

**A RESOLUTION
BY COUNCILMAN C. T. MARTIN**

A RESOLUTION CONTINUING TO CALL ON ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, NEIGHBORHOODS AND PLACES OF WORSHIP TO JOIN INTO THE DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE LASTING NEGATIVE EFFECTS THAT IMPROPER BEHAVIOR AND DECORUM, OFFENSIVE DRESS AND OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE HAVE ON OUR YOUTH IN TODAY'S SOCIETY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Atlanta City Council established a task force to recommend whether the City of Atlanta, Georgia should amend its indecency code to make it illegal for exposure of one's undergarments in a public place; and

WHEREAS, the debate garnered international attention and discussion among youth and adults and has led to several states, municipalities and educational institutions to encourage their youth to dress appropriately in public and to be mindful of societal standards; and

WHEREAS, the Atlanta Public Schools and local institutions of higher learning such as Atlanta's Morehouse College, have recently instituted practices of curtailing offensive dress and language in response to a growing backlash against the sartorial and linguistic byproducts of today's culture which encourages thuggish violence and crude materialism over education; and

WHEREAS, Atlanta is home to some of the nation's leading higher educational institutions where students dawn their school's primary colors and business dress, as tangible symbols of the image of responsible citizens of the Atlanta community; and

WHEREAS, the use of profanity and the wearing of exposed underwear are not a part of the image of schools like Morehouse College, its students, nor its distinguished alumni, which include actor Samuel L. Jackson, director Spike Lee, theologian Howard Thurman, Olympian Edwin Moses, former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan, current Morehouse President Robert Franklin and the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and

WHEREAS, the measures taken by Morehouse College and other institutions of higher learning should also be emulated throughout the nation by other institutions of higher learning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA, that City Councilman C. T. Martin and the Atlanta City Council, through this resolution, continue to call upon all colleges and universities, secondary schools, neighborhoods and places of worship, to join into the dialogue concerning the lasting negative effects that improper behavior and decorum, offensive dress and offensive language have on our youth in today's society.

Neighborhoods

**A RESOLUTION
BY COUNCILMAN C. T. MARTIN**

A RESOLUTION CONTINUING TO CALL ON ALL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND PLACES OF WORSHIP TO JOIN INTO THE DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE LASTING NEGATIVE EFFECTS THAT IMPROPER BEHAVIOR AND DECORUM, OFFENSIVE DRESS AND OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE HAVE ON OUR YOUTH IN TODAY'S SOCIETY; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, the Atlanta City Council established a task force to recommend whether the City of Atlanta, Georgia should amend its indecency code to make it illegal for exposure of one's undergarments in a public place; and

WHEREAS, the debate garnered international attention and discussion among youth and adults and has led to several states, municipalities and educational institutions to encourage their youth to dress appropriately in public and to be mindful of societal standards; and

WHEREAS, ~~Dr. Robert Franklin, President of Atlanta's Morehouse College, has recently instituted a practice of curtailing offensive dress and language on its campus in response to a growing backlash against the sartorial and linguistic byproducts of today's culture which encourages thuggish violence and crude materialism over education; and~~ *the Atlanta Public Schools and local institutions of higher learning such as*

~~**WHEREAS**~~, Councilmember Martin is an admirer of Dr. Franklin and often quotes Dr. Franklin's latest book, "Crisis in the Village;" and

WHEREAS, ~~Morehouse College, one of the nation's leading higher educational institutions for men, provides every freshman with a tie and a blazer in the college's primary color, maroon, as a tangible symbol of the image of a gentleman; and~~ *Atlanta is home to some* *Where* *Anti business dress*

WHEREAS, ~~the use of profanity and the wearing of exposed underwear are not a part of the image of Morehouse College, its students, nor its distinguished alumni, which include actor Samuel L. Jackson, director Spike Lee, theologian Howard Thurman, Olympian Edwin Moses, former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan, current Morehouse President Robert Franklin and the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.; and~~ *students done their school* *schools like* *Responsible citizen of the Atlanta community* *and other local institutions of higher learn.*

WHEREAS, the measures taken by Morehouse College should also be emulated throughout the nation by other institutions of higher learning.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA, that City Councilman C. T. Martin and the Atlanta City Council, through this resolution, continue to call upon all colleges and universities, secondary schools and places of worship, to join into the dialogue concerning the lasting negative effects that improper behavior and decorum, offensive dress and offensive language have on our youth in today's society.



UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA
Post Office Box 20449
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31404

August 20, 2008

Dear Savannah State University Tigers,

Welcome to the 2008-2009 academic year at Savannah State University. We trust that you had a productive summer and that you are now prepared for an exciting academic year as we embark upon many important ventures with you in mind. One of the ways in which you can help assure this is a banner year for Savannah State University as a whole, and for you as individuals, is to commit yourselves to what it means to be a true 'University' student.

Based on our interactions with some of you, it is apparent that many students are not fully aware of how to 'dress for success' or they may still be transitioning into true 'University' students. Specifically, we are concerned that a number of students are wearing 'sagging' pants, 'extremely' short pants, and tops that expose bare midriffs, etc. While, we certainly respect students' rights to self expression and individuality, this attire is none the less distasteful, offensive and not in keeping with what is expected of serious 'University' students.

Accordingly, please assist us by spreading the word that students are expected to model success at all times by dressing appropriately during class hours. We ask ALL students, student organizations and student leaders to set the tone by not only dressing appropriately throughout the academic year and carrying themselves in a respectful, civil and courteous manner, but that students challenge each other to demonstrate their understanding of how to 'model' success in their dress, language and interactions with others within the University community. In addition, students can expect University leaders to request their cooperation if they are not presenting themselves in an acceptable manner.

Finally, Wednesdays have been designated as "Dress for Success Day" at Savannah State University in the past. It is our hope that this tradition will continue and perhaps that it be expanded by our student leaders. Guiding your in-class and out-of-class behavior is part of our responsibility to prepare you for your future careers, goals, and challenges. We look forward to witnessing your development and celebrating your successes. Have a great year!

Sincerely,

Earl G. Yarbrough, Sr., Ph.D.,
University President

Errol Hooper,
SGA President

Rose Metts, Ph.D.
Co-Chair, Faculty Senate

Mary Wyatt, Ph.D.
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Randy Gunter, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

[ajc.com](#) > [Metro](#) > [Atlanta](#)

Morehouse takes on saggy pants, cursing

College looks to promote 'Renaissance man'

By [GAYLE WHITE](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Sunday, December 07, 2008

William Tweedle, a residence hall director at Morehouse College, wants students at the historically black men's school to get "In the Zone."

That's the zone where there's no cursing, no saggin' pants, and no use of the word whose plural spelled backward is "saggin.'" All are beneath the image of the Morehouse man, Tweedle said.

Morehouse President Robert Franklin is making the same points to students on a somewhat different plane. He talks about the new "Renaissance man" who is "well-read, well-traveled, well-spoken, well-dressed and well-balanced."

Franklin, who was named president last year, instituted the practice of giving every freshman a tie and a blazer in the college's primary color, maroon, as a tangible symbol of the image of a gentleman.

Morehouse is one of several historically black colleges taking action recently to improve dress on campus. Overt dissent on the Morehouse campus has been minimal, but a smattering of bloggers nationally have suggested that schools might be trying to take away students' freedom of expression.

"Call me crazy, but I didn't realize that there was a correlation between morality and Brooks Brothers," Morehouse alumnus Jonathan Walton, an assistant professor of religious studies at the University of California, Riverside, wrote in an article on the subject.

Profanity and exposed boxers are not exactly part of the stereotype of Morehouse, whose distinguished alumni have included actor Samuel Jackson, director Spike Lee, theologian Howard Thurman, Olympian Edwin Moses, former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan, current Morehouse President Franklin. And, of course, Martin Luther King, Jr.

But Morehouse has also had its challenges. Two years ago, before either Franklin or Tweedle were on campus, a group of four students and former students were accused of torturing and killing a fellow Morehouse brother. Police believed they were after money they thought he had received from an

insurance settlement.

The four have been indicted in Clayton County Superior Court but have not yet been tried.

Sagging pants seem inconsequential in comparison, but dress and language help create the campus atmosphere, Franklin said.

“The fact is a significant percentage of our students arrive at Morehouse with a preppy orientation and understand the importance of presentation of themselves,” Franklin said. “Some of the students themselves are surprised to discover a small number of students who arrive with a different, almost thuglike, orientation in dress, speech and social behavior.”

