



The Ivy League Connection

VANDERBILT ESSAY PROMPT

Using the prompt below, write a 600 word essay delineating your opinions and providing a strong argument to back up your position.

In the upper right hand corner of the essay we need:

your name
your school
your email address
the best phone number where you can be reached

The essay must be emailed to
dongosney@comcast.net
no later than 9:00 PM on Monday November 26th, 2012.

The file name should read (using your name replacing the XXX's):
XXX Vandy Original Essay.doc

Immediately above your essay, cut and paste the following:

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In late 1959, James Lawson and other members of the Nashville Christian Leadership Council's projects committee met with department store owners Fred Harvey and John Sloan, and asked them to voluntarily serve African Americans at their lunch counters. Both men declined, saying that they would lose more business than they would gain. The students then began doing reconnaissance for sit-in demonstrations. The first test took place at Harvey's Department Store in downtown Nashville on November 28, followed by the Cain-Sloan store on December 5. Small groups of students purchased items at the stores and then sat at their lunch counters and attempted to order food. Their goal was to try to sense the mood and degree of resistance in each store. Although they were refused service at both lunch counters, the reactions varied significantly. At Harvey's, they received surprisingly polite responses but while at Cain-Sloan they were treated with contempt. These reconnaissance actions were low-key and neither of the city's newspapers was notified of them.

These actions marked another chapter in the civil rights struggles of the 1960s.

Do you think these students should have engaged in what could have been construed as unlawful action at the time?

Explain your answer — remembering that under Plessey vs. Ferguson, “separate but equal” was the law at the time.