



FEBRUARY 2002



Honoring the Black Male

As we look forward to celebrating Black History month, some students take time to reflect on their thoughts about the recent Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday we celebrated last month...

“Personally, I don’t think we should have a set day to remember him—doing so only trivializes the importance of his life. Maybe on that day, instead of taking the day off work or school, we should come together to figure out how to better the world. We should remember him every day through our actions, words and the way we live our life.”

Michael Courtney – Jr. Organizational Leadership and Supervision

“It’s an important holiday to have because we can look back to him as an example of a strong black leader. If we stop making an effort to remember people such as Martin Luther King, we may have the tendency to also stop believing the possibility of being a strong black leader.”

Stacia Murphy – Jr. Psychology

“Considering the events of September 11, this year we should really celebrate because of the number of people who were discriminated against as a result.”

Jouhne Scott – Sr. Computer Graphics

“For me, it reminds me of what people before me went through for freedoms and rights. Today it seems watered down and people forget what it stands for.”

Ron Hockett II – Jr. Psychology

If asked to give an example of an influential Black American, oftentimes Dr. King is the first person to come to people’s mind. Dr. King is definitely one of the greatest leaders of modern day, but we need not forget the numerous other influential leaders that have helped shape our world. This month’s newsletter aims to spotlight and celebrate those very people—specifically the black male. By featuring black men whose impact ranges from the world at large to our own back yards, we hope to capture what it is that makes him a source of strength and inspiration.

Kristen Bright



Honoring the Black Male



This month's newsletter honors the Black Male. There are students, faculty and staff members at Purdue who are strong and worthy Black men. I am proud to be in the company of disciplined, committed and dedicated Black men at Purdue University.

Often, the media portrays negative images of black life and culture. The BCC is committed to presenting positive models, messages and works through the newsletter and Cultural Arts Series. The BCC recognizes and praises African American males who are excelling academically at Purdue such as Milton Davis, Tyrone Muslim, Michael Washington, Darye Henry and Natalio Wheatley. A Purdue education will prepare you to move into positions of power and authority. However, you must also take responsibility to teach and embrace our brothers who need to achieve their unfilled potential. This will allow for us to improve the quality of life for all our people.

One of the most significant events in recent history that brought national attention to the Black male was the Million Man March held on October 16, 1995. The purpose of the Million Man March was to enable and encourage Black men in the U.S. to take greater responsibility and play a greater role in caring for, and uplifting the status of, the Black family. The Million Man March was a call for Black men to pledge their commitment to the restoration of their roles as sustainers and providers for the Black family and community.

Five and a half years after the Million Man March, some of you may be questioning and wondering what can I do? Below is a list to start you on your journey...

1. Register to vote and organize voter registration drives.
2. Develop quality relationships based on the principles of mutual respect and shared responsibility.
3. Participate in a mentorship program.
4. Join the struggle against drugs and violence in the community.
5. Be sure your education is culturally-rooted.
6. Support organizations and institutions of the Black community by volunteering service, giving donations and providing leadership.
7. Cultivate economic discipline and economic self-determination.

I encourage you to become a critical thinker, strive for academic excellence, be socially responsible and expand your sense of human possibility.

Renee Thomas

In the Mix....

A^s a twentysomething, preacher, actor, educator, author and social activist, Rev. Sekou is the premier public intellectual of his generation. His lectures are delivered with the intellectual complexity of W.E.B. DuBois, the fire of Malcolm X and the passion of Martin Luther King, Jr. Join Rev. Sekou on February 12 in Matthews Hall Room 210 at 7pm.



Mohammed Bilal is a musician, poet and extraordinary writer who educates audiences about today's social ills. He will present an informative and entertaining lecture performance that deals with issues of diversity, AIDS awareness and personal responsibility. Join Bilal at Elliott Hall of Music at 7pm on February 25.

Jane Elliot is the developer of the Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes discrimination experiment, which has been described as a life changing experience. She has been featured many times of *The Today Show* and *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. Jane Elliot leads the fight against ignorance and racism. Join Elliot on February 26 at 7pm in Loeb Playhouse.



