

WINTER 2015

# OAKWOOD

M A G A Z I N E

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# OAKWOOD MAGAZINE

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WINTER 2015



Oakwood University covered in snow. December 25, 2010 Photography by Ocie Maddox, Jr.



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Oakwood University is now a part of the North American Division. Read the interview with President Leslie Pollard and President Dan Jackson on pages 6-8 about how this decision was made and how it affects Oakwood University.  
Photo by Dan Weber.

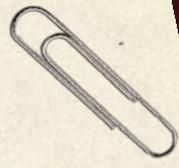


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## OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



Last year, I traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, for an accreditation conference. I decided to go the airline club, since I had a one-hour layover in Atlanta, Georgia. For a split second, I wondered whether I should take the stairs (at the time, I was carrying two bags), or if I should catch the elevator to the club level. As soon as I stood at the crossroads of the stairs and the elevator, voila! the elevator appeared—doors open, recessed ceiling lamps gently caressing the wood-paneled walls . . . almost calling my name, “Les, how about a ride?” and I could not resist! Stairs, be gone! I fell into the elevator’s embrace. I pushed the button for “Level 3” beside the two inward-pointing arrows under the caption “close doors”—and two precisely-tracked elevator doors slid quietly toward each other, like lovers floating across a field of daisies. I could almost hear the metal doors “kiss” as they touched.

The next sound I heard was the elevator’s hydraulic-sucking sound. I felt the elevator move upward. We have liftoff and suddenly, with a jolt, the elevator stopped. I waited, and I waited. The doors refused to open. I knocked. I tapped. I pried. I cried, “open Sesame.” Nothing! No, I did not see creatures coming out of the wall. No, my life didn’t flash before me. No, I didn’t hear a voice crying “run to the light.” But, I did know one thing, and one thing alone, this elevator was stuck. What was I going to do?” Immediately the closed elevator doors felt less like an embrace, and more like a prison.

I once read a story on the Internet from Dr. Tony Evans, a very popular preacher from Dallas, Texas. The story reported how he also got stuck on an elevator. Dr. Evans had never been particularly comfortable on elevators. There was something about riding up and down in a little box several hundred feet off the ground that never sat well with him. He worried that something would go wrong.

One day it did. The car he was riding in got stuck in between floors way up in the higher floors. He noted that some of the people in the car became frantic. They began to beat on the door hoping to get someone’s attention. Others began to yell in the hopes that their voices would get someone on the surrounding floors to come to their aid. But nobody heard their noise or their cries.

Then Dr. Evans quietly made his way to the front of the elevator car, opened a little door in the wall and pulled out a telephone. Immediately he was connected with someone on the outside, the operator. He didn’t need to beat on the wall to get their attention. He didn’t need to speak loudly into the phone to receive their help. He could have whispered and they would have heard him.

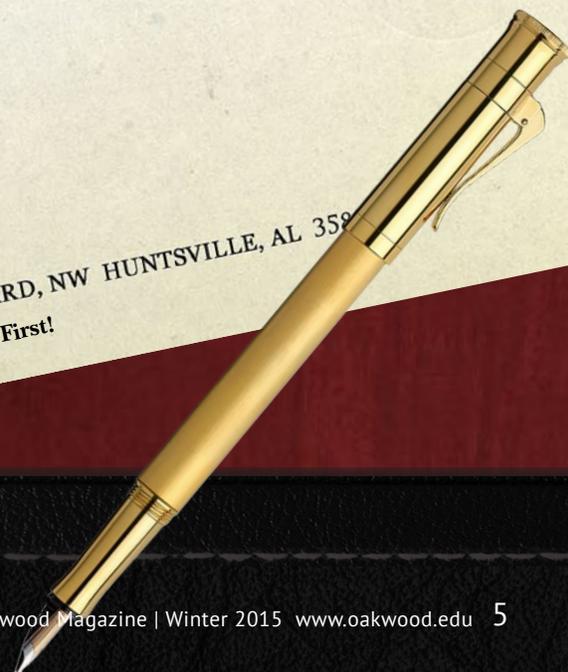
In that Atlanta elevator, I reached toward a small metal panel, imbedded wall of the elevator. I grabbed its polished chrome handle, and spotted a push-button phone—not wireless—tethered to the wall. I pressed “O” for operator. On the other end of the line, a pleasant voice answered, “Good afternoon. May I help you?” “Yes, I think that I am stuck in the elevator,” I responded. “Our apologies sir. People have been getting stuck all day. I will reprogram the elevator and you should be moving very shortly.” Almost instantly, I felt a gentle bump, and could feel the elevator rising to its next level.

Every now and then in life, we will get stuck! When we get stuck, let’s reach out our hands, get on our knees, and open those little doors in our hearts that can only be opened by prayer, pick up our spiritual cellphone and press “O” for Operator. Heaven’s Operator will help us. And be assured, our Operator will take us to the next level!

*Leslie M. Pollard*

Leslie Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., MBA  
President, Oakwood University

7000 ADVENTIST BOULEVARD, NW HUNTSVILLE, AL 35894  
God First!



A Message from the President

EDITORIAL



[photo: Ansel Oliver/Adventist News Network]

# Welcome Home:

## Oakwood Becomes First North American Division-Sponsored Institution of Higher Education

by George Johnson, Jr., director, Integrated Marketing and Public Relations

“The decision to transition Oakwood to NAD aligns Oakwood with its historic constituencies. Thus, the people primarily served by Oakwood will be better positioned to advocate for the mission of Oakwood.” -Dr. Leslie Pollard

In a historic vote of 129 to 1, Oakwood University was recommended to become the first North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists-sponsored institution of higher education. This vote was taken on October 15, 2014, at a “Called Session” of the Oakwood University Constituency, held during Annual Council at the Seventh-day Adventist Church World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. Oakwood will be the first university sponsored by the 105-year-old North American Division.

“Oakwood University has been a vital part of Seventh-day educational system, training many leaders of our Church,” said Elder Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. “On behalf of the World Church, we value Oakwood,” he said. These words were shared as he opened the meeting.

The rationale for the recommendation of the Oakwood University Board of Trustees anticipates a number of benefits, which will accrue to the Oakwood University enterprise. These benefits include:

- Oakwood finding greater mission congruence and financial support within the North American Division—the Division most directly impacted by its 118 years of operation;

- The decision to become a North American Division institution grants greater legal, constitutional, and voting influence to the core NAD constituencies directly served by Oakwood University;

- The new organizational placement reconciles the historic purpose for Oakwood’s founding with the focus, scope, and results of its current work.

During the meeting, Elder Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division and Oakwood University board chair, praised the General Conference for taking heed of God’s instruction and the counsel from Ellen G. White on the education of African Americans. It was White’s counsel in the early 1890s to open a school that would educate recently-freed African Americans in the South. “We offer deep gratitude to the General Conference for the way in which they have fostered this work,” said Jackson. “And to Oakwood University, we say welcome home,” he stated.

The vote also included recommended changes to the University’s Constitution and Bylaws. Both recommendations were confirmed at the North American Division’s Year-end Meeting, which took place November 3, 2014.

## What does this mean for Oakwood University?

An interview with Oakwood President, Dr. Leslie Pollard, and the Oakwood Board Chair, Elder Dan Jackson

**George Johnson:** Elder Jackson, what has Oakwood's history meant to the North American Division (NAD) all of these years?

**Dan Jackson:** I would say that the history of Oakwood is somewhat like a microcosm of the history of America. Through times of challenge and growth, the on-going impact of Oakwood has been to provide our Division with great preachers, teachers, and leaders. Oakwood has played a significant part in the growth and development of this Division. Oakwood has been a huge blessing to the Church in our Division and throughout the world. Through all of that history, we have matured together. We are so thankful that Oakwood has found its rightful home in the NAD.

**GJ:** Dr. Pollard, does it matter that Oakwood is a General Conference (GC) institution versus and North American Division institution?

**Dr. Pollard:** Absolutely! As a General Conference institution, Oakwood actually stood in a remote position from its primary constituencies. We have North Americans who are funding and supporting Oakwood University, but we had good people, from a whole different level of the Church, making important policy decisions that affected Oakwood. Any organization removed from the direct voting influence of its core constituency stands in a particularly vulnerable position because the pathos, ethos, and vibrancy of what Oakwood represents and offers is not experienced by the people who are voting on our destiny. No other political system in the world actually operates successfully on such a model. Our action aligned Oakwood with the people who "feel" Oakwood and will elevate their voices in the conversation around what happens at Oakwood. As much as we love all of the members of the General Conference Executive Committee, when I became president of Oakwood in 2011, the majority of the General Conference Executive Committee had never visited Oakwood University. But, when I look at the North American Division Executive Committee, almost everyone has visited Oakwood—maybe during Alumni Weekend, or PELC, or Graduation, or for the Board of Trustees meetings, etc. What was at stake in this decision was how and who makes decisions about Oakwood—its funding, its promotion, its mission, etc.—and Oakwood's proximity to the people most benefitted by what Oakwood actually produces on a day-to-day basis. While we appreciate everything that the General Conference has done for Oakwood for the past 118 years, we also want to say that the next stretch of our journey calls for more immediate and more personal engagement with the institution. So yes, absolutely, the structural residence of Oakwood does matter.

**GJ:** Dr. Pollard, How will this transition enhance and/or impact Oakwood's mission?

**LP:** The reality of Oakwood is that for 118 years, it has been focused on the NAD. Because it had been placed with the GC in 1896, the notion that it is a global-serving institution is what became the way of understanding the institution. But the reality is Oakwood was always focused on the North American Division. Ellen White's counsel regarding the "Huntsville School" substantiates this truth. If Oakwood's mission is diffused across the whole globe, then it actually can't place its focus where it should. For instance when it comes to issues of funding Oakwood, the GC can easily argue to fund Andrews because of the Seminary and the global traffic that institution

directs toward Andrews. Loma Linda is in the same situation. But Oakwood was not situated by investment or endowment of the GC to be a global-serving institution – no seminary, no medical school, etc. So now by putting Oakwood at the North American Division, the mission of Oakwood is now officially focused on the North American Division, which includes Canada, Bermuda, and even the Guam and the Micronesian islands. Some of these places we wouldn't have thought of before, but immediately when placed with the North American Division, we see that our catchment area has expanded. Our catchment area now gets more focus. What types of services should we be providing to these areas? Functionally, we now have a territory that we legitimately belong to and that we can legitimately cover.

**GJ:** Elder Jackson, how will Oakwood help support the mission of the North American Division?

**DJ:** This is a great question. There are so many possibilities. I see a grand collaboration where Oakwood and the Division cooperate in the continuing education of our pastors in different areas throughout our territory. I believe that the six major strategic initiatives (the Building Blocks) that the NAD is developing and growing can not only find a home at Oakwood, but the University can assist us in bringing them all to full reality.

**GJ:** Dr. Pollard, What will specifically change for Oakwood because of the transition?

**LP:** Immediately, what will change is the composition of the Oakwood University board. Now the board will reflect more of a North American Division population and focus. What this does is bring the insights and resources represented by these leaders of the Oakwood University enterprise. The constitution and bylaws also change and will reflect these kinds of involvements of the North American Division.

Operationally, a lot of things will continue just as they were because we were already aligned with the North American Division. When we talk about congruence, we are actually talking about being true to the way we have actually operated. I'm of the opinion that there is no shame in being who you really are.

