

Letters Expressing Displeasure with Mayor Ivan Allen Jr.



Via GPB

Mayor Allen was a strong advocate for integration of all business places during an era where that belief was highly controversial at best and dangerous at worst. Mayor Allen did not seem phased by the fact that what he believed was against what some of the more vocal of his constituents believed, and continued to advocate on behalf of policies that aligned with that belief. One of the most prominent occasions on which he did so was when he testified before

Congress

on behalf of a policy advocated for by the Kennedys. Due to the high profile nature of this event Mayor Allen received many letters from people across the country, expressing both support and displeasure with his actions.

Focusing more closely on the letters expressing displeasure a few trends emerge that allow for the generalization of the many letters he received. There appeared to be two main groups that wrote to Mayor Allen, wealthy businessmen who were concerned about the business implications of his policies who likely had secretaries type the letters for them, presenting a more professional letter. The second were those with less skill and grammatical knowledge typing the letters on plain paper, likely middle class due to the expense of a typewriter, who had less higher education as seen by their typing and their logical fallacies. These groups had very different tones in their writing, with the businessmen usually making a more logical argument about the business consequences of integrating businesses and the average person writing a more hate fueled letter making arguments using flawed and obviously racist beliefs.

ROBERT B. PARKES, D.D.S.
608 MEDICAL ARTS BUILDING
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI
PRACTICE LIMITED TO ORTHODONTICS

July 27, 1963

Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr.
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mr. Allen:

It is with great regret that I read your testimony regarding the controversial public accommodations proposal of the President's civil rights program. A man of your stature must surely know that a thin veneer of forced intergration will not solve the underlying problems. I am sorry that you have broken the southern lines in resistance to this political foot ball and feel that the majority of the citizens of your city must feel regret also.

A common thing throughout most of the South is "let's don't have another Atlanta." This is due to the fact that most Southerners feel that the officials of Atlanta have put money before principle and we do not care to live under those circumstances. I have heard quite a few citizens of Atlanta voice this same opinion.

Sincerely yours,



Robert B. Parkes, D. D. S.

RBP/ow

A letter from a Mississippi Orthodontist expressing displeasure

"A man of your stature must surely know that a thin veneer of forced intergration will not
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solve the underlying problems"

The letter above, written by an Orthodontist from Mississippi, is an excellent example of the structure that was present among many of the letters written by more successful and educated people. Though this person as not a constituent of Mayor Allen, he likely still had connections or did business in Atlanta, due to the fact that Atlanta was and still is the largest trade hub in the south east. This letter is well structured with proper grammar, something not seen often in the letters that were received. The letters also provides a viewpoint on why forced integration will not work, in this case the fact that it will not solve the underlying issues at hand, that is obviously the product of time spent observing and reflecting upon what the author saw occuring in society around him. Though this letter does not provide any evidence to support its claim directly, the claim it makes can be supported through careful observation of the social climate surrounding integration as a whole. Though the letter does resort to attacking Mayor Allen, it does so in a manner that isn't blatantly rude and provides reasons as to why he believes Mayor Allen is wrong in what he supports.

Laurens, S.C.
July 31, 1963

Mr Allen-Mayor of Atlanta
Atlanta, Ga.

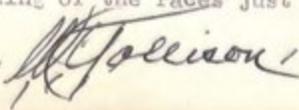
Dear Allen;

How are you getting along mixing of the races, you said wanted a Federal law passed to enforce mixing of the races. Deep down in your heart you don't believe in mixing of the races, are you might be playing politics are some game to get business interest or gain something else. You know if the Civil rights bill are passed same just want work and never will. Mixing of the races anywhere want do,

I am lost to understand why the Good white people of Atlanta elected you, you certainly have hurt the great City of Atlanta on the stand you have taken on the Civil rights Question.

Do you believe inter marriages of the races, if mixing of the races or allowed same will bring inter Marriages, then our Country is gone, will be called a mix breed Country, Oh how I hate see Atlanta hurt by your talks, How would you like to see the White Women of your great City swim in same swimming pools with black Negro men. That would be awful. Mr McGill Editor of Atlanta Constitution is in favor of mixing the races, I understand he is a imported Yankee from the North to Atlanta, He is trying to tell the Good White Citizens of Georgia what to do, I am glad to say the good white people of Georgia is not paying any attention to you and McGill also former Mayor Hartsfield. Mayor Hartsfield was only playing politics for business gains, That applies to you, I am happy to know the white voters of the great State of Georgia will not pay any attention to you, and the former Mayor Hartsfield also McGill the Negro lover from the North trying to tell the good white people of Georgia what to, You all are only loosing your voice speaking trying to tell the white people of Georgia to mix with black Negros. You Negro he is different race from the white people and has different Ideas, Wake old man before its to late, YOU ARE OLD AND SHOULD KNOW BETTER. I don't know if you are a Georgia borned person, you might have come from the North, Time for old man like you to wake up, knowing mixing of the races just want do and Never will.

yours truly, ---By



A letter from a person who strongly disagrees with Mayor Allen in South Carolina

"How would you like to see the White Women of your great City swim in the same swimming
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pools with black Negro Men."