“The Black One—Venting”

I write with the fury of a blind man
catching a fleeting glimpse of light
Trying to do right by these words
Most times they are the only good
things in my life
They help express the strife’s of the
inner city when I
Believe Love Understand and Emanate
Soul
I write for this walking motion picture
where
I’m type cast to play this role
Of
The confused and misunderstood black
man
Why am I confused?
Why am I misunderstood?
Has it something to do with the way
I’m depicted?
Viacom says I should pimp b*tches
Trick riches on expensive wheels
and first and foremost “keep it real”
“Keep it Real”
Well how do I “keep it real”
when I can’t afford real estate
because I am black I get inflated
interest rates
and the nation impatiently awaits
to incarcerate
as many of me and mine as they can
I get so furious
because and me and mine built this here
land
yet despite all the flag waving
were treated like 2nd class Americans

What is an American?

Too hard to face reality
So I chose, sadly at times, to hide from
being here
The only way to do this is to drink or
blink
But I can only keep my eyes closed for
so long
Before the words to that sad song get
painted on my eyelids
“Soon they will be done, trouble of the
world”

Sadly Mahalia, I feel the troubles have
just begun
as my (our) neighborhoods are filled
with liquor stores and whores
that turn tricks into disappearing acts of
freedom, justice, and liberty
The dream shouldn’t have died with
MLK
Nor should the means necessary have
perished with X
But how can you question what’s next
when we put the plans for freedom and
upliftment
in the hands of one man, some with the
God complex

Created in His image, are we Him?

I propose a new plan where we bring
every man with melanin labeled
“Black” or “African-American”
every Mason, Alpha, Kappa, Omega,
Sigma, Iota,
NSBE, NABA, ACLU, NAACP, SCLC
and all other members of groups that
were born out of the struggle
and form a collective that will not
wither with the passing of one
We could name the collective the
BLACK ONE
But first we gotta figure out

What’s Black?

Temesgen Strickland

Cultural Arts Series

Sunday, February 3, 2002

**Harlem Gospel Choir with special guest
Purdue Black Voices of Inspiration**

2pm Long Center, Lafayette, IN

Thursday, February 7, 2002

**Strange Fruit- Written, Directed and
Performed by E. Patrick Johnson**

**7 pm Experimental Theatre
Stewart Center**

Thursday, February 12, 2002

**The Crisis in Black Leadership: A Hip-Hop
Response Rev. Osagyefo Uburu Sekou**

7 pm Matthews Hall Room 210

Friday, February 22, 2002

**BCC Coffeehouse featuring New
Directional Players and Jahari Dance
Troupe**

7 pm Fowler Hall

**Admission: \$3/Purdue Students, \$5/
general public**

Monday, February 25, 2002

**Mohammed Bilal
“Celebrating Diversity”**

7 p.m. Elliott Hall of Music

Tuesday, February 26, 2002

Jane Elliott

7 p.m. Loeb Playhouse

Wednesday, February 27, 2002

**BTV Live!
TownHall Meeting on Racism featuring
HumanRITE**

7 p.m. Black Cultural Center





**Introducing:
Brandon Jermaine Carter**

It is no secret that there is a scarcity of African-American men at Purdue University. However, those that are here often go unrecognized for their many achievements. The Black Cultural Center knows the importance of recognition and has chosen to showcase one of our own exemplary black man.

This month we have chosen to highlight Brandon J. Carter. Brandon is a native of Winston Salem, North Carolina. Currently Brandon is a fourth year student majoring in Industrial Design. Throughout his academic career Brandon has been dedicated to the Black Cultural Center as both a staff and ensemble member. As a freshman, Brandon was one of the few male members of the Jahari Dance Troupe and later went on to join the New Directional Players. While continuing to be active in the ensembles, Brandon maintains a student staff position with the BCC as the publicity graphic designer. Brandon stated, "This is the most exciting and fulfilling role that I have had with the BCC."

