

# Spelman Messenger



25 years later...

*Cassi Davis, C'2009*



On Broadway...

*LaTanya Richardson  
Jackson, C'74*



Exactly as I am...

*Shaun Robinson, C'84*





Spelman College

A Choice to Change the World

SPELMAN

## Messenger

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### C R E D O

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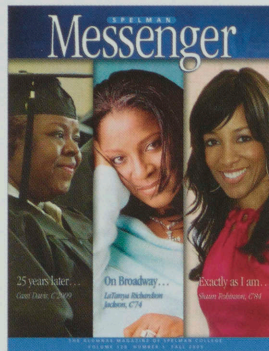
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CASSI DAVIS AND SHAUN ROBINSON BY JULIE YARBROUGH

LATANYA RICHARDSON JACKSON COURTESY OF LATANYA RICHARDSON JACKSON



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BY MAE GENTRY, C'73



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# Voices

...the Negro national anthem is

'Lift Every Voice' ....

Don't be an echo. Be a voice.

CORNEL WEST, PH.D.

SPELMAN COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

MAY 17, 2009



# 'Alumna 2 Student Conversation With Alumnae on Stage, on Screen, in Front of & Behind the Scenes'

**O**n October 23, 2008, some of Spelman's brightest stars gathered in Sisters Chapel to share their insights with current students. The homecoming convocation program, "Alumna 2 Student Conversation with Alumnae on Stage, on Screen, in Front of & Behind the Scenes," featured actresses Denise Burse-Fernandez, C'73; Cassi Davis, C'2009; Karan Kendrick, C'98; Keshia Knight Pulliam, C'2001; makeup artist Patrice G. Coleman, C'78 (videotaped); and publicist for Turner Broadcasting Systems Inc., Maya T. Brooks, C'2003. The panel spoke candidly with students about their careers, sacrifices and what Spelman means to them.

**Patrice G. Coleman, C'78** "You had to learn how to maneuver the system [at Spelman], and I think that prepared you for life. "Spelman ultimately has everything to offer you: whatever you want you can find here, and I think you get out of it as much as you put into it."

**Denise Burse-Fernandez, C'73** "Sacrifices get made along the way that may seem very negative early on. But in reality they'll be very positive in the long run when you look back over them and say, 'well that wasn't so bad,' or, 'at least I learned something from it that will be very beneficial to me.' "[The definition of a Spelman woman] in my mind is competence, confidence, capability, compassion, it's the embracement of our heritage and the self-love that powers out onto the large community as love for our people. I think that's something that you learn here, and it's also something that you take out beyond here."



PHOTO: WILFRED HARRWOOD

Denise Burse-Fernandez, C'73



**Cassi Davis, C'2009** "For me everything began at Spelman... This is where it all really, really began for me — the acting classes and the dormitory life. ... To get here and see all of the diversity and to experience all of these Black people was just really, really wonderful. It was just one lesson after another. "I think a Spelman woman is innately connected to legacy, but the actual definition to me of a Spelman woman is an African American woman that was accepted to this great institution. It was the only place that I applied to. I could talk to people who were here for three months, or six weeks or had to go home after the first semester, and they don't turn in their Spelman woman card — you just are a Spelman woman. I think after orientation or that freshman year or even if you transfer in, you get here and you see and experience the love of your time and realize it is the same love over time and all the way back to the beginning of this time. I just think that we are who we are as soon as we say 'You know what? I think I can do that, I think I can endure' — that's my definition."

**Karan Kendrick, C'98**

"Spelman meant so much to me. It was a place where I invested four years of my life, and it was a place that invested so much in me that I always feel compelled to give back. This is my reunion year as well, so I hope to

lead my class in making a very significant donation to the school in order to hopefully provide a way for students who are coming behind us to have an opportunity like we did. Giving back to Spelman can always be in your time and in your talents, but it's always being a sister and I think that's part of giving back as well."

**Keshia Knight Pulliam, C'2001**

"I'm very thankful that I did take the time away from being an actress to attend college here, because there's so much that you learn about yourself as a woman. As an African American woman, that's so empowering. It teaches you the confidence and determination that you need once you get out in the greater world, and I think you learn so much about who you are as a person that nothing out there can really sway or deflect all of that glow that comes from the inside. So just learn from all of the drama that you have, all of the classes, it helps make you who you will become and that there's nothing out there that you can't handle.

"As you go out into the world, it's leading by example, it's doing the best at whatever it is you do. When you're in your environment representing Spelman and yourself as an African American woman with dignity, with pride, with elegance, with grace, with intelligence, with all of those things, [this] is continuing to give back to Spelman. You

*"Spelman meant so much to me. It was a place where I invested four years of my life, and it was a place that invested so much in me that I always feel compelled to give back."*

KARAN KENDRICK, C'98



might not know it but you may be in a room and someone might see you, a little girl, and be awed by you, and that might be the deciding factor for her to go to Spelman. I know that was my case. We filmed here when I was on 'The Cosby Show.' I was about 7 or 8 years old, and I saw all of these beautiful, magnificent intelligent women around the campus, and I was like 'Mommy, I'm going to Spelman.' Lo and behold when it came time for me to apply to colleges, this wasn't my top choice; it was my only choice.

"Spelman doesn't make you . . . you make Spelman."

#### Maya T. Brooks, C'2003

"The thing that Spelman taught me that I learned from being a student here is that I learned to be fearless. I'm fortunate to be in a position where I sit at the table with a lot of senior executives at Turner, and I even sit at the table sometimes with Tyler Perry. It's made me be confident within myself and have no fear in what I'm talking about to them, presenting to them. It instilled so much confidence that I just feel like I can go in and sell whatever I'm trying to sell or accomplish whatever goal I'm trying to accomplish." •



Maya T. Brooks, C'2003 (left), and Keshia Knight Pulliam, C'2001.

*"When it came time for me to apply to colleges, this wasn't my top choice; it was my only choice."*

KESHIA KNIGHT PULLIAM, C'2001



Spelman alumnae panelists, along with SSGA president, Miriam Archibong, C'2009, (third from left) conclude "Alumna 2 Student Conversation," the Homecoming convocation program, singing the Spelman Hymn in Sisters Chapel.



