

December 23, 1962

Mr. Ralph Moore
Chairman of the
Committee on Appeal for Human Rights
Atlanta University
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mr. Moore:

May I acknowledge receipt of your wire of December 22nd, which reads as follows:

"The Students of Atlanta University feel as if you have made a great mistake in supporting the establishment of an Atlanta Wall across Peyton and Harlan Roads. In reply to a request of the All Citizens Committee on Better Citizens Planning we supply 175 picketers per day for the Westend Business area. We will also stage several mass demonstrations at the Atlanta City Wall with no less than 1500 students. This action will focus the eyes of the world on the Atlanta City Wall. We do not want Atlanta to have this type of publicity. Therefore we encourage you to remove the Wall and save the good image of Atlanta while there is still time."

First, this is to advise you that at the request of Mr. Virgil Copeland, President of the Southwest Civic Association, I have asked representatives of the following four groups to form a citizens committee to discuss the problems confronting the Peyton-Harlan Road area situation. Mr. Q. V. Williamson has advised me that the Citizens Committee for Better Planning will represent him in his capacity as Co-Chairman of the Atlanta Negro Voters League. I would think that any action prior to the deliberations of this committee and its recommendations would be precipitous and harmful to our best efforts.

Second, I would like for the students of Atlanta University to have full knowledge and acquaint themselves with the overall problem and with

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the complete record to date which is as follows: The Peyton-Harlan Road problem is the fifty-second area or street to undergo neighborhood expansion, penetration or encroachment since the first of this year. The record is flawless insofar as the protection of the rights of the Negro citizen is concerned. I am enclosing a list of the fifty-one streets on which this problem has been satisfactorily handled to date. I hope that the students, with their ability to analyze factual conditions, will study carefully this record, and I would hope that they would express their complete satisfaction and accord with the record of this administration.

I am certain that the matter having been handled so as to protect the rights of all persons in the first fifty-one instances would raise the question of why it is not being handled the same way in the Peyton-Harlan Road instance. The answer, again, can be factual and definite. The Peyton Road incident, consisting mainly of agitation on Fielding Lane, is an artificial, unnatural condition created by unscrupulous parties, both white and Negro, who have attempted through unethical, disloyal and false misrepresentations to panic the residents of that community.

To prevent this condition, I have previously worked with the Empire Real Estate Board and a citizens committee, composed of the West end Businessmen's Association and the Empire Real Estate Board. In spite of a previous record of excellent cooperation from these two bodies, it was impossible to stop this artificial bargaining of land.

May I invite your attention to the fact that the closing of Peyton and Harlan Roads is an inconvenience mostly to white citizens and to very few Negro citizens. It does not prevent access or egress into any area of town, nor does it limit any rights of the individual citizen from purchase or sale, or other fundamental liberties. It merely serves as a warning to unscrupulous real estate dealers that Atlanta will not tolerate under the guise of "race discrimination" the destruction of fundamental values among any of its citizens.

I would hope that you would study this problem carefully and I would also assure you that if there is additional information which you desire, I will be glad to supply it.

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The record as outlined above shows that the rights of all citizens have been protected without question in fifty-one out of fifty-two instances, and, now, you place a question mark by the fifty-second. Atlanta's reputation has been built by those who have carried out the aforementioned record. It is my sincere hope that the students of Atlanta University will not injure this record.

Should you ignore the above request and feel that you must picket for the sake of picketing, then be assured that the rights of the individual in picketing will be zealously guarded by the law enforcement body of this city.

You stated that you plan to stage several mass demonstrations with 1,500 students at the Atlanta City Hall. If, for purposes of national publicity you feel this is absolutely necessary, and if you will advise me of the time of your arrival, I should be glad to receive you on the City Hall steps.

I hope you will inform the students of Atlanta University that Atlanta's record is outstanding, and that I hope they will not injure it with any unnecessary or overt action.

Sincerely,

Ivan Allen, Jr.
Mayor

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