I suppose that as leader of this institution, I should address one of the concerns, which surprised me when I first heard it. Some have talked about Oakwood losing the prestige of not being a General Conference institution with this transition. I personally don't think we honor Christian mission with such thinking. Thus, I don't understand the prestige argument at all. The "prestige" involved in Oakwood's service comes from



From left to right, members of the Oakwood University to North American Division Transition Committee: Karnik Doukmetzian, Miriam Battles, William Winston, Dedrick Blue, Timothy McDonald, Lisa Beardsley-Hardy, Leslie Pollard, Dan Jackson, Ron Smith, Ella Simmons, Alex Bryant, Bob Lemon, Dana Edmond, and George Johnson Jr. [photo: Ansel Oliver/Adventist News Network]

being a member of God's final mission—and even that speaks to me of responsibility, not prestige. The North American Division is a part of God's church in the General Conference. The nature of the church is not a pyramid, which implies that as one climbs higher and higher toward its apex, we achieve more value—per se, prestige. What we have here with the transition of Oakwood to NAD is our being true to the mission that we have been called to do. That mission aligns with our biblical theology. So if we want to have a biblical and missional conversation, the notion of prestige is actually a corrupted, worldly value. It's a worldly value that's being superimposed upon the church's operation. The church operates on a missional basis. Oakwood University as a Division institution has no more prestige than any of our universities that are Union institutions—which have no more prestige than any of our academies, which are Conference institutions. So when people say you are losing prestige, there's a trickle-down argument with unintended implications for other organizations. It's dangerous and biblically misguided. This transition means that organizationally, Oakwood has moved to its true north. This is where our mission, our calling, our principal constituency, our passion for service all intersect. This is where success will accrue to Oakwood University.

**GJ:** Dr. Pollard, how did you feel when the vote happened and Elder Jackson exclaimed, “welcome home” to Oakwood?

**LP:** I was very touched because I thought about the journey of African Americans in this Church, in this country, and in this Division. Elder Jackson linked what he said with the early history of America. The one people in western history who have often felt homeless have been people of African descent in North America, and that includes Canada, because of the way they arrived in the western world. For many of us as African Americans, we didn't have a home. Look at the founding of Oakwood. It had to be placed with the General Conference to protect and preserve it in 1896. Why? Even in our Church, some people didn't feel that these people were citizens. Ellen White criticized the then leadership for their neglect of the “colored people” at the turn of the century—read her testimonies. President Lincoln, in 1862, convened a number of Negro leaders to the White House to discuss colonizing the colored people back to Haiti, Panama, and Liberia. At one point, he thought that the answer to the so-called “negro problem” was to export all of our ancestors to those areas. Patriots like Frederick Douglass had to remind him, “Mr. President, we are Americans!” I see Ellen G. White in the same light. Her sermon on March 21, 1891, to the 30 leaders assembled at the General Conference Session titled “Our Duty to the Colored People” established the urgency and legitimacy of taking the gospel to the recently-released ex-slaves of the American south. This clarion call to action culminated with the creation of Oakwood University in 1896 and the Negro Department in 1909. While many Adventists would rather not talk about this regrettable history, the lessons of the past have meaning for our present. While we cannot reinvent history, history helps us understand why we are where we are. A part of what this action says is that the home of African Americans is North America, and the home of Oakwood University is the North American Division. It's our home and we claim it for God's mission purposes. And we will not rest until we reach the 39 million people of African descent in North America with God's saving message.

**GJ:** Elder Jackson, we recently saw at the 2014 North American Division Year-end Meeting, that there was a motion to request that the General Conference consider a new fundamental belief on Adventist Christian Education. How do you see Adventist higher education changing around the North American Division?

**DJ:** That action really harmonizes with my own personal belief. I believe that God created us to be life-long learners. We need

to cherish the value of being taught by Him in our schools, in our homes, our churches and in our workplaces. What we do not cherish and value we often lose.

I believe that the delivery of education within the Church must change dramatically. The escalating costs associated with Adventist education today are eliminating many families who want to provide their children with Adventist education. Furthermore, congregations, conferences, and unions are also feeling these same pressures as they attempt to provide education to their constituent groups.

One of the reasons that we are developing the Adventist Learning Community concept is to facilitate at least a part of this “delivery” change. We must build a collaborative spirit between all of our institutions of higher learning to accomplish this change. In my opinion we will either look at this question proactively, or we will wind up playing catch-up as we react to circumstances thrust upon us by increasing costs and weakening economics. We have a great educational treasure and we need to position it for growing success in the future.

**GJ:** What do you feel about Adventist education as a part of the fundamental beliefs, Dr. Pollard?

**LP:** I fully endorse this idea and would also add Adventist healthcare into the mix, which I have heard Elder Jackson speak about on many occasions. There are four organizational engines to our mission—ecclesiastical, educational, publishing, and healthcare institutions. I think that the proposed fundamental belief ought to capture all of these by stating the theology behind each individual mission and purpose. This is my way of supporting my colleagues in healthcare ministry, which, by the way, I worked in personally, as an administrator at Loma Linda University for 13 years, and now, as I serve on the board of Adventist Health in Orlando, Florida. It is a privilege to stand with my healthcare colleagues in mission and ministry.

No other church operates both a healthcare and education system such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For this not to be a part of our fundamental beliefs is a gross oversight. Look at the millions of dollars we invest in the 8,000+ educational institutions around the world. What we need is an affirmation of what Christian education represents in the growth of discipleship and the perpetuation to the next generation of what this Church stands for. The time is now to have a fundamental belief that elevates Christian education and that discloses its purposes and mission. Ellen G. White has written about it. We've got the theology in place already and don't have to reinvent it. In her writings she spoke about Eden and Heaven being schools. But we don't have anything in our beliefs that urges pastors to support Seventh-day Adventist education as a part of who we are. What I say about education should also be said about healthcare—because the two are very similar. What other church spends as much money as we do for healthcare ministry and outreach?

I believe that we are overdue on this issue. Let's form a fundamental belief that affirms our commitment to Adventist education. It will help our pastors and leaders to market what this Church actually offers to families.



Ted Wilson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, acknowledges Oakwood for its vital role in Adventist education history. [photo: Ansel Oliver/Adventist News Network]

## Quality Enhancement Plan Embraces

CRITICAL

# THINKING

by Olivia D. Beverly, Ph.D., director, QEP

Oakwood University's initiative on quality enhancement is in direct relationship to a reaccreditation focus of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a five-year plan that details student-learning outcomes designed to enhance student learning, required of all its member institutions by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Schools. QEP is a core standard in maintaining full university accreditation.

Oakwood University's plan is titled "The Right to Write: Critical Thinking Development through Writing." It is expected that the impact of critical thinking will be evident in the quality of written work produced by students.

There are three primary cohorts (groups) involved in Oakwood's QEP plan:

- Cohort 1: the freshman class of 2013-2014
- Cohort 2: the freshman class of 2014-2015
- Cohort 3: the freshman class of 2015-2016

Each of the above cohorts completes four identified courses in which critical thinking skills are embedded within designated QEP courses and assessment data is collected and analyzed to determine the impact on individual student's critical thinking development through writing. The QEP courses are: OU 101, EN 111, EN 112 and ED 250.

To assist students in achieving this primary goal, all QEP teaching faculty for all QEP courses are required to have successfully completed the critical thinking course provided by Oakwood University. Ongoing professional development is also required of all QEP teaching faculty each semester.

The three student-learning outcomes associated with Our topic are that students will:

### 1. Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking skills through the writing process in the ability to:

- Develop well-supported inquiry statements that demonstrate clear purpose
- Evaluate the quality and credibility of information
- Make connections and informed conclusions

### 2. Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking skills to written information as they:

- Identify well-supported inquiry statements that demonstrate clear purpose in written information
- Evaluate the quality and credibility of information in written information
- Identify connections and informed conclusions in written information

### 3. Demonstrate the ability to apply critical thinking skills to their Christian beliefs, faith system, and personal goals as they:

- Develop well-supported inquiry statements that demonstrate clear purpose
- Evaluate the quality and credibility of information
- Make connections and informed conclusions

In the spring of 2017, the Fifth Year Interim Report is due to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which coincides with the completion of Cohort 3 through the required four critical thinking courses. This report is designed to test the University on the degree to which it has accomplished the agreed upon goals for the QEP. Specifically, Oakwood will respond by providing a written report with evidence to support that OU students have developed critical thinking skills as demonstrated through writing.

The QEP office will continue to provide updates to all of the stakeholders: Oakwood University administration, faculty, staff, and students. We look forward to continued partnerships throughout the University as we continue to develop Oakwood University students in their critical thinking skills through writing.



Danica Brown spends time with one of the neighborhood children during Agape Day.

## Oakwood Performs

# COMMUNITY SERVICE

## Around Huntsville

by Monica Spencer and George Johnson, Jr.



**M**ore than 600 Oakwood University students and employees participated in 40 community service projects around the city of Huntsville on September 30, 2014. This annual event, called AGAPE Day, sets aside classroom instruction for a day of “service-learning” in the community. Some of the service sites included Crisis Services, the Alabama Constitution Village, Highlands Elementary, Habitat for Humanity, The Salvation Army, Early Works Children Museum, The Historic Lowry House, and Burritt on the Mountain, The Humane Society, and the free Dental Clinic, just to name a few.

The first AGAPE Day was held in 2005. It was an initiative created as a joint venture between the Division of Academic Administration and Freshman Studies. And, according to Service Learning Coordinator Patricia Stewart Daniel, AGAPE Day provides an opportunity for the Oakwood University community to demonstrate its care and commitment to the Huntsville area. “AGAPE Day is a way to internalize and operationalize the University’s motto ‘Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve,’” said Daniel. “We begin to practice that which we hope our students will continue long after they have left the institution,” she said.

In sharing her AGAPE Day experience, Luanne Sams, a junior biomedical sciences major, explained, “It was nice. I enjoyed painting the walls of the Mt. Calvary Church.” When asked why she chose to participate in AGAPE Day instead of using it as a day off, she said, “I am a biology major studying to one day be a medical doctor. Instead of waiting until I am a doctor to serve, I chose to help others now.”

Deborah Callins of the National Children’s Advocacy Program shared a thank-you note saying, “You can be proud of how Oakwood was represented. We look forward to a return visit next year.” Opal Meek of the East Mastin Lake Homeowners Association shared, “This is a very helpful program; people on a fixed income were helped, who had no one who could help them do what the volunteers did. Such a blessing!”



Photos by Anthony Chornes II.

A POWER-PACKED WEEKEND:

# MORE THAN CONQUERORS

by Monica Spencer, student writer



Chaplain Ronald Pollard baptizes Freshman Eric Muturi as Chaplain Kimberly Mann celebrates his decision. Muturi is one of several students who were baptized on September 20, 2014, at the conclusion of the Power-packed Weekend. Photo by Djuvane Martin.

**F**rom September 17-20, 2014, the Office of Spiritual Life held its annual Power-packed Weekend. Students gathered inside the Oakwood University church to be spiritually revitalized and hear a word from Marquis Johns, '11, associate pastor of the Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Hyattsville, Maryland. During his appeal, many students expressed their desire to rededicate their lives to Jesus Christ and desire to prepare for baptism.

In 2011, Howard Weems, Ph.D., assistant to the president for Spiritual Life and senior chaplain, noted that the students were in need of a spiritual boost to carry them through the semester. After this observation, Dr. Leslie Pollard and Chaplain Weems decided to implement an annual weekend program to enhance the spiritual atmosphere of the campus and revitalize students.