## BOOK REVIEWS

ANGELA BROWN TERRELL

## The Sea Is So Wide and My Boat Is So Small: Charting a Course for the Next Generation

By Marian Wright Edelman, C'60  
(Hyperion)

Marian Wright Edelman, C'60, founder and president of the Children's Defense Fund, former Spelman trustee and world-renowned advocate for children, has written a book that offers a plan for protecting the future of young people, as it takes to task the do-nothing attitudes of this present generation.

Written in the form of letters to various leaders of our communities, to her four grandchildren and even to God, Mrs. Edelman pulls no punches as she spells out the ills of our society and how the neglect of services for children, especially, has driven them into a state of spiritual and economic poverty.

No one is exempt: parents, teachers, government institutions, politicians, the religious community, businesses and community leaders. We all share in the guilt of not protecting the rights of children and hence our future. And we are paying for our neglect, Mrs. Edelman admonishes:

"This is our American family today, where one in six of our children lives in poverty in the richest nation on earth, more than 40 percent in extreme poverty. . . . Every year that we let 13 million children live in poverty costs \$500 billion in lost productivity and cost of crime and health.

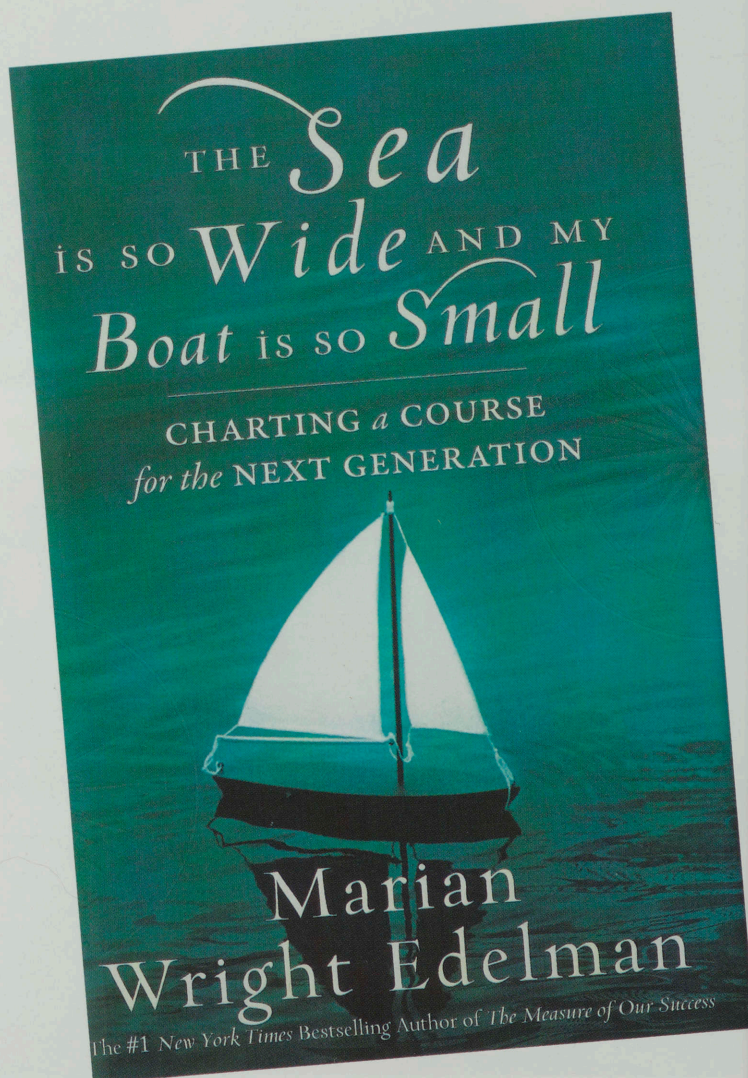
You cannot hurt others, especially children, without consequences."

What can be done? What do we do? Mrs. Edelman offers several solutions, among them a nine-step program "for America's leaders to end child poverty and the cradle-to-prison pipeline crisis." In addition, Mrs. Edelman writes, "The black community must reclaim our traditional values of family, community, and self-help, regain and share with all our children — and with all in America — the spiritual legacy of the black struggle for justice, and catalyze and mount a powerful crusade to save all our children, joining with our Latino

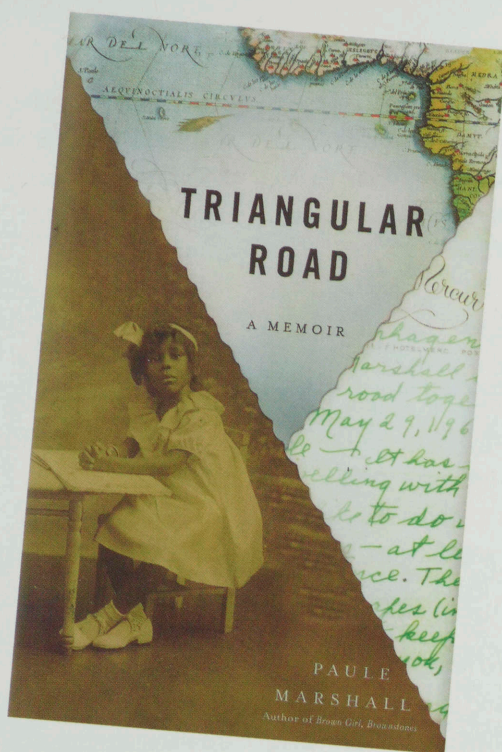
brothers and sisters and all people who share your goals of a beloved community."

This mother of three, who is known for her no-nonsense manner of dealing with what she knows is right, doesn't mind teaching us. She's written eight best-selling books and has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Robert F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award, and a MacArthur Fellowship, for her works.

It would behoove all of us to take heed of the message in this book to ensure the future of our nation, our world and the quality of life inherited by our children.







## Triangular Road: A Memoir

By Paule Marshall  
(Basic Civitas Books)

Writer Paule Marshall, acclaimed as one of the “best writers writing in the United States,” has brought to us a greater understanding of the African Diaspora in its personal perplexity through this memoir.

Born in Brooklyn of immigrant parents from the Caribbean island of Barbados, Marshall’s first novel, *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), was her early exploration into what it means to carry a heritage of slavery and still find your true identity in a world that tries to ignore you. Since then, her novels and stories have given the world a glimpse of the cultural and social influences that have affected people of color in the Americas.

