

ACTS & FACTS



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OU'S FIRST GRADUATING CLASS EXCITED AND DETERMINED: The students composing OU's first graduating class are both excited and determined to make it down the aisle. There are students heading off to Medical School, Law School, and even Forensic School. Commencement activities and speakers are:

Thursday, May 8: 4:00 p.m., Moseley Complex: Nurses Pinning Ceremony. Speaker: Michael G. Mwasumbi, Oakwood alumnus and registered nurse. 6:00 p.m., Skating Rink: Senior Class/Parent/Guardian Reception hosted by the President's Office.

Friday, May 9, 8:00 p.m.: Consecration, Oakwood University Church. Speaker: Eric Thomas, Oakwood alumnus. Sabbath, May 10, 10:45 a.m.: Baccalaureate, Von Braun Center Arena. Speaker: Chris Christmas, Christian entrepreneur. 8:00 p.m., Von Braun Center Arena: Commencement. Speaker: Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, U.S. House of Representatives.

OU AMBASSADORS WIN 2008 USCAA CHAMPIONSHIP: Chalk up another first for Oakwood University – as the Ambassadors beat Florida College at the Men's Division I Basketball National Championship playoffs of the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma in March. This was Oakwood's first year participating in the USCAA, so the win is especially meaningful. Coach Tony Oliver said the team prayed before they stepped onto the court for the Saturday night game as a part of their regular "M-O" before every game. Despite countless queries as to why the team refused to participate in games played between sunset Friday and sunset Saturday, the Seventh-day Adventist team members and coach stood by their religious convictions and observed the Sabbath. The rest seemed to work to their benefit. The team returned to Huntsville to a crowd of well-wishers at the airport and was later recognized by the Huntsville City Council on April 10. Congratulations Ambassadors!!

OU WINS HONDA CAMPUS ALL-STAR CHALLENGE: Oakwood University defeated Alcorn State on to come in first in the 19th annual Honda Campus All-Star Challenge, billed as "the largest annual academic competition between the nation's leading Historically Black Colleges and Universities." The event was held March 27 through April 1 in Orlando, Fla. Oakwood had participated since the Challenge's inception in 1989, but had never made it past the Final Four. After playing all of their first seven matches on Friday, due to the Sabbath observance, they won Saturday night to advance to the semi-finals and on to the finals on Sunday. Each of the 64 teams was comprised of five students with diverse academic backgrounds. The grand prize was a grant of \$50,000 from Honda. www.hcasc.com We agree with one friend of Oakwood, who said that the most important part is not the intellectual prowess, the trophy, the national media attention, or the money, but our team's witness about the Sabbath!

OU BEGINS MASTERS PROGRAM: The Master of Arts in Pastoral Studies (MAPS) is a thirty-six (36) semester hour professional degree designed to foster spiritual and academic development and the integrative practical skills of pastors and lay leaders for Christ-centered ministry. Participants will develop competencies in pastoral leadership, pastoral care, and pastoral evangelism and discipleship, which will equip them to offer faithful spiritual leadership. The program is conducted in two-week intensives. The inaugural class has over 20 students, ap-

proximately half of whom are currently ministers, while the rest have diverse careers including lay members of local churches.

OAKWOOD STUDENT WINS MUSIC COMPETITION: On March 2, 2008 Bean entered the prestigious Alltech Opera Scholarship music competition at the Singlatory Center for the Arts located at the University of Kentucky and ran off with all the prizes that were to be given. Bean, who came in first place out of approximately 29 singers, will receive a full graduate assistantship to the University of Kentucky, \$10,000 cash award, \$10,000 stipend during his tenure at the University and a promise of a main stage lead role with Kentucky Opera. Bean follows in the footsteps of 2006 Music Department Graduate Eric Brown, who also won this competition in 2006. Congratulations, Bruce, from all the students and music faculty at Oakwood University. Bravo!

Congratulations also go to OU Music students who placed well in the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) competition. Alabama competitors: semi-finalist Xavier Joseph—Freshman College Men category—and Breoni Fassett—Junior College Women category. Finalist, Breoni Fassett, placed 3rd for the state of Alabama. The NATSAA competition is designed to assist singers preparing to launch a professional career, and to that end, substantial monetary and performance prizes are offered. ~ Submitted by Audley C. Chambers, Chair, Department of Music.

OAKWOOD STUDENT AWARDED 2008 UNCF-MERCK UNDERGRADUATE SCIENCE RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIP: Junior biochemistry major Ryan D. Lang is the recipient of a 2008 UNCF-Merck Undergraduate Science Research Scholarship that will cover tuition, room, and board expenses for Lang's senior year, up to \$25,000. In addition to this award, Lang will receive two paid summer internships at a Merck Research Lab. Also, Lang's academic department (OU's Chemistry Department) is eligible to receive a Department Grant of up to \$10,000 to support research and student scholarships.

Lang has worked as a research assistant in the laboratory of Dr. Alexander Volkov (Chemistry Department) for three years, and has completed research internships in New York and South Africa. He plans to attend medical school after graduation and eventually become a physician-scientist. Lang counts it "an exceptional blessing to be a part of this initiative, and one of only 15 students in the nation to receive this highly competitive fellowship." He is also the first Oakwood student to receive this fellowship. For more information, please visit: www.uncf.org/Merck.