This year, the Office of Spiritual Life themed the weekend "More than Conquerors". When asked what inspired this theme, Chaplain Weems explained, "Right now, many students are challenged with many issues and we wanted to encourage them and remind them that they are more than conquerors through Jesus Christ."

Indeed, several students were blessed and encouraged from the weekend's services. Alesha Johnson, a senior dietetics major shared, "I was blessed by the messages Pastor Johns shared with us during the weekend. I really enjoyed and appreciated how he engaged the crowd through relatable stories."

## Oakwood Hosts Open House; College Days Event a Success

by Monica Sudeall-Hawkins, executive director, Student Enrollment Services

College Days 2014 has come and gone, but certainly has not been forgotten. The 609 potential Oakwood students and the energy they brought to the campus on October 12-14, 2014, will be etched in “memory books” for years to come. George Ashley, Ph.D., acting vice president for Academic Administration, and Nikki Lawson, former director of Enrollment Management, collaborated with faculty and staff campus-wide to plan this event.

The campus was filled with buses that transported high school seniors from all over the United States, Canada, and Bermuda to sample a taste of the “Oakwood Experience” and to “get connected” to the entire campus community in this fun-filled, educational, and spiritual event. Students attended the academic fair and individual academic departments that exposed them to 56 majors in the schools of Arts and Sciences, Business and Adult and Continuing Education, Education and

Social Sciences, Nursing and Health Professions, and Religion and Theology. The Student Enrollment Services Division and other student support departments worked diligently to immerse the College Days students in various campus activities.

This event could not have happened without the 148 chaperones, five Alumni Recruiting Motivated Youth (ARMY) members as well as the parents who selflessly gave their time and talents to accompany the students to the scheduled events in a timely and orderly fashion. “At Oakwood University, we believe that giving our prospective students an opportunity to visit our campus is critical to their decision to enroll,” said Dr. Timothy McDonald, provost and senior vice president.

One student shared, “I cannot put into words the amazing feeling I got when I stepped on this campus. I just felt like this is where I belong.” It is comments such as this that propel the planning team to put forth so much time and effort in the annual College Days event.

Students who attended College Days 2014 and have submitted an application for admission to Oakwood University are encouraged to submit their transcripts and ACT and SAT scores, in order to qualify for the \$500 College Days Scholarship. In addition, students who complete their FAFSA before March 1, 2015, and submit their Intent to Enroll Fee of \$200 and Housing Fee of \$250 before March 2, 2015, will qualify for the Early Bird Scholarship which is an additional \$1,000. For more details, please contact the Enrollment Management Office at (256) 726-7356.



SAVE THE DATE

October 11-13, 2015

FOR College Days



OAKWOOD  
UNIVERSITY

For more information, call (256) 726-7356.

## A History of the Title III Program at Oakwood University

**T**itle III, Part B, is a federal institutional development grant that provides financial assistance to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to establish or strengthen their physical plants, financial management, academic resources, and endowment-building capacity. The mission of the Oakwood University Title III Office is to serve as the central administrative office for the management of Title III funded activities. The Office assists the University by ensuring planning, management, administrative oversight, and providing technical assistance and evaluation of each activity. These functions, when applied in concert with other campus administrative activities, strengthen the total infrastructure of Oakwood University. Additionally, the office serves as a liaison between Oakwood University and the U.S. Department of Education.

In 1973, President Calvin Rock sent Dr. Timothy McDonald and Dr. Rick McKinney to a Technical Assistance Workshop at Alabama A&M University. Dr. Audrey Dickerson, one of the founders of Title III in Washington, DC, presented information to the HBCU Title III Directors and representatives regarding grant policies, procedures, and the application process for becoming a recipient of the award. McDonald and McKinney came back that evening and started discussing, praying, and writing and developed The Quin C Center - The 5 Cs of Institutional Development: communication, community, curriculum, coordination, and culture. A few weeks later, the institution was awarded its first, large Federal Grant award of \$100,000.

Several directors followed McDonald and continued making strides with the assistance of the Title III funds. Dr. Ellen Anderson became the director in 1978 and was followed by Dr. Rose Yates from 1981-1990. Most of her achievements were academic-driven to impact the following departments: Business, Nursing, Physical Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, Institutional Research, and Inner College (Developmental Learning Resource Center, Center for Academic Achievement, and Center for Academic Success). Inner College was geared toward tutoring, academic advisement, and personal social development. Among the first student tutors were Dr. Delbert Baker, who returned in 1995 as the President of Oakwood College (now a vice president of the General Confer-

ence of Seventh-day Adventists), and Attorney Clifton Jessup, currently a Oakwood University Board Member and recognized as Lawyer of the Year in 2013 Best Lawyers in America. Countless other alumni have benefitted from the peer group tutorial, counseling, academic advisement, and independent study programs offered at the center.

In 1990, Hattie Mims directed Title III and funds grew from \$100,000 to over \$1.2 million dollars. Faculty attended conferences for professional growth, development, and accreditation. Several computer labs were developed for various academic departments.

The campus Enterprise Resource Planning administrative software system (Jenzabar EX) was upgraded to enhance constituent satisfaction, achieve operational excellence, and maximize institutional success. A campus-wide fiber optics infrastructure backbone installation was completed. The campus core switch was upgraded from 1GB to 10GB backbone. More than 300 wireless access points were implemented campus-wide. Also, an electronic time keeping system was implemented to better manage employees' time. In early 2000, Oakwood was fully qualified for an Endowment.

Ivy Starks became the Title III Director in 2008. Title III continued to move the Institution into the 21st century with an upgraded telephone PBX with VOIP technology and fiber optics capabilities. The office also developed and implemented a campus closed-circuit CATV channel for emergencies and public announcements, and installed 30 LCD televisions in academic buildings, library, residential halls, the student center, and other public areas. Technology increased, above and below ground, making the campus totally wireless. Title III supported the renovation of Ford Hall and equipment for the Peters Media Center. Inclusive of all funds (Title III Historically Black Colleges and Universities, College Cost Reduction and Access Act/Student Aid and Fiscal Responsibility Act) the yearly awards increased to more than \$2 million.

In 2013, Michelle Ramey was appointed the director and Selita Harpe joined the team as Budget Analyst. The mission of supporting institutional goals to enhance Oakwood students' academic matriculation through the halls of higher education continues.



Oakwood administrators review the Title III program. Photo by Anthony Chornes, II.

## Oakwood wins Retool Your School Grant...again



Oakwood administrators and USM President Tahjai Conkerite (third from right) receive \$25,000 Prize from Home Depot Representative Lynda Ares.

**T**his past year, Oakwood received The Home Depot RETOOL YOUR SCHOOL \$25,000 Campus Pride Grant. According to the judges, Oakwood was selected because of a combination of the social media activity and voting score. In 2013, Oakwood won the Tier 1 grant of \$50,000, for the construction of an outdoor pavilion.

Recently, Oakwood administration appealed to Home Depot to allow for the revision of the grant that was originally submitted to re-seed the softball and soccer fields behind the Ashby Gymnasium, as well as install sprinkler systems. The new project that will be supported by this \$25,000 grant will be to continue upgrading the Unity Pond area of the campus, which is the location of the outdoor pavilion.

On November 12, 2014, the Home Depot Retool Your School team officially presented the University with its prize of \$25,000 and began work which included installing benches, constructing a smaller pavilion and power-washing the amphitheater area.



Photos by Richard Hodnett.

## Grand Opening of Oakwood's Edible Arrangements

Oakwood University hosted the grand opening of its franchise business, Edible Arrangements, on September 29, 2014. Below are pictures from the ceremony. Pictures by Anthony Chornes II.



Ribbon-cutting ceremony participants



Dr. Leslie Pollard explains to a local news reporter why Oakwood University purchased a franchise business.



At the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Pammie Jimmar of the Huntsville Chamber of Commerce praised Oakwood leadership for their business mindset and for the work that they are doing with students.



Therry Thomas, '10, shift supervisor, takes an order from a customer.



Oakwood's Edible Arrangement's store on 5000 Whitesburg Drive S. in Huntsville.

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### Ambassadors Experience Good Season

by Monica Spencer, student writer

Oakwood University Ambassadors and Lady Ambassadors have already demonstrated a stellar performance this season. “Each team is filled with talented and vibrant players, and it shows. Unlike the opposing teams, our athletes receive no scholarship; they play the game because they love it and because of the acceleration of wholesome competition,” explained Coach James Roddy, athletic director.

The Women’s Volleyball team, under the coaching of Dr. Wayne Bucknor, certainly represented Oakwood exceptionally well with its performance throughout the season. In fact, for half of the season the Women’s Volleyball team ranked number 14 in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association, which is comprised of more than 100 Colleges and Universities.

The Women’s Soccer team has shown tremendous improvement since its inception. This past season, under the coaching of Anthony Walker, the Women’s soccer team won its first game against the skilled Fisk University team.

This past season’s Men’s Soccer team was one of the most talented since Oakwood became involved in intercollegiate soccer. Although numerous obstacles surfaced, the team was able to win about 50% of its games this season.

The Women’s Basketball team, coached by Tony Oliver, and the Men’s Basketball team, coached by Simon Jacob, began its season, late October 2014.



Photos by Richard Gordon.

### Students Share News through Student Newspaper

Extra, extra! Read all about it! Oakwood’s *Spreading Oak*, the official student newspaper, is back in action! The *Spreading Oak* has had a reputation throughout Oakwood’s history as being a top-source for sharing news around campus. However, some feel as though the initial heritage of the paper has been recently forgotten. Despite that, not all is lost, since this year and the presence of the paper has been quite prevalent. The team has even brought the newspaper back to its original “newsprint” output, after last school year’s online-only distribution format.

*Spreading Oak*’s current Editor-in-Chief, Jyremy Reid, and his team, have been working to get the vision of the newspaper to skyrocket. “I don’t just want this to be any kind of newspaper,” comments Reid. “I want it to be one where the Spirit of Christ can also be seen through our works and writings. My whole thing is that you can’t witness to others until you witness at home first. Our words could reach many people, here at Oakwood and beyond,” he said.

The first issue *Spreading Oak* debuted on September 18, 2014, after the weekly scheduled chapel service. Reid, along with four other students, including United Student Movement Sponsor, Raymond King, dressed up as vintage paperboys. The distribution process went better than expected as all copies were smoothly dispersed to the students.

The voice of the student body at Oakwood University is very important. *Spreading Oak*’s essential purpose is to serve the

students in a way that has never been seen before. With the way the students are leading, it is definite that the paper will move on to greater heights in Oakwood’s history. “Together, we can accomplish much. And, with God, all things are possible,” stated Reid.



James Fields helps to distribute the newspaper. Photo by Anthony Chornes II.

## DEEP Sabbath Comes to Oakwood

by Raymond King, director, Student Activities

**O**n September 30, 2014, the United Student Movement hosted students from Southern Adventist University for the annual DEEP Sabbath. DEEP (Diversity Education Exchange Program), was conceptualized in 1997 by former OU President Dr. Delbert Baker and current SAU president Dr. Gordon Bietz. It was developed to allow students from both campuses to get together to learn from one another through a day full of worship and fellowship.

As the Southern students arrived on campus, a “welcome line” was formed by the Oakwood students who cheered them on as they walked into the Millet Activity Center. Oakwood United Student Movement Religious Vice, Jordaan Houston, delivered a heartfelt message based on Mark 10:46-52 with the story of Bartimaeus. Houston appealed to the congregation to reconnect to their faith in God and not to be blind-sided.