In this eighth book, following many years of teaching and lecturing at various universities (including visits to Spelman College in the 1980s as part of the Women’s Research and Resource Center) and receiving awards that include a MacArthur Fel-

lowship, Ms. Marshall comes full circle in telling her own story and experiences in becoming a writer, this time as nonfiction.

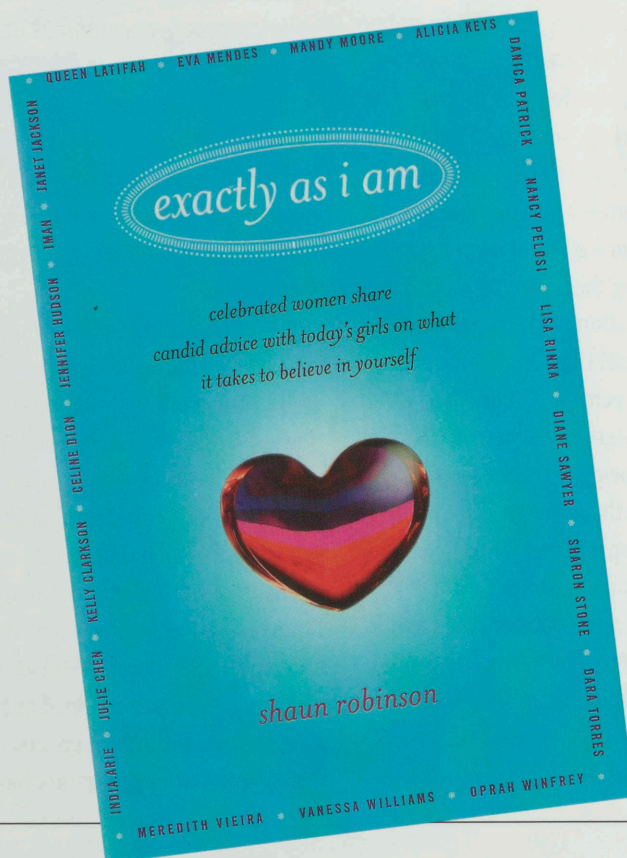
She tells of an invitation from the U.S. State Department to join her friend and mentor, writer Langston Hughes, on a monthlong cultural trip to Europe, with a base in Paris. Following a Guggenheim Award, she was able to spend a year on the island of Grenada, where she encountered the Big Drum/Nation Dance, a festival in which drummer and dancers give tribute to their African ancestry. This circular dance performance reminded Ms. Marshall of the Ring Shout, a circular dance and shout performed in the United States by Black people, a legacy from slaves. What this notable writer culled from many such learning experiences, she writes, is “... fully understanding, fledgling that I still was, that as a fiction writer, a novelist, a storyteller, ... my responsibility first and foremost was to the story, the story above all else: the old verities of people, plot and place; a story, that if honestly told and well crafted, would resonate with ... historical truths ...”

## Exactly as I Am: Celebrated Women Share Candid Advice With Today’s Girls on What It Takes to Believe in Yourself

By Shaun Robinson, C’84  
(Ballantine Books)

It seems enough cannot be said nowadays about girls and teens, and their self-esteem or lack of it. It’s as if we’ve suddenly become aware that the old-time advice of, “they’ll grow out of it” does not suffice. In this age of multimedia bombardment of negative body images and sexually explicit misinformation, we need to give more than lip service to help young women cope with growing up.

Shaun Robinson, C’84, award-winning weekend co-host of TV’s entertainment news program “Access Hollywood,” responded to the many Emails and letters she’s received from





girls seeking advice about how to become like the stars they see. But what the girls didn't see, Shaun realized, is the truth of how these celebrities got to be where they are. And it hasn't always been easy, she's discovered through the in-depth interviews and conversations she's been privy to with many celebrities.

At issue, Shaun found, is that these young women don't realize their own personal strengths and abilities. So she set about to show them, through the celebrities' own words, what really goes on behind the making of the star personalities we see and admire. Included are many folks we know, like Oprah Winfrey, Queen Latifah, Jennifer Love Hewitt and India.Arie, as well as lesser-known businesswomen, scientists, religious leaders and politicians. There's a car designer, a boxer, a governor and a fashion designer — all of whom have been successful against the odds. They cover a cross-cultural and cross-generational group of women.

Armed with statistics from her involvement with Girls Inc., an organization founded to make girls feel "strong, smart and bold," this book evolved to help girls learn to love themselves as they are and not let others lead them away from recognizing their own self-worth. The information in the organization's "Supergirl Dilemma" study, showed that 69 percent of more than 2,000 girls interviewed were concerned about their appearance, and only 13 percent thought they could achieve their aspirations. Shaun saw the need for a turnaround.

The areas covered include self-acceptance, building confidence, handling stress, sex and boys, and, importantly, learning to take responsibility for their future and

giving back to others. The advice given comes from the hearts and personal experiences of the women, including Shaun, who want to help the next generation of girls reach their potential and realize their dreams. "I want so badly for you to realize the potential that you have inside," Shaun writes to encourage the girls. "You will wake up every morning and give thanks for another day to be magnificent. You will *dream big* and carve a path for many other girls to follow their dreams."

## Justice Older Than the Law: The Life of Dovey Johnson Roundtree

By Katie McCabe and  
Dovey Johnson Roundtree, C'38  
(University Press of Mississippi)

The accomplishments of Dovey Johnson Roundtree are almost unbelievable for one woman to have achieved: from her beginnings in a financially poor family in Charlotte, North Carolina, to graduation from Spelman College (C'38), to being part of the first group of women, including 40 Black women, to enter officer candidate training in the newly formed

Women's Army Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) during World War II, to graduating from the mostly male Howard University Law School, to practicing law in then-segregated Washington, D.C., to being among the first women to be ordained into the ministry of the African Methodist Church. Civil rights for families and children through education and social justice was her battle cry. She fought hard and won against the greatest of odds. Throughout the years, few have

heard of this crusading woman who wouldn't take no for an answer during the segregated history of our nation. Her epic story, though often painful, needed to be told.

