

# Slain Youths Lacked Time for 'Politics'

By PAUL L. MONTGOMERY

As their families and friends remembered them, neither of the two students killed by policemen at Jackson State College Thursday night was active in what Mississippi blacks call "Politics."

The two youths — James Earl Green, a 17-year-old senior at Jim Hill High School in Jackson, and Phillip Lafayette Gibbs, a 21-year-old junior in prelaw studies at Jackson State — spent most of their days working or studying and, friends said, had little time to be militant.

Young Mr. Green, a star miler on the track team, who hoped to go to college, worked six hours a day after school and most weekends in a grocery store for \$12 a week plus tips to help support his widowed mother, three younger brothers and sisters.

Mr. Gibbs, who was born in the hard-scrabble hill town of Ripley, Miss., and received much of his education in Wisconsin, was married and had a son who will be 11 months old tomorrow. He was described as a fine student who had hoped to be a doctor until shortage of money made him switch to law.

### Outline of their Lives

As reconstructed from telephone conversations with teachers, friends and relatives, this was the outline of the two youths' lives:

James Earl Green was born in Jackson Dec. 19, 1952, the fifth of eight children. His home at 1164C Dalton Circle, as well as the three schools he went to — Isable Elementary School, Blackburn Junior High School and Jim Hill Senior High School — are within a half-mile of Jackson State.

His father died when he was small, leaving the support of the children to his mother, Mrs. Myrtle Green, who is 43. She recently married again; his stepfather works as a laborer.

His teachers describe him as a quiet, well-liked youth with regular attendance record and average grades.

"He presented no disciplinary problems," said his principal. This year he was taking English, typing, government, journalism, physical education and industrial arts, a course



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**Phillip L. Gibbs, a student at Jackson State College, was one of the two victims.**

that would prepare him for junior college. One of his sisters said, however, that he had his heart on going to University of California at Los Angeles.

### 'Most Often, He Won'

He was the best mile runner on the track team. "Most often he won," said his 16-year-old sister, Gloria. "They said he was the best they had. This year, he was going to get a jacket."

"He was very happy all the time and everything," said his sister. "He hadn't hardly any enemies. He didn't, you know, have anything to do with politics."

For several years the youth had worked from 4 P.M. to 10 P.M. weekdays and beginning at 8 A.M. Saturdays and Sundays at the Rag-a-Bag, a grocery store near Jackson State. He gave his mother most of the \$12 a week and the tips he earned to help with the groceries. His mother said he was on his way home from work when he was shot.

### The Gibbs Family

Phillip Lafayette Gibbs was born Sept. 1, 1948, at Ripley, the county seat of Tippah County in Northeast Mississippi. His father was from Walnut, 20 miles to the north, and worked as a sharecropper and at odd jobs. His mother, Louise Clemmer, was from Ripley.

In the early nineteen-fifties, the Gibbs family—the parents, Phillip, two sisters and a brother—went north. Mr. Gibbs found a job at the Rock Island Arsenal in Davenport, Iowa.

Mrs. Gibbs and the children went to Beloit, Wisc., then to Milwaukee. Phillip graduated from the Palmer Street Elementary School in Milwaukee and went to Lincoln High School there.

Mr. Gibbs died in March, 1961, and Mrs. Gibbs died in August, 1962. The children came home to Ripley to live in the rickety five-room house on Terry Street they had inherited.

At the Line Street Consolidated School in Ripley, Phillip was a very good student, graduating near the top of his class of 40 in 1967. He was a guard on the basketball team and the youth representative on the Committee of Social Concern at the Methodist Church.

"He had a quiet, determined personality," recalled Dr. F.L. Spight, then principal of the Line Street school. "We had a small thing here, we called it the Civil Rights Council, but I would say he was just an onlooker to it."

He went on to Jackson State, where he hoped to study medicine. "Then I guess he realized it was a little impossible, so he switched to law," Dr. Spight said.

One of his sisters, Mrs. Noreen Cox, recalled her brother as being "lively and full of fun."

While at Jackson State, the young man married Del Adams, a high school sweetheart from Ripley. Their son, Phillip Jr., was christened at the Methodist Church two months ago.