

# The Williams Record

VOL. 94, NO. 7

USPA 684-680

WILLIAMS



COLLEGE

NOVEMBER 4, 1980

## Campus shocked by burning cross

### Pair lights fiery cross

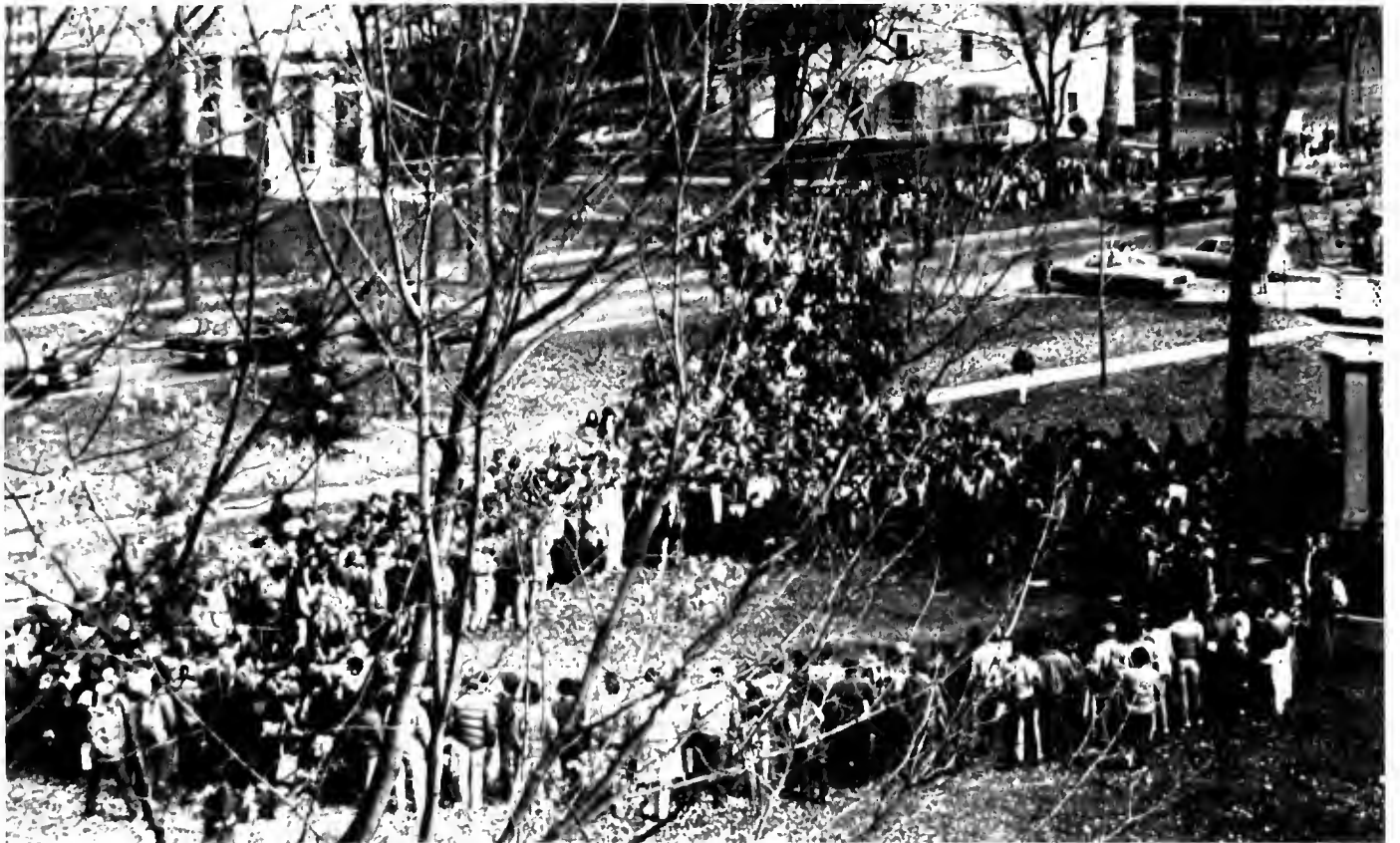
by Stephen Willard

Two shrouded figures burned a cross in front of Perry House Saturday night in view of about 40 students attending Homecoming parties at Perry and Wood Houses. At about 10:20 p.m., the two men, dressed in white sheets, lit the cross and a semicircle of flame around it, on the northeast corner of the Perry House lawn and fled to a waiting car. The incident sparked a reaction of fear and anger in the Williams community that led to a rally at noon Monday on the Baxter lawn, where students and administrators denounced the act before a crowd of about 1200. (see accompanying story.)

The two dark-haired males, roughly 5'10" to 6' in height were originally seen pounding a dark object into the Perry House lawn at about 10:15. "I thought they were doing something in connection with the Perry House party," recalled onlooker Gordon Celender '82. The men pounded the 2' by 1' cross into the ground with a third piece of wood, and, after tying a small white rag to the top of the cross, doused the cross and a semicircle of lawn around it with gasoline. After lighting a two-foot torch, the pair then waved the torch wildly for about 45 seconds before setting the cross and ground ablaze. Once the cross was on fire, the two men ran around the west end of Perry House to a waiting car parked behind the house. The car was described by an eyewitness as "an early model, 1972 or 1973, orange Japanese compact with a lot of body putty or primer paint on it." The car drove out onto Route 2 and headed east toward North Adams.