Born in 1914, she lost her father to the influenza epidemic in 1919, and moved with her mother and three sisters to her grandparents' home. Throughout her life, Ms. Roundtree had many mentors and supporters to whom she gives all credit. Her grandmother, teachers, benefactors, friends all are given due for her success. Once a protégée of Mary McLeod Bethune, she was also closely associated in the battles fought by Thurgood Marshall, James Nabrit and the Legal Defense Fund team, which culminated in the victory of *Brown vs. Board of Education* that ended school segregation.

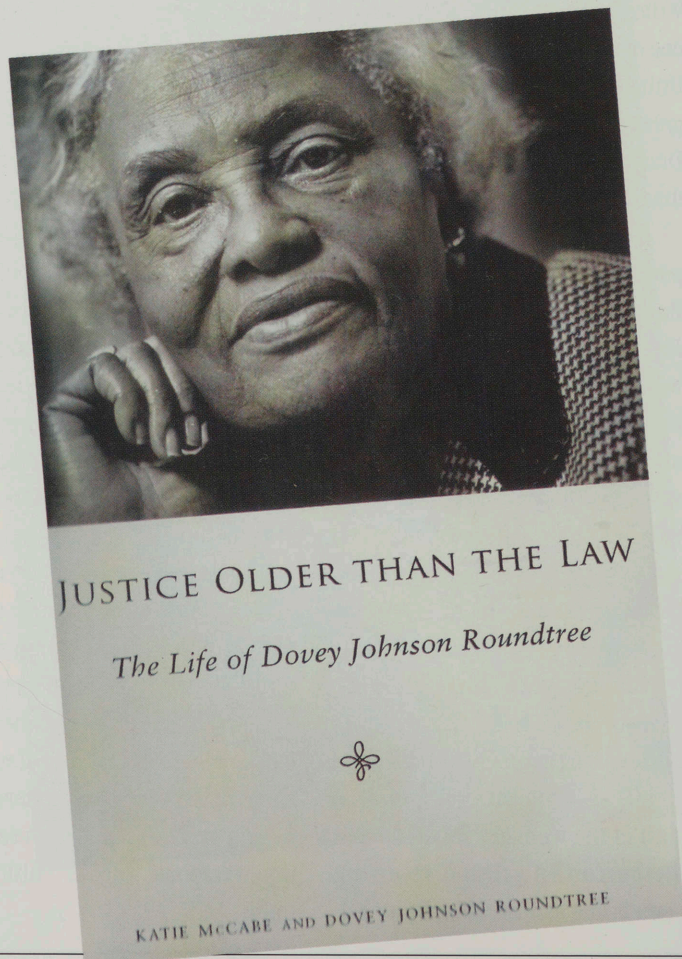
Co-author of this provocative autobiography, Katie McCabe, is an

accomplished freelance journalist who first wrote an article about Ms. Roundtree for *Washingtonian Magazine*. Thus began a 13-year-long fruitful association with Dovey Roundtree, whose health now confines her to a nursing home in Charlotte. She also did countless interviews with associates and friends and hours of research into legal documents and files.

Ms. McCabe writes, "... Dovey and I created this book together, she telling me stories in the magnificent oral tradition of her grandmother, I trying to capture that as a writer. The voice is Dovey's; the words are mine; the vision is one we share."

Now we have the legacy in this wonderful story of courage, determination and unfailing faith. •

ANGELA BROWN TERRELL is a writer and editor based in Columbia, Maryland.





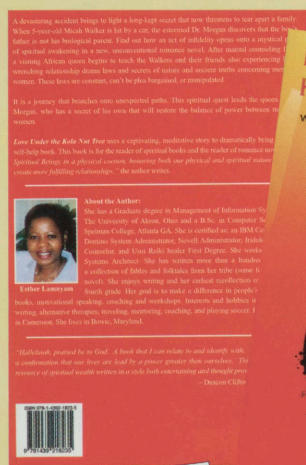
# Book Notes

LORRAINE ROBERTSON

**C. Alexandra Allen, C'96**, released the book *In the Nude* (Devreux Publishing) in February 2009. As a follow up to her 2002 debut, *The Revolution of Eve*, this work serves as the lead title under the Devreux Publishing & Art Media imprint. *In the Nude* is an impressive collection of poetry and prose that embraces readers from all walks of life. Ms. Allen writes with a brilliant fearlessness about politics, hip-hop, loss of innocence, spirituality and matters of the heart. This introspective piece is about celebrating who you are, about learning life lessons and at some moments is an ode to redemption.



**Esther Lamnyam, C'88**, released her novel, *Love Under the Kola Nut Tree: What City Moms Didn't Tell You About Creating Fulfilling Relationships* (BookSurge) in February 2009. The book blends spirituality, romance, mysticism and a quest for fulfilling relationships. It uses a captivating, meditative story to dramatically bring to life a self-help book. It's the perfect read for the lover of spiritual books and romance novels.



**Joyce White Mills, C'64**, wrote and designed the book *Artist Lev Mills: Catalog Raisonne & Biographical Sketch* (Cut-Chain Press). The book, edited by Lev Mills a former Spelman professor, began in 2003 when Ms. Mills photographed her husband's works on the walls of their first Atlanta home. From there the project was built from a chronological list of works that continued to grow as more were located throughout the years. What started as a personal collection for a Father's Day gift has turned into a compelling account of Mr. Mills' illustrious career as a respected artist and professor.



