



Winter 2003

## The Network Voice Winter

MAN, Illinois Wesleyan University

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# The Network Voice

Winter Edition • 2003 Vol. 4

## From the Co-Chairs

By Deborah Burt-Fraizer, '74  
Ansel T. Johnson, O.D., '81  
Co-Chairs - IWU M.A.N.

Greetings to you in our first Network Voice of the New Year. This will be an exciting year for the Illinois Wesleyan Minority Alumni Network. In February we will be having a Minority Alumni Network Black History Month program in Chicago on Friday, February 28th. Starting at 5:30 pm we will have some very special guests. We are expecting the staff and about 40 prospective students from the newly named Wright-Purnell College Placement Center. The center a new and expanded service and facility of the college placement ministry of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, IL. The center is named after the internationally known Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr. and Silas Purnell who is well known for recruiting many of the African-American Alumni to Illinois Wesleyan. IWU

M.A.N. and the Placement Center staff are extremely excited about this new partnership which will greatly increase Illinois Wesleyan University's exposure to minority students in the Chicago area. Rev. Dr. Chaundra Taylor-Smith, the executive director of College Summit will be giving remarks at this event. There will also be some additional surprise announcements made at this program you do not want to miss.

We are committed to becoming a part of this national organization early on to strengthen the resources and networking opportunities for IWU M.A.N.'s own members.

Some of our alums present at homecoming may have met her but we also want to welcome Benita Towers-Kawakita, the

new Minority student recruiter in admissions at IWU. If you wish to help with recruitment or refer prospective students, please e-mail her at [btowers@iwu.edu](mailto:btowers@iwu.edu). We also want to welcome Beth Raboin-Gettleman, '99 who is the new Assistant Director of Alumni Relations at IWU. Though based in Bloomington, she will be the central staff coordinator and facilitator of all of the affairs M.A.N. puts on.

We hope to see you all on February 28th for a great affair. Finally, our own Bennie Smith '81 has just been hired as the newest Vice President of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA). Bennie is the husband of Dr. Chaundra Taylor-Smith and the fund raising chairperson for IWU M.A.N. Congratulations Bennie!!!!

## COLLEGE SUMMIT

By Debbie R. Burt-Frazier, '74

This past August, I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in a program called, COLLEGE SUMMIT, its motto is "Let Talent Shine." I was a writing coach for 5 of about fifty high school students, all juniors and seniors from Chicago's inner-city.

COLLEGE SUMMIT is a national non-profit organization which nearly doubles the college enrollment rate of low-income students. The current

**Aa** college admissions system leaves behind a key

portion of America's talent, low-income, academically mid-tier students. Such students lack the supports that mid-tier students from higher income families have, and they are rarely fast tracked to college like low-income "superstars." COLLEGE SUMMIT targets these students.

As writing coach, I helped my "superstars" compose their all-important personal essay, for their college enrollment applications. In our four days together, I learned of their dreams, trials, aspirations, and contributions. From outline, rough drafts to finished product, the writing process enabled us to put down on paper a little of who they are.

However, the four days weren't spent entirely writing. The COLLEGE

SUMMIT provided support via group rap sessions on obtaining financial aid, college counseling with admissions counselors, and a hearty dose of fun and recreation.

At the culminating banquet ceremony each writing coach was given the opportunity of honoring his or her writing team by sharing a portion of each students essay. It was truly an emotional and rewarding experience.

I definitely plan to volunteer for next summer's program. If any fellow alums would care to join me in this worthwhile effort, please contact: Jeani Habegger, Program Administrator @ 312-917-8057.

You'll be glad you did!

## Board of Trustees Bios

### RICHARD D. AMES

Cleveland, Ohio

President, Command Plastic Corporation

Dick Ames is president of Command Plastic, a manufacturer of vinyl products and packaging, and other corporations in Northeastern Ohio. He is an alumnus of Ohio Wesleyan with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics, and a business entrepreneur. His previous business experience was at Keithley Instruments and Reliance Electric. He is a board member for Vocational Guidance Services and member of the Great Lakes Theatre, with interests in skiing and golf. His Illinois Wesleyan interest stems from his parents, Chuck and Jay Ames. Dick and his wife, Anne, have three children.



### JEAN S. BAIRD '80

Bloomington, Illinois

Executive Assistant, State Farm Insurance Companies

Jean joined State Farm in 1980 as an analyst in the systems area and has advanced through offices in Georgia, Colorado and Arizona to her current position as Executive Assistant. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in French from IWU in 1980 and an

MBA from the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana in 2002. She earned the Chartered Life Underwriter designation in 1994 and attended the Darden School of Business in Charlottesville, VA. At IWU, Jean was a member of Sigma Kappa Sorority and has served many years as Class Agent and telethon volunteer. She and her husband, Bill, live in Bloomington, Illinois.



