

Chaurice Ransom Lartigue

Class year: 1972

Major: Sociology

Current Profession: Retired Teacher

Our CC Experience 1968-1972

My friend, Seretha Manor Carter and I, Chaurice Ransom Lartigue came to The Colorado College in the fall of 1968. It was a time of social and political upheaval in our country. The Vietnam War was raging, as were the protests against it. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert Kennedy had both been assassinated in the spring of that year. The Women's movement was gearing up, the Civil Rights Movement was changing from non-violence to a more radical "by any means necessary" attitude as advocated by Black Panther Party members Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale; H. Rap Brown, Stokely Carmichael, and Angela Davis. Four students were slain by National Guard members at Kent State University our sophomore year.

When Seretha, William Duvall, and I got on the plane in Austin, Texas to come to CC, we might as well have been going to a foreign country. We lived in segregated Austin, where we graduated from an all black high school, lived in an all black community, attended all black churches. It was our first time on a plane, our first time leaving Texas, our first time being around white people. We were in culture shock on so many levels! Seretha and I were preacher's kids who had never even had a drink.

When we were freshmen at CC, we started under the conventional system of several classes at once, and changed to the block system the next year. There were dorm mothers and curfews one semester, and coed dorms with no rules the next. There were eight black students in our freshman class, fifteen in the entire school. The next year, there were several more, and we were a very cohesive group. We organized ourselves and marched over to President Worner's office to make certain demands. We started the campus's first Black Student Union, and secured the former PACC house as our house. We had BSU meetings there, cooked Thanksgiving meals there, and of course we partied and played cards there. Later, it became the Minority Student House, which we shared with Hispanic students. We lobbied for more Black Studies, and more cultural awareness in booking speakers and entertainment. The administration was responsive to our requests and during our time there, brought in poets: Gwendolyn Brooks, Sonia Sanchez, and Nikki Giovanni; actor/activist Dick Gregory; Cleo Parker-Robinson's Dance Company; and the group Friends of Distinction.

We learned so much at CC inside the classroom, but more importantly outside the classroom. We met people from many diverse communities all over the country and the world. We learned to think for ourselves, make our own decisions, and accept the consequences of those decisions. We found our voices and grew up at CC. We are grateful for the experience.