According to Brandon, his involvement at the BCC helped him adjust to being one of the few black men at Purdue. "The BCC has helped me in gaining a sense of family, time management, commitment to community, cultural awareness, and most importantly an appreciation for African artwork." In addition, the trips, speakers, and programs that the BCC offers each year have exposed him to many new and exciting things.

To all of the young black men at Purdue, Brandon encourages perseverance, a true sense of identity, independence, and a steady source of income. The Black Cultural Center is proud of Brandon and his achievements at Purdue.

LaToya Wright

I am his image....

In the chains of the norm
And the constraints of society
Mirrors don't like to reflect
My real...true identity

Your mirrors blink and stutter
My appearance; uncertain, unclear
Are you scared of my potential
Is dark clarity what you fear

I'm perfect says my mother
My ego and confidence comply
Molded and cast, I am his image
Burning bushes never lie

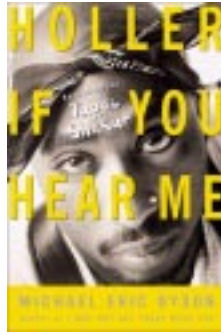
Be calm...my child
This second coming, just dreams
There was blackness before man
Is your greatness, what it seems

Brandon Carter

Harlem Gospel Choir comes to Purdue

You too can "feel the spirit" of The Black Voices of Inspiration and The Harlem Gospel Choir as they bring about a better understanding of the African-American Culture as it relates to the black church and gospel music. Founded at the world famous Cotton Club in Harlem, the Harlem Gospel Choir is a group of talented and highly motivated singers and musicians from various black churches in Harlem that perform for over 3 million people year. They have performed for the Pope, Nelson Mandela and the 1998 Maltic Music Awards. Join the two musical talents on February 3 at the Long Center in Lafayette, Indiana at 2:00pm. Tickets \$15.





Holler If You Hear Me: In Search of Tupac Shakur

By Michael Eric Dyson

Book Review



Tupac Shakur understood, better than most of his contemporaries, the power of what Clyde Taylor has called the mythogenic black male: “the object of layered fictions produced by others.” Shakur, as Dyson illustrates, fully embraced the myths that ensconced contemporary perceptions of black men and constructed his own performance of black masculinity. Dyson presents Shakur as an artist tailor-made for the music video era and the attendant acceleration of celebrity surveillance. Pac was intrinsically aware of his surveillance, whether by law enforcement or MTV television crews. While Shakur was the product of many of the competing legacies of the Black Panther Party (to which his mother belonged)-political insurgents or self-immolating street thugs-he was perhaps most visibly impacted by the movement’s proclivity, in Dyson’s own words, to be “reduced to style and performance” and a “commodity for the cultured classes to consume.” Dyson writes that Shakur often glossed his “personal story as reflection of social injustice...linking the question of respect to morality; highlighting, perhaps even exaggerating, the degree of emotional injury to justify rebellion.” Perhaps because of this, the book is less a biography than an examination of a persona, in which Dyson explores Shakur’s legacy as artist and icon. Whatever his shortcomings in terms of pure rap skills, what Shakur possessed was a well-honed critical sensibility, powerfully aided by voracious reading habits, that allowed him to articulate crucial observations about black life and culture. The book is a legitimate attempt to examine one of the most complex figures hip hop has produced, affirming Dyson’s status as one of the most affective chroniclers of that culture, a status he earned well before the current hip hop bandwagon.

Recommended Reading



*Young Black Men
on Love
&
Violence*

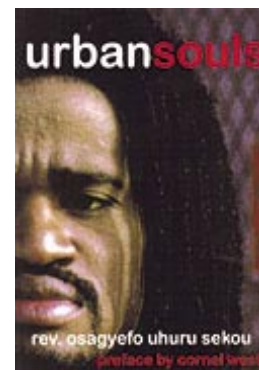
Soulfires

Edited By: Daniel
J. Wideman &
Rohan B. Preston



*The Odyssey of
Black Men
In America-An
Anthology*

Edited By: Herb
Boyd & Robert
L. Allen



Urban Souls

Written By: Rev.
Osagyefo Uhuru
Sekou

Scarcity of African American Men in Doctoral Programs

There has been a shortage of minority students being enrolled at Purdue University. This is especially true regarding the number of African American students, particularly African American males in graduate programs.

