knew those ideas about perspective and understanding came to the forefront.
2. This was the first time Lee Smith’s story was told. Because of the story, my school community was informed about not only his incredible experience as the only Black student at an all-white school but also his achievements as a Civil Rights lawyer. In fact, after reading the story, my school’s Office of Alumni Relations created a new award, the Lee Smith ‘65 Courage and Honor Alumni Award, to honor his legacy.
3. This was the last piece written for the magazine. I wanted to wait so I could witness the impact that the movement had in the fight towards racial equality and use that to weave a narrative of hope for the future. As tragic as the death of George Floyd was, I wanted readers to see that his death had made a real impact — a nice summation of the dozens of stories we had put together over the summer.
4. I put together an opening copy to give context to the “Everybody has a Story” magazine. I wanted to explain that I had randomly selected community members to prove the concept that everybody does have a story, as well as share why the topic is meaningful to me and journalists everywhere.
5. Doug Rummel found a human femur on the shores of Lake Texoma, yes, but Doug Rummel is also a bubbly personality who loves sharing his adventures. Instead of writing a conventional story in fact-quote format, I wanted to give readers a better insight into his personality, emotions and reactions throughout the story. After a lengthy interview, I assembled an assortment of his quotes to create a compelling first-person narrative.



GEORGE FLOYD, 1973-2020

# WHY HERE? WHY NOW?

*George Floyd. Breonna Taylor. Rayshard Brooks. Ahmaud Arbery. Tony McDade. Dion Johnson.*

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed in Minneapolis after allegedly attempting to use a counterfeit \$20 bill at a grocery store. After being handcuffed face-down on the street, officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee to Floyd's neck for more than eight minutes. For the final several of those minutes, Floyd was unresponsive and had no pulse. None of the four police officers present attempted to revive him.

Following this, amidst a global COVID-19 pandemic, an international surge of protests led by the Black Lives Matter movement ensued, organized in all 50 states, over 60 countries and across every continent except Antarctica.

People want change.

They not only want to see an end to police brutality, they're also protesting what they believe is systemic racism in the United States.

This magazine attempts to not only tell their stories but also shed light on this movement, a movement with ancient roots yet new ideas, a movement that will not subside until change is made.

We stand with the Black lives in this country that are hurting and have been hurting for generations.

Because Black lives matter.

**We understand** the great responsibility and challenge that producing a magazine of this nature entails. It is our hope that the hard work and effort of the *Focus* team is reflected in every page, every paragraph, every word.

The St. Mark's community is comprised of a diverse group of students, faculty, staff and alumni. The school has done an admirable job building awareness and has made successful efforts to increase the diversity and inclusivity of its community.

But the world is changing. And with that change, we ourselves are called to change. We ourselves are called to be more aware of the struggles of other people and better embrace their value.

As journalists, part of our job in facilitating this change in giving people ways to inform themselves and expose themselves to new, sometimes frightening perspectives outside their community bubble — outside their comfort zones. Which bring us to this magazine.

Our goal as the *Focus* staff is to expose students to the complicated world that lies just outside 10600 Preston Road — and to encourage them to think. Think about the world, about the people around them and about themselves.

And to never be satisfied with the knowledge they have. There is always a new perspective, a new idea, a new story to embrace.

Cristian Pereira  
*Editor-in-chief*

# WHAT'S NEXT?

The death of Civil Rights icon John Lewis reminded us how different the United States looked in the 1960s.

Before Lee Smith '65, the school's first Black graduate, came to St. Mark's, he lived in a Black neighborhood and attended a Black school. He was not allowed in many restaurants, movie theaters and stores. As a senior here, Smith faced racism from classmates and parents, having to be sent home multiple times throughout the year over safety concerns.

Fast forward to today, where the country finds itself in the midst of one of the biggest American civil rights movements of our generation. This movement is far from over. But how will these pleas for change manifest themselves?

Well, it's already starting.

