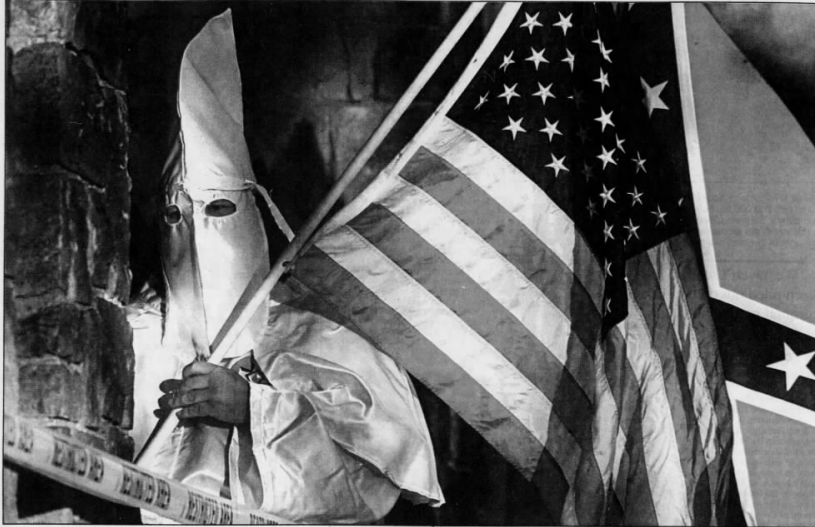


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Herald & Review/Dennis Magner

# Ku Klux Klan counters Jackson with rally



RALLY: Standing aside from the rest of the members of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from Butler, Ind., a flag bearer watches the crowd of 200 assembled people during the 45-minute rally. In the photo at top, Anthony Chapman, 29, uses a piece of cardboard to make his statement about race relations in Decatur during the Rainbow/PUSH march. With the word "not" crossed out, Chapman's sign reads, "Racism is in our town." Gregory Howell, one of the expelled students, is Chapman's nephew.

## Almost 200 gather in park to hear group's stand on expulsions

By PAUL BRINKMANN & BRAD MUDD  
H&R Staff Writers

DECATUR — Almost 200 people attended a rally Sunday afternoon in Nelson Park in support of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan from Butler, Ind.

The crowd roared approval for the shouts of "White Power" and for jokes made about African-Americans and Jews. The gathering included several teen-agers and a few children.

Some individuals on the fringe of the crowd did not cheer and appeared to be observing the spectacle.

An unidentified Klan member opened the rally with a prayer for peaceful demonstrations. Many in the vocal crowd bowed their heads in prayer.

"We did not come in praise of violence, but we will not be backed into a corner," the Klansman said. "We are here to protest and demonstrate against this (epithet) Jesse Jackson."

Jeffrey Berry, the imperial wizard of the Klan faction, said "Get the gangs out of school. Make room for somebody who wants to learn."

"They shouldn't throw them out for two years. Everyone needs an education," Berry said. "But let the school board do their job. No outsiders should get involved."

Steve Thorngood, 44, and David Rohman, 62, both of Decatur, said they came to support the Klan.

Thorngood said everyone he talks to is angry about Jackson's effort to reverse the expulsions, although he acknowledged that the original expulsions of two years were too long.

"I think he (Jackson) wants to start trouble, and it may come," Thorngood said.

Anthony Chapple was the only black person in the crowd. He said he wanted to see a little bit of history.

"There's a lot going on in this nation, and the Klan is a part of that," Chapple said. "I don't feel uncomfortable. I'm out here peacefully, and if they can say what they want without getting in my face, then I can listen to them without getting in their face."

An unidentified Klan member wearing hood and robes read a Klan list of 10 points to resolve the expulsion controversy. Their plan included alternative schooling, counseling, public apologies and banning the teen-agers from all extracurricular activities.

One Klansman who took off his mask said he was a local resident. He said Decatur residents had arranged to rent the pavilion and invited the Klan to come. He also said the Klan was preparing "something big" in Decatur in about two weeks that involved local Klan members "coming out of the closet."



'TAKE OFF YOUR MASKS': Nancy Waterman of Decatur expresses her opinion of the American Knights of the Ku Klux Klan Sunday in Nelson Park as she shouts, "Take off your masks, cowards," at the 10 Klan representatives from Butler, Ind.



Herald & Review/Phil Jacobs

### NO-MAN'S LAND:

The crowd that gathered in Nelson Park on Sunday to see the KKK and hear its message had to endure a 100-foot buffer zone with a substantial police presence.