The obvious question is, “Why is there a lack of black male enrollment in the Ph.D programs?” There is no easy answer to this question. Dwight Lewis, Director of Minority Programs for the Graduate School, suggests that this may be a result of the mere fact there are more women in undergraduate programs. This holds true not only at Purdue, but also at many Historically Black Colleges that several of our African American graduate students are alumnus. Lewis also sites, “There are more black men in prison than there are in college.” That truth brings light to the possibilities that external issues may contribute to the fact that there are few black males who even attempt to pursue even an undergraduate degree.

The university has made an effort to increase the number of African American students who are enrolled in the graduate programs. In 1998, the Historically Black College and University visitation program was created. Through this program, Purdue invites HBCU students to come and view the school in hopes that they will pursue a graduate degree here. Statistics show that since the program has been implemented the number of black students in graduate programs has increased by nearly 200%.

It is important for the university to continue to make strives to not only recruit but also retain the African American student in graduate programs. The lack of black males in these areas only proves that there should be more attention devoted to this issue.



Ossie Davis:

“Freedom is one thing, equality is another. Is it possible to create a free society that is not an equal society. There is still one more river to cross.”

Ossie Davis

As we celebrate the black man and his accomplishments, homage must be given to Ossie Davis, who, for so many years inspired young minds not only in entertainment but in life as well. This man who we have come to know and adore, reshaped the field of entertainment in ways that can never be measured.

What can you say about Ossie Davis? This African-American male that has been an actor, author, producer, director, playwright and husband for over 50 years. At 83, Davis has not missed a beat.

The son of Laura Cooper and Kince Davis, Ossie was born on December 18, 1917 in Cogdell, Georgia. He studied at Howard University from 1935-1938. Three years later in 1941, Davis entered the field of entertainment. When you look through Davis’ life, one finds that he possessed something special that set him apart from everyone else. He was able to appear on stage, in films and on television in various capacities.

The diversity of his life has made him the legend he is today: Davis served as a eulogist at the funeral of Malcolm X, he was chairman of a memorial tribute to W.E.B. DuBois, he agitated on behalf of the atom spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Morton Sobell, he attended a rally in honor of the Communist revolutionary Che Guevara.

Davis has acted and in several movies and television shows including but not limited to; *Blacks in American Film and Television*, *No Way Out*, in 1950, *Fourteen Hours*, in 1951, and *The Joe Lewis Story*, in 1953. He wrote books such as *The Negrowriter in the United States* in 1966 and *Just Like Martin*. Davis wrote *Purple Victorious* and directed educational television shows, *The Ruby Dee/Ossie Davis Story Hour* in which he and his wife co-starred. Some of the films he directed were *Cotton Comes To Harlem* and *Black Girl*. Recently Davis starred as Eddie Murphy’s father in the 1998 comedy, *Dr. Doolittle*.

Davis is also in affiliation with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

Creative Quotes from Ossie Davis:

“I find, in being black, a thing of beauty: a joy; a strength; a secret cup of gladness.”

“If we can reach in with the art and touch the imagination of the child, no matter who, we have affected that child.”

“It’s not the man, it’s the plan. It’s not the rap, it’s the map.”

“Struggle is strengthening. Battling with evil gives us the power to battle evil even more.”

“Any form of art is a form of power; it has impact it can affect change it can not only move us, it makes us move.”

Kendra Bracken

Black Film Review: Students Choose.....



ALI, the Movie

Ali was one of the year's most anticipated movies, and while it was a good movie, it did not live up to its billing as a blockbuster film.

The movie dealt with a ten-year period in the life of Muhammad Ali, considered by many to be the greatest heavyweight champion of all time. The opening forty-five minutes to an hour shows Ali when he was still known as Cassius Clay. It chronicles a few of his early fights and shows the relationship that he forms with Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam.