After the service, the Southern guests, and USM officers ate lunch. The afternoon was filled with icebreaker activities to allow the students to get to know one another better and also share what they have in common.

Students also participated in an outreach program where they passed out sandwiches and performed a program for the neighborhood children. Upon returning to campus, both schools joined hands and prayed with one another asking God to bless the bond between schools. Oakwood looks forward to visiting Southern’s campus in the spring for SAU’s DEEP Sabbath.



Photos by x|posure.

### Shots That Were Heard Across the Nation

by James Caldwell, residential life coordinator,  
Holland Hall



Photo by x|posure.

On September 15, 2014, the United Student Movement and Holland Hall, partnered to bring together a panel of people to discuss what has been happening across the nation concerning a growing tension between people of color and law enforcement. This topic has been on the lips of many in the Oakwood community in light of the situation that happened in Ferguson, Missouri, with Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old African American male, who was shot six times and killed by Darren Wilson, an officer of the law.

More than 300 students, faculty, and staff gathered to listen and participated in the “Shots Fired” event. Panel participants included Oakwood students Nia Langley and Chris Johnson; Chief Lewis Eakins, Oakwood University Police Department; Camille Warren, JD, contract teacher for the History and Political Science Department; Gregory Nelson, senior pastor of the Madison Mission Church; and James Doggette Jr., pastor of the Maranatha Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. During the panel discussion, participants enlightened the audience “that being African American can still be problematic in the United States today.”

The discussion also sought clarity and direction

on the conversation of how to properly deal with law enforcement. Participants shared that individuals should never give law enforcement reasons to subject themselves to stereotypes due to appearance and behavior. The panel also revealed, that police officers have a job to carry out, “to protect and serve,” and along with this, they have the right, to search and question citizens based on suspicion of criminal behavior. Chief Eakins and Attorney Warren both explained, “This was never intended to be a way of targeting people, as a very small percentage of officers have done, but it behooves us to cooperate as much as possible for our own safety and the safety of others around us.”

Organizers of the event were pleased with the way this forum seemed to bridge the gap between two entities in our society, police officers and community members. Participants and audience members were able to discuss fears, prejudices, and barriers that are perpetually dividing. This incident with Michael Brown (and others) where shots were heard across the nation has definitely brought about the need for deeper conversations that will hopefully lead to our society in recognizing that we all need to get along with one another.

## Oakwood Names Academic Vice President

**O**akwood University Administration is pleased to announce that Tricia Penniecook, M.D., MPH, current dean of the School of Public Health at Loma Linda University, has accepted an invitation to serve at Oakwood University as vice president for Academic Administration.

Dr. Penniecook brings a wealth of national and international leadership experience to the Oakwood University position. She will close out the academic year at Loma Linda University and officially take up her responsibilities at Oakwood on July 1, 2015.

Dr. Penniecook's name comes forward from a University Search Committee consisting of administrators, faculty, staff, and student representatives. Dr. Timothy McDonald, University provost and senior vice president, chaired the interview meetings, where names were considered over a three-month period. Of the five interviewed finalists, Dr. Penniecook's qualifications as a broadly-experienced academic administrator commended her to the position.

"My family and I are very excited to join the Oakwood University family as it prepares leaders to fulfill God's mission for their lives. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to engage with committed faculty, staff, and students who care about their community and are able to make a difference," said Dr. Penniecook.

At the first Faculty Meeting of the Spring semester, on January 20, 2015, Dr. Penniecook is scheduled to share the presentation she made to the Search Committee, titled "Oakwood's Role in Fighting Disparities."

The Administration extends its generous thanks to Dr. George Ashley and Dr. Chandra Mountain, for their contributions to the Division of Academic Administration in the "acting" roles they assumed this year. They will be finishing up projects commenced during this academic year before resuming their previous responsibilities on July 1, 2015. "Both Dr. Ashley and Dr. Mountain have our full support, as the work they continue to do is vital as we prepare for our fifth-year accreditation report," said Dr. Leslie Pollard, Oakwood University president.



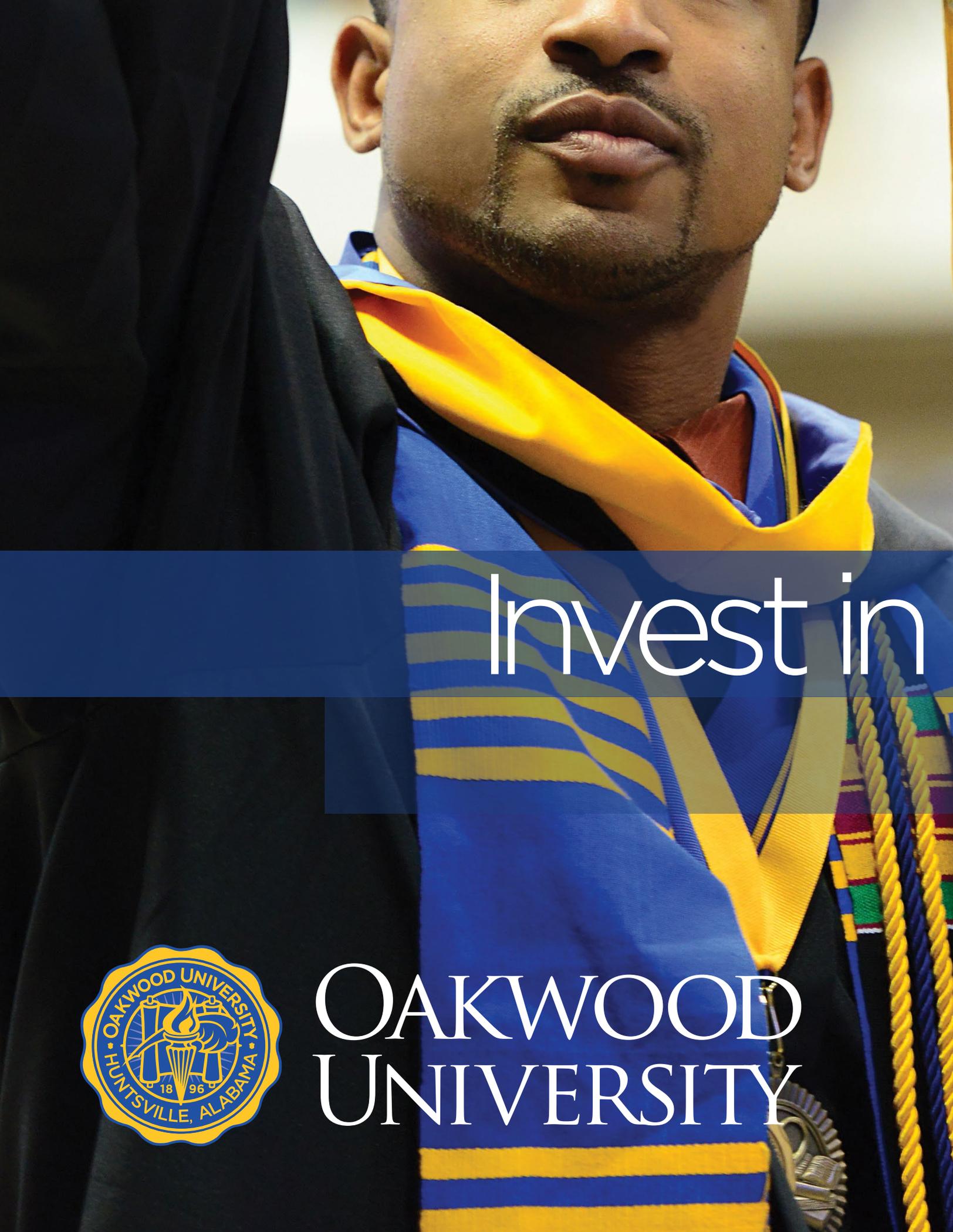
## Adventist Health Systems Interviews Business Students for Internships

**O**n September 17, 2014, a team from Adventist Health Systems (AHS) in Florida visited the Oakwood campus. The purpose of the visit was to conduct interviews for the summer internship Program at the Florida Hospital and Adventist Health System. The team from Adventist Health Systems included: James English, director of Revenue Management; Norman Miles, Leadership Development, Adventist

Health Systems; Leah Brandon, finance resident; Jillyan Shelton, assistant administrator, Florida Hospital, East Orlando; Adam Maycock, director, Florida Hospital Centra Care; and Benita David, dean, MHA Program, Adventist University of Health and Science.



The AHS team sponsored a "meet and greet" information session followed by a light repast.



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# Memphis Mission Experience

As told by Kimberly Mann, associate chaplain,  
Office of Spiritual Life

**O**n November 6-9, 2014, Oakwood University students participated in the 4HIM Fall mission trip in Memphis, Tennessee. Chaplain Kimberly Mann, assisted with the students on this excursion and shared her personal account of the experience:

**Thursday, November 6, 2014:** A group of seven students departed to Memphis, Tennessee. The trip included 6 sophomores and one freshman. Two churches hosted us - Breath of Life and Overton Park. We arrived at Breath of Life and unpacked our belongings. One of the first activities the students had to do was to shop for the mission trip meals. The students were divided into teams and each was responsible for fixing a menu, getting items, sticking to a budget, and preparing the meal. It was a great teaching moment for them and for future leadership planning. That evening at worship we discussed the topic of personal expectations. The students shared why they decided to be 4HIM missionaries for the weekend and what they expected to experience over the next three days. The students shared various ways they had to trust God prior to taking the trip. Some didn't have the financial resources, but God made a way. Some expressed that they wanted to put into practice some of the things they'd heard about being bold for God.

**Friday, November 7, 2014:** We participated in a full day of community service. We visited the Mid-south Food Bank where the students packaged more than 6,000 pounds of food for seniors in the community. They also visited the Youth Villages Foster Home campus, where students mentored a group of troubled teens, ages 12-16. During this visit, they played a lively game of kickball. They also volunteered in the Habitat for Humanity store. The day ended at Overton Park, where the students showcased their gifts for the Lord and other community teens. Sophomore David Shaw shared his testimony through a poem, and Sophomore Alexis Langston, a chaplain's assistant, shared a song. I also shared a poem and gave the closing thought for the night. The students did a great job intermingling, and getting to know others while sharing their faith.

**Saturday, November 8, 2014:** For the Sabbath celebration, the students participated in Youth Day at Overton Park. Pastor Kymone Hinds allowed me to fill in as the guest pastor and guest speaker. Prior to the offering, Alexis Langston, OU sophomore, gave a moving testimony about how she met a man named Mr. Billy who had lost his 15-year-old daughter and how her casket was so small he had to lower her into her grave with his own hands. Langston was able to share the love of God with him.

On Sabbath afternoon, everyone participated in the "Amazing Race." Students, church members, and community youth divided up into five teams and went into the neighborhoods performing community service acts. A few of the activities included going to the homeless shelter and passing out hugs, offering to clean rooms at a local community center, writing an encouraging letter and giving it to a stranger, and praying with someone under 18 of a difference race/nationality. Participants enjoyed completing the task and had many opportunities to share their faith. We closed the evening with the youth sharing testimonies of the love of God, and you could see a renewed energy and spirit



Chelese Moore, Shamal Bruce, Kamesha Laury, Jessica Giscombe, Alexis Langston, David Shaw, and Briana Derry. Photo by Kimberly Mann.



