



Spring 2002

The Network Voice Spring

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The Network Voice

Spring Edition • 2002 Vol. 3

Something to Strive Towards

By Dayna Vidas '03

Do you recognize the name Silas Purnell? Do you know what his importance is? Did you know that he is connected to Illinois Wesleyan?

Silas Purnell is credited with helping tens of thousands of teens, mainly disadvantaged blacks, turn the dream of going to college into a reality. People saw hopeless cases; he saw untapped potential.

"These kids, nobody placed any value on them. It was understood they'd grow up and be nothing," Purnell said. "I knew it didn't have to be that way."

Purnell opened a college placement service in the mid-60's, which is estimated to have helped more than 50,000 students get into colleges.

Purnell said that he was acting on a disturbing trend that teenagers were held back by racism, poverty and history and "didn't have the slightest idea" how to go about getting into college.

"He affected my life by urging me to go to graduate school at Rutgers and then law school and Vanderbilt. He has such a high regard for Illinois Wesleyan students and affected not only my life, but others' too," said Bennie Smith, Jr. '81.

Purnell's connections with Illinois Wesleyan dates all the way back to the end of the 1960's when he first visited campus. Ever since then, he has helped to steer a significant number of minority students to enroll at IWU.

"I went to his church to talk about financing an education and met him when he was still working with Coca-Cola and helping high school minority students get into college. This wasn't a job to him. It was a passion," said James Ruoti '63, Illinois Wesleyan Dean of Admissions. "He helped to direct a number of students here to Illinois Wesleyan."

In 1996 Illinois Wesleyan granted him his first honorary doctorate degree to recognize

his efforts. In addition, The Illinois Wesleyan University Silas Purnell H '96 Endowment Minority Scholarship Fund was established to honor his commitment, dedication and support of minority students throughout his lifetime.

"Silas was a very vocal spokesman. He was doing 40 years ago what universities are doing now," said Ruoti.

These are not the only such funds that help minority students that cannot afford tuition to still be able to attend Illinois Wesleyan. Two such scholarships are the Michael Fagerburg '66 Minority Scholarship and the David G. '74 and Lois R. Wilkins Endowed Scholarship Fund for African-American Students. In addition, currently there is a fund being created by Celeste Flaschbart in Phoenix, Arizona called the John Wesley Powell Scholarship. It is going to be used to help recruit minority students out of the southwest.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Herman Boone Speaks to "Titans"

By Tracy Quinlan '04

The Disney film "Remember the Titans" tells the true story of a legendary football team that was responsible for unifying a racially divided town. Student Senate, along with the Athletic Department and the Office of Multi-Cultural Affairs, was able to bring the inspirational, real-life head coach of the Titans, Herman Boone, to campus as the keynote speaker for the Feb. 17 Soul Food Dinner.

"Herman Boone is the number one Titan," said Joanna Littleton '03, issues and programming commissioner of Student Senate.

"He was chosen because he is an African American that has made an impact on today's society and gotten the black voice out."

Boone was the head coach of the 1971 State Champion TC Williams High School football team from Alexandria, Vir.

"If you haven't seen 'Remember the Titans' go buy it," Boone said. "It's about you—individuals that became a team that prompted respect for other people. We molded angry, unfocused boys into caring,



Coach Eash captures a picture with Boone at the Soul Food Dinner on February 17 at IWU's Shirk Center.

— CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Illinois Wesleyan Celebrates Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

By Monica Taylor '88

On three separate occasions, Illinois Wesleyan celebrated the life of slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- "Martin and You" Remembrance Program: January 21, 2002
Noon - Hansen Student Center

Illinois Wesleyan students arranged a program to celebrate Dr. King. This program was held in the Hansen Student Center at noon. After an introductory speech, by Kristin Gregory '03, students recited work of Dr. King, their own personal work, or sang songs in remembrance of him. It is the students' hope that this program will have more participants next year and a larger audience. Some of students who participated were Mitchell Brookins '05, Khair Sadrud-Din '05 and Lauren Wells '04.

- 12th Annual Gospel Festival: January 21, 2002
2:00 - 9:00 p.m. - Presser Hall, Westbrook Auditorium

Since 1990, The United Community Gospel Singers of Bloomington-Normal, under the direction of Mrs. Corine C. Sims, have provided the IWU and Bloomington/Normal Community the opportunity to celebrate Dr. King's love of gospel music with an all day Gospel Festival. This year's celebration was held in Presser Hall, Westbrook Auditorium. Several local and nationally known choirs participated in this year's festival. This event also celebrated local children who participated in art, essay and speech contests. President Minor Myers opened the program with a welcome from the University. Dr. Diana McCauley, former IWU Education Department chair, gave a moving speech in honor of Dr. King. 500 people throughout the day attended the Gospel Festival.

- 12th Annual Birthday Tribute and Fellowship Dinner: January 27, 2002
5:00 p.m., Main Lounge, Memorial Student Center

The annual Birthday Tribute and Fellowship featured Civil Rights Activist Dorothy Cotton. The dinner included recipes from Pearl Johnson, retired Sodexo-Marriott employee, that have been used since the first fellowship dinner. Mrs. Johnson was present at the dinner and received roaring applause for her contributions to this annual event.