PHOTO: JULIE YARBROUGH, C91

Joyce White Mills, C'64

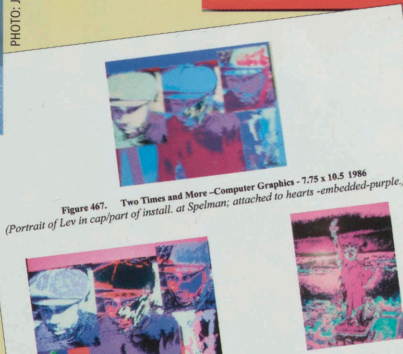
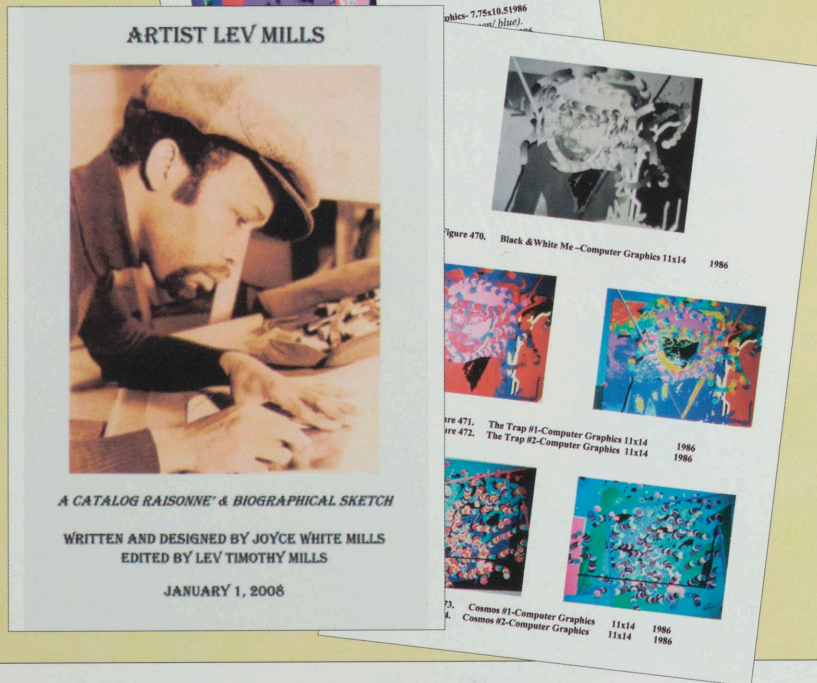


Figure 467. Two Times and More-Computer Graphics-7.75x10.5 1986  
(Portrait of Lev in cap/part of install. at Spelman; attached to hearts-embedded-purple.)



ARTIST LEV MILLS



A CATALOG RAISONNE' & BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY JOYCE WHITE MILLS  
EDITED BY LEV TIMOTHY MILLS

JANUARY 1, 2008

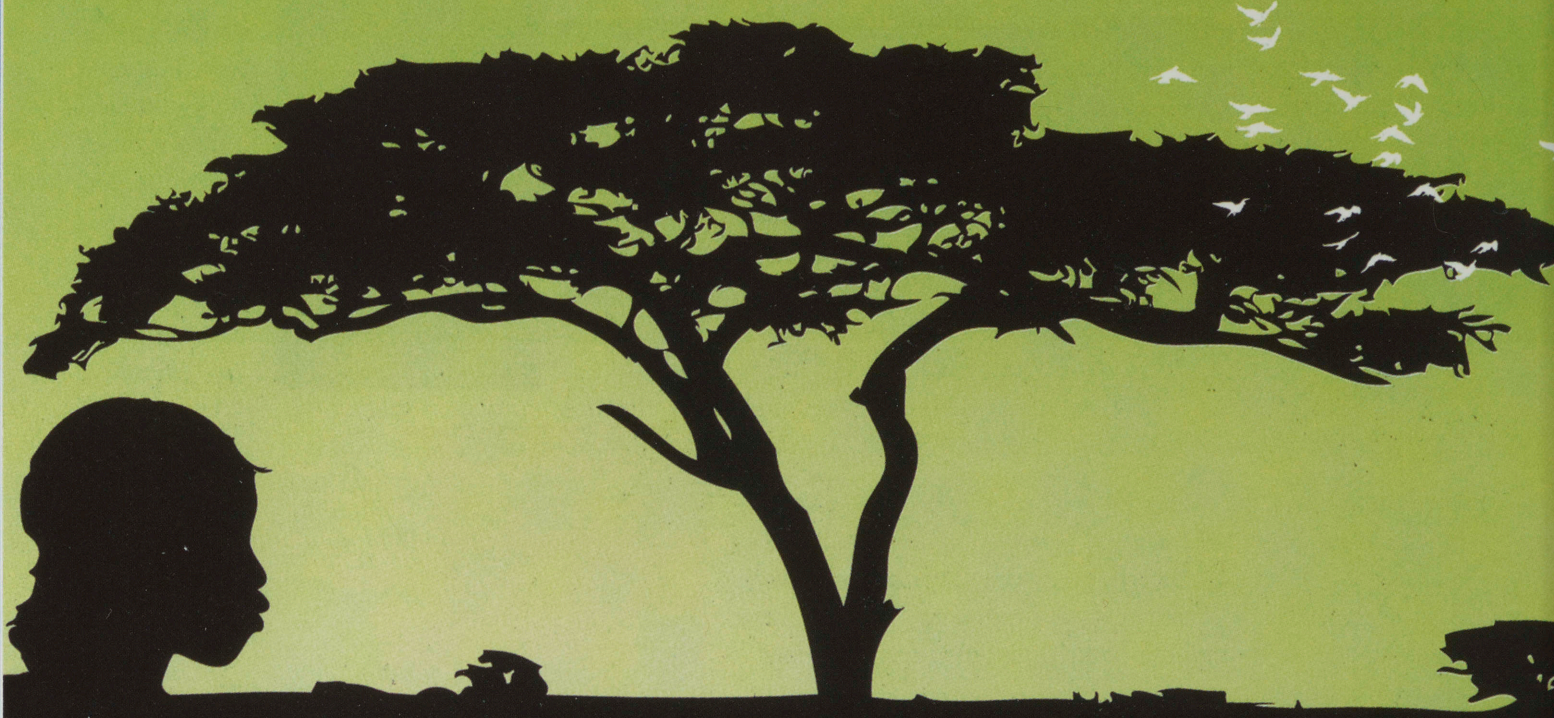


Figure 470. Black & White Me-Computer Graphics 11x14 1986

Figure 471. The Trap #1-Computer Graphics 11x14 1986  
Figure 472. The Trap #2-Computer Graphics 11x14 1986

Figure 473. Cosmos #1-Computer Graphics 11x14 1986  
Figure 474. Cosmos #2-Computer Graphics 11x14 1986





# THE AFRICAN DISAPORA AND THE WORLD

*Marking 15 Years of  
Interdisciplinary Study From a  
Race- and Gender-Based Perspective*

BY MAE W. GENTRY, C'73





n a Tuesday evening during spring semester, two dozen Spelman students prepare to “revisit” their writing assignment on the aftermath of slavery. Their professor, Dr. Alma Jean

Billingslea-Brown, suggests they break into small groups and examine W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington with “a little more intensity.” Four intellectually challenging questions serve as springboards for the students who are enrolled in “African Diaspora and the World,” a year-long course that has been offered at Spelman for the past 15 years.