On Aug. 11, presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden picked Kamala Harris as his running mate, making her the first Black woman on a major party ticket. The NFL team in Washington D.C. officially changed its once-controversial name to the Washington Football Team, marking the end of a decades long debate. Aunt Jemima pancake mix, Land O' Lakes butter and other brands are changing their logos over concerns of racial stereotyping. And the state of Mississippi is currently in the process of changing its state flag to remove symbols of the Confederacy. Furthermore, city governments across the country are working to reform their police departments, lowering funding and changing rules and regulations.

What a long way this country has come.

But what a long journey ahead it still has.

Because Lewis's fight for racial equality has not ended. His death was also a reminder that there is still unfinished work. There is still change to be made — individually, collectively and nationally.

As we enter an unprecedented era in America's storied history, only time will tell what the effects of this movement will be. But we do know one thing — they will be profound.

■ Cristian Pereira  
*Editor-in-chief*



AHMAUD ARBERY, 1994-2020

ARTWORK Cooper Cole

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## One week, three Zoom calls and 480 responses later...

**B**efore we can write for *The ReMarker*, before we can design for *Focus*, before we can send anything to print, as Beginning Journalism students, we read one book: *The Fiddler in the Subway* by Gene Weingarten, the only reporter to win two Pulitzer Prizes for feature writing.

It's a quick read. Twenty short, powerful stories about all kinds of people — children's entertainers, nonvoters, violinists and more.

When asked how he came up with the idea to travel around the country and write feature stories about some of the most ordinary-seeming people, Weingarten wrote the following in his introduction:

"If you have the patience to find it and the skill to tell it, there's a story behind everyone and everything."

In essence, *everybody has a story*.

This issue, we put that to the test.

Because life is a series of twists and turns. And everybody, from your parents cooking breakfast to your last period teacher sending you home at the end of the day, has experienced these twists and turns in their own way. Everyone is filled with perspectives, ideas and stories. Yet most people never get to hear these stories.

Did you know Nurse Julie got engaged two weeks after meeting her husband of over 40 years?

Did you know Paul Mlakar's parachute was tangled mid-air while he was free-falling?

Did you know alum Stuart Nance '78 and his grandfather unknowingly bet on the same winning horse, at the same horse race, *twice*?

With this magazine, we hope to give you answers to questions you didn't even know you had.

**For the most part**, *Focus* dedicates each issue to a single topic. But how does one tackle a single-topic magazine if the single topic is everyone?

With help from Mathematics Department Chair Shane May, we randomly selected 40 possible story candidates out of over 1,000 students, faculty, staff and alumni using a random number generator and the school directory.

Our team came up with 12 questions, including:

- If you could relive a single day in your life, which would you choose?
- What is your closest encounter with death?
- What are you proudest of in your life?
- What's the kindest, most helpful or most influential thing someone has done for you?
- If a fire broke out in your home and you were only allowed to save one object, what would you save?

And one week, three Zoom calls and 480 responses later, we narrowed them down to the ten stories we thought were the most engaging, most unique and most riveting. These are the ten stories that appear in this magazine — some sad, some frightening, some eye-opening.

Enjoy.

And remember — these are just a few of tens, hundreds, even thousands of stories that are surrounding you right now.

Because everybody *does* have a story.



**Donning his classic** dress shirt and jeans, Founders Master Teaching Chair Doug Rummel stands outside the Winn Science Center underneath the Ginkgo tree, whose leaves all fall during an annual 48-hour period (above). Rummel has been a long-time lover of the outdoors: "Between the ages of 12 and 17, I spent a total of a year underneath the stars."

# Doug Rummel

After finding a human femur buried in the sand at an eighth grade campout, Founders Master Teaching Chair Doug Rummel sprung into action, contacting authorities and helping a family along the way.

**D**oug Rummel had just arrived at 10600 Preston Rd. His first year was full of new: new campus, new classrooms, new students — and a new responsibility: group leader on the eighth grade campout.

