

Fall 1991

UA12/6/1 The Voice Vol. 3, No. 1

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Recommended Citation

WKU Diversity Programs, "UA12/6/1 The Voice Vol. 3, No. 1" (1991). *WKU Archives Records*. Paper 1023.
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THE VOICE

Vol. 3, No. 1

fall 1991

by Samuel Watkins

A collage of colors sweeps across campus like so many paints from an artist's brush.

Men and women dressed in crimson, cream, pink, green, purple, gold, black and blue with ancient Greek letters emblazoned across their chests.

What does it all mean? They are black Greek fraternities and sororities.

There are four such organizations that are recognized on Western's campus. They are Alpha Kappa Alpha and Delta Sigma Theta sororities, and Alpha Phi Alpha and Kappa Alpha Psi fraternities.,

All are represented by United Black Greeks, an organization that promotes unity among the groups by contributing resources for both service- and socially-oriented activities.

The concept of fraternal organizations can be traced to the "Koimonia" or fellowships of the ancient Roman empire. Another source was the founding of the Free and Accepted Masons for men of color by Prince Hall in 1787.

In the early part of the 20th century, young black men and women had to live with everyday oppression on college campuses as well as in society. To combat these negative influences, groups of men and women assembled for the purposes of "brotherhood, sisterhood and community uplift."

Today, there are close to two dozen national Greek-letter organizations that primarily serve African-American men and women. Eight have taken on leadership roles and welcomed new members from all races. The organizations, along with the dates and places founded, are as follows:

Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity was founded at Cornell University in 1906. Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority was founded at Howard University in 1908. In 1911, Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity was founded at Indiana University and Omega Psi Phi fraternity and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority at Howard University. Phi Beta Sigma was founded at Howard University in 1914. Zeta Phi Beta sorority was founded at Howard University in 1920 and Sigma Gamma Rho was founded at Butler University in 1922.

These organizations have attempted to contribute to the advancement of African Americans through voter-registration campaigns, scholarship funds, literacy campaigns and various other activities.

They also have incorporated some of the characteristics of African culture in their "step" shows and serenades through the use of heterophony, an independent variation on a single melody by two or more voices, and antiphony, responsive alternation between two groups of singers.



Uncovering the historical legacy of black Greeks

University welcomes new black instructors

by Mitchell Quarles

Western has hired three new African-American faculty members — John Hardin, Sharon Holzedorf and Cassandra Little.

History

Hardin, a Louisville native, is an associate professor of history. He teaches three types of history: African-American, African and American.

He has taught at Eastern Washington University, Kentucky State University, the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky.

He earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from Bellarmine College, a Master's of Arts in History from Fisk University and a Doctor of Philosophy in history from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor.

Physical Education

Holzedorf is a native of Newport, Va. She teaches tennis, cross country, bowling and fundamentals of physical activity.

She also assists with the supervision of Western's physical education prac-



Photo by Kurt Vinion

President Thomas Meredith, left, chats with John Hardin.

ticum students.

She has taught at Lafayette High School in Williamsburg, Va., and Edward Waters College in Jacksonville, Fla.

She has attended Norfolk State University, Kent State University and Zoe College in Jacksonville, Fla. This summer, she plans to study toward her post-graduate degree at Virginia Technical Institute.

Speech

Little, a Chicago native, is the clinical supervisor of the speech clinic, and she will teach courses in communication disorders in the future.

In addition to teaching at Chicago State University, she was a speech language pathologist in Chicago and Azusa, Ca., schools.

Little earned a Bachelor of Arts in speech pathology and audiology from Howard University, a Master's of speech pathology from Pennsylvania State University and a Ph.D. in curriculum and supervision from the University of Pittsburgh.

Little said she enjoys listening to contemporary jazz and being active in Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority.

See more on each instructor in future **Voice** issues.

The Voice wants you!

so join us Thursdays at 2:30 p.m.
in the Minority Student Support
Services office in Potter Hall

Minority Student Support Services director speaks out

With a welcoming smile that eases even the greatest anxieties, Phyllis Gatewood listens intently to the daily problems of students.

In between numerous phone calls and appointments, the director of Minority Student Support Services takes time out for those in need of assistance.

Gatewood graduated from Western in 1979 with a Bachelor's degree. She has served as a dorm director and a black student recruitment specialist.

In the following Voice interview, Gatewood tells what she likes best about her job.

Voice: What positions have you held at Western?

P.G.: "In January 1987, I started as a Black Student Recruitment Specialist and director of the AIMS (Activating Interest in Minority Students). In August 1989, I became the coordinator of Black Student Retention."

Voice: What are your main responsibilities?

P.G.: "I'm responsible for developing programs and activities designed to assist black students in their orientation, upward mobility and graduation."

Voice: What group of students do you find come to your office the most?

P.G.: "I guess its freshmen. Upper-

"I could be doing several things, but, no matter what, I still want to work with young people."

