

African-American Studies Program Launched at MSU



Photo Courtesy of MSU Relations News Bureau

Last year, Dr. Stephen Middleton joined the MSU faculty as Professor of History and Director of African American Studies (AAS).

A historian, author, and scholar, Dr. Middleton was reared in rural South Carolina. He worked as a plowman and cotton picker. "I was poor and brought up under segregation,"

said Dr. Middleton. "My great uncle William 'Last Boy' Mack was handicapped in serious ways. Yet, he developed a powerful interpretation of his life. He urged, 'can't been dead; I helped bury the scoundrel.'" He also urged, "Take what you got and make what you want." These are more than slogans to me. I believe in these tenants -- I live by them."

At Morris College, where Dr. Middleton began his studies, Dr. Michael Brandstadder inspired him to become a history major. He completed his Bachelor's degree at Morris. Later, he obtained a Master's from The Ohio State University and a history Doctorate from Miami University. He comes to MSU from North Carolina State University.

What attracted him to MSU? "The challenge to become a part of history by establishing a program that will survive my life," said Dr. Middleton. "Also, MSU has a fine and comfortable campus. It seems as if the university is one of the best kept secrets in the South."

Launched last November, the AAS is an interdisciplinary academic program leading to a minor concentration for undergraduates and a minor field for graduate students. "Graduate students will have a **(Continue on Page 2)**

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Looking Ahead

- Summer Membership Drive: June-July.
- Annual Meeting (October 2008): Details to come.
- Post-Game Banquet (October 2008): Details to come.

Annual Reunion and Meeting Update

The MSU Black Alumni & Friends Group Annual Meeting and Reunion will occur on Saturday, October 25, 2008 – Homecoming Weekend at MSU. The format for the event will be similar to last year's event and will include a breakfast, a networking session, committee updates, and

remarks by our guest speaker. We will convene in the Union at 8:00 AM Central Time and conclude at 10:00 AM, allowing time for participation in the various tailgating and other pre-game events. A post-game dinner event will also occur.

Starting in May, bi-weekly updates will be posted at: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MissStateUnivBlackAlumni_Friends/.

See you at the next MSU Alumni event and at Homecoming!



L,R: Shawana Bynum, Coach Croom, and Venita Grays at the April 24, Road Dawgs Tour in Atlanta

AAS Program Launched at MSU (Cont)

choice of advanced courses to take, as well as an opportunity to work with our well-accomplished faculty," said Dr. Middleton. "Doctoral students will choose a faculty mentor and will teach the introduction to AAS after they have earned a total of 20 hours in graduate school, with at least 6 hours in AAS."

Dr. Middleton's goal is to have 6 jointly-appointed faculties, with each serving half-time in AAS and a traditional academic department. "By offering a range of courses dealing with history, literature, art, music, geography,

psychology, etc., I believe we will attract students who will take one or more of our classes, as well as pursue a minor in AAS," said Dr. Middleton. "Students from all ethnic backgrounds will study about African people from a perspective that they might not always hear about. They will not only study the poor slave, they will learn about black agency, empowerment, courage, radicalism, etc. Some will probably discover black people for the first time in their lives. Black students will make the same discovery. Also, black students may find out that a course in AAS

might be a stress-buster. They might leave an AAS course feeling better about themselves than every before. They may encounter what it means to be a black American for the first time in their lives."

Dr. Middleton believes he has an opportunity to help create a viable academic program that will make a difference in the lives of students at MSU. "Being the inaugural director of this program is what I like best about my job. I am a creator, and my attitude shows it," said Dr. Middleton.

In addition to offering courses, the AAS program

also provides learning opportunities outside the classroom. Research projects, lecture series, and film series are all designed to advance discussions about AAS.

As a teenager, he realized the value of an education and learned to care about people. "My desire is to serve by supporting them in discovering their power," said Dr. Middleton. "We take pride in being a part of the people's university (MSU). We offer speakers, our expertise, and programming aimed at improving the quality of life of the people of Mississippi."

Executive Steering Committee Draft Principles

The Executive Steering Committee (ESC) - the managing and administrative body for our Group - has developed a set of guiding principles. The ESC solicits your comments on the following:

Preamble: The committee will at all times conduct its deliberations and offer its advice and decisions respectful of the views of MSU alumni and friends.

