

PRESS RELEASE

SCREENINGS:

Cape Fear Individual Film Network
Sometime in October Film Festival
Saturday, October 16, 2004 2:00
Downtown Soapbox, 255 N. Front Street

UNCW PREMIERE:

Watson School of Education
New Education Building—Room 162
Wednesday, October 20, 2004
Two Screenings 4–5:30pm
7–8:30pm

THE QUORUM

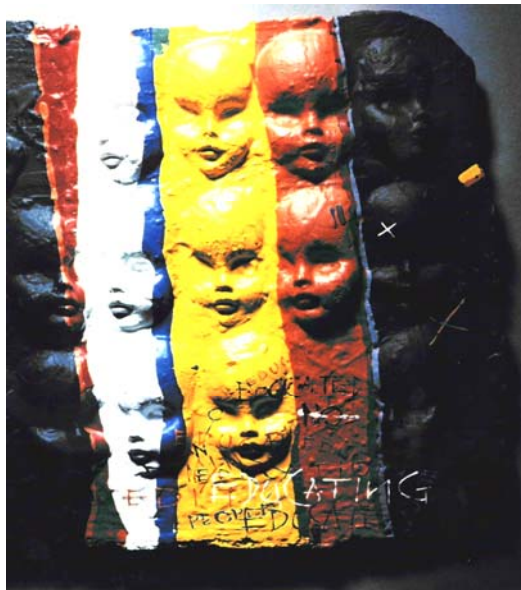
INVITATIONAL SCREENING



The Quorum

A documentary

University of North Carolina at Wilmington



John T. Scott

The *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court Decision of 1954 called for the integration of schools “with all deliberate speed.” In the decade that followed, hate groups and conservative segregationists resisted integration of any kind, calling it a communist conspiracy. They resorted to terrorist tactics, harassment, lynchings, bombings, school closings, phone threats, and media propaganda that labeled anyone who complied with the *Brown* Decision as “communist, homosexual, integrationist agitators.”

This documentary, *The Quorum*, is a true story about social change and racial integration in New Orleans occurring in a coffee house that opened its doors to persons from all racial backgrounds in 1963. The Quorum’s clientele included artists, writers, poets, musicians, scholars, ordinary people, students, university professors, actors—including some from the Free Southern Theatre—intellectuals and folk artists including country blues singer Babe Stovall and songwriter Jerry Jeff Walker (“Mr. Bojangles”).

It was forbidden by State law for Blacks and Whites to sit at the same table in restaurants and bars. The Quorum was one of the first public places in New Orleans that allowed the social gathering of Blacks and Whites, and permitted them to sit together at tables in the coffee house. The Quorum was also a frequent stop for the “Freedom Riders” who rode Greyhound busses into the South to volunteer in the registration of Black voters and to assist in the Civil Rights Movement.

On Wednesday night, July 29, 1964, police raided the Quorum. Seventy-three persons were arrested, accused of “playing guitars out of tune, engaging in conversations without conclusions” and charged with “disturbing the peace.” This motion picture unveils the social fabric of New Orleans, the tactics of fear and intimidation used by the police and the district attorney in their efforts to destroy the free right of assembly by American citizens as guaranteed by the Constitution. The Quorum documents an event of social change in New Orleans that was a profound step in making freedom a reality for all of its people.

See the website at
www.quorumthemovie.com

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The Quorum.

Directed by
UNCW professor
Maurice M. Martinez
Watson School of Education
Co-producers:
Maurice M. Martinez
Harriet J. Ottenheimer