The young women break open their textbook, *The ADW Reader*, re-read the beginning of DuBois’ 1903 *The Souls of Black Folk* and contemplate the meaning of “double-consciousness” and the question “How does it feel to be a problem?”

One student takes offense at the question, saying, “I don’t see myself as a problem.”

Another reads aloud: “‘Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question . . .’ The other world,” she repeats, underlining the phrase in her textbook. “The other world is the White race.”

That response causes Dr. Billingslea-Brown, director of African Diaspora and the World, to reply affirmatively. “This is about subject and object, thesis and antithesis. Double consciousness is about seeing yourself only or primarily as others see you — how others are always structuring everything to reinforce how they see you.”

Heads nod as the young women appear to find enlightenment. That is the desired outcome for those taking African Diaspora and the World, or ADW as the course has come to be known. Like the students in Dr. Billingslea-Brown’s class, generations of Spelman women have examined major themes associated with the African Diaspora from a race - and gender-based perspective and come away with greater insight into their place in the world as women of African descent.

Most recently, the 2008 presidential election gave ADW students a chance to examine the treatment of the first African American first lady of the United States. For example, criticism of Michelle Obama’s sleeveless dresses and muscular arms prompted classroom discussion of whether she appears “too strong,” “fierce” or “militant.” It also gave students the chance to examine stereotypes of Black women as sexualized objects or dominating figures.

Those kinds of connections and understanding of the Diaspora are what the organizers of ADW envisioned when they gathered in 1992 under the leadership of Dr. Michael

A. Gomez, then-chair of Spelman’s history department, with a mandate to lighten the faculty’s teaching load while simultaneously grappling with the difficult issues of multiculturalism and pluralism. The result was ADW, perhaps the first course in the nation to focus on the African Diaspora as part of its core curriculum. Taught by professors from different departments, ADW is a two-semester, interdisciplinary course that is required for all Spelman students. During the first semester, students learn about “points of convergence between race, gender and slavery; and the varying responses to the condition of servitude throughout the Americas,” according to the course catalogue. Second-semester students are exposed to “comparative assessment of post-emancipation societies; the Harlem Renaissance and the Negritude movement; relationships between anti-colonial struggles in Asia, Latin America, and Africa, and the Civil Rights movement in the



PHOTO: JULIE YARBROUGH, C91

United States, . . . [and] contemporary economic and political conditions in the Diaspora.”

Since the course was established in 1993, ADW has become a transformational experience for many Spelman women and has altered how they view themselves and others. Its goal is to communicate “the values and concepts central to Spelman College: sisterhood, leadership, a love of learning, sensitivity to cultural differences, the use of diverse methods of scholarly investigation and the association between learning and social change,” according to a description on the College’s Web site.

The 15th anniversary of African Diaspora and the World was marked Friday and Saturday, November 7 and 8, on Spelman’s campus. The keynote lecture for the writing intensive course was delivered by one of the African

*Ama Ata Aidoo, internationally respected Ghanaian playwright, poet, short-story writer and novelist.*



Diaspora's best-known women writers – the internationally respected Ghanaian playwright, poet, short-story writer and novelist, Ama Ata Aidoo, who has written eloquently of her struggles against gender oppression in “No Sweetness Here,” “The Dilemma of a Ghost” and in the semi-autobiographical *Our Sister Killjoy*.

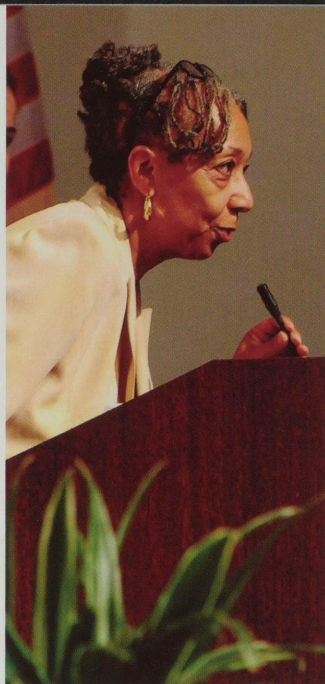
Professor Aidoo, a visiting professor of Africana studies and creative writing at Brown University, was introduced by Ms. Jade Lambert-Smith, C'98, who recalled reading Professor Aidoo's work in ADW while studying in Ghana and directing a scene from the play *Anowa* during her senior year at Spelman. Following a powerful dramatic reading from *Anowa* by Ms. Althea Williams, C'2011, Professor Aidoo ascended the stage to address the dozens of students, faculty members and guests gathered for the celebration.

“Those of us who write know that, at its best, all writing is black marks against white paper,” she said. “It comes to life only when it is read or spoken. Anytime I get a captive audience like you, I read.”

Garbed in a regal purple African outfit, her head wrapped and shoulders draped in matching purple-and-white kente cloth, she began her remarks by reading a poem she had written for her daughter, and she expressed pleasure at being at Spelman, which she called “a woman's place.” She talked about the importance of ADW, a course that teaches students to feel good about themselves, their people and their history, and she recounted how she and her Ghanaian schoolmates were discouraged from using their native language: A sign posted outside their school read “Leave Fante or Wolof outside the gate.” As an adult, she felt uncomfortable about writing in English. But, she concluded, “writing in English is better than not writing at all.”

Professor Aidoo spoke of the African continent, its riches and its dictators, and of being taught “the English Colonial version of history,” which she said was “silent” about the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

“We need to know about and deal with our past



Dr. Alma Jean Billingslea-Brown



Althea Williams, C'2011

PHOTOS: JULIE YARBROUGH, C91

in all of its mad and glorious detail,” she said. “It's the only one we've got. No people can run away from their history and amount to much. If we don't write our own history, someone else will.”