Dorothy Cotton worked closely with Dr. King and was with him on August, 28, 1963, when he delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to a crowd estimated at 250,000. Ms. Cotton was the educational director for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and later directed the Citizenship Education Program (CEP). Ms. Cotton was also the director of student activities at Cornell University for several years. In addition, Dorothy Cotton was the Vice President for Field Operations for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolence Social Change in Atlanta. Her presentation was very enlightening and enjoyed by all in attendance.

News & Notes...

- Kristin Gregory, '04 recently became the first African American woman to be elected Vice President of Student Senate this Spring in a three way race, with Kristin winning in a landslide. Jules Graves, '68 was elected Vice President of Student Senate in the Fall of 1967-1968.
- Erwin Davis, '80 was recently elected to serve on the Tri-County (Peoria, Illinois) Board of Directors for the National Urban League and is the Chairman of the Bloomington Satellite office, which is affiliated with Tri-County.
- Frankie Faison, '71 will be this year's commencement speaker. Graduation will be held on Sunday, May 5, 2002 at 1:00 p.m. on the Eckley Quadrangle.

From the Mailbox...



- It's a Boy! Levette and Bernard Afrifa, '95 gave birth to Nana Yaw Adutwum on March 27, 2002, weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. and 21 inches.
- Maury Parker, '93 and Tamera Parker's son, Marcus Emanuel Parker was born August 25, 2001.

History Facts:

Who was the first African American to be elected President of Student Senate?

Please name the Black Panther who appeared on campus shortly before being assassinated.

Please e-mail your answers to these questions to Lonnie at lonnie.smith.gl3x@statefarm.com. Answers will be provided in the Summer 2002 Network Voice.

SOMETHING TO STRIVE TOWARDS — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Such scholarships as these provide many opportunities to students who may not have been able to have them without the help. If you are interested in donating to one of these scholarships to help a student with a chance of a lifetime, please contact Travis Pearson at (312) 492-7606 or by email at tpearson@titan.iwu.edu.

"I would have never been able to go to Wesleyan without financial aid. I had a government grant, and Illinois state scholarship and a scholarship from Wesleyan. I am so glad they made an investment in me when I didn't have the money to invest in myself!" said Phyllis Barker '73.

M.A.N. Welcomes College Summit

By Debra Burt-Fraiser '79
Ansel T. Johnson, O.D. '81

We are pleased to announce that Illinois Wesleyan in partnership with the Minority Alumni Network (MAN) has committed to participate with the College Summit program. This program provides an on-campus weekend experience for above average students from low income households from across the country. This program has phenomenal success with its students having a 79% college enrollment rate and 80% retention rate. Participation with this program will give Illinois Wesleyan significantly greater exposure to a large pool of African-American and Latino students. Dr. Chandra Taylor Smith is the Executive Director. She brings to the program a total package with a Masters Degree in Divinity from Harvard Divinity School and a PhD from Vanderbilt University. She is also the wife of our alum and M.A.N. member Bennie Smith '81 who prompted her to give IWU a chance to participate with such a great program.

The program will be held on IWU's campus the usual weekend of the Minority Alumni Picnic on August 1st through 4th. We will still have our picnic this year, however we are making some adjustments to encourage alum participation with College Summit. Our picnic will be held on campus in Bloomington on Saturday August 3rd. For those that can come earlier, we would like as many M.A.N. members to participate as coaches for College Summit Students. All others are welcome to come on down to the picnic. We also have many members that live in the Bloomington/Normal area and this will give our Bloomington chapter a chance to host and participate in our picnic. We still have not ruled out having a smaller Chicago area event this summer, so we will keep you posted.

Stay tuned for more details.

HERMAN BOONE SPEAKS TO "TITANS" — CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

responsible men that learned a way to kick adversity in the rear end."

According to Boone, the film is accurate. Disney consulted him throughout the entire production process.

Boone's influence is often credited for preventing a race riot in Alexandria when its schools were first integrated.

"We never experienced rioting because [the football players] learned to talk to each other, and talking changed attitudes within themselves," Boone said. "That taught the city to talk to each other, and they came together to support their children."

In addition to speaking about his experiences as the Titans' football coach, Boone encouraged students to take action. He suggested stepping outside of your own "culture box" to experience that of another as a way to end racial profiling.

"It is a responsibility of mankind to put an end to racial hatred and jealousy, or hatred and jealousy will put an end to mankind," Boone said.

Harlem Renaissance Photos:

February 15, 2002



Joanna Littleton '03, Amber Mason '03, Kristin Gregory '03, Ruth Miller, Princess Johnson '02 show off their 1920's dress during this year's Harlem Renaissance.



Kristin Gregory poses in the Hansen Student Center during Harlem Renaissance hosted by SAVVI (Sisters Actively Visualizing Vitality through Intellect).



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Upcoming Events...

- Graduation will be held on Sunday, May 5, 2002 at 1:00 pm on the Eckley Quadrangle
Frankie Faison '71 will be this year's Commencement Speaker.
- College Summit August 1 through 4
Contact Travis Pearson for more information at 312-492-7606 or through email at tpearson@titan.iwu.edu
- Minority Alumni Network Picnic August 3 in Bloomington
Contact Travis Pearson for more information at 312-492-7606 or through email at tpearson@titan.iwu.edu
- Homecoming Friday, October 4-Sunday, October 6
Contact the Alumni office at 1-888-IWU-ALUM or iwualum@titan.iwu.edu