Phyllis Gatewood

Accolades

classman come for information about degree programs, but the highest percentage are freshmen. They come for financial aid, demanding class work and managing time."

Voice: Was there any type of support group or office to assist black students when you were at Western?

P.G.: "Not in the sense of targeting blacks and I can see where it would have been helpful. But we networked and helped one another. The band and assisting among the black student body was stronger because we basically had to depend on one another."

Voice: What types of programs

have you helped to implement?

P.G.: "All the programs originated from this office and I wrote the proposals for AIMS and MODELS (Minority Mentors Offering Direction, Encouragement and Leadership Strategies)."

Voice: Which program are you especially proud of?

P.G.: "Probably the AIMS program. One reason is because we have very few programs for black youths in surrounding counties. I've seen that you have to start early. In tracking students who participated in the first AIMS session in 1987 they seem to have more direction. A lot of them are going to college next fall."

Voice: What do you like best about your position?

P.G.: "I like the relationship and rapport I have with most students. I really like the fact that students feel comfortable with me and let me know that our services are needed."

Voice: What would you like to be doing five to ten years from now?

P.G.: "I could be doing several things, but, no matter what, I still want to work with young people. It's fulfilling, and it's good to see the end product. This job is not about money or promotions. It's about what I do for the people."

by Rita Roberts

Supreme Court nominee plays dodge-the-question

I hear it at the office, at home and at every restaurant table. I read it in the paper, in Newsweek and on fliers. The big question and what seems to be a never-ending debate is, "How do you feel about Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas?"

The debate has led to a lengthy game of dodge-the-question between Thomas and the Senate Judiciary Committee. And the public still knows nothing about Thomas except that he was born a poor Georgia boy and raised by some

Her View

by Nikita Stewart

Catholic nuns. With his Caucasian wife at his side, Thomas has managed to evade all questions with clever, empty answers.

But although this country is for the people by the people, we must remember the Constitution specifically gives the president the right to nominate who he wants for the Supreme Court.

President George Bush tried to sit on the fence with Thomas. He tried to satisfy the conservatives with a Republican and the liberals with a black man. He is quickly finding out that you can please some of the people some of the time and not all of the people all of the time.

Let's just hope this debate makes Thomas see the rights that got him where he is, and that he continues to extend those same rights to us.

Alex Haley says blacks must find their roots

African-American author Alex Haley is proof that success can come from humble beginnings.

Born Aug. 11, 1921 in Ithaca, NY, Haley spent most of his early life in Henning, Tenn. He joined the U.S. Coast Guard in 1939, and while in the service, he taught himself to write. It was not until his retirement in 1959 that he became a full-time author.

Throughout his career, the author of such books as **Roots**, has stressed the importance of learning your heritage.

Haley learned of his own family background through his maternal grandmother.

Did you know

by Dawn Rutledge

Using her recounts as a basis, Haley began extensive research and study of his family background in the 1960s.

The research took him 10 years, and in 1976, he published **Roots**, a sweeping saga tracing the history of seven generations of black Americans.

The story includes the families birth in Africa, their struggle through slavery to

to freedom and the gaining of their independence and self-respect.

The book was so well done that Haley won a special Pulitzer Prize for the book in 1977.

Haley visited Western as a guest speaker in spring 1991 and drew a large crowd of avid listeners.

He stressed the importance of young African-Americans learning their heritage and respecting their elders.

Haley said that if the ancestors of today's African-Americans hadn't sacrificed, future generations could not have prospered.

Black Achievements

Rep. **Lois Deberry** became the first black woman from Memphis to be elected to the Tennessee House of Representatives in 1972. (source: The Commercial Appeal)

Freedom's Journal, founded by **John B. Rusworn and Samuel E. Cornish**, was the first black newspaper. (source: Black achievements supplement to The Commercial Appeal)

Asa Philip Randolph organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the nation's first major black union, in 1925. (source: Ebony Magazine)

Jackie Robinson signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1945, becoming the first black athlete to break through baseball's color barrier. (source: Ebony magazine)

Benjamin O. Davis was the nation's first black one-star Army general. (source: Ebony magazine)

Dr. Robert Tanner Freeman became the first black graduate of the Harvard Dental School in 1867. (source: The Commercial Appeal).

- by Anya Lockert

THE VOICE

Editor . . . Darla Carter
Co-editor . . . Anya Lockert
Adviser. . . Wilma King
Contributors. . . Jerry Daniels, Alicia Gilbert, Ericka Malone, Mitchell Quarles, Rita Roberts, Dawn Rutledge, Kendra Stewart, Nikita Stewart, Kurt Vinion, Samuel Watkins, David Wilson

The Voice is concerned with providing a bridge between minority concerns and the Western Kentucky University community-at-large and is a forum for discussion of issues of interest to both. The editors welcome contributions devoted to our purpose.



WESTERN
KENTUCKY
UNIVERSITY

Office of
Black Student Retention
Bowling Green, KY 42101

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ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
BULK RATE
PERMIT NO. 398
BOWLING GREEN
KY 42101