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# SOHP UPDATE 2003

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## SOHP Launches New Initiative, “The Long Civil Rights Movement: The South Since the 1960s”

The Southern Oral History Program has launched a major new research initiative to document the “long civil rights movement,” the critical decades that followed what has come to be seen as the classic southern phase of the civil rights movement. That phase, enshrined in popular memory as the movement from Montgomery to Memphis, has been richly, and rightfully, memorialized in an outpouring of books, museum exhibits, historical sites, and films. These commemorative efforts, however, tend to treat the freedom movement as if it ended in the mid-1960s with the defeat of legal segregation (the movement’s substantive culmination) and Martin Luther King’s assassination (the movement’s tragic and symbolic end).

Yet it is at precisely this point that the South embarked on decades of change rivaling in scope and impact the transformation that took place during the tumultuous 1960s. In these years, the South established the terms of desegregation and contended with the meaning of racial equality and economic justice. Equally important, the scope of “the movement” grew, as civil rights struggles spawned other social justice movements even as powerful political and structural forces forestalled more far-reaching change. The result – and the world in which we live today – is rife with the contradictory outcomes of this history: de jure integration alongside persistent de facto

segregation; economic and political advancement for some previously disenfranchised groups but significant inequality for others; and regional economic growth combined with high rates of poverty and environmental degradation. On these and other measures of societal well being, the fault lines are not only of race but also of class and gender.



Perhaps no aspect of the South’s struggle with race relations after the 1960s aroused more public attention than school desegregation, a focus of the SOHP’s new research initiative. Here, in a scene from the early 1970s, students bussed in Charlotte, NC, arrive for morning classes under the watchful eye of local police.

The history of this most recent South lies within the living memory of several generations (*continued on Page Four*)

## Hall, Glass Assume Key National Leadership Posts



SOHP alumnus Brent D. Glass, the National Museum of American History’s new director.

In 1975, as the two year-old Southern Oral History Program began to gain momentum, founding director Jacquelyn Hall named Brent D. Glass, then completing his doctorate at UNC-Chapel Hill, as the Program’s first assistant director. Working together, Hall and Glass launched the SOHP’s first major research initiative, a study of the South’s industrial revolution. A gifted fieldworker and administrator, Glass contributed eighteen oral history interviews to the “Piedmont Industrialization” series, as well as a number of other key interviews, including one with former Gov. Terry Sanford. The Hall-Glass

partnership set the course for the SOHP across ensuing decades. Now, nearly thirty years later, Hall and Glass have each assumed national leadership positions.

In April 2003, Jacquelyn Hall was installed as president of the Organization of American Historians, the largest professional organization devoted to the study of American history and publisher of the *Journal of American History*. During 2002-2003, Hall similarly served the Southern Historical Association as president; her outgoing SHA presidential address, (*continued on Page Nineteen*)