Forgive, but Never Forget

Dr. James Salley, Vice President for Institutional Advancement at Africa University said that after years, ‘the Orangeburg Massacre can be forgiven, but we will never forget’.

Dr. Salley addressed the audience on Monday February 8, 2008; saying that he was a local high school student at the time of the incident. Dr. Salley was a 1969 graduate of Wilkinson High School.

“Many of the people alive during that incident suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome”; some people have went years without talking about the events that happened, that night. “Telling your story, especially about traumatic events is important”, for the bettering of your psyche.

Dr. Salley said that talking about the events was a way to get over the occurrences – a way that participants had ignored for years.

In his speech, Dr. Salley gave a first-hand account of the incidents that took place – in Orangeburg on the night of the Massacre. Dr. Salley started his recollection with statements addressing his absence from the events that night. Several people in the community caught wind of what was supposed to happen on that night and advised him to stay away from the bowling alley that night.

Dr. Salley said that the Orangeburg citizens – at that time – could and have forgiven their attackers for what they did, but they will never forget. He also urged the youth and young adults of the Orangeburg community to “read-up” on the events.

Forgiving is a necessary process, but forgetting would be futile. We will – either – know our past, or be doomed to repeat it, he said.

During the program, the SGA Orangeburg Massacre Social Mobility Scholarship winners were announced. This scholarship was started by Zachary Middleton – SGA President.

Other participants in the Massacre were present – as well as some member of the victims’ families – were recognized.

This issue is dear to many members of the Orangeburg community for we have and will continue to forgive, but we will never forget.