

*P. M. S.
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2218 Myers Street
Durham, North Carolina 27707
April 7, 1968

The Honorable Dan K. Moore
Office of the Governor, Capitol Building
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Governor Moore:

Early Friday morning, in the aftermath of the tragic assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, I wrote to my Congressman, Representative Nick Galifianakis, expressing my grief at the murder of this great American and my hope that Mr. Galifianakis, as my representative in Congress, would work to solve the problems of discrimination, oppression, and poverty which threaten to tear apart the very foundations of our country. I also asked that, in particular, he would vote for the civil rights bill now before the House of Representatives.

During the next two days, after having reflected long and hard upon the meaning of that terrible event, I concluded that it was important for me to express my feelings and thoughts and hopes to as many people as possible who can be influential and effective in helping our whole country to remedy, on both local and national levels, the problems of inequity and injustice which confront the American people today. Accordingly, I am addressing copies of this letter to my mayor, my governor, my representative, my senators, and my president.

I concluded also, however, during my reflections and searchings, that it was important that the people to whom I addressed my thoughts know who I am and who I am not so that they might ascertain what segment of this nation I represent.

I am not a civil rights worker. I am not a member of any political or social action groups. I have never participated in any demonstrations or protests. I am a native Southerner. I was born and raised in the South, specifically in Raleigh and Greensboro, North Carolina, and in Roanoke, Virginia. My parents are also Southerners: North Carolinian and Georgian. I was raised as a segregationist. I was taught, as were most white Southerners, to distrust and look down upon Negroes and, to a lesser extent, Jews, Catholics, Northerners, and foreigners. As I grew older I began to examine the attitudes I had been taught and I gradually came to abhor and reject them. As I have grown older I have had opportunities to meet people of many races and creeds and I can no longer judge people as groups but only as individuals.

I do not consider this attitude of judging people as individuals a radical or extremist stance. And although I have a college

education and probably an above average income as a laboratory technician at the Veterans' Administration Hospital in Durham, in most areas of my life I am a fairly average citizen. But I am concerned about this country of ours which has been so good to me and has provided me with so many opportunities. I am concerned because I have learned over the years that one major reason for my having had the social and educational opportunities that I have had is that I was born white, a circumstance over which I had no control. I am concerned because others, chiefly the Negroes of America, are far less fortunate than I largely due to the environment into which they were born. For the color of their skin, over which they had no control, is the prime reason for their having been born into and kept in a stultifying and oppressive environment.

Until we truly achieve in America what we whites are taught in our youth already exists and what every Negro knows through daily experience does not exist - a society in which all people have equal opportunities to develop their abilities and personalities to the fullest - normal sensitive white citizens such as myself will continue to be concerned and distressed, Negro citizens will continue to be frustrated and outraged and humiliated, and poverty, ignorance, crime, racial strife, waste, and violence will continue to increase.

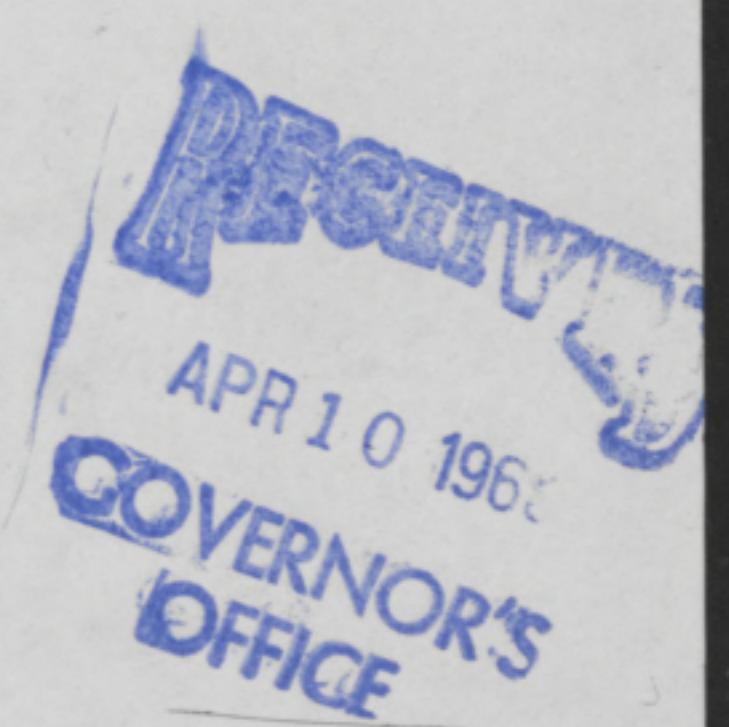
Already we are seeing widespread violence in the wake of Dr. King's death. I feel sure that he would deplore this violence. But it exists and has existed and will probably increase. And as we are confronted with this violence, we, as reasonably affluent white Americans must ask ourselves: do content satisfied fulfilled people riot and burn and kill? Why is one segment of our society, which we know to have been discriminated against in education, voting, jobs, housing, and social areas for over a hundred years since they were freed from slavery, rising up in violence all over our country? How can a country as powerful and clever and affluent as ours allow such a situation to develop and how long can it continue to ignore the problems and thus perpetuate them?

I implore you, as I am also imploring in copies of this letter your colleagues who direct various segments of this nation, to exert your capabilities and energies to the fullest to help solve these grave national problems. Act now before men's minds on both sides, black and white, are closed by violence. Act now that America's future may be bright rather than tragic: let the pledges of equal opportunity made by the founders of our country be fulfilled completely for all citizens.

Sincerely,

Alice H. Estes

Alice H. Estes



*Human
Relations*

April 11, 1968

Mrs. Alice H. Estes
2218 Myers Street
Durham, North Carolina 27707

Dear Mrs. Estes:

Thank you for your letter urging that steps be taken to solve the problems of discrimination, oppression, and poverty in our Nation.

I appreciate having this expression of views with regard to positive action proposed for these difficult days. You may be sure that these ideas will receive most careful consideration.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Dan Moore

THW:nmj