

ONCE UPON A TIME (commemorating MSP)

Once upon a time and long ago

There was a kingdom (or school if you are not into fables) called Rut-gers

In a place called New-Ark

In a building called New-House

Where people came to learn about

The rule of law

and the

The search for Just-us.

So it was said. Let it be heard.

I

n the kingdom called Rut-gers

There was a Dean to watch over the whole kingdom,

A court filled with barristers to help run the joint,

With advice and consent from the Council of Esteemed Judges or those

better known as “faculty,” and input from the people of the kingdom

better known as the “people electric”

Together they learned about the rule of law and the search for justice.

And so it was said. Let it be heard.

Well, the kingdom lived long and prospered

Highly regarded in the land.

And although most of the people were of

The same culture

And spoke the same language

And shared the same sex

And wore the same complexion

For a time, everyone looked around the kingdom and saw that it was good.

And so it was said, then let it be heard.

But soon, throughout the land the waters were troubled

*The people of the land who were outside the kingdom began marching
outside the kingdom doors*

*They cried out to the kingdom saying “rise up against the tyranny of the
law”*

And they shouted “justice for all”

And they marched:

For open doors

And open minds

And conscious

And principle.

And for the first time that anyone really knew

The people of the kingdom called Rut-gers

Looked around and saw that all was not good.

For the kingdom that prospered and taught the rule of law and urged a search for justice did not hold all of the faces and all of the voices of the people of the land.

And they were challenged by the outsiders

And chided by the insiders

And touched by the cries

And fearful, especially when the man called “dreamer” died

And so they stopped. And the kingdom went silent, while the dean and the court and the council of esteemed judges and the people electric went into deep reflection

And after a time, the people of the kingdom called for a new day

And they proclaimed that just-us must become just-is (the root word of justice), and that history must go forward and they decided to build a better kingdom

And a place within a place was born

And the kingdom went on a new journey

With new faces and old faces

With similar voices and different voices

With common language and other languages

And this place within a place was called MSP (Many Smart People)

So it was said. Let it be heard.

And through the years of creating the place within a place, the kingdom never stopped prospering

The wonderful, magical, difficult, challenging, painful, progressive, changing years, when the people of the kingdom came to learn the reasons why and the arguments for and against and to reconcile the rule of law with

A sense of community

And race

And class

And culture

And grapple with the questions “what is the value of a human being” in an era where even DNA is a market commodity” and “what does that have to do with the rule of law anyway?”

Well, MSP thrived and the place within a place produced

A new court

New barristers

New judges

And people who created new fertile areas and expanded the rule of law across the land to accommodate all of the people, all of the faces, all of the voices, and all of the hopes

and defeated the one called Destroyer who came to the land to deny Rutgers and other kingdoms a place within a place

And through sung and unsung, named and unnamed, MSP birthed a diaspora that blossomed and burst forth with a passion for change and excellence

And a glorious mantra issued forth: The people’s Electric Law School live long and prosperous!

In a place called New-House

In a city called New-Ark

In a kingdom called Rutgers

And so it was said. Let it be heard.

On the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Minority Student Program (MSP), April 2000. Marcia Wilson Brown ('1994)