### PHYLLIS BARKER '73

Chicago, Illinois

Manager of Agency Wide Volunteer Services, Safer Foundation

Phyllis has devoted the last seven years of her career to a variety of volunteer service organizations including the Safer Foundation, Chicago Children's Museum and Metropolitan Family Services, and is president of the Association of Volunteer

Administrators for Metropolitan Chicago. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English from IWU in 1973 and a Master's in English Literature from Roosevelt University in 1992. After graduating from IWU she spent 22 years in management positions at Illinois Bell/Ameritech and in alumni relations at Roosevelt. An active member of the Black Student Union at IWU, Phyllis is a founding member and former chair of the Minority Alumni Network. She was the 1996 recipient of the IWU Alumni Association Loyalty Award.



### WILLIE G. BROWN

Bloomington, IL

SVP, State Farm Mutual  
Ex-Officio Trustee

Willie is President-Elect of the Illinois Wesleyan Associates and will become an Ex-Officio Member of the Board of Trustees when he assumes the presidency. He is Senior Vice President, State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, assuming that position in 2002 after 31 years with State Farm. Willie received a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Illinois State University in Normal and completed the University of Illinois Executive Development Program. He has earned designations of Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter, Chartered Life Underwriter, and Fellow, Life Management Institute. A native of Fairfield, Alabama, Willie received the Roy Wilkins Award from the NAACP and is also active in the United Way of McLean County.



### DEMETRIA KALODIMOS '81

Brentwood, Tennessee

Anchor, Reporter/Senior Editor,  
WSMV-TV

Demetria is primary anchor and reporter for three evening newscasts on WSMV-TV in Nashville, TN, which she joined in 1984. She received a Bachelor of Music Education Degree from IWU in 1981, after transferring from North Park

College in her junior year, and a Master's Degree in Journalism from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in 1983. Her professional honors include 14 Emmy Awards, a National Headliner Award and being named 1996 Broadcaster of the Year by the Tennessee Associated Press. At IWU, Demetria broadcast on WESN and was a member of Sigma Kappa Sorority. A native of Chicago, she received IWU's Outstanding Young Alumna Award in 1995.



### THOMAS J. NEIS '70

McHenry, Illinois

Owner, Neis Insurance Agency, Inc.

Tom is an independent insurance broker, president and owner of the Neis Insurance Agency in Crystal Lake, Illinois. He graduated from IWU in 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Insurance and worked for an insurance company while developing and incorporating his agency. He was named Crystal Lake Citizen of the Year in 1994, chaired the Sister Cities program with Holzgerlingen, Germany, and helped establish the McHenry County Foundation for families with emergency needs. At IWU, Tom was president of Acacia Fraternity and the Inter-Fraternity Council. He and his wife, Marilyn '71, have two daughters and attended Missy's graduation at IWU.

**RONALD L. RUECKER '66**

Decatur, Illinois  
Physician

Ron is an internist who subspecializes in gastroenterology with the Internal Medicine Subspecialty Associates, Ltd., where he is president. A 1966 graduate of IWU with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Chemistry, he received his medical degree from St. Louis University School of Medicine

in 1970 and earned a Master's of Science in Management from Purdue University in 1995. Ron is active in both the American and Illinois Society of Internal Medicine, the Illinois State Medical Society and American Medical Association. At IWU, Ron was a member of Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity, W Club and Tri Beta. He and his wife, Bonnie '65, have served in many volunteer leadership roles and reunion chairmanships, receiving the IWU Alumni Association Loyalty Award in 1995. They have two children, including Robin, a 1993 IWU graduate.

**AMANDA S. TONEY '74**

Chicago, Illinois  
Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County

Amanda was first elected Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County in 1994 and retained in 2000. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from IWU in 1974 and a Juris Doctorate Degree from DePaul University College of Law in 1985.

After graduating from IWU she was a corporate manager for Illinois Bell for 11 years. Prior to her election as judge she was president of the law firm Amanda Toney, Ltd., an appellate law clerk and a Cook County State's Attorney. A native of Chicago, Amanda is a member of the Minority Alumni Network and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority.

**SUSAN D. WARING**

Bloomington, Illinois  
SVP & Chief Administrative Officer,  
State Farm Life

Susan serves as senior vice president, chief administrative officer and a member of the Board of Directors of State Farm Life, State Farm Accident and Assurance, and State Farm Life and Annuity companies. She received a Bachelor's Degree from Gettysburg

(PA) College and a Master's Degree in Counseling from Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA. She served as an admissions counselor at Gettysburg College and was Dean of Students at Wilson College in Chambersburg, PA before joining State Farm in 1986. She earned the Chartered Life Underwriter (CLU) designation in 1997.

