

BSU, JSU Launch Duke Campaign

BONNIE NIGHTENGALE

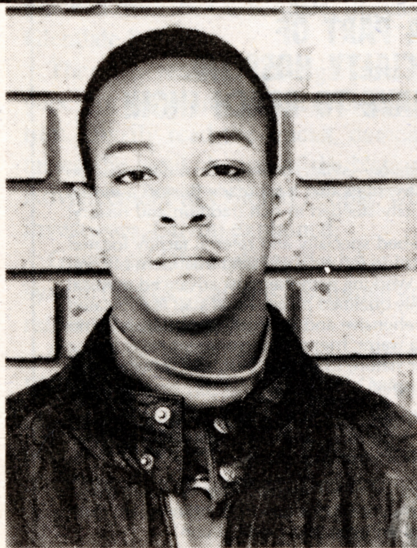
Spectrum Staff Writer

The Black Student Union and the Jewish Student Union have launched a joint campaign designed to increase awareness of David Duke's recent election to the Louisiana Legislature, as well as to promote voter registration.

Duke, former Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, won his congressional seat by a narrow margin

aware of Duke's position may not "even know he's in our congress right now—that he was elected in Louisiana." The other purpose of the campaign, according to Schulman, is to "show people how important a vote is. We want to educate people. You can make a difference, and you can do something."

BSU President Kurt Young agreed. "We want people to realize the power that they have in the vote." He emphasized that "the



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Kurt Young
BSU President

in Metairie, a predominantly white, conservative middle-class New Orleans suburb.

"If you went around school and asked people who David Duke is, a lot of people wouldn't even know," JSU member Carolyn Schulman explained. She added that those

KKK and other hate groups do exist, and it's not just something that's down in the South. They have a chapter right up here in Buffalo."

In addition to voter registration, Young said, "We want people to be

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aware of their (politicians') background and what we're investing our vote in."

Schulman is aware of the KKK chapter in Buffalo. "It is here. It's very much alive in Buffalo, and people don't realize that. They figure they don't see them in the streets marching and stuff. It's not like the South where it's more accepted to have them go march.

"The area in which he was elected was a white area, and the deep South has been known to have that sort of (racist) view," she continued. "It isn't a very mixed area. It's pretty homogeneous."

Nation-wide campaign discussed

The campaign, which includes posters to get the message across, may employ different strategies as time goes on, possibly including a rally. The prospect of making the campaign a national issue has been

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discussed, and members of the student organizations involved may begin by contacting Louisiana State University to launch the nationwide campaign. LSU is Duke's alma mater from which he earned a degree in history.

Duke claims to have left the Klan in 1979, although his address and phone number remain identical to those of the local KKK headquarters in Louisiana.

"It's pretty hard to believe that someone can actually be an ex-imperial wizard of the KKK,"

Young said. "It's like saying, to use the opposite extreme, like being the ex- Pope. It's something that you live for all your life, which is the hate of other people, and all of a sudden you see the light, you turn around."

Lee Atwater, Republican National Committee Chairman, President George Bush and Ronald Reagan unsuccessfully attempted to stop Duke, who converted to the Republican Party before the special election primary in January. The three political leaders have since denounced him.

Although some members of the Democratic party have pointed fingers at the Republicans, Young said, "I don't want to make this a partisan issue because I'm sure that there are lots of people whose credentials could be questioned in all parties, and we're just not aware of them."