The two-day anniversary celebration featured panel discussions on “Interdisciplinary, Study Travel and Other Pedagogies for African Diaspora Studies,” “The ADW Course at Spelman: History, Legacy and New Directions” and “The African Diaspora and Globalization: History and New Directions.” And it brought some 350 people together, including President Beverly Daniel Tatum, Provost Johnnella E. Butler and the multidisciplinary team of professors who piloted and taught the course, among them Dr. Gomez, Dr. Paul A. Jackson, ADW associate director Dr. Soraya Mekerta, Dr. Jontyle T. Robinson, Dr. Anne Warner, Dr. Daryl White and many others.

Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, who was president of Spelman when ADW was conceived, was also in attendance. An anthropologist who once lived in Liberia, she enthusiastically supported the idea of examining issues of Pan-African identity across disciplinary lines. Dr. Cole, who was recently named director of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art, called ADW “an extraordinary force” that has been a leader in the confrontation of stereotypes. And she recounted the occasional Spelman student who would complain about having to take ADW. “Often, that same student returned to testify about the course that situ-

ated her . . . in Africa, the Diaspora and the world.”

The creation of ADW arose from Dr. Cole's desire to reduce the faculty teaching load from four to three courses per semester, according to Dr. Gomez, who led the charge to restructure the core curriculum and calls it “a truly collaborative effort.”

“We had choices, but we decided to go to a very different model,” recalled Dr. Gomez, now a professor of history and Middle Eastern and Islamic studies at New York University. “The idea was to bring together various disciplines – history, literature, music, etc. – around a particular theme and to create an interdisciplinary approach to a theme that would be global. And so we came up with the idea of the African Diaspora as the theme.

“And, of course, Spelman being the kind of institution it is, we not only needed a course that would center on people of African descent, but also [focus] on women and gender, and I think the course successfully reflected that.

“The notion of the African Diaspora is certainly nothing new. But I don't know that any college or university had a course on the African Diaspora and the World as a part of its core curriculum. I think Spelman was the first to do that.”

ADW was piloted in the spring of 1993 by Dr. Michael Gomez, then chair of the history department; Dr. Alma Jean Billingslea-Brown, then assistant professor of English; and Dr. Jontyle T. Robinson, then-associate professor and curator in the department of art. That fall, 16 faculty mem-





(left to right) Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum, Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole, Ama Ata Aidoo, Dr. Johnnetta E. Butler, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs, and Dr. Nawal El Saadai, Cosby Endowed Professor — 2007–09.

bers from nine disciplines — history, sociology, English, French, music, economics, art, drama and philosophy — taught 24 sections of the course.

The birthing of ADW was not without its difficulties, however. Once the concept was refined, the organizers had to work with the faculty to get the curriculum approved. That required educating them about the concept of the Diaspora, convincing them that the course was appropriate for a liberal arts institution, and training professors to teach outside of their disciplines. Despite the many challenges, Dr. Gomez said he found the undertaking “one of the best experiences I have had in the profession.

“It was a wonderful opportunity to work with colleagues from different disciplines and perspectives,” he said. “Everybody contributed, and it was an honest effort to bring all of the disciplines together to focus on the theme of the African Diaspora.”

Despite all of the challenges involved in creating the course, the organizers’ efforts have been validated by the thousands of Spelmanites who have benefited from ADW.

“For me, African Diaspora and the World was the first time in 13 years of education that an institution required me to take a class related to my own experiences of race and gender,” wrote Valerie Jiggetts in her 2008 sociology thesis, titled “The Course Through Their Eyes: A Look at Spelman College’s African Diaspora and the World

Course and Its Effects on the Racial and Gender Identities of Spelman College Students.”

“This course creates an experience that may offer . . . students an opportunity for the first time in their lives to look at the world in a sociohistoric context and through a lens that is not male and European-based.”

During the celebration of ADW’s 15th anniversary, several Spelman students echoed those sentiments.

“A lot of students think it’s anti-man, anti-White,” said freshman Lauren Morton. “But I don’t feel that way. I look forward to going to ADW. Since we are free-thinking women, it’s up to us to research and find out the truth. A lot of what we have learned is lies.”

Loni Young, a freshman who attended the 15th anniversary celebration, also believes ADW has forced her and other students to grow intellectually.

“It’s a challenging class, yes, but it allows me to be open-minded,” she said. “I had heard students say it’s really hard; you do learn new things. ADW is a class that allows you to question. It just opens your mind and makes you want to learn more.” •

**MAE GENTRY, C’73**, is retired from The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, where she spent 23 years as a writer and editor. She holds a master’s degree from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism.

## DI-AS-PO-RA

The word “Diaspora” derives from the Greek term meaning “a scattering” and refers to the migration of a people from their homeland. The word “Diaspora” was first used to describe the exile of the Jews from Palestine in 587 B.C.

The African Diaspora was caused by the trans-Atlantic slave trade, which began in the 16th century. Although some 20 million people were dispersed from Africa to points all over the Western Hemisphere, through the centuries they have retained distinct cultural traditions in food, storytelling, music and folk beliefs. Perhaps the most striking example is the Gullah people of the Georgia and South Carolina coastal communities, whose basket weaving, songs, language and other customs have been directly tied to West Africa.

In 1979, scholars descended on Howard University for the first African Diaspora Studies Institute to assess the teaching of the subject. Of the 38 papers presented at the conference, 23 were assembled in the book *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, edited by Joseph E. Harris and published in 1982 by Howard University Press.

In the fall of 1986, Spelman’s scholarly journal *SAGE* devoted its entire issue to an examination of the African Diaspora. The publication included an interview with South African exile Tandi Gcabashe, a profile of Nicaraguan artist June Beer, an article titled “The Feast of Good Death: An Afro-Catholic Emancipation Celebration in Brazil,” and numerous other features related to women of the Diaspora.

“Much of the work included here,” wrote *SAGE* editors Beverly Guy-Sheftall and Patricia Bell Scott, “demonstrates that Black women in the Diaspora, besieged by racism, maintain a tradition of identification with Africa.”



