

BLACK THURSDAY: A HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Earlier this semester, over 50 students gathered to learn about the events of Black Thursday through a new Historical Sites Walking Tour held on UF's campus. This event, organized as part of a collaboration between multiple campus programs such as the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program and the African American Studies Program, directed students across campus while describing the events leading up to Black Thursday, as well as the events of the day itself.



On April 15th, 1971, UF's Black Student Union staged a sit-in of 70 students at Tigert Hall after President Stephen O'Connell failed to address their demands regarding the absence and mistreatment of Black students and workers on campus. This peaceful demonstration came 13 years after UF was desegregated, and it was met with violent retaliation by O'Connell, who ignored the students and called the police to have them removed. These protestors were gassed and arrested; the event ultimately culminated in over 100 students withdrawing, and several faculty members being fired or leaving. This event was a powerful demonstration of Black students' resilience and eventually led to the establishment of UF's Institute for Black Culture (IBC) and the Office of Minority Student Affairs.



The tour began outside Turlington Hall, where students explored the Center for African American Studies inside. The tour continued to Tigert Hall, where the events of the day had taken place only 53 years before. It ended at the Institute for Black Culture, where students enjoyed food, met with the tour program directors, and learned about the resources available to them through the IBC and other programs at UF.

DEMANDS OF THE STUDENTS

1. A commitment on the part of the University to recruit and admit 500 Black students out of the quota if 2,800 freshman and a continuance of the critical year freshman program.
2. Establishment of a department of Minority Affairs under the direction of a full Vice President, and the immediate elevation of Mr. Roy Mitchell and his Vice Presidency.
3. Hire a Black administrator in Academic Affairs with the advise and recommendation of department of Minority Affairs to coordinate the recruitment of Black faculty.
4. The hiring of a Black assistant manager in personnel.
5. Intensification of recruitment and hiring Black faculty so as to reflect the ratio of Black students admitted under the proposal in number 1.
6. The fair and equal treatments of our Black brothers and sisters, who are employed by the University.