No big deal. Rummel had spent vast amounts of time in the outdoors and he loved nature.

But when the bus dropped him off at Lake Texoma, the last thing he expected to find on his journey was the remains of a dead person.

Here's the story in Rummel's own words.

"Fall of 1998, my first year teaching here. It was the eighth grade campout — three days, two nights.

It's the second and last hike to the second and last campsite — Juniper point. We were going to leave at noon the next day.

1998 had been a record drought year. The lake level hadn't been that low in at least a decade, and the beaches were wide — they haven't been that wide since. Normally, you can't hike the beaches because they're all mud and you get slogged into the muck, but we found that we could hit the sand and bypass some of the route.

I grew up most of my life outdoors when I was in high school. As a kid, I was looking for animals, hunting, geology — just finding stuff. And as a result, on campouts, I like to go to the back, take it slow and look for things.

We're maybe 100 yards from camp. Everything was tossed up on the shore — tires, a car body, dead fish, cows — all the hidden things that get dumped into a lake were exposed, and the kids were having a great time finding all of them. You don't need to mess with that, right?

Well, I'm walking down the beach. And I notice a bone sticking up, two and a half inches out of the sand at a 45 degree angle. I did pre-med in college, so I've been in an anatomy lab before.

At first, I thought it was a cow femur. For whatever reason there's so many cows in Lake Texoma, God knows why. But this femur was too thin to be a cow's, and it was too big to be a coyote's or a mountain lion's. So I didn't touch it.

I was pretty sure I was looking at a human bone.

I went back to the campsite and directed

my group as if everything was fine and normal. I didn't want anyone else to go down there investigating. We set up shelter, gathered our food for dinner, got everybody squared away and let them loose to go their merry way, which to eighth-graders means going to the lake and throwing rocks.

Grabbing a black trash bag, I went back to the beach. I figured if I used the plastic, I could probably do away the sand and wrap it up. I carefully dug around and pulled it out.

It was a little more than half a human femur, about two-thirds the length from the kneecap up. One can tell a lot of features about an individual based on the thickness and shape of their bones. This was a male, probably in his 30s or 40s and in good shape with strong muscular attachments — it was obvious where the quadriceps were attached to the bone.

I wrapped this thing up and took it secretly back to the campsite. If this was a human bone, this thing had been here for a while, so an extra 12 hours wasn't going to make a difference in any sort of case.

I kept the bone hidden and wrapped up while we hiked to where the busses were going to get us. The base camp guys were there — they had been in charge of running the whole campout — and I showed them the bone. Ultimately, we ended up deciding that we needed to contact the Grayson County Sheriff.

When the sheriff got there, he explained to us that Lake Texoma had become a dumping ground for bodies from Dallas — they were finding seven to eight per summer — and apparently there were a lot of drug deals gone bad.

Safe to say, the county police were experienced with these kinds of things. In fact, it had become such a problem that they had received some federal money to deal with the problem and had invested in a really nice boat for hunting the bodies.

After looking at the bone, the sheriff made some calls, and a whole team showed up — a medical examiner, a diver and, of course, the really nice boat. They went to the lake, sectioned off the entire inlet and swept every inch of the floor looking for more bones — they even swept a large portion of the coastline. But they never found any other bones.

Later that year at the beginning of December, somebody called the switchboard at school asking for my name. The sheriff had an update: They had found a DNA sample, at the

time a rare occurrence, and they had found a match.

Apparently, this bone sat for a month in the medical examiner's office. The sheriff had a favor that was owed to him in Denton County, which had a relatively advanced DNA lab. Normally at the time, the cost for a DNA sample would have been in the thousands, but the sheriff was able to exchange his owed favor for a free sample. And they got a hit.

It was a man who had been lost for close to a decade.