### Notes & quotes

An employee from Del Carmen's Pizzeria found the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition march to be an inexpensive marketing opportunity. He rode a bike through the hungry crowd wearing signs advertising specials on slice pizza.

"This could happen anywhere. I don't think that Decatur is the only place this could happen."

— Katie Ward, 21, a computer student at Millikin University, originally from Tennessee

At the KKK rally in Nelson Park, Klan members belittled the policemen who stood around the pavilion partially to protect them from possible counter-demonstrators.

A hooded and robed Klansman said local police are scared to go down to these crack houses and do their jobs. "The Klansman then said Decatur-area Klan members would begin patrolling streets and making citizen arrests."

"I brought them to see history and to see what the (civil rights) struggle is like. It may be in bits and pieces, but it still goes on."

— Billy Moncrief of Decatur, who along with his two grandchildren, Mike White, 9, and Angela White, 3, sat on the curb near Garfield Montessori Magnet School and witnessed the march

Klan Imperial Wizard Jeffrey L. Berry told potential recruits in the crowd that they must be Christian to become KKK members. He disavowed Illinois white supremacist Matthew Hale's World Church of the Creator, which had members at the rally passing out literature. "He's an atheist," Berry said of Hale.

While the conflict has been perceived through mostly negative terms, 45-year-old Decatur resident Curtis Clark insists the issue is bringing the community together. And, he said, Sunday's rally conveys a positive message about Decatur and its residents.

"This is like a good thing, to get together and do this as a community. I love it," he said. "I love this city. It's not a black and white thing. It's a beautiful thing."

"We have to have a truthful dialogue between the powers that be in the city from both the black and white communities. We need to sit down and try to work out a solution that's going to help us move forward."

— Former Decatur school board member Jeffrey Perkins talking about what should happen after the dispute over the seven expelled students is resolved

Decatur school board member Mike Setina's car was the target of vandals on either Tuesday evening or early Wednesday morning as it was parked at his residence. While he has no proof the incident was related to the controversy in which the board is involved, Setina said he believes it is related because the vandals made an effort to determine the car's owner before the windows were broken.

"We've finally found something that is bringing the community together on the schools. But I wish it were something else."

— School board member Dan Oakes, who took his seat on the board Tuesday.

### MARCH VET:

Dollie Chambers Casey of Chicago holds a "Keep Hope Alive" sign in her left hand as she handles a crutch in her right hand during the march for the seven expelled high school students Sunday. Casey has participated in 153 marches over 55 years.



Herald & Review/Joseph C. Garza

## Demonstration draws civil rights veterans

Three with histories dating back to King answer the call again  
By BRETT WILCOXSON  
H&R Staff Writer

DECATUR — Evander Scott first marched for the civil rights of African-Americans in March of 1966, when the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. led him and thousands of other demonstrators on a 49-mile, four-day voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Ala.

Since then, Scott has taken part in "countless" civil rights marches across the nation. He now lives in Chicago and was on hand Sunday selling civil rights black power buttons to the marchers in Decatur — and sales were good.

Scott is among several veteran civil rights demonstrators who came from Chicago to participate in Sunday's march.

At the head of the crowd was Dollie Chambers Casey, a veteran of 153 marches during the past 65 years, including

some with King. Holding one end of the Rainbow/PUSH banner in her left hand, Casey marched forward with the aid of a crutch under her right arm.

Casey said she didn't hesitate when the call was issued for Chicagoans to come to Decatur in support of the expelled students.

"This is history," she said. "Today is a very special day; it's like a holiday."

"We're marching for freedom of education. Scott echoed those com-

ments, saying he is glad the Rev. Jesse Jackson is motivating people to continue the fight for civil rights into the next millennium.

"People are too complacent," the 53-year-old said. "They have good jobs, they have \$100,000 homes."

"They have the things that they need. But that home cannot save you (from injustice), that job cannot save you."

Scott said the size of the crowd reminded him of the marches of the '60s. "Numbers make a differ-

ence," he said. "It's the only way they'll get (the students back in school)."

Scott and Casey were not the only people at the march who had walked behind King. So has 69-year-old Jackie Peters, who brought her 15-year-old great-granddaughter.

Peters said Sunday's march was like a trip back in time. "It's about the same magnitude as the marches in the '60s, but a lot more calm," she said.

— Billy Nys and Amy Burch contributed to this story.