## *Martin Luther King*

by Debra Burt-Frazier, '74

On four separate occasions in January, Illinois Wesleyan University celebrated the life of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. King spoke at Illinois Wesleyan in 1961 and 1966. He touched the lives of the Illinois Wesleyan Community then and continues to inspire the community in 2003.

On Sunday, January 12, 2003, the 13th Annual Fellowship Dinner was held in the Memorial Center. The United Community Gospel Singers of Bloomington-Normal and Illinois Wesleyan co-sponsored this community event. This year, the speaker was Rev. E. Randel Osburn. Rev. Osburn was the youngest person ever elected as National Vice President of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC). He was also the youngest minister on Dr. Martin Luther King's original field staff. Rev. Osburn was well received by students and faculty. He encouraged our community to stand up for what they believe in and fight for righteousness. Rev. Osburn also spent time with the Black Student Union Leadership following the dinner.

The 2nd Martin and You program was held in the Hansen Student Center at Noon, on Wednesday, January 15. January 15th is Martin Luther King's birthday. This year would have been his 74th birthday. This program sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs, provided a forum for faculty, staff and students to honor Dr. King, through words, music and song. Khair Sadrud-Din '04, read a speech of Dr. King's. Most memorable were Dr. Sammi Robinson's reflections on King. She shared with the audience where she was when she heard Dr. King had been assassinated. She also spoke about how Dr. King paved the way for her and other African-Americans.

The 13th Annual Gospel Festival was celebrated on the King Holiday, January 20. Through out the day 500 people visited Westbrook Auditorium in Presser Hall to hear Gospel Groups from Central Illinois and the Chicagoland Area. This program also showcased the talent of the Psalters of Praise; a gospel group comprised of Illinois Wesleyan Students under the direction of Mitchell Brookins '04.

Lastly, Dr. Carren Moham presented a Festival of Spirituals in Honor of Dr. Martin Luther King at Evelyn Chapel on January 22 and January 26. Dr. Moham gave a history of spirituals and closed out the program singing. Several students and faculty performed for the event.

## **Book Collection**

By Monica Taylor '03

On February 28, 2003, Wilson Muscadin '03 and Bennie Smith '81 will announce that a collection of books by African-American authors will be acquired by The Ames Library. This idea was conceived by Black Student Union President, Wilson Muscadin. A fund will be established to augment the cost of the books. Each book purchased through this fund will have a bookplate which will identify the donor.

The Minority Alumni Network is pleased to announce a bookplate design contest. Alumni and students are encouraged to submit bookplate proposals. The bookplates should represent African-Americans and/or African-American authors. The deadline for submitting designs is **April 1, 2003**. Application forms will be available at the February 28 event at Harambee House and may be obtained by contacting the Office of Multicultural Affairs at 309/556-3412 or stopping by that office in Shaw Hall 200.



The Network Voice  
Illinois Wesleyan University  
P.O. Box 2900  
Bloomington, IL 61702-2900

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## **Interview with New Faculty Member: Sammie L. Robinson, Business Professor**

*By Kristin Gregory '03*

### **1. What do you like to bring to a classroom?**

Enthusiasm, vitality, on top of knowledge of the subject. I like to get the student engaged. I want them to have the concepts. I want them to be able to apply the knowledge and I want them to be able to think critically about what they know so when they are using what they know, they'll do it in a way that is ethical and socially recognizable.

### **2. What are your thoughts on diversity, in a community, and on campus?**

Having diversity makes it possible for us to access various viewpoints. So that we come to truly understand and value the fact that there are different ways of being, thinking, and approaching things in this world. And the better job we're able to do at admitting possibilities of different viewpoints, the better job we're going to do at getting the best for everyone. We lose so much when we don't have diversity cause we don't know or don't admit there are other ways of advancing or enhancing our quality of life. We need to stop thinking of diversity in terms of numbers and quotas, in terms of

tolerating differences. We need to move toward valuing what people bring.

### **3. What can students expect from you?**

Openness. I want to be accessible. They can expect that I'll be honest, I will be empathetic, that I'm interested in them. I'm interested in knowing their viewpoints, that I'm willing to share. That I'm still very much a faculty member, I still have the demands and expectations placed on the other faculty members. I do realize by virtue of who I am that I feel its almost a duty to students of color, or students who feel marginalized, to be what I haven't had. I had to sit down by the stove in the kitchen to tell cooks the struggles I had. I would've loved to go to an office...

Southern Methodist University, Dallas, MBA

Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas

The University of Kansas, Ph.D

Open door Wednesdays, come up here, door is open, come on in.

**Tues: 2:00-4:30 pm, Thursday: 1:30-3:30 pm**