
Written as a case study, this book documents the community-driven effort to organize, fund, and administer a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in Greensboro to examine the events and consequences of the Greensboro Massacre of November 3, 1979. In that incident five people were killed and ten injured in a clash between Ku Klux Klansmen and American Nazi Party members on one side, and Communist activists on the other. However, readers should not expect an exhaustive account of the massacre, but rather an account and analysis of the TRC’s work. (For a full examination of the massacre the author refers readers to the TRC’s final report which is online at: [http://www.greensborotrc.org/](http://www.greensborotrc.org/))

The author is an associate professor of Communication Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNC-G), and “worked alongside other community members … to document the grassroots effort to convene” the Greensboro TRC. This appears to be her first book-length work since her dissertation in 2001, but her articles consistently address issues of communication and civic engagement.

The book is well organized, first leading the reader through the basic facts of the massacre, then explaining the theory of TRCs in general before narrating the story of the Greensboro TRC, both its formation and its work. Later chapters describe the community’s response to the TRC’s final report, analyze the impact of the commission’s work on the community, and evaluate its effectiveness. The reader is left with a portrait of a community that still has a long way to go to achieve racial and economic parity, but which is beginning to address those issues.

Although this is a scholarly work, the author writes in an accessible prose style. While the author strives to maintain an objective voice, she is not completely successful, which is not surprising given her personal involvement. Many readers are likely to find her interpretation challenging, but her evaluation of the need for greater civic engagement and civility overall in our society is highly relevant.

The book includes extensive references and notes, as well as an index. Six appendices provide the commission’s mandate and guiding principles; a discussion of the concept of reconciliation; the final report general summary; a guide for conducting college class discussion based on the summary; and “Lyrical Reflections” on the massacre, the text of a spoken word production written by UNC-G faculty and students (which could use a better citation—if the reader misses the footnote where the work is described, there is no heading or textual note in the appendix to explain its source or context or even to indicate this is not the author’s own work). Overall, this work was not well-edited: grammar issues abound.

This book is recommended for all adult and young adult collections, particularly those with communications programs, North Carolina history collections, or collections which concern themselves with race and class issues. School libraries will want to evaluate the appropriateness of challenging content for younger age groups, who may have difficulty with the straightforward
descriptions of the massacre and emotional personal narratives from the commission proceedings. (This material is a relatively small portion of the book.)

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