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BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

July 5, 1963

The Hon. Terry Sanford  
Governor of North Carolina  
State Capitol  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Sir:

I should not be writing this letter if two rather unrelated events had not been accidentally juxtaposed in time for me. The first of these events was your appearance yesterday on national television (the Huntley-Brinkley Report) with a most moving and gratifying appeal for equal opportunity in your state and a proclamation that hiring for state jobs would henceforth be on a non-discriminatory basis. Had it not been for the other event, this would have been marked down in my mind as another example of what a progressive and democratic state can do under the leadership of an able man. In fact, other events in North Carolina in the past have led me to that general and happy conclusion.

However, the second event (which actually occurred first, but did not play on my conscience until yesterday) surrounded my taking my eight-year-old daughter to camp near Rosman, North Carolina, early this week. It was there, at a camp called Summerlane, that I learned that the camp program which had been planned was being altered and abridged because certain citizens of Transylvania County had visited the camp several times threatening violence "if niggers are brought in." The camp had been planned on an integrated basis. This type of visit apparently occurred several times in the last several weeks. Last week, as I understand it, leading citizens of the town of Brevard called members of the camp's staff together in their city and washed their hands of any responsibility for the actions of persons from Rosman and nearby.

Mr. George von Hilsheimer, of New York, who organized the camp, then decided to move the group known to contain Negroes to another state. Whether or not my child's group was to be "permitted" to remain was still in doubt when I left to return to my teaching duties at this college. Needless to say, I have been a bit uneasy this week.

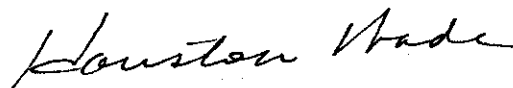
I have these facts only on the say of several of the counsellors at the camp, but the events were recounted consistently. It might be said that the personnel at the camp were unduly frightened by hollow threats, but given the fact that they had no phone, that it is many miles to Rosman by a single road from other cities in the area, and given the fact that their charges are children, I think the staff had just cause for worry.

Texas has its own racial problems; they are no less frequent nor severe. I certainly do not mean to be blameless or without shame. I am writing to you because statements you made yesterday indicate that you are a just and sincere man. They also indicate that you may be unaware of this case of unlawful and unmitigated racism that stands a chance of breaking into national headlines and has certainly already gone too far. I am not even sure that there is anything to be done. My experience in local matters of this type--though none of them directly similar--has been that lawlessness breeds more of its own kind. Besides the fact that an injustice to many and a moral wrong has passed, those who perpetrated it and those who acquiesced in its commission (the "leaders" of Brevard) are confident that the matter has been settled by their acts. This means that the future could hold serious problems for someone.

We left our daughter in North Carolina when many other parents would not have. We did for several reasons, not the least of which is our knowledge that she must face the reality of vicious people in the world. We also have confidence in the staff members at Summerlane and trust that they will keep her from bodily harm. But the people who have invested their ideas, efforts and money in Summerlane and the children who will attend summer camp there have lost something which may not be regained. It is an injustice and a threat which should not escape your attention.

In the name of the future of our nation and our precious children, I am

Sincerely,



Houston Wade