He'd been out with his buddy fishing in the late spring or early summer. A thunderstorm came up, as they often do. They got caught out, went into a wave wrong and their boat flipped. And I don't know if this guy had a life preserver on, but the other guy survived. He reported his friend missing, but they couldn't find the body. They couldn't even find any sign of him anywhere in or by the lake.

And because they didn't have a body, the life insurance refused to cut the check.

This guy had a wife and two young kids, and they lost their house. They had to move into a trailer. They were in fairly dire financial straits, going from having a stable income to basically no income.

So the sheriff was calling me, because the insurance company had just gotten approval and had cut them a chunk of change. And apparently, that had been enough to get the family into a house, get the kids into private school and give them enough money to have a college fund. It was a big deal.

Anytime you have a loved one that's disappeared, it's tough not knowing what happened. You don't have closure. Now the family had closure. The sheriff had also called me to tell me that in a week or two, they were going to have a memorial service up at the lake and that the family had invited me to come. I was floored.

I told the sheriff how absolutely wonderful it was that they had closure, but I also told him it would feel awkward to show up as "the guy that found the remains of the husband." I just imagine people introducing me as "the guy that found the remains of the husband."

I told the sheriff to go in my stead and that I was really, really happy for them.

I'm glad it all worked out."

**Story** Cristian Pereira  
**Photos** Sal Hussain, Courtesy Doug Rummel

More than 50 years ago, the first Black student to ever attend St. Mark's arrived on campus. His name was Lee Smith '65, and he changed forever what it means to be a Marksman.

# 1965

STORY Cristian Pereira, Robert Pou  
PHOTO Courtesy Development Office, Lee Smith

This school used to be a school only white boys attended. That's what the charter said. And that's what happened. But that changed as soon as Lee Smith '65 stepped foot on 10600 Preston Rd. in 1964.

It wasn't easy for him to get in. And it was even harder for him to stay.

In the 1960s during the peak of the Civil Rights Movement, segregation in Dallas was rampant. Movie theaters, restaurants and schools had different rules and regulations for white and Black citizens. There were white neighborhoods and Black neighborhoods, white colleges and Black colleges, white parks and Black parks.

But integration was on the horizon. Some institutions in Dallas had already started breaking down barriers. And the school's administration was discussing the possibility of joining them.

Enter 17-year-old Lee Smith.

A junior at all-Black James Madison High School, Smith participated in science fairs, winning awards from NASA and the Air Force. An accomplished chemistry student, Smith wanted to continue studying science. He entered into the St. Mark's Advanced Chemistry summer program — which was integrated at the time even though the school wasn't.

During his time with the program, Smith met former Science Department Chair Christie Drago.

Drago noticed Smith's superior academic abilities and had him take a St. Mark's entrance exam — Smith scored very well.

"Those who were not in favor of integration at St. Mark's had made the point consistently that there was no one coming out of the Dallas black schools who would be qualified, so there was really no internal discussion about next steps," Smith said. "When Drago presented me as a candidate, with the accolades I had plus my admission test scores, for those people who were interested in that [integration] conversation, that moved the needle."

After much discussion, St. Mark's made the decision to start its integration process with Smith. After a charter change

and discussions with the board, Smith was called in to meet with Headmaster Christopher Berrisford.

"They thought I would be a good addition to the school," Smith said. "They offered me a place. Also, they knew cost was an issue, and there was a person who wished to remain anonymous that had offered to cover all my tuition expense."

It wasn't an easy decision to up and leave James Madison. Smith was a top student, academically gifted and a community leader.

"I was very active in civic things and community things. I wasn't unhappy where I was," Smith said. "But I also understood that looking down the line at college there were things at St. Mark's that would benefit me. And it would be foolish not to take advantage of that."

The St. Mark's community reacted to Smith's arrival in different ways. Some were excited and happy with the decision to integrate, believing that St. Mark's as a reputable institution should be among the pioneers of Dallas integration.

But it was Texas in 1965, however, and some were vehemently opposed to Black students at St. Mark's. Smith was sent home multiple times throughout his senior year out of fear for his safety, one time just for dancing with a white girl at a house party.

