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2-27-1995

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### Repository Citation

Thurston, Christine, "Maine Campus Varner shares dream at Curry prologue" (1995). *Social Justice: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*. 103.

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# Varner shares dream at Curry prologue

By Christine Thurston  
Staff Writer

Most people have heard of Martin Luther King's dream, but few know the dream, both literal and figurative, of James Varner, which he shared at a rally before the performance of comedian Mark Curry Friday night.

"I woke up at 3 a.m. on Valentine's Day in a sweat, with a revelation that I had in a dream," said Varner, advisor to the African-American Student Association. "My idea was that the University of Maine campus, with its students and faculty, can be a model for a national movement."

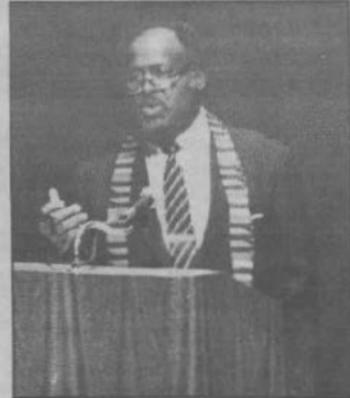
Varner's vision, in a nutshell, was to initiate the movement with a rally before the Curry performance that endorsed human rights for all and increased human understanding.

"On the fourth Friday of every month, people can pause for a few minutes to think about the state of human rights in this country," Varner said. "Everyone is concerned

with the problems of racism, sexism, treatment of the poor and gays and lesbians, but we have only been talking about it."

Varner said, he hopes that it will be a year-round way to deal with the problems of all oppressed races and groups, and that it could spread across the nation and beyond our borders.

On Friday night before Curry, Varner and members from a variety of groups, from the AASA and Wilde Stein to Women in Curriculum and the football team, stood before the crowd in support of their



James Varner. (Page Photo.)

newly-formed coalition.

"We have formed the Coalition to Increase Human Understanding and to Promote Human Rights for All," said Varner. "If you think our cause is a worthwhile one, please stand."

Not one seat in the Maine Center for the Arts was left occupied, while the audience stood and applauded the concept behind the coalition.

Varner pointed out that he has already learned something by becoming part of this coalition.

"I always thought a gay man was a woman in a man's body, and a lesbian was a man in a woman's body," he said. "I was told that a gay guy is just a guy with a preference for men. Just like someone has a desire for a Ford and another for a Buick."

Varner envisions having an agenda at each monthly meeting that is germane to the particular locality and the issues that the area is concerned with.

"Martin Luther King said, 'A  
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man hasn't really lived until he has found something worth dying for,' and that is exactly how I feel," said Varner.

Varner first shared his dream publicly at the weekly AASA meeting on Feb. 19, and then headed a meeting to form the coalition later that week.

"College-age individuals are the best to show the way, and the older ones will follow," he said. "The younger generation has turned a lot around and are interested in getting their teeth into something that can make a difference."

His idea sounded good to some, but many were concerned with how and if something could really be done.

"It makes sense, but we wonder if any-

thing will really happen," said Student Government Vice President Chris Bragdon, vice president of the General Student Senate. "This may be thinking too much in advance."

Bragdon said he wondered if another organization would really make a difference, with so many other organizations already out there promoting ideas.

"Don't assume someone else is going to do it," said Harrison Anchor of Wilde Stein. "You have to get off your butts and do something."

Anchor said there needs to be understanding between organizations in order to come together in terms of thinking.

"We need to have a plan of action," said a member of the AASA. "We appear to be scattered so we aren't taken seriously."

One fraternity member said that the campus is simply full of apathy and no one wants to take the time to do anything.



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