ESC Guiding Principles: The MSU Black Alumni & Friends Group's Executive

Steering Committee will function using the following principles:

1. Act in the best interest of the MSU Black Alumni & Friends Group (Group).
2. Focus on and be open to outcomes.
3. Have a bias for action.
4. Make important ESC decisions by consensus and not by voting nor by the exertion of power or authority (Note: This does not mean that eve-

ryone must agree, but a sense of acceptance by the entire ESC is sought. When no consensus can be reached, the ESC Chair will make final decisions based on the best advice or recommendation).

5. Promote communications and transparency between the Group's four committees, with Group members, and with MSU alumni and friends to build a stronger relationship.

6. Respect all participants (i.e., alumni and friends) and viewpoints.

7. Work collaboratively, recognizing that decisions will evolve from the committee process.

Currently, the ESC members are Desi Crouther, Beverly Thomas-Lockett, Alshunda K. Quinn, Debra J. Moore Shannon, and Tommy Stevenson.

Please provide your comments on these draft principles (and preamble) via e-mail to a ESC member by May 31, 2008. A copy of these principles is also posted at this principle:// groups.yahoo.com/group/MissStateUnivBlack-Alumni_Friends/files/.

Props and Praise

Congratulations to Dr. Angela Lang Chandler, M.D. (MSU, B.S. Chemistry, Class of 1994, Delta Sigma Theta, Nu Beta Chapter, Fall '91) and to Derrick Chandler (MSU, B.S. Chemical Engineering, Class of 1994) who on November 21, 2007, welcomed a new baby, Adrienne Simone to their family. Adrienne was welcomed home by her brothers Tyler,

Myles, and Reece.

In February 2008, Tyrone Keys, who has made helping others his lifelong mission, was honored during the MSU-Ole Miss game for his work with All Sports Community Service. His Tampa-based non-profit organization was featured in "Story of Character" television spots to com-

memorate the SEC's 75th anniversary.

Betty (Bush) Roby was recently promoted to Senior Technology Manager for Bank of America in Atlanta, GA. Betty manages a team of DB2 Database Administrators. In July 2008, she will celebrate her 10th year with Bank of America. She previously

worked for Electronic Data Systems. Betty's a 1989 graduate with a degree in Computer Science.

Alshunda Quinn completed the Event Coordination Certificate Program through the Center for Continuing and Corporate Education at Georgia Perimeter College. She will graduate in December.

Campus Happenings

The Holmes Cultural Diversity Center is seeking all who have worked in the Center (e.g., Peer Counselors, Peer Ambassadors, Graduate Assistants, Interns, secretaries, friends). "We are beginning plans for our first ever reunion," said Center Director E. Maria White. "I need these individuals to send me their contact information." These individuals should send their contact information to: E. Maria White, Director,

Holmes Cultural Diversity Center, P.O. Box 9503, Mississippi State, MS 39762; email mw1@saffairs.msstate.edu; or contact her on Facebook.

The Holmes Cultural Diversity Center, formerly known as the Office of Minority Affairs, strives to enhance the college experience of culturally diverse students at MSU. As noted on its web site, the Center has been an important

part of university life since its beginning in 1979. Many students who interact with the center consider it to be a "home away from home". In 1991, the Holmes Cultural Diversity Center was dedicated to Dr. Richard E. Holmes, the first African American alumnus of MSU.

Visit the Center on the web at <http://www.hcdc.msstate.edu/> or during your next trip to MSU.



*Dr. Richard E. Holmes,
Photo Courtesy of MSU*

Alumni Spotlight

Kudos to MSU Alumnus, Ken "Phat" Cornelius for the debut of his play, "Prelude to the Good Life". Written and directed by Ken, a member of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., the play premiered March 28-29, 2008, at the Greensboro Center in Starkville and was well received by attendees. The play centers on a family with relationship and other challenges. All of the songs in the play are original and were written by Ken and his brother Carlton Vivians.

"Prelude" was also the first collaborative effort of Project C.H.A.N.C.E. (Creating, Harvesting, and Nurturing Creative Environments), the brainchild of MSU Alumni and MSU Black Alumni and

Friends Events Committee member, Tunisa Rice. Designed to be a not-for-profit organization, its main goal is to bring organizations, institutions, and businesses together in support of arts-oriented community events.