"Somehow somebody had promised the parents that no matter what happened, there would be no interracial dancing," Smith said. "And that I would be told not to dance with white girls. I didn't get the memo."

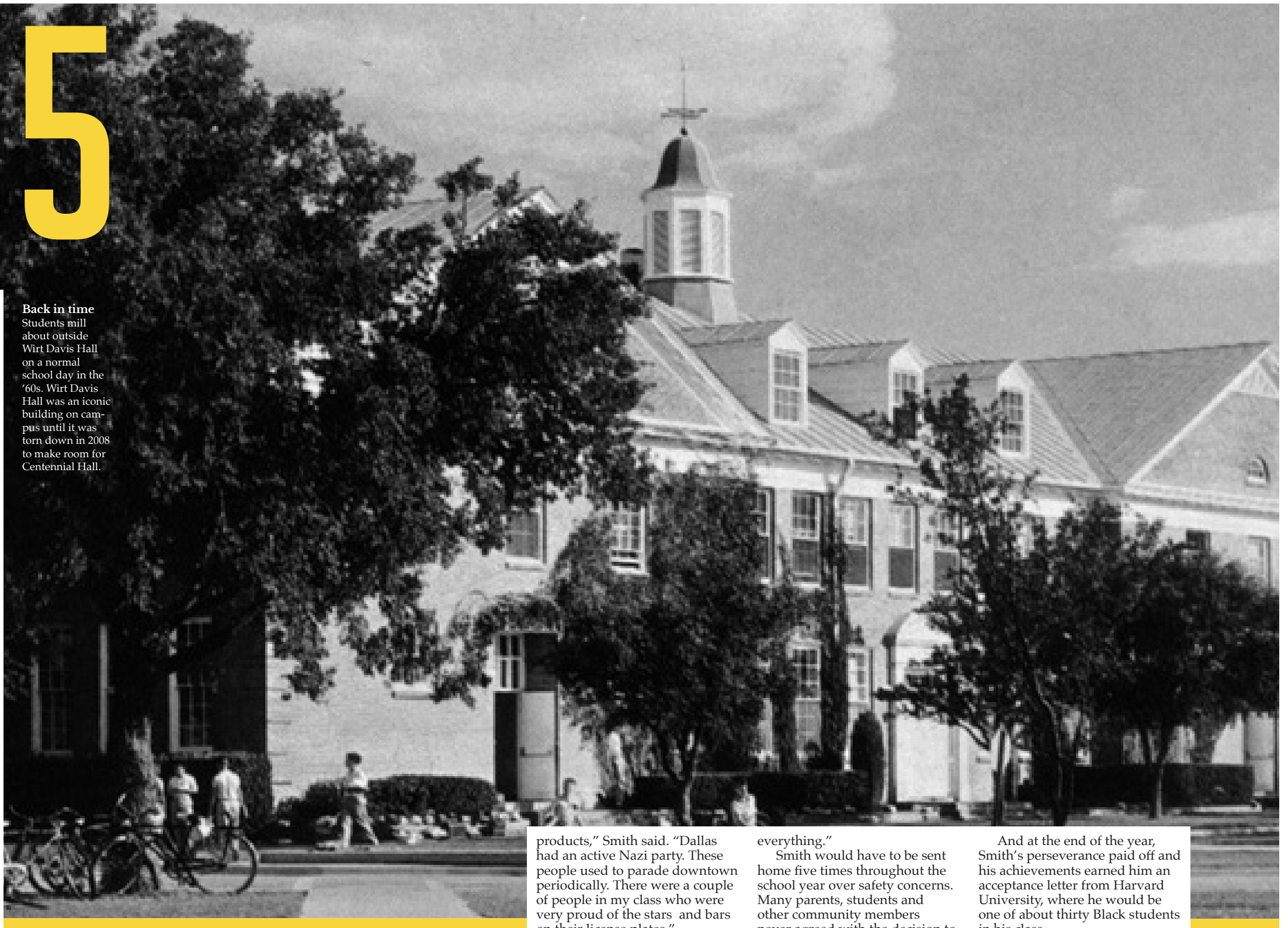
Smith's dance with a white girl led to certain parents threatening to withdraw their funding of the Davis Hall expansion going on at the time.