Jessica Giscombe shares a food bag with a resident of the homeless shelter. Photo by Kimberly Mann.



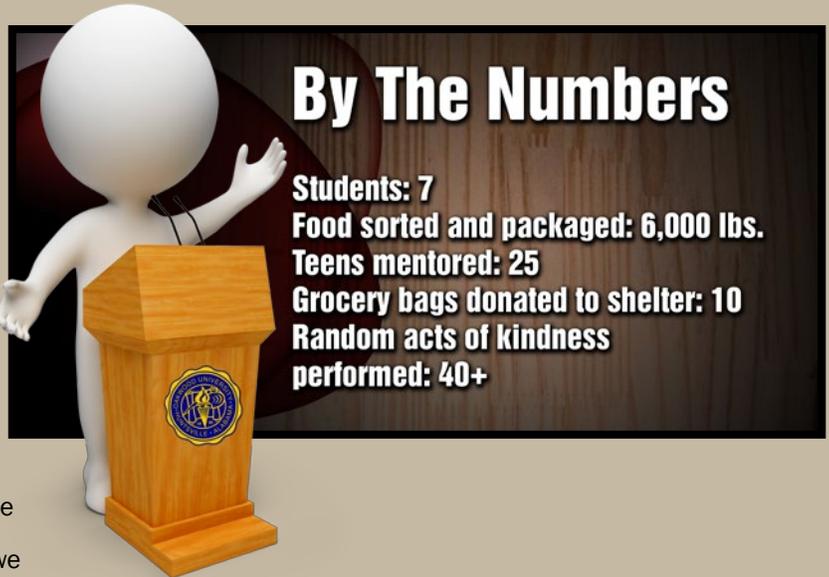
Alexis Langston and Chelese Moore prepare the meals for the mission trip participants and the community youth. Photo by Jessica Giscombe.

among the young people.

**Sunday, November 9, 2014:** We visited the Slave Haven Museum, a historic home in Downtown Memphis that was owned by a German man who was an abolitionist and part of the Underground Railroad. The students toured the property and learned more about the slave trade, slavery in Memphis, and how the Underground Railroad operated. They also toured the National Civil Rights Museum and had a chance to visit the Lorraine Motel, where Dr. King was assassinated. This portion of the experience served to tie in the cultural importance of community service and social/ethical responsibility. The students learned about voting rights, the 1964 freedom summer, and important keys to working together to organize for a cause. During this time, the students compared and contrasted current events such as the November 4, 2014, midterm elections, the Trayvon Martin case, and other cases for much of the injustices happening in our country today.

We ended our day by donating some of the left-over groceries to the homeless shelter, and spent time ministering to the program participants and prayed with the director. Just before we pulled off to head back to Huntsville, a student stopped and said the Holy Spirit said to give them everything! The students agreed that they all felt convicted to give and asked if we could give the rest of the groceries away instead of returning them to the store. As soon as we pulled out more groceries, the man exclaimed, "We prayed and God gave more than we could ask because He knew we needed it."

When I asked one of the students to sum up the mission experience in one word, she said "impossible." She stated that for her it was much bigger than any one word could explain.



Shamal Bruce, Alexis Langston, Chelese Moore, Briana Derry, David Shaw, Jessica Giscombe, and Kamesha Laury. Photo by Kimberly Mann.



## Oakwood's WJOU 90.1 FM Hosts 2nd Annual Community Health Fair

**O**akwood University's Praise Station WJOU 90.1 FM along with Good Samaritan Hospice, hosted its second annual Community Health Fair on October 23, 2014, in the Millet Activity Center.

More than 60 vendors were present to provide diabetes screening, BMI Testing, dental consultation, flu shots, healthy product presentations, voter registration, other health screenings, Affordable Care Act counseling, senior citizens information, home health care services, and healthy cooking demonstrations.

"This health fair event is our gift to the community," said Reginald Hicks, general manager and director of WJOU. "It's very important to know how healthy you are," he added.

This year, event organizers also awarded scholarships to Oakwood University students in the areas of communication, allied health, and nursing. "Not only do we want to make sure we let the community know about health, we want to help students out, as well, who are going into these health and communication-related fields," said Hicks.

Other local Huntsville sponsors included Redstone Federal Credit Union, Healthy Smiles Dental, Dynamic Performance Physical Therapy, Eternal Security, Crown Trophies, Woody Anderson Ford, Walgreens, Madison County Health Department, Minuteman Press, Seraaj Family Homes Inc, Genesis Healthcare, Senior Directory, Homewatch Caregivers, Two Men in a Kitchen Catering, McAbee Medical, and Childress Accounting.



Testing for hypertension was just one of the several screenings available at the second annual Community Health Fair. (Photo by Anthony Chornes II)

## Putting the Fun into Sports Medicine

by O'Brian Harris, senior healthcare administration major and marketing director for Dynamic Performance Physical Therapy

**O**n October 31, 2014, the Allied Health Department, along with Dynamic Performance Physical Therapy, joined together for an action-packed Sports Medicine Boot Camp. This fun and exhilarating experience gave participants the opportunity to know how it feels to do various exercises with certain physical ailments. At this event, participants completed several rounds of one-arm planks, push-ups, jump squats, jump lunges, crunches, and much more along with wheel chair racing.

The event was hosted in recognition of National Physical Therapy Month, which takes place every October. It helps to bring awareness to how physical therapists and physical therapist assistants help transform society by restoring and improving motion in people's lives.

David Peterson, DPT, CEO/Owner of Dynamic Performance Physical Therapy, and the highly trained staff, led this event with the intent to put fun into sports medicine. Eryn Peeler, president of the Oakwood University Allied Health Club, shared that "It was a fun experience that not only got my heart pumping, but also made me think about my future as a physical therapist."



Ruth Guinness, '13, prepares one of the participants for the Boot Camp activities. Photo by Casey Adams.

## Biology Professor Responds to Adventist President's Statement Regarding Evolution

**A**t a Bible and science conference on August 15, 2014, in Las Vegas, Nevada, General Conference President Ted Wilson stated that "life has existed on the Earth for only a few thousand years, not millions of years." He also said that "teachers who believe otherwise should not call themselves Seventh-day Adventists or work in Church-operated schools." His comments sparked the interest of local religion reporter Kay Campbell of *The Huntsville Times*. She spoke with Biology Professor Juliet Bailey-Penrod, who believes that Wilson's statement merely reiterates what she believes and teaches in her classes. "We all have our biases," she says, explaining how one can be a serious scientist and also a creationist.

## Oakwood Listed as #33 Among the Nation's Best HBCUs

**I**n September 2014, *U.S. News & World Report* released the 2015 Best Colleges Rankings for the 30th consecutive year. Oakwood University was number 33 on the list.

The annual peer survey is conducted in the spring, where administrators at HBCUs (including the president, provost, and admissions dean) are asked to rate the academic quality of all other HBCUs with which they are familiar. In addition to the survey results, the rankings are based on the same data indicators used in the Best Colleges 2015 rankings for Regional Universities, weighted the same way, from retention and graduation rates to high school class standing and test scores, and the strength of the faculty.

To be part of the Best Black Colleges ranking, a school has to be currently designated by the Department of Education as an HBCU, a status created as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965. Additionally, the college must be a baccalaureate-granting institution that enrolls primarily first-year, first-time students and must also have been part of this year's Best Colleges process. [Source: *U.S. News & World Report*].

## First-ever HBCU-created MOOC Offers Context for Understanding World Religions

**A**lthough Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have been shaking up higher education since 2012 by offering free courses to students anywhere in the world, historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) have been notably absent from MOOC platforms, until now.

Canvas Network and the Center for Excellence in Distance Learning (CEDL) at Wiley College announced a new MOOC, developed by Dr. Keith Augustus Burton of CEDL member institution Oakwood University, "Understanding World Religions: An Occupational Approach." Enrollment is free, and anyone can register at [www.canvas.net](http://www.canvas.net).

This MOOC is the product of innovation-focused collaboration between Oakwood University and the Center for Excellence in Distance Learning at Wiley College, which promotes greater sharing of resources and best practices in online education among the HBCU community.

"On behalf of all the members of the Center for Excellence in Distance Learning at Wiley College, we are proud to be standard-bearers for educational innovation in the HBCU community with the introduction of its first massive open online course," said Dr. Haywood L. Strickland, president and CEO of Wiley College. "We recognize the substantial contributions of Canvas Network in providing a superior platform that will make Dr. Burton's MOOC and scholarship freely available to students across the globe."

Dr. Burton is the director of the Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations at Oakwood University.

## Students Participate in Community Action Forum

**O**n September 30, 2014, the Oakwood University Church hosted a 2014 Nonpartisan Candidates Community Action Forum. The event was an opportunity for the citizens of Huntsville to meet the candidates and learn about their qualifications for office.

Nia Langley, president of the Oakwood University Chapter of NAACP; Alexandria Carrington, a member of the United Student Movement; and Leandra Joseph, vice president of the Pre-Law Society, offered a warm welcome to the audience on behalf of the University.

Daneal Barnaby, president of the Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity International, more commonly known as the Pre-Law Society, explained that the purpose of the event was to allow the candidates to introduce themselves to the general public and provide the audience an opportunity to ask questions.

## Oakwood Hosts Healthcare Futures Workshop

**O**n September 18, 2014, more than 100 students and faculty members gathered for the first Future Health Care Leaders of Tomorrow (FHCLT) event at the McKee Auditorium. The Future Health Care Leaders of Tomorrow, a student organization of Oakwood University's Business Department, has an overall purpose to enhance, develop, and support the biblically-based education of students in service to God and humanity whose interest is health services ministry. Their first program was geared toward students and faculty members of Oakwood University and Alabama A&M University, in an effort to empower young adults to actively involve themselves in service throughout the community. Pictured here are the Future Health Care Leaders of Tomorrow and National Urban League Young Professionals at Oakwood University: (l-r) Christopher Howard, FHCLT sponsor; Jared Winston, FHCLT president; Elijah Williams, NULYP treasurer; Michele Scurry, NULYP member; Rachel

Horton, FHCLT member; and Terrell Moses, FHCLT community outreach chair.



## Oakwood Student Conducts Glaucoma Research

by Monica Spencer, student writer

**O**akwood University student Kaleem Burton was awarded a \$25,000 UNCF Merck Undergraduate Scholarship, and the opportunity to participate in a 2014 summer internship at Duke University. His research abstract was titled "Functional Analysis of SIX6 Gene in Primary Open Angle Glaucoma."

Glaucoma is a neurodegenerative disease that is characterized by the death of retinal ganglion cells and peripheral vision loss. Primary open-angle glaucoma (POAG) is the most common form of glaucoma and is the leading cause of irreversible blindness worldwide.

Burton is a senior majoring in biochemistry with a minor in biology. While at Oakwood, Burton has not only established himself in the area of academics but also in the arts. He is currently a member of the Aeolians. He is also a member of the Mkono-Nia Drama Ministries.



## Oakwood Ranks Among Nation's 30 Best HBCUs

**B**est Colleges reports that Oakwood University has placed at #14 out of the top 30 historically black colleges and universities. To compile the list, they first looked at academic excellence and student satisfaction, and then factored in cultural impact and community service.