Students attending the Perry and Wood House parties first

Continued on Page 3



800 students, faculty, and staff marched from the rally at Baxter to Perry House where they viewed the site of the cross-burning and prayed for a world free of terror and racism. (Buckner)

## Rally draws more than 1200 participants

by Stephen Willard

More than 1200 students, faculty, and staff attended a noon rally Monday in response to the cross burning late Saturday nights at Perry House (see accompanying article). The crowd, many of whom were wearing white armbands distributed by the Williams Black Student Union (BSU), heard President John Chandler, College Council President Darrell McWhorter '81, and BSU coordinator Greg Witcher '81 speak.

Chandler opened the rally with comments referring to a one-page statement which was put in student mailboxes about 11:00

Monday morning. Chandler emphasized in his comments that no one presently knows whether the perpetrators were part of the Williams community and that their motives are not known.

"The deeply disturbing incident is an affront to the fundamental values and commitments of Williams College," Chandler said. "No use of the terrible symbolism of the fiery cross, whether seen as a thoughtless and insensitive prank or as a malicious effort to intimidate, will be tolerated at Williams. This episode has undoubtedly damaged ... and may still damage Williams."

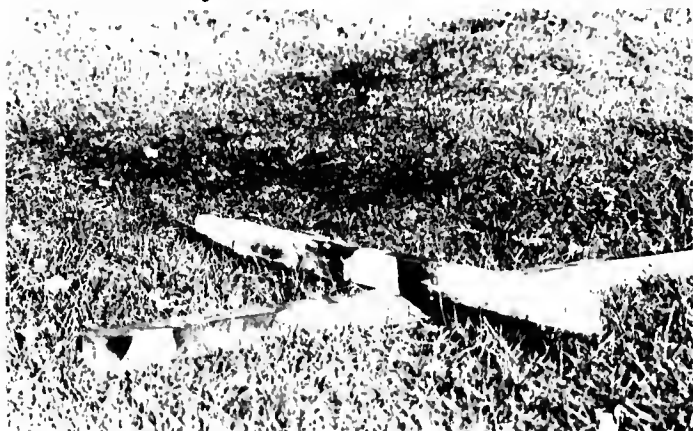
Chandler announced that the College is offering a reward of \$1000 for information leading to the identification of those responsible. He then called on students to "look ahead and rededicate our efforts to creating a positive social environment so that we can function with a sense of freedom from intimidation and harassment."

Darrell McWhorter was the next to speak, representing the student body as College Council president in expressing its collective shock at the incident. McWhorter emphasized the terrible symbolism of the burning cross to all people, but par-

ticularly to blacks. "A cross burning evokes lynch-in, hanging, tar and featherings," said McWhorter. "It's clear that this (Williams) isn't an ivory tower." In his speech McWhorter assumed that the offenders were Williams students.

McWhorter tried to explain to the assembled students the difficulty of being a black student at Williams, saying that tension and fear of violence as well as the problem of racism is "a problem we (back students) have to face every day." McWhorter concluded with a call to black students to educate their white

Continued on Page 3



Clockwise—pieces of the charred cross near the site of the cross-burning; Greg Witcher '81 speaks to the rally at Baxter, Chandler, who spoke before Witcher, looks on; Reverend Muhammad Kenyatta leads the assembled crowd in prayer at the site of the cross burning. (Buckner)



## Reza proclaimed Shah

Reza Pahlavi '82 proclaimed himself the Shah of Iran last Friday in a message to the Iranian people, fulfilling his father's deathbed wish that he assume the throne on his 20th birthday.

Pahlavi entered Williams as a special student with the class of 1983 last year, but did not return for the fall semester. He is currently a Political Science student at the American University in Cairo, Egypt; there has been no official indication of when he will return to Williams.

Friday's statement was made at a simple ceremony in Pahlavi's office at the Kubbeh palace in Cairo, where the family has been living since March 24. He spoke for ten minutes saying that he grieved over the "nightmare" of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's regime and the "external aggression" of Iraq.

Pahlavi predicted the over-

throw of the present Iranian government in an interview with CBS News. "The Iranian people will stand up again," he said. "That I am convinced of ... and will sweep away this regime."

As the exiled king of Iran, Pahlavi said he hopes to become the leader of an anti-Khomeini resistance movement. "Now that destiny demands that I take up my new duties, I dedicate myself to a new and shining era in our history," he told the Iranian people. "I seek your support, and I am confident of your response. It is imperative that all patriotic groups inside and outside Iran should now join forces in the common cause."

The State Department said that the United States will not recognize Pahlavi's claim to the throne of Iran, which is based upon the 1906 Imperial constitution. "We consider the present government of Iran the legally constituted government," said a Department spokesman.