"They wanted me out of St. Mark's," Smith said. "I was called to the headmaster's office and told I needed to go home for my safety. I guess the boys were counting on me showing up on Monday so they could do their part, and I guess they needed to be called in and counseled or whatever."

These sort of things happened to Smith often within the St. Mark's community and also within the greater Dallas community.

"I could understand what was going on with the boys because these boys were

**Back in time**  
Students mill about outside Wirt Davis Hall on a normal school day in the '60s. Wirt Davis Hall was an iconic building on campus until it was torn down in 2008 to make room for Centennial Hall.



products," Smith said. "Dallas had an active Nazi party. These people used to parade downtown periodically. There were a couple of people in my class who were very proud of the stars and bars on their license plates."

But Smith had resilience — without it, being the first Black student at an all-white school would have been nearly impossible.

"I was thrust into that environment," Smith said. "But I had tools to deal with it. The people at St. Mark's, with the isolation they had, had no tools to deal with me. Their perspective was that I had crashed their party, and I was the one causing

everything."

Smith would have to be sent home five times throughout the school year over safety concerns. Many parents, students and other community members never agreed with the decision to allow Smith at the school. But he remained unphased.

"Growing up in Dallas during segregation, you're not unfamiliar with white people who hate Black people," Smith said. "I learned you can't wear your feelings on your sleeve. You don't let other people define you. If you know what you're doing, you just cut your own way. They're going their way, and you're going yours."

And at the end of the year, Smith's perseverance paid off and his achievements earned him an acceptance letter from Harvard University, where he would be one of about thirty Black students in his class.

As described by former headmaster Arnie Holtberg, Smith's journey is a remarkable one.

"He's a man of sincere and real conviction," Holtberg said. "To achieve what he achieved in the mid '60s took a lot of courage. 10600 Preston Road was not like the St. Mark's today in terms of its population of students. Back then he was more or less on his own."



**Photographed**  
Senior Lee Smith (left) in the 1964-65 yearbook.



**School play**  
Senior Lee Smith (right) acted alongside Tommy Lee Jones.

When the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS) from the Southwest came to accredit the school in 2019, the committee asked Headmaster David Dini why there was no diversity director. Dini cited *Focus Magazine* as an example of one of the ways the school exposes students to new perspectives.

"One of the questions that was asked was, 'Well, if you don't have somebody that's designated as a director of diversity and inclusion, what does that say about the school? Is it not a priority?'" Dini said. "And I said, 'If you want to know about St. Mark's and how we think about issues around diversity and inclusion, rather than making sort of a superficial judgment without really knowing the nuances of the culture of the school, you need to read what our boys say about it.'"

Dini spoke to newspaper adviser Ray Westbrook and collected a sampling of

newspaper and magazine issues that have dealt with topics like race, diversity, gender identity and sexual orientation and inclusion.

When explaining its accreditation, ISAS specifically mentioned *Focus Magazine* and *The ReMarker* as great publications which offer differing view points to students.

From high school, the school's first Black student, Lee Smith '65, graduated from Harvard, earned a law degree at the University of Washington and began practicing law in Seattle.

"I wanted to represent regular people," Smith said. "Seattle had a problem with cops that liked to shoot Black people. I would sue bad cops. I learned that they're expensive to pursue and you're not gonna win, but I used

money I was making from other cases to make that statement."

Smith also helped lower the failure rate among Black students taking the University of Washington admissions test. He then moved back to Dallas, where he was a chief regional civil rights attorney, enforcing civil rights laws at schools and hospitals in Texas and surrounding states. He was instrumental in removing a statue of Jefferson Davis at the University of Texas. One of his biggest projects was helping fund Black colleges in the Texas school system in the 1980s.