Best Colleges only includes institutions with at least two of the following four data points published:

- Acceptance Rate
- Retention Rate
- Graduation Rate
- Enrollment Rate

Every school was ranked against one another for each data point, and all data points were weighted equally. Schools that did not have a particular data point available were excluded from that specific ranking to avoid unfairly penalizing them for not having that information available. These four data points cover the school's assessment of students, student opinion of the school, and student success, once enrolled. Schools that excel in all four areas rank the highest in their respective categories. [Source: Best Colleges]

## Oakwood Administrators Attend HBCU Initiative Conference

**O**n September 22-23, 2014, representatives from Oakwood University attended the 2014 National HBCU Week Conference in Washington, DC. Titled “Innovators for Future Success” and coordinated by the White House Initiative on HBCUs, the Conference brought together presidents, senior administrators, and stakeholders to meet and interact with senior federal officials, and representatives from the private sector and foundations in order to meet the evolving challenges in higher education.

Some of the issues covered at the Conference included building capacity in response to new challenges; responding to issues of accreditation; building sustainable partnerships; strengthening community ties; framing new pathways to science, technology, engineering and mathematics; building networks for on-line courses; improving access and opportunity; responding to the needs of non-traditional students; and responding to issues of diversity and inclusion.

“This conference allowed me to meet other HBCU counterparts and share challenges as it relates to the area of development in higher education,” said Kisha Norris, executive director for Advancement and Development. Norris was one of 11 individuals representing Oakwood at this year’s event. She attended the track dealing with institutional advancement.

In a 2012 proclamation, President Barack Obama stated this about HBCUs: “Graduates of these institutions have played an extraordinary role in shaping the progress of our Union by championing equality and changing perspectives through the arts. They have strengthened our Nation by building our economy, teaching our children, healing the sick, and defending America as members of our Armed Forces. Today, HBCUs continue to help move our country forward, cultivating leaders in every area of our society.”

## Oakwood Responds to ISIS Situation

**T**he Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations at Oakwood University released this statement on August 22, 2014, condemning acts of violence by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS):

“The Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations at Oakwood University is saddened by the ongoing acts of aggression being perpetrated by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Their actions demonstrate a basic disdain for humanity and are clearly against the message of peace, love, and mercy that is so evident in the Qu’ran and embraced by the vast majority of Muslims.

## Oakwood Hosts Graduate and Professional School Fair

by Monica Spencer, student writer

**T**he Career Services and Testing Department hosted the annual Graduate & Professional School Expo, on October 6, 2014, in the Millet Activity Center. Area universities take turns hosting the event each year on the first Monday of October. This year, a record-breaking 600 students from Oakwood University and Alabama A&M University attended and took advantage of the opportunity to explore their options to further their education.

Senior Biochemistry Major Amanda Hendricks expressed her appreciation: “I enjoyed the fair. They had a school here that I am applying to, Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine. The fair helped with my admission process because I got to interact with the staff in person while I was applying.”

Among the 63 graduate schools that participated were the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Florida International University, Florida State University, Georgia School of Psychology, McWhorter School of Pharmacy, and the Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Sonia Paul, director of Career Services and Testing, explained that the “purpose for this event is to assist students in selecting the right graduate school and program. This event is also intended to allow sophomore and freshman students to gain the experience of interacting with recruiters.”



We call upon people of faith everywhere to pray for God’s intervention in the hearts of those associated with ISIS. Let’s pray that they will truly submit to God’s will and join those who walk the “straight path” (Sirat al Mustaqim); those upon whom the mercies of God pleasantly rest.

We also call upon people of faith to join in the struggle against prejudiced attitudes towards all Muslims because of the actions of a violent few. We believe that the only antidote to terror is peace, and call for all true believers to promote and practice peace in their spheres of influence.”

## Oakwood University Welcomes Its Newest Employees



### Abena-Yolanda Hoard Baskin

Assistant Professor, Nursing  
Department of Nursing – Simulation &  
Skills Lab Coordinator

**My favorite Bible text is:** Hereby know we love, because He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”.

**What’s interesting about me is that I like to** defy gravity with skydiving and zip-lining. I also enjoy long distance running, averaging 12 miles per week. I finished my first international event in Detroit-USA/Windsor-Canada last October. “Finishing surpasses winning!!” I’m planning to combine a half marathon run at Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, with a climb to the peak of the volcanic mountain in 2015.

### Reggie Hicks

General Manager, WJOU

**My favorite Bible text is:** Proverbs 3:5-6 (NIV): Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

**What’s interesting about me is that I like to** play golf. Also, I was the executive producer of “PowerPoint,” the first-ever National Public Radio call-in program addressing issues affecting the African American. The program aired on public radio for seven years in 60 media markets and on NPR’s News Talk Channel on Sirius Satellite Radio.

### Karen Watson

Office Manager, Wade-Peterson

**My favorite Bible text is:** Isaiah 26:3 (Holman): You will keep the mind that is dependent on You in perfect peace, for it is trusting in You. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

**What’s interesting about me is that I like to** give sewing lessons, play the flute and ride my motorcycle. I’m a member of the Adventist Motorcycle Ministry.



## Dana Wilchcombe

Assistant Professor, Literacy & Reading Secondary Coordinator – School of Education

**My favorite Bible text is** Romans 8:38-39 (KJV): For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, or any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**What's interesting about me is that I like to** read, archive family history and heirlooms, garden, and play the flute, I also like to spend time listening to, and sending cards to those who are 85 and older.



## Carmiele Wilkerson

Associate Professor, English & Foreign Languages

**My favorite Bible text is** Ezra 10:4 (NLV): Get up, for this is your duty, but we will be with you. Have strength of heart and do it.

**What's interesting about me is that I like to** create electronic and real visual story boards, and I love butterflies.



## Ricardo Woolcock

Assistant Residential Life Coordinator, Holland Hall

**My favorite Bible text is** Romans 8:38-39 (NIV): “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**What's interesting about me is that I like to** be around all animals, and I am a certified horse wrangler by the Certified Horsemanship Association.

### Oakwood University Welcomes Its Newest Employees

Eunice Murio  
Assistant Professor, Nursing

Kia Sawyers-Shropshire  
Assistant Buyer, ContractDynamcorp,  
Sponsored Programs

Heloise Smith  
Cashier, Student Accounts

Vanessa Smith  
Custodian, Custodial Services

Julian Waddell  
Network Administrator/  
Lab Coordinator,  
Business & Information  
Systems

Sondra White  
Medical Assistant, Health  
& Counseling Services

### Faculty Present Research Papers at Mustang Conference

Oakwood University and the School of Business and Adult & Continuing Education were well represented at the Mustang International Academic Conference, held in Nashville, Tennessee, on October 7-12, 2014. Presentations were made by Dr. Theodore Brown (An Analytical Study of SDA Leadership Perceptions in the NAD; Ranking of CFO Responsibilities); Dr. Faye Brathwaite and Dr. Theodore Brown (Is There a Relationship Between Religious Orientation and Willingness to Use Unethical Business Tactics Among University Students?); and Drs. John and Karen Anderson (A Theoretical Exploration of the Application of the Expectancy Motivation Theory to Health-Promoting Behavior of Senior African American Women).

### Have you heard of IMARI? New Highlights in the Sciences

by Cherryl Galley, Ph.D., dean, School of Arts and Sciences; chair, Department of Psychological Sciences

The acronym IMARI stands for Increasing Minority Admissions to Research Institutions. During the fall semester of 2013, Oakwood University was awarded a five-year grant for \$1.5 million from the National Institute of Health (NIH). The principal investigator of the grant is Dr. Timothy McDonald, provost and senior vice president, with Program Coordination provided by Alexandrine Randriamahefa, Ph.D., affectionately known as “Dr. Rand,” and Safawo Gullo, D.V.M., Ph.D., chair of the Department of Biological Sciences.

The focus of the grant is to increase the pool of competitive minority students electing to pursue advanced biomedical research careers, and better prepare a new cadre of young scientists for biomedical research careers. IMARI will provide early academic excellence intervention, advising, mentoring, and increased research participation and competence.

The motto of the program is: “Preparing Biomedical Researchers for the Future.”

Since the grant was awarded:

- From the Departments of Biology, Biochemistry, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Psychology, 32 students in the first grant year and 20 students in the second year were selected as participants.
- Students participated in a pre-research program that directed their understanding of their area of interest and provided training in laboratory procedures regarding the same.
- During the summer of 2014, students were matched with an intensive research institution for training in their area of interest to conduct research and subsequently present their findings at scientific meetings. The partner institutions were Cleveland Clinic, Duke University, Johns Hopkins University, Loma Linda University, Mayo Clinic, University of Cincinnati, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, and Virginia Tech.

- Following their rich summer activities, students made poster presentations of their work at the Annual Biomedical Research Symposium on OU’s campus on October 26, 2014. The event was well-attended and served to inspire an interest in research among the student body.

Oakwood students also made posters and/or oral presentations on their research at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in November 2014, in San Antonio, Texas. This conference was also an opportunity for the students to advance in their professional development with mentors and peers.

What more can I say? A dynamic opportunity? Indeed. A blessing from above? Unquestionably! Kudos to those involved in the program. Students, keep up the great work!

*Note: Increasing Minority Admissions to Research Institutions (IMARI) is a research education project funded by the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of General Medical Sciences, Grant Number: 1R25GM106994-01.*



The IMARI research group.

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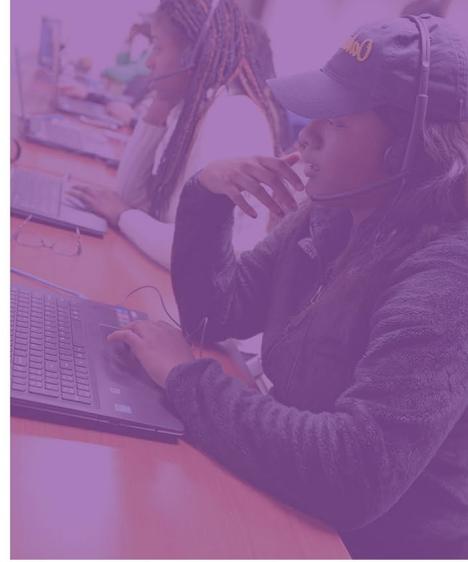


OAKWOOD  
UNIVERSITY

Ginneh Wright (age 8 months)  
Jonathan Wright (age 3) —  
children of Stacia (Dulan) Wright,  
'00, and H. Marcel Wright.



[www.oakwood.edu](http://www.oakwood.edu)



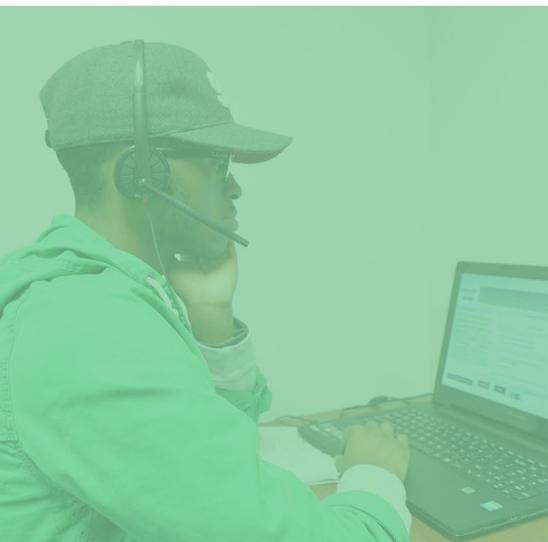
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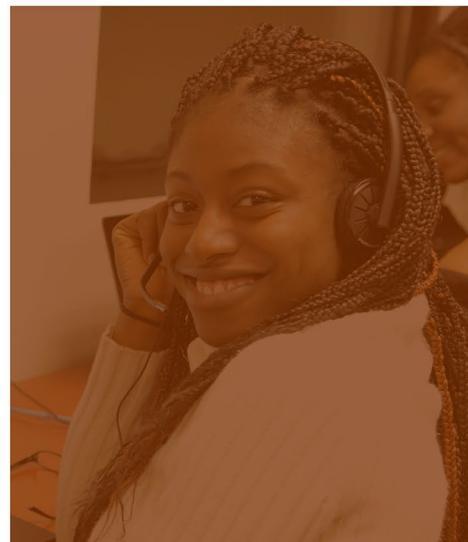


for participating in the **2014 Phonathon** which was held November 16-20.

