

# York admits discrimination

by Cynthia Peranandam and Andil Gosine

TORONTO (CUP)—Six years after the fact and thousands of dollars in legal fees later, York University has been forced to apologize for racial discrimination.

Yet the person responsible for the offence, Terry Wright, continues to be employed by York as co-ordinator of Crime Prevention Services.

Earlier this year, three former York security officers—Claude Williams, Rita Hendrickson and Len Merith—were awarded \$14,000 total in compensation for "injury to dignity and self-respect."

The case was carefully kept out of the spotlight. Because of an agreement that security officers must sign with the university upon employment, no one would discuss this case prior to its conclusion.

And even since its resolution, York's administration is still tight-lipped.

York president Susan Mann called the case a "non-issue," and referred exalibur to her lawyers. Wright also refused comment.

York counsel Harriet Lewis argued that the university doesn't want to discuss the case because of an understanding between the former officers and York that the agreement would not be publicized.

"The Human Rights Commission went ahead and decided to publicize the case without informing us," Lewis said.

It is partly York's failure to publicly admit its mistakes that has angered the former security officers.

"The issue barely caused a stir within administration. And many are bound by contracts and systematic traps to submit unwillingly or unknowingly to discrimination of all sorts," said Williams.

Williams said that although he is content with the settlement reached with the university, he still feels cheated. "The culprit has not been reprimanded," Williams said. "Instead he was rewarded with a promotion."

In early 1988, security officer Wright decided to publish a "humorous" office bulletin. But Wright's jokes turned out to be anything but funny.

One of the staff members was portrayed as seeking "the elusive mad bomber of women's groups... to buy the sucker a beer," while another officer was portrayed as the "AIDS-Buster," attired in "faggat" clothing from "Noo Yowk Citay."

The piece that finally got Wright into trouble was one called, "WHOOT'S 2," which portrayed three employees—Williams, Merith and Hendrickson—as a team who combat racial injustices at York University.

According to the bulletin, "The three don Ku Klux Klan costumes and attend security administration meetings. Halfway through the agenda, the rat pack drop their robes to reveal they are wearing boxing gloves and shorts. They manage to beat the living crap out of everyone attending." All three staff members are Black.

Disgusted by the bulletin, Williams and Hendrickson decided to take action. Among their requests was that Wright be suspended for two weeks without pay, and for an apology.

Above all else, Williams wanted to see that Wright be reprimanded

for his actions and his lack of judgment and responsibility. "I wanted Wright to be made aware of the consequences of his actions and to realize that what he had been making fun of was no joking matter," Williams said.

But the former officers' attempt to settle the matter proved to be a long, frustrating process as they moved from one bureaucratic level to the next.

An official complaint was submitted to the assistant vice-president after talks with Michael O'Neil, director of security and parking, proved to be pointless.

O'Neil responded to the grievors' requests in a letter that describes the bulletin as "an attempt at humour which turned sour and although offensive in some eyes, does not warrant any further action other than that which has already been taken."

With this, he hoped the incident would be dismissed without any investigation.

But Williams and Hendrickson persisted. They felt O'Neil was un-

fair and biased because of close ties to Wright.

Williams, Merith and Hendrickson were advised by their lawyers to file a complaint with the university in order to obtain a settlement before filing a law suit in the Ontario Supreme Court against O'Neil and Wright.

Williams and Hendrickson filed a complaint with the Race and Ethnic Relations Centre at York—but it too brought no action.

The complaint was then filed as a violation of the collective agreement between the university and the International Union of United Plant Guard Workers of America. It was dismissed.

Williams took the complaint further as a violation of the Human Rights Code on the basis of discrimination against race, colour, place of origin, ancestry and ethnic origin.

Six years later, the grievors received a formal apology from the university and given a monetary award.

# Ubyyssey wins

by Mohammad Ghiasvand and Ryan Nakashima, The Charlatan

OTTAWA (CUP) — The Ubyyssey, the largest student newspaper at the University of British Columbia, has gained its independence from UBC's student council after 77 years under its control and a year of bitter infighting.

UBC students voted to pay \$5 per full-time student in a referendum, held Jan. 16-20, to support financial autonomy for the paper from its publisher, the Alma Mater Society (AMS).

With about 30,000 full-time students and a pro-rated fee for part-time students, The Ubyyssey stands to collect more than \$150,000 in student levies. Students, however, can have their fees refunded.

The vote was 62 per cent in favour of The Ubyyssey. Almost 5,400 students voted.

The AMS slammed the paper's poor taste and bad judgment last year and fired the eight elected editors in April, opting to appoint an editor-in-chief.

The first appointee left to pursue studies elsewhere, and a second quit, saying she did not like the control the AMS had over the paper.

The eight elected editors launched a wrongful dismissal suit against the AMS for \$10,000 each, but one of them has since dropped the suit. The case is going to court Jan. 30.

Before the referendum, the AMS gave \$30,000 to The Ubyyssey each year, supplemented by \$100,000 yearly in advertising revenue.

Niva Chow, news editor-elect of the paper, says she doesn't know when The Ubyyssey will resume publishing — it stopped last April — or if she'll apply to be news editor again.

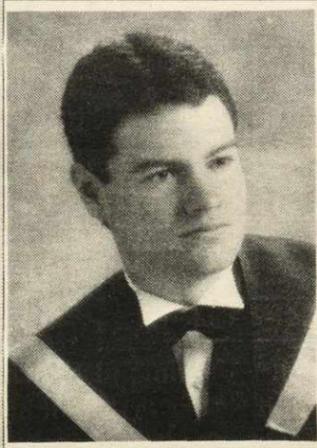
"You know how long fighting has been going on," says Chow. "It's not as if we're going to become friends just like that."

The AMS decided to hold the referendum at a council meeting Jan. 5. Ubyyssey staff who attended the meeting say council wanted to wash their hands of the paper and the past conflict.

## NEED VOLUNTEERS

To help with exhibit related to disabilities in the SUB, Feb. 28-March 3, 1995

If you can donate some hours of your time, please call Caroline at 494-2836.



Class of '95 Official\* Graduation Portraits

Portrait orders from \$32.95!

Berryhill Home of Fine Photography

DSU's Official Portrait Studio\* At the SUB March 15 - 17 Last chance for Yearbook!

Your choice of 3 sitting fees! Book and check your proof at SUB Enquiry Desk near display.

\*Choice of DSU based on quality, service, price, and dependability.

All faculties welcome! All hoods provided.

NEW sales office - Park Lane Mall (4th Floor) 429-1344

for more information: 1-800-AND-GRAD

## 7TH ANNUAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FAIR

Discover the latest advances in computer technology!

- Meet Radius, Mac clone licensee!
  - OS/2 WARP from IBM!
  - Secrets of the Internet!

Free seminars on the latest products and developments

Speak directly to the manufacturers

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 1ST**  
**10:00 AM TO 7:00 PM**  
**IN THE McINNES ROOM**  
**DALHOUSIE**  
**STUDENT UNION BUILDING**

THE FAIR IS PRESENTED BY DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY AND THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES:

**PCPC**  
Personal Computer Purchase Center

**TOSHIBA**  
Tough Enough for Today's World.

**AT&T**  
Global Information Solutions

**Apple**  
Authorized Educational Institution Dealer

**EPSON**

**Packard Bell**

**radius**

**COMPUTARTNER**