The movie then shifts to Ali's conversion to Islam and his winning of the heavyweight championship for the first time. Ali's reign as champion lasts until he refuses to enlist in the military during the Vietnam War, costing him three years of his boxing career and his heavyweight championship. Eventually the Supreme Court rules in Ali's favor and he fights George Foreman in the famed "Rumble in the Jungle," regaining his heavyweight crown. This is the climax of the movie and also its last major scene.

"Ali" drags on a little bit too much for this particular moviegoer. At two hours and forty-five minutes, it is long enough to have touched almost all the aspects of Ali's career, not just ten years. Will Smith and Jamie Foxx delivered very convincing portrayals of Ali and his right-hand man, Bundini Brown. Both seemed to embrace their roles and both give some of the better performance in their respective careers. Portrayals of Malcolm X, played by Mario Van Peebles and Howard Cosell, played by Jon Voight are pretty accurate as well. Less than stellar is Levar Burton's portrayal of Dr. Martin Luther King.

Overall, 'Ali' does not live up to its high expectations. Many of Ali's relationships, such as that with Sam Cooke and other major figures in his life, are barely touched or not explored at all. Perhaps when this movie is released on DVD, we will get to see scenes that for some reason or another were left out of the final cut.



Eugene Johnson

Who Am I?

Who am I?
I'm black or a shade of brown

Am I a boy or a man?

Who am I?
Violent, Evil or Sensitive?

Am I an intelligent student?
or every day's society label, lazy

Who am I?
African American or American with
African roots?

What is my true heritage?

Who am I?
I ask myself
I am a black male passing through
seeking an education

Who am I?
I ask myself again
Am weak or I too sensitive?

Can I survive?
With God's eye... I will

Who am I?
A black male who is constantly getting
stared at, verbally abused, or
wrongfully accused because I am a
shade or two **darker** than you

Who am I?
I am a black man seeking higher
knowledge and wisdom
I am a sensitive and caring black man
Yes I said sensitive and caring!

Who am I?
I am a strong black man achieving his
best despite all the ignorance and
hatred.
I ask myself

Who am I?
I'm in Love

Nathaniel Grady



When I was informed that this would be my last And Finally column, I really didn't know what to write about. After a lot of thought, I was told that maybe I'd like to reflect on experience here on campus as a black male. The more I thought about this, the more it made sense. So the topic of this column is "Five Years as a Black Male at Purdue."


Entering Purdue University in the fall of 1997, I felt I was more than ready to leave the predominantly black environment of Gary, Indiana. However, I was wrong. I remember my first day of class, sitting in the Class of 50 building with 500 other students, and not one looked like me. I figured this was just an isolated incident, but this pattern continued over the next four years. Even today, I find myself sometimes being the only person of African-American descent in some classes. The difference? Five years ago, my attitude was, "this is an injustice, this wrong, this isn't acceptable." Today, my attitude is, "This is the real world."

Outside of being in the minority for the first time in my life, my experience as a black male at Purdue has not been a bad one. It's almost as if you are part of an exclusive club, seeing how there's only about 600 of us here. That being said, you have to realize that while here, you "represent the race." Everything you do, everything you say, and how you act reflects on the other black males on campus. It goes along with the challenge of surviving this university and graduating with a degree.

Some of my biggest challenges have come from within the black community. The unity that should exist among a group in the minority is not abundant. Too often, we as black males compete with each other over status, affiliation, the opposite sex and others things that strain the strong bond we should have. But the common bond that cannot be destroyed is that as black males at Purdue, we are the cream of the crop in our cities, communities, and churches.

The experience has been an interesting one, and one that I am sure I'll miss when I graduate in May. My advice to those young men under me is to remain focused, positive, and continue to be self-motivated. Don't let the fact that you are in the minority discourage you from accomplishing your goals, because the makeup at Purdue resembles that of the real world. There's only one difference. Everywhere you go, someone won't be asking you if you're an athlete or what sport you play.

Eugene Johnson



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