"YOU ARE OLD AND SHOULD KNOW BETTER"

The letter above, written by a concerned southerner from South Carolina, is a good example of a letter written by a less educated and less prominent person.

There are numerous mistakes in the typing, something common when writing personal correspondence, as typing mistakes were common among those who did not type for a living. The grammatical structure of the letter is also rather inconsistent and incorrect, even when considering the changes that have occurred in grammar since the 1960's.

This letter also provides very little in the form of valid concerns, mostly referencing outdated and racist beliefs such as the fact that African Americans are unclean and that if they swam with white women it would be absolutely disgusting. This letter is also quite rude and insulting to the mayor, referencing very little in terms of why he should feel shame for his views, instead apparently calling him names just for the sake of calling him names to make themselves feel better and to express their frustrations.

Marietta Ga. 7.30.63

Mayor Ivan Allen Jr.,
City Hall,
Atlanta, Georgia,

My dear Sir:-

I live in Marietta and possibly do not have the right to address a letter to you, however, I could not resist the temptation. I notice in the papers partial extract of your statement before the Senate Committee on the Civil Rights Bill. You refer to the fact that the negro can walk into a bank and borrow money, can walk into a department store and purchase goods and can go into a grocery store and purchase groceries, but when time comes to eat, he is not welcome at a restaurant and his status changes to a second class citizen.

These segregated businesses were established by their owners on the basis of choosing their customers; they worked hard, put up their own money and when they have made a success, the negro wants to walk in and eat with the whites instead of other negroes. Just why he does not want to eat with other negroes is difficult to understand and this to me is a strong argument in favor of segregation. He put no money nor work into these segregated businesses, but now wants to tell the owners how to operate them.

However, the negro loses no rights by these segregated establishments and does not change into a second class citizen. There is no law against him establishing his own integrated eating places, hotels, theaters, etc., and then the public would have the choice of integrated or segregated facilities. He has the freedom of choice to establish his own integrated business, the same as the white man has to establish his segregated business.

I presume you have a swimming pool at your home. Is it integrated? Is your home integrated? How many negro clerical workers do you employ in your office at the City Hall? How many negro clerical workers does the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce employ? Some of the Directors of the Atlanta Chamber of Commerce are bankers and I presume some of them approved the Chamber's resolution asking certain Atlanta businesses to integrate. Has the banks with whom these executives are connected integrated? If so how many negro tellers do they have, how many negro stenographers do they employ and how many negro executives do they have? Is the Ivan Allen Marshall Co., integrated? If so how many negro clerks do they have; how many negro stenographers do they

A letter from a local citizen slightly outside of Atlanta

*"There is no law against him establishing his own integrated eating places, hotels, theaters,
etc.,
and then the public would have the choice of integrated or segregated facilities.*

This letter is somewhat of a rarity in that it appears to be written by a truly middle class citizen, one who is educated but might not possess a college education, one who appears not to be rich but also not struggling for money, and makes both logical and flawed arguments in the same letter. This letter is almost the perfect middle ground between the two predominant groups, a middle ground that is sparsely populated by these letters. In this the person is also the middle ground in terms of location. They are not technically a constituent of Mayor Allen, but they are very close to Atlanta, just outside of it in what would nowadays be considered a close suburb. In this letter this person makes a very solid argument that African Americans do not have a stake in the businesses that they want integrated, and are not prevented from establishing their own businesses and making them integrated by their choice as the business owner. This person also makes the argument that Mayor Allen and the City of Atlanta have not fully integrated all of their positions and businesses, and that until they do so they should not comment on the need for others to do so. However, there is also a certain naivety to this letter in that they do not understand the hidden things preventing African Americans from opening their own businesses, or the social requirements preventing the City of Atlanta from fully integrating. Overall the letter is not rude but rather provides what the authors believes to be solid arguments as to why Mayor Allen is wrong, though it does have a rather strong negative tone to it.



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