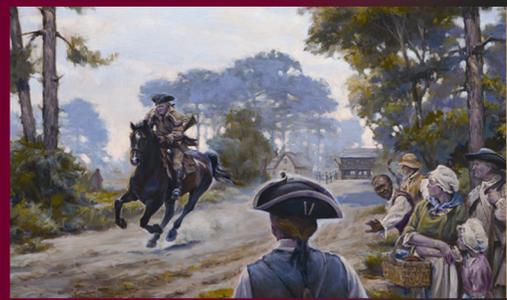




THE  
*May 20<sup>th</sup>*  
SOCIETY



# Complimentary Event

**May 20, 2013**

**7:30-9pm Lecture at McGlohon Theater**

**9pm-10pm Book Signing**



The May 20th Society presents their 8th Annual Speaker Series featuring Isabel Wilkerson, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, and the author of *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* which examines the three geographic routes that were commonly used by African Americans leaving the southern states between 1915 and the 1970s.

Charlotte celebrates its 50th anniversary of desegregation this year which began on May 20, 1963 when a black dentist led a march from Johnson C. Smith University to the Mecklenburg County Courthouse and declared "We shall not be pacified with gradualism; we shall not be satisfied with tokenism. We want freedom and we want it now." May 20th was chosen as the date for this march not only because it was a state holiday but to point out how black citizens had not shared in the freedom demanded by Mecklenburg residents from the British in 1775.

Please join us to celebrate this revolutionary spirit that captures Charlotte's rebellious and visionary history - a history that began on May 20, 1775 with the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence!

**To order your complimentary ticket to this lecture, please go to <http://www.carolinatix.org>, search Wilkerson and use promo code TEACHM20**



Observer Photo by James Dennis  
Marchers On East Trade Street

## J. C. Smith Students March Across Town

By JAMES K. BATTEN  
Observer Staff Writer

A spirited but orderly band of singing, hand-clapping Negro students marched through downtown Charlotte early Monday afternoon in the first public protest against segregation since August.

The demonstrators, most of them from Johnson C. Smith University, walked the four miles from the campus to the Mecklenburg County Courthouse and back without incident. About 60 people participated.

Led by two boys carrying the American and Christian flags, the procession arrived at the steps of the courthouse about 1:45 p.m. and cheered as a Negro leader asserted that the time for action had come.

"We are not going to cooperate any more with segregation," shouted Dr. R. A. Hawkins from the courthouse steps. "Segregation is a sin and we cannot compromise with this sin."

Hawkins, a dentist who also is an ordained Presbyterian minister, wore a clerical collar for Monday's demonstration. He organized the parade and did most of the talking at the courthouse.

The youngsters and a few Negro adults greeted his words with approving choruses of "Yeah!" and "No."

At one point, the Negro speaker warned, "We shall not be pacified with gradualism; we shall not be satisfied with tokenism. We want freedom and we want it now."

## J. C. Smith Students March

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stood in the courthouse square festooned with flags of the states of the old Confederacy.

Both the courthouse and City Hall were closed for the Mecklenburg Independence Day holiday, and only a few by-standers gathered to watch the proceedings.

Upon returning to the Smith campus, Hawkins promised a resumption of last summer's demonstrations. He refused to say exactly when the protests would begin, but indicated that it would be quite soon.

Throughout the round-trip march, the Negroes stayed in a column of two's, carefully obeying traffic rules and ignoring spectators, as instructed by Hawkins.

City police cars and plainclothesmen in unmarked cars saturated the Trade Street parade route. On several occasions, police held up traffic at intersections as the Negroes moved along.

City Manager William Veeder and Police Chief John S. Hord stayed close to the demonstrators in an unmarked car.

The marchers attracted relatively little attention as they

are — punks," he muttered disgustedly. Noting that Johnson C. Smith is a church college, he added:

"That's who's raising hell all over the country — church people."

As the Negro youngsters strode down the sidewalks, they sang continually the songs of protest that have become a part of the civil rights movement.

Among them were "Freedom," "We Shall Overcome," and "Lift Every Voice and Sing." The singing was accompanied throughout by rhythmic clapping.

A sprinkling of older Negroes,



[www.may20thsociety.org](http://www.may20thsociety.org)