OAKWOOD REVIVES A SPEAKING TRADITION: Breath of Life Speaker/Director Walter Pearson, an Oakwood alumnus, breathed new life into an old tradition when he approached his alma mater last year in an effort to revive an Oakwood public speaking tradition. Through his efforts, and those of an anonymous supporter who donated the prize money, the Breath of Life/Oakwood University Oratorical Contest was formed and on April 10 the first such competition took place at the Business and Technology Auditorium on Oakwood's campus. The theme of this year's competition was "Impacting the World for a Better Tomorrow." The competition began with 23 talented students who participated in the qualifying meets held last November. A volunteer panel of judges comprised of local clergy and faculty and staff members from University of Alabama Huntsville, Alabama A&M University, Calhoun Community College, and Oakwood University evaluated these final six contestants as they competed for first-, second-, and third- place prizes totaling \$6,000.

Of those six finalists, Music Education Senior Christine Jobson placed first, Theology Sophomore Philip Kerimiah placed second, and Business Marketing and Communications Senior Lynae Turner placed third, walking away with \$3,000, \$2,000, and \$1,000, respectively. The other three contestants—Kaggia Scott, Ashley Stephenson-Jones, and Joseph Holland—all received prizes for placing and competing in the final round.

The event serves as a pilot for possible duplication at the 13 other Seventh-day Adventist institutions throughout North America in the first of what it to become an annual campus event. Funds for the monetary prizes were provided by an anonymous donor.

COMMUNICATION ALUMNI HONORED: The first James E. Dykes Communicator Award banquet was held on March 23 at the Huntsville Board of Realtors' office building in downtown Huntsville. The award's name honors the late James E. Dykes, the associate professor who envisioned and started the communication curricula in the mid-1970s at Oakwood.

The following alumni received the award to recognize their achievements in the communication field: David Person, Class of '85 —Editorial writer and columnist for The Huntsville Times and host of "WEUP Talk," a daily call-in show on Huntsville's WEUP-AM. Victoria Joiner Miller, Class of '87 — General manager of Praise 90.1 FM, WJOU, Oakwood University's radio station, and Assistant Vice-President of Development for the school. Hallerin Hilton Hill, Class of '90 — Host of "The Hallerin Hilton Hill" drive-time talk show for FM 100, WNOX in Knoxville, Tenn. He also produces and hosts a weekly television show, "Anything is Possible" on Knoxville's NBC affiliate WBIR. Kym Richardson Thurman, Class of '93 — Anchor for the 5:00, 6:00 and 10:00 p.m. news at the NBC affiliate WPMI-15 in Mobile, Ala.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:

If You Know What Stanlieo's Is, You're an Oakwoodite: It's here-- a website created by David Crawford and Carmela Monk Crawford, for all Oakwoodites: Oakwoodite.com. This new website enables you to connect with Oakwoodites you know and those with whom you have lost touch. This site is dedicated to connecting Oakwoodites and things affiliated with Oakwood University. It is not an Oakwood alumni site because you are not required to have graduated from Oakwood to be a member. We're looking for you! Go to Oakwoodite.com and become a member.

Congratulations to Dr. Carlton P. Byrd, Senior Pastor of the Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church in Atlanta, and to Dr. Mervyn A. Warren, Oakwood University Provost, on their induction into the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. International Board of Preachers Collegium of Scholars. Drs. Byrd and Warren were among a class of 40 notable Pastors, Ministers, and Bishops for the 22nd Board of Preachers and Scholars Ceremony on April 3, 2008, in Atlanta. They will be joining other SDA ministers who have received this prestigious honor, including Elders C. E. Bradford, E.E. Cleveland, and Walter Pearson.

Osterman Celebrates 30 Years of Ministry: Come join in the 30-year anniversary celebration of music ministry with Dr. Eurydice Osterman. If you have sung under her direction in the Aeolians, the College Choir, Church Chorale or the Chamber Ensemble, then you need to plan for this event on October 18, 2008. For details, see the Oakwood website -- <http://www.oakwood.edu/music/default.aspx?id=23>.

Charles Wesley Knight (class of 1997) recently completed requirements for the Doctor of Ministry degree at the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. Knight's dissertation examined how congregations frame their identity, understand who they are, and decide what they are called to do in order to move from reaching inwardly to true outreach in the community. This understanding, in turn, impacts how a church can be more involved in social justice and community empowerment. Knight is married to the former Stephanie Johnson from Orlando, Florida. They have two children— six-year-old daughter, Princess, and three-year-old son, Charles. The website for Knight's pastorship is: <http://www.mtrubidoux.com/index.php>.

OU Alumna Keeps Busy: Karla Nesmith Boston (class of 2004) was hired to be the Extras Casting Director for the Hollywood film, *Constellation*, which was filmed in Huntsville. She was responsible for making various scenes work well by finding just the right extras, and worked closely with all of the actors and director Jordan Walker-Pearlman. Karla helped the crew find

locations, and assisted in many other ways in addition to casting extras.

Thereafter, she went into radio advertising, and worked on a national reality show. Since moving to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Karla's latest business venture with husband John Boston (also an Oakwood graduate) is a doggy daycare called Barkingham Palace. www.barkingham-palace.us Her husband pastors two churches in the Myrtle Beach area.

THANK YOU: Thanks to Communication Department Intern Justin Wilson (Class of 2008) for assisting with production of this issue of Acts & Facts.

Acts & Facts is produced by the Office of Public Relations at Oakwood University, in Huntsville, Alabama. To add your name to the mailing list, ask a question, or share a comment, send an e-mail to pr@oakwood.edu or call (256) 726-7202.



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