Together we raised **\$42,000** which will go towards making a difference to those who followed in your footsteps by choosing **Oakwood University**.



GOD FIRST!



# LEAVE A LEGACY



**H**elp us celebrate the new Peters Media Center, home of Oakwood University Broadcasting Network (OUBN). The sidewalk leading to this state-of-the-art facility, dubbed **The Legacy Walkway**, will be paved with bricks. Oakwood University is excited to offer you the opportunity to pave the way into the next 118 years of success by purchasing a brick to be set on campus. Our **Legacy Walkway** will feature names of donors, loved ones, special remembrances, and favorite sayings. Customized bricks are a great opportunity to congratulate a recent graduate, celebrate a degree or accomplishment, or honor your loved ones.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to leave more than a memory at Oakwood University. You can leave your own legacy as we continue the Building on the Past Campaign.

It's easy to create your own personalized brick today. Visit [www.bricksrus.com/order/oakwood](http://www.bricksrus.com/order/oakwood) or call **256-726-7201**.



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## Golfers Tee Off for Student Scholarships

by Cheri Wilson, CFRE, development director

Despite local weather predictions of a chance of thunderstorms, 59 dedicated golfers enthusiastically teed off for the UNCF Golf Classic on October 6, 2014, at The Ledges of Huntsville, an 18-hole championship golf course. Golfers represented corporate sponsors, as well as Oakwood University students, faculty, staff, and friends. The UNCF Golf Classic is one of three annual events hosted by Oakwood University to raise funds for the UNCF North Alabama Campaign for student scholarships.

Highlights of the day included gifts and awards for the longest drive and closest-to-the-pin, as well as a chance to win a Ford Escape at a hole-in-one contest. Thanks to Regions Bank, an added feature this year was a golf swing analysis for each golfer.

Golfers finished the day with an awards dinner sponsored by Woody Anderson Ford, which included a meal, distribution of awards and trophies, and music from guitarist Roland Gresham. Third place prize was won by Alabama A&M University; second place by Parsons Corporation; and first place by Pretium Valuation Group.

UNCF is the nation's largest and most effective minority education organization. Since its founding in 1944, UNCF has raised more than \$3.6 billion to help more than 400,000 students receive college degrees at UNCF member institutions, and receive UNCF scholarships and student internships at approximately 900 institutions. Many of the students at UNCF-member institutions are the first to go to college in their family. By finishing their college degree, they change the trajectory of their families' lives, now and for future generations.

At publication, this year's UNCF North Alabama Campaign had raised \$69,000 in early pledges and donations towards the \$150,000 goal set by the UNCF Community Planning Committee. All proceeds from the campaign support the 37 UNCF-member colleges and universities, including the five institutions located in Alabama—Miles College, Oakwood University, Stillman College, Talladega College, and Tuskegee University—and the thousands of students they serve.

For more information about the UNCF North Alabama Campaign or to donate, please visit [www.ougiving.com/uncf](http://www.ougiving.com/uncf).



Photos by Anthony Chornes, II.

## Oakwood on the Road – Chicago

by Edith Pruitt, coordinator, Alumni Relations



Photos by Kisha Norris and Anthonye Perkins.

**D**uring the first weekend in October 2014, Oakwood on the Road (OOTR) blew into the Windy City of Chicago, Illinois. Though it was a cold and blustery weekend, the Independence Boulevard and Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist churches overflowed with love, warmth and fellowship as Oakwoodites of all ages packed into each service.

The weekend began with Friday night vespers, produced in partnership with the Chicagoland Youth Federation, at the Independence Boulevard Church. Oakwood Alumnus and Lake Region Youth Director Jason North was the speaker, and the Chicago Youth Praise Team and Oakwood’s Dynamic Praise provided music. The Shiloh Church hosted the Divine Worship service on Sabbath, where close to 1,200 were in attendance. President Leslie Pollard delivered the sermon; Chaplain Kimberly Mann presented, and Dynamic Praise provided music.

Near the end of the day, the Dynamic Praise gospel concert

was a featured event, where the contagious sound and enthusiasm of 50 voices praised God and ministered to the crowded church of Oakwoodites, friends and well-wishers.

The day closed out with an Oakwood alumni reception in the transformed Parish Hall, next to Shiloh Church. There, close to 300 individuals gathered to reminisce, reunite with friends, have a bite to eat, and hear about the innovations and changes that are occurring at their alma mater. “The atmosphere provided a sense of comradery and pride,” stated Leonard Tucker, alumnus and former dean.

Once again, Oakwood on the Road is a time where you can re-connect, where you can witness “the Oakwood experience,” and strengthen the ties that bind. Stay tuned for more information about Oakwood on the Road at General Conference in San Antonio, Texas, July 2015.

## UNCF Leadership Tea Promotes Philanthropy



Joy Agee



Jacquelyn Gates Shipe and Karen Peterson. Photos by Roland Scott.

The annual UNCF Women's Leadership Tea held on November 16, 2014, is one of the four events in the annual UNCF North Alabama Campaign. It attracted nearly 100 businesswomen, Oakwood faculty, students, local clergy, and other women in leadership to The Ledges of Huntsville the day after National Philanthropy Day.

The Tea brings awareness of the impact of the UNCF to women who believe and participate in the power of philanthropy. A local woman-owned corporation, ERC, Incorporated, sponsored this year's event, so all proceeds were added to the campaign total. The event chair was Joy Agee, alumna of UNCF member institution Spelman College, scientist at HudsonAlpha Institute, and a Ph.D. candidate in biotechnology at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. Agee is an exemplary recipient of the UNCF Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholarship Award, which supports a scholar from undergraduate work through the post graduate degree. Ashley Thornhill, a current Gates Millennium Scholarship recipient at Oakwood, also attended the event and enthusiastically questioned Agee regarding her research.

Jacquelyn Gates Shipe, executive director of the International Services Council of Alabama and former Oakwood vice president of Advancement & Development, was selected to receive the first UNCF Ramona Young Philanthropist Award.

Shipe was nominated for her significant support of the mission of UNCF and Oakwood University, philanthropic contributions and dedication to providing educational opportunities in the local and global communities. She continues to partner with Oakwood University to host visits from international guests and dignitaries to engage in global conversation on important issues. The award is named in memory of Ramona Young, an Oakwood alumna and philanthropist, for her volunteerism and philanthropic efforts.

For more than 70 years, the UNCF has raised more than \$3.6 billion to help more than 400,000 students attend, and graduate from, college. UNCF has distributed more funds to help minorities attend school than any entity outside of the U.S. government. To learn more about the UNCF, please visit [www.uncf.org](http://www.uncf.org).



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# ALUMNI NOTES

## OAKWOOD ALUMNI

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- Treasurer/Financial Vice-President
- Academic Vice-President
- Social Vice President
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- Religious Vice-President
- Parliamentarian
- Appointed Positions
- *Spreading Oak* Editor
- Special Events Coordinator
- Public Relations
- Music Coordinators
- Secretary for President and Vice-President



THE CURRENT USM ADMINISTRATION IS INVITING YOU TO A MIXER TO REVIEW THE HISTORY OF OU USM DURING ALUMNI WEEKEND 2015.

Please contact Edith Pruitt, Alumni Relations Coordinator at: [alumni@oakwood.edu](mailto:alumni@oakwood.edu) or 256.726.7039.

Please provide the following information: name, phone number, address, email, years of service, position, and names of your cabinet members.

## OU ALUMNI: SHARE YOUR NEWS!

AlumniNotes may be submitted online at [pr@oakwood.edu](mailto:pr@oakwood.edu) or mailed to:

**Oakwood University**  
Office of Integrated Marketing & Public Relations  
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Digital photos should be emailed in JPG, EPS, or TIF file format. Please make sure that the files are 300 dpi or the largest size possible for print. In addition to your name, please include your year of graduation or attendance. AlumniNotes may be edited.

## BIRTHS

Dammeon L. Malone, Jr. ("DJ") was born to **Shannan (Moore) Malone, '02**, and **Dammeon Malone, '03**, on October 2, 2014, weighing in at 6 lbs. and 15 ounces.



Kayla Marie Terrill was born to **Cherie (Keough) Terrill, '06**, and **Keith Terrill, '02**, on August 20, 2014



Bradon Levi Snell was born to **Debleaire, '99** and Gianna (Norman) Snell on December 10, 2014. He was 7 pounds, 7 ounces, and 21 inches long.

## WEDDINGS

**Samantha Nicole Scott, '11**, and **Wayne Devin O'Bannon, '14**, were married in Oak Glen, California, on September 18, 2014.



**Kyndall Powell-Hicks, '14**, and **James Rodrigues, '13**, were married in Los Angeles, California, on July 12, 2014, in the same church where the bride's parents, Drs. Calvin and Cynthia Powell-Hicks, were married 38 years ago.



**Tori Brinson Hicks, '00**, and Sharon Debbie Frederick were married on May 18, 2014, in Pacoima, California.

## GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Ira Harrell, Jr. '81  
Franklin S. Hill III, '71  
Samuel R. Hutchins, '86  
Jesse L. Reaves, Sr., '55  
James E. White III, MD, '68

## 1950s

Living Legend, **Gloria Eaton, '50**, celebrated her 90th birthday on September 21, 2014.

## 1960s

**Timothy, '63**, and Beverly (Clark) McDonald celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Huntsville, on October 4, 2014. Dr. McDonald currently serves as the provost and senior vice president at Oakwood University.



Dr. & Mrs. Timothy McDonald

## 1970s

Living Legend, **Dr. Gwendolyn (Burton) Ward, '75**, celebrated her 90th birthday on December 2, 2014.



Dr. Gwendolyn Ward

## 1980s

Due largely to the leadership of **Dr. Shonda Moody-Shaw, '89**, Elite Scholars Academy, a public charter school in Morrow, Georgia, was one of the 337 schools honored by the U.S. Department of Education for the 2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools recognition. Elite Scholars was honored during a ceremony on November 10-11, 2014, in Washington, D.C. The school received a National Blue Ribbon School plaque and a flag as a symbol of its recognized status.

**Jackson M. Doggette, Jr., '82**, is the first African-American ordained minister to be appointed General Counsel for a regional conference. Doggette serves as the director of Philanthropy and Trust Services, and as general counsel, for the Allegheny East Conference.

**Ronald Pollard, '87**, was interviewed by a reporter from Huntsville's WHNT Newschannel 19 to share why Oakwood participates in mission excursions despite all of the current international safety and health concerns of today.



William Smith & Candace Tolera

## 1990s

**James Butler, '93**, is the new vice president for Information Technology Information at Washington Adventist University. He is no stranger to Adventist higher education, having spent the past 21 years at Oakwood University. Most recently, James served Oakwood as director of Administrative Software Systems and previously as a programmer analyst and webmaster. He holds an M.S. in Computing Technology in Education, and is pursuing his Ph.D. in

Information Systems with a concentration in Information Security.