Supporting sponsors of the play included the Phi Lambda Zeta Graduate Chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., and the Delta Upsilon Sigma Graduate Chapter of Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

On April 23, 2008, a cast of mainly MSU students performed "Prelude to the Good Life" in Lee Hall Auditorium. The event was sponsored by the MSU Holmes Cultural Diversity Center and the MSU Student Association.

Ken, who also acts in the play, told the MSU Reflector's Jennifer Nelson afterwards that his work is inspired by his experience of trying to motivate young men and women. Given his spiritual background, he wants people to realize that no matter what their trials and tribulations, if you pray about your situation, the Lord will make a way.

Ken started writing "Prelude to the Good Life" in early 2007 and finished it in November 2007. He classifies his play as inspirational. Judging from the reviews received to date, his audiences would agree that "Prelude to the Good Life" is indeed "inspirational".



*Photo and Story by
Angela D. Hatchett*

Alumni and Friends Search

Please help us locate the following alumni and friends (Last known name, graduation year/decade at MSU, and hometown):

Diane Armon (1981), Jackson, MS
Temika Bolton (1990), Picayune, MS
Miranda Clark (1999)
Michael Edwards, (70s),

Moss Point, MS
Barbara Jones (70s), Columbus, MS
Jennifer Johnson (70s)
John Lee (70s)
Sharon A. McCorvey (70s), Moss Point, MS
Singarit Taylor (70s), Vicksburg, MS
Fabian West (70s), Starkville, MS

Got Info? Please contact dcrou02@yahoo.com. If you're searching for a lost MSU classmate and would like the Groups' assistance, please submit your request to missstateunivblack-alumni_friends@yahoo.com. Please provide us the persons full name, the years they attended MSU and their hometown (if available).

"A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success."

Unknown

MSU Black Alumni & Friends Group

Editor's Corner

Welcome to The Journal! Our efforts are dedicated to keeping you informed. Every quarter, we hope to provide you information and news about MSU alumni and friends, MSU students and faculty, and events and activities.

This issue—our second for 2008— has an added emphasis on campus-area events and activities. We thank you for your ideas and contributions to this and our previous issues of The Journal. As we move forward, we encourage you to continue to provide us your ideas and articles, making each issue of The Journal better than the previous edition.

We will post the next issue of The Journal on July 31, 2008.



***Desi A. Crouther, Editor
The Journal***

About the MSU Black Alumni & Friends Group

The focus of the MSU Black Alumni & Friends Group is to facilitate African American involvement in variety of ways. This includes (but is not limited to) campus involvement, professional development, and events involving and/or supporting MSU students, MSU, and MSU alumni-related programs and events. A membership in the MSU Alumni Association is not required to attend our events but is encouraged.



Read The Journal online at:

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MissStateUnivBlackAlumni_Friends/

In Memoriam



Hollie Ford, Jr. - the fifth of eleven children – was born in Crystal Springs, Mississippi. He attended Hortclaw High School in Crystal Springs. After completing High School, he served two years in the United States Army. Subsequently, he received his Bachelor of Science De-

gree in Agricultural Education and Master's Degree in Extension Education and Educational Specialist Degree in Agriculture and Extension Education from MSU.

Mr. Ford commenced his career in 1961, teaching Vocational Agriculture in Benoit, Mississippi. Later he served as the Assistant County Agent in Lexington, Mississippi for two years, coordinating the African American 4-H program. He then served as the Associate County Agent in Lee County. For the next six years, he supervised and trained county farmers in vegetable programs, coordinated various areas of the 4-H program, and served as the 4-H Youth Extension Agent where he continued to coordinate the county 4-H program.

In 1973, Mr. Ford moved his family to Starkville where he served as a 4-H

Youth Development Specialist at MSU until retiring in 1993. He served in various capacities in numerous organizations such as President of DUS Management, Inc.; President of the Kiwanis Breakfast Club; Member of the State 4-H Advisory Council; President of the Starkville PTA Council; and President of the Oktibbeha County Library Board.

He was a dedicated member of a number of professional, honorary, and social organizations such as the Starkville Area Chambers of Commerce; Kiwanis International Starkville Breakfast Club; MSU Alumni Association; and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. He was also a recipient of numerous national, state, and local recognitions and awards.

He served as an Oktibbeha County Election Commissioner from 2000 until his passing on January 25, 2008.

"March on. Do not tarry. To go forward is to move toward perfection. March on, and fear not the thorns, or the sharp stones on life's path." ~ Kahlil Gibran