Some students don't seem to be aware of their language, said Tweedle, director of Hubert Hall at Morehouse. “They don't know they're cursing. They don't know they're using the n-word the way they use it.”

Likewise, Tweedle said, “I understand that baggy pants and a certain level of sagging is part of culture, but showing your drawers, your underpants, is unacceptable.”

Tweedle and Franklin's efforts predate the recent presidential election. But President-elect Barack Obama's win has boosted the backlash against the sartorial and linguistic byproducts of the hip-hop culture.

The Rev. Al Sharpton, an activist, former presidential candidate and radio host, is among those taking note. Sharpton, long a critic of vulgar rap lyrics, recently told the Chicago Tribune, “You can't be using the

b-word, the n-word, the

h-word when you have Barack Obama redefining overnight the image that black people want to have.”

“Obama Won; Now Pull Up Your Pants” was the headline on a post-election column by Justin M. LaGrande, lifestyle editor of The Gramblinite, the newspaper of the historically black Grambling State University in Louisiana. “Obama isn't sagging his pants,” LaGrande wrote.

Obama himself said in an MTV interview shortly before the election that he opposes laws and ordinances — such as one proposed by an Atlanta city councilman last year — that would control dress.

“Having said that,” he added, “brothers should pull up their pants. You are walking by your mother, your grandmother, your underwear is showing.”

Morehouse freshman Gregory Brito, 18, looks to the president-elect as a role model, but he is struggling to live up to the image.

Brito, who is from New York, doesn't wear sagging pants but, he said, “I'll be honest. I curse. I say 'n.' I need to have time to transition from using the word to not using it. I come from an urban area. That's the way we talk.”

Some African-Americans have argued that by using the racial epithet themselves, they take away its power to be used against them. To Brito, it's just a slang term of address.

But since being at Morehouse, and especially since Obama's election, he said, he would prefer not to hear or say it.

"African-American men and men of color can't make excuses anymore," Brito said. "It's hard, though."

Ray Hayes Jr., a 20-year-old Morehouse junior from Chicago, said he gave up sagging pants and the n-word in high school. Since hearing Tweedle's pitch to get "In the Zone" at Morehouse, he's trying to eliminate profanity, too.

"A lot of guys use profanity here," he said. "A lot of guys sag their pants. They say it's a fashion statement."

Hayes disagrees with some observers who say the vestiges of hip-hop culture were already going out of style.

"I don't think it was going out of fashion at all," he said. "I think it was going to get worse as time went on. Guys who weren't doing it would fall into the trap and start doing it."

The Morehouse campaign is effective, said freshman Paul Daniels, 17, of Raleigh, because it is linked to the college's illustrious legacy.

Franklin, he said, "doesn't condemn the n-word or sagging or cursing. ... He's teaching us why we shouldn't do it."

When freshman Ryan Hobbs, 19, of Fayetteville wears his maroon blazer, he's conscious of its message. Receiving it was a rite of passage, he said.

"The blazer and the tie made me feel like I was really a man of Morehouse, accepted into the brotherhood," he said. "Morehouse has produced great, great individuals. I want to be another added to that list."

More on ajc.com

[Morehouse wants men with class](#)

[Some Jews fear Madoff case stokes anti-Semitism](#)

[List of Christmas speakers on Britain's Channel 4](#)

[Millions of older Americans use risky drug combos](#)

[U.S. role alleged in Georgia fighting](#)

[Millions of older Americans use risky drug combos](#)

[Minister's role in MLK event upsets gay groups](#)

[Many suffered from anti-gay violence in 2008](#)

[ACLU sues Laguna Beach over treatment of homeless](#)

[Russia accuses foreign nationals in Georgia war](#)

[Expand this list](#)

Related Subjects

- [William Tweedle](#)
- [Robert Franklin](#)
- [Gregory Brito](#)
- [Swearing and Invective](#)
- [Racial Issues](#)
- [Social Issues](#)
- [Barack Obama](#)
- [African-American Issues](#)
- [Special Interest Groups](#)

[Expand this list](#)

Find this article at:

http://www.ajc.com/search/content/metro/atlanta/stories/2008/12/07/morehouse_saggy_pants.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.