"We're almost 15 years past the Civil Rights Act and this gigantic endowment for the University of Texas only went to white schools," Smith said. "I was the head of that, and a change in the constitution in the '80s turned on the tap for initially 24 million a year more to these Black schools."



**LEE SMITH '65**  
Active alumni and attorney

Fast forward to 1993. Arnie Holtberg becomes headmaster. Before then, Smith had not been invited to alumni visits and campus events. But Holtberg had a new philosophy that would drastically change the school — a philosophy that continues to affect the St. Mark's community today.

"Arnie's overall climate of inclusion included me," Smith said. "And that is when it felt different."

This style was intentional. Holtberg believed in the importance of diversity.

"My objective was to have the very best student body we could have," Holtberg said. "To enroll the most talented, accomplished boys and young men we could from every background imaginable. Inclusivity fits into that because you bring different people from different backgrounds together and you have different opinions expressed by definition."

This mentality carried over to how Holtberg's St. Mark's treated Smith.

"I made sure that he understood that I valued him," Holtberg said. "That he brought something obviously very special to the school, that his character stood out for me and that he was a full fledged member of the alumni body like any other graduate of the school, no questions asked, no argument, just a full fledged member. Let's not think anything else or question anything, he is a Marksman through and through."

Smith sees how Holtberg's approaches to diversity and inclusivity affected the school and moved it forward. These changes not only affected the overall school community but also Smith's personal relationship with the school as well.

"When I left St. Mark's, my friends were my true friends," Smith said. "But I did not feel like the school was my true school. It felt like I was a footnote. St. Mark's is my true school now, but that took many years. And I think Arnie had a lot to do with this change in how the school saw me and my own pride at St. Mark's."

Today, Dini continues to lead the school with the same principles that led to Smith's admittance and a similar philosophy that Holtberg governed the school with.

"I'm grateful that there are people that

have stood in those positions over time and made difficult decisions in the face of opposition and disagreement, but believed firmly and strongly that it was the right thing to do," Dini said. "What a brave and courageous young man Lee Smith was coming here at the time and forging a new path for the future, for our school and community."

Dini recognizes how different the school is today versus what it was in the 1960s.

"I think there's no question that the school has grown and changed and evolved — so many of the principles and values that were instilled in the school from its founding have led to significant growth and improvement with time," Dini said. "In this past quarter century plus, the school has become a far more diverse community than it was when I arrived. And I think we will continue to become an even better school."

Smith occasionally visits St. Mark's, and Dini is proud that St. Mark's can call him a graduate of the school and that he can share his experiences with younger Marksmen. Dini says that Lee's perspectives and life experiences shared through chapel talks, alumni events and newspaper interviews have been beneficial to new Marksmen and important to the school's history and future.

Looking ahead, Dini wants to continue increasing diversity among all categories. Goals IV, a list of long-term goals for school improvement, for example, states an increased push to maximize socioeconomic inclusivity among the St. Mark's student body.

"We need to break down barriers of access to even more boys in the future," Dini said. "A lot of enthusiasm about that as we go forward is to make sure that any boy with promise and ability that could thrive and make a difference here, that we can remove barriers of access for those students."

Dini also wants to continue to hire increasingly diverse faculty members to help enrich the lives of students.

"It is also important for the boys to have opportunities to see lived experiences in their teachers that are similar to their own," Dini said. "And that matters and is certainly a major priority going forward for us."

STORY Cristian Pereira, Robert Pou  
PHOTO Courtesy Lee Smith, Ekansh Tambe



Present day Centennial Hall, a building that didn't exist when Lee Smith attended the school, stands tall at the south end of the Perot Quadrangle.

2020

More than 50 years after the first Black student graduated, the school still feels his impact and the legacy he left behind.