## 2000s

**Kenneth Manders, '92**, has recently been elected as the president of the Bermuda Conference. Manders took the presidency after working as ministerial secretary and personal ministries director at the Bermuda Conference.



Bianca Barreiro

**LaTasha (Betts) Hewitt, '00**, has recently been selected to be the new communication director of the Allegheny East Conference (AEC). Hewitt replaces Robert L. Booker, '56, who retired October 1, 2014. Hewitt was previously employed as an administrative assistant in the conference's youth department and is the current host of AEC Today, a video series covering the news and activities of AEC.

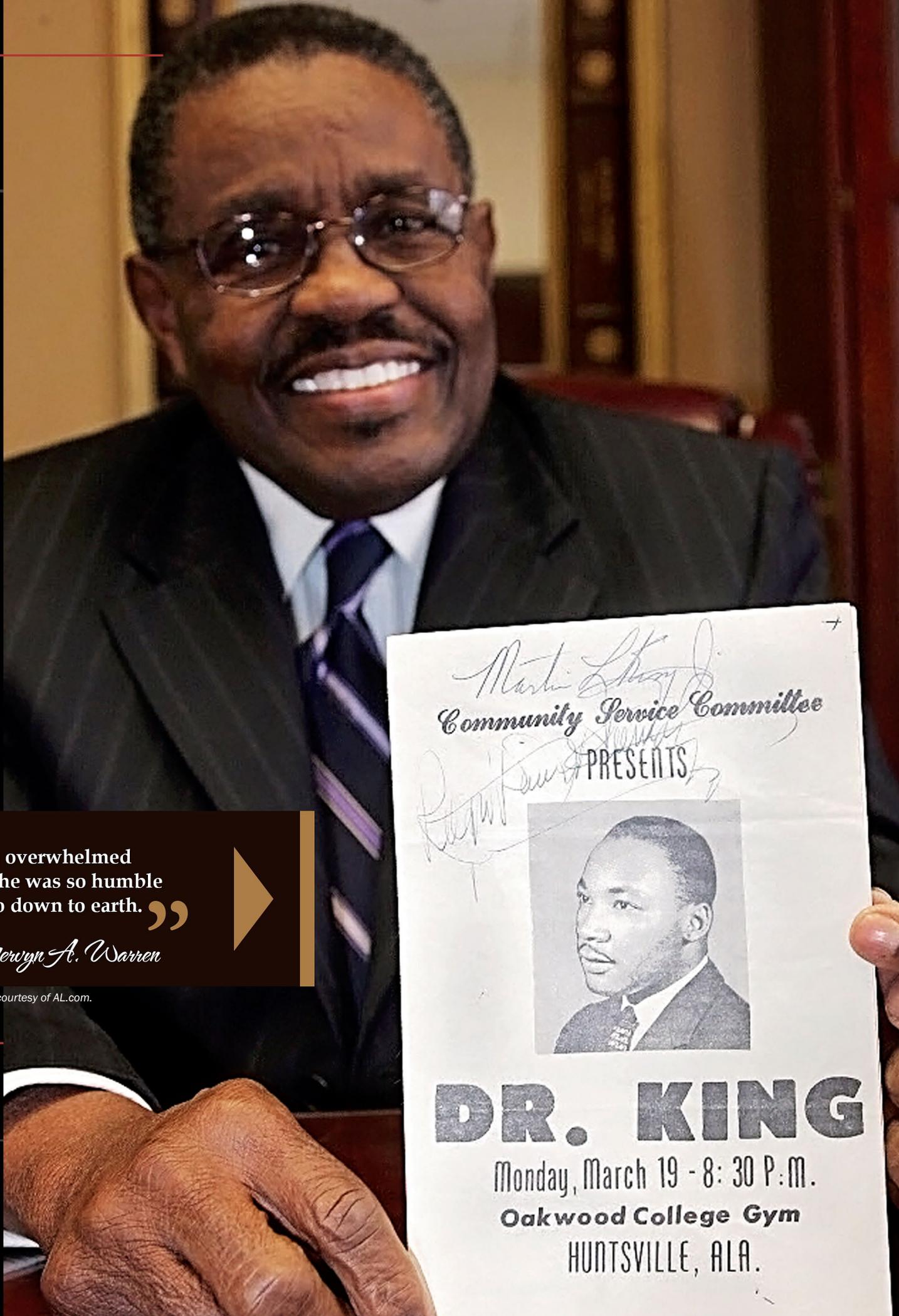
**A. Jeanice Warden-Washington, '01**, currently serves as the Principal Consultant to the California State Legislature, Assembly Committee on Higher Education. She was the sole representative of the California Legislature at the recent "Improving Student Learning at Scale Policy Collaborative," convened by the National Governors Association and the National Conference of State Legislatures in Chicago, Illinois.

**Chantel Bailey-Callender, '04**, and **Bianca Barreiro '09**, were guest lecturers in Dr. Dana Wilchcombe's class, ED341 - Foundations of Reading, in the OU Education Department. Both Education Department alumnae also gave presentations to prospective OU students during the 2014 College Days and to members of the Education Club.

**William Smith, '08**, is engaged to Candace Tolera. They were engaged on September 26, 2014, and will be married on July 19, 2015.

**Armand Blankenship, '12**, encouraged the owners of Huntsville's Woody Anderson Ford to establish the "Care to Drive" campaign. For every vehicle purchased by anyone affiliated with Oakwood University, Woody Anderson Ford will contribute \$50 toward Oakwood's scholarship fund.

# FLASHBACK



“ I was overwhelmed because he was so humble and so down to earth. ”

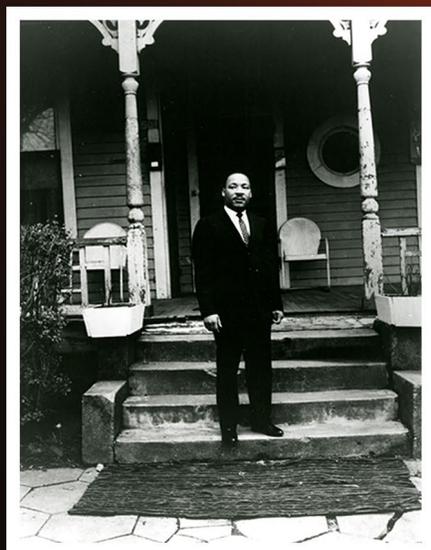


*Dr. Merwyn A. Warren*

Photo courtesy of AL.com.

# Sharing His *Dream* at Oakwood

by Gregory Johnson, student writer

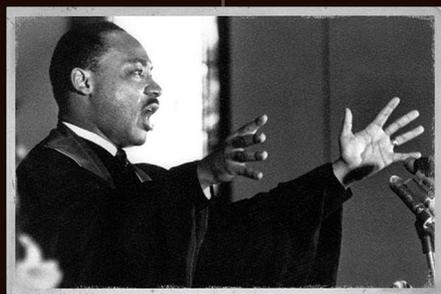


The "I Have a Dream" speech is one of the most profound and memorable speeches delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at the March on Washington on August 28, 1963. Did you know that one year before giving this famous speech, Dr. King walked the grounds of Oakwood's campus? On March 19, 1962, Dr. King spoke to more than 2,000 Oakwood students in the Ashby Auditorium.

In the 1960's, the state of Alabama was still experiencing times of racial injustice. During that same time in March, Dr. King was denied a venue to speak because of the color of his skin. However, since Oakwood was a place for African-American scholars, the administration decided to invite him to speak to the Oakwood students and other community members.

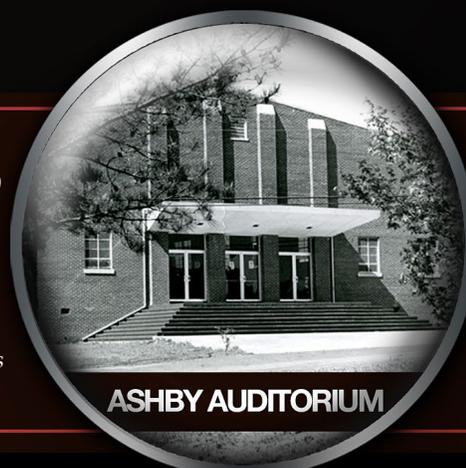
In a WAAY TV interview, Dr. Mervyn A. Warren, religion professor, stated "I was overwhelmed frankly because he was so humble and so down to earth. I even remember his haircut. He was modestly dressed but he was neat and wasn't flamboyant," Warren said. Warren was front and center listening to King's speech - which happened to be a first version of his "I Have a Dream" speech later delivered in Washington, DC.

Each year in January, the United States remembers the legacy of Dr. King. His leadership has positively impacted our society as it relates to social issues. Oakwood University is proud to have been one of the places where Dr. King was able to share "his dream."



*Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke before a crowd of 2,000 Oakwood College students in Ashby Auditorium.*

*It was on this campus that the great civil rights leader walked and spoke to the hearts of every Oakwood student.*



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# Seeing the Beauty Beyond

by George Johnson, Jr.



**M**y wife likes to walk and run through our neighborhood. These excursions generally take place early in the morning. Sometimes before the run, she will ask me if I'd like to join her. As I roll over from my sleep-induced coma, I peer through my eyelids and say "maybe tomorrow." This one particular morning, I decided to join her.

As I prepared for this walk, I began to make sure my wife knew the rules: 1) I wasn't running, 2) we weren't going to be out for a long amount of time because I wanted to get back into the bed, and 3) please refer to rule #1. She smirked and we began our journey around the neighborhood. "How does she do this every day?" I wondered. Now, let me make it clear, I'm not against exercising; I'm just against early morning activities that take me from the comfort of my bed.

Our brisk walk turned into a jog. In between panting, we chatted about the things that were happening in our lives, with our sons, and work. Just as we were turning a corner we reached an open field. Now, I had seen this field before. Generally the field was mowed and kept intact. But on this particular day, the field seemed not to have its usual neat look – as if someone had forgotten that it was their job to maintain the area. "This field is hideous. Why hasn't anyone kept it clean?" My wife stopped as she heard my rants about this neighborhood eyesore. This is when the object lesson would begin on

this early morning trip.

Kim began pointing out various areas of the field. Yes, there were some weeds, as well as patchy and rocky areas on the land. However, there were wild flowers growing in clusters in the field. "They're so beautiful!" she announced. I couldn't believe my ears. What was she saying? Kim went on to explain that sometimes our lives are like that field that we were standing beside. She exclaimed that the weeds in the field can be compared to bitterness, stress, unbelief, and hurt, just to name a few of life's more unattractive weeds.

As we began to continue the conversation about this field, I began to see more correlations. We need to allow the grounds keeper of our lives to pluck away those things. When we allow that, God can see the beauty in us – what he created us to be.

The message was loud and clear. Lord, please be the master gardener of our lives. Please pluck away those things in our lives that don't belong. Who knew that this ratty field with beautiful wild flowers would speak so loudly that early morning? I looked at my wife and thanked her for helping me to see the beauty beyond. I guess next time I won't complain about these early morning runs!

“Now, let me make it clear, I'm not against exercising; I'm just against early morning activities that take me from the comfort of my bed.”

*-George Johnson Jr. is the director of Integrated Marketing and Public Relations for Oakwood University.*



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