## Sister to Sister:

### SPELMAN: THE COMPASS FOR CHANGE

**T**his spring my compass led me back to Spelman to become your eighth director of Alumnae Affairs. Indeed it is an honor and a privilege that I graciously accept. I will do my best to enhance the programs, services and experiences for our diverse group of 15,000 alumnae of which I am proud to be a member. Spelman has always had a special place in my heart. Regardless of changes in my life, throughout the years I remained connected to Spelman. Whether it was through a yearly gift to the Annual Fund, serving as a reunion class agent, recruiting new students or working with a local NAASC chapter, just like all of you, my blood runs Spelman blue.

Having completed 25 years as a sales and marketing professional in corporate America, I have returned to Spelman where I received the foundation and the tools to succeed in my first career. Now I have the opportunity to bring back the skills and experiences that aided my success in business to my alma mater.

As I stroll around campus, there is evidence of change everywhere. Spelman continues to evolve, and it is more vibrant and beautiful than ever! The memories of the times I spent as a student on campus are as vivid as if they were yesterday. My freshman dorm, Chadwick Hall, was demolished many years ago, but the 30-year friendships I made keep "the Wick" present in my heart. I will always have a special affection for Rockefeller Hall. You see, I spent my freshman and sophomore years as a work study student in the President's office. Now to return and have an office in this wonderfully remodeled building brings my Spelman experience full circle.

A plush new dormitory, The Suites, opened last fall as Spelman's first green facility. Beautiful bright blue and white banners and signs all around campus radiate the Spelman brand of excellence. It feels great to come home.

Timing is everything, and yes, I picked the busiest week on Spelman's campus to start this new endeavor, but what

an awesome experience. I participated in the Fifth Anniversary Women of Color Conference and welcomed back more than 500 alumnae to campus for the 2009 Reunion — Spelman the Compass for Change. We greeted the parents, grandparents, extended families and friends of our 2009 graduates (more than 500 new alumnae). For the first time in my life, I got the behind-the-scenes view. It was truly a pleasure to see departments working collaboratively to ensure that everyone had an enjoyable experience, and they did!

There were many touching moments that defined the Spelman sister's ability to embrace change. Allow me to share just a few of them with you. What a spectacular scene to see alumnae in their white attire as they marched through the Arch. Talented, educated women of all ages and professions taking part in this traditional ceremony and finding so much joy in greeting and welcoming the new graduates into this new phase of sisterhood.

Sometimes change is planned, and sometimes it just happens. Either way, Spelman sisters respond swiftly and with compassion. At the Blue Note Theatre an emergency arose as one of our Diamond Daughters became ill. As you might imagine, there was an abundance of physicians and clergy sisters stepping forward to provide assistance. As one physician administered medical attention, a clergywoman called for us to bond together in corporate prayer. Just as we said "Amen," the sick woman's health dramatically improved. Change can be magical, particularly when you connect faith, medicine and sisterhood. The Reunion mood changed to spirited competition among classes as sisters competed to earn the title "largest gift to Spelman" and "highest class participation attendance," with C'79 (\$91,961) and C'69 (70.9 percent) as the respective winners.

Another defining moment took place at commencement as actress Cassi Davis danced across the stage to receive her diploma 21 years after entering Spelman. What an excellent



model for change and an inspiration to everyone, seeing that Spelman women always achieve their goals.

In just one week, I interacted with the most dynamic, diverse group of sisters who consistently embrace change and recalibrate their compass to reach their goals. I am confident that those attending the 2009 reunion are a reflection of all alumnae. We understand that Spelman's future is only limited by the vision of her alumnae. Whether we are in the boardroom or classroom, are scientists, mathematicians, homemakers or philanthropists, we know that what we do for Spelman makes a difference.

In tough economic times, the need for your support is even greater, in order to ensure Spelman College remains the pre-eminent institution for educating the best and the brightest African American women who will change the world. I encourage you to give generously to the Annual Fund and *Every Woman . . . Every Year!* campaign. Your contributions are critical to the College's success!

Sisters, as I move into this new leadership role, I invite you to join me as we navigate this compass for change together. I am counting on you to work with me to keep Spelman on course.

Sisterly,

*Sharon E. Owens*

Sharon E. Owens C'76

Director of Alumnae Affairs



PHOTOS: JULIE YARBROUGH, C'91

*Coming Soon:*  
The Spelman College Alumnae Online Community!  
Reconnect Rejoice Remember



## ALUMNAE NOTES

1949

### Evelyn Willis Chisolm

**Professional:** Retired from Spelman College, department of psychology, after 46 years of service, in May 2009.

1952

### Marion King Jackson

**Personal:** Honored by Spelman College and the Baha'i Atlanta Assembly at Sisters Chapel Worship Service on October 5, 2008.

1959

### Cheryl Graham Solomon

**Professional:** Received the J. Lee Barrett Award for bringing the 2012 American Association of Port Authorities national convention to Detroit. She received the award on January 29, 2009.

1961

### Gwendolyn Middlebrooks

**Professional:** Retired from Spelman College, department of education, after 42 years of service, in May 2009.

1966

### Phoebe Bailey

**Professional:** Joined the Boys and Girls Clubs of America as education programs director on September 15, 2008.

### Ruth A. Davis

**Professional:** Presented a proclamation from Spelman College on January 14, 2009, in honor of her retirement from the United States Department of State after 40 years of service.

### Beverly Guy-Sheftall

**Professional:** Quoted in the winter 2009 issue of *Ms.* magazine. She was also featured in "Atlanta Voices of Change" on WABE 90.1 FM. The program ran throughout February, paying tribute to African Americans who have impacted

American history. The late Dr. Georgia Dwele, HS, '00, the first Spelman graduate to attend medical school, was also featured.

1968

### Ernestine Dearing Hogan

**Professional:** Held an event on July 19, 2008, in Atlanta, for her new book, *Insights for Life*.

1971

### Tina McElroy Ansa

**Professional:** Held a book reading and signing on August 4, 2008, at Spelman College for her latest novel, *Taking After MuDear*.

### Pearl Cleage

**Professional:** Participated in the Atlanta Reads 2008 "One Book One Community" citywide reading project in September 2008 featuring her novel, *What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*. She spoke at The Atlanta Chapter of Women for Obama rally at the Georgia State Capital on October 25, 2008, and was also featured in "Atlanta Voices of Change" on WABE 90.1 FM. The program ran throughout February paying tribute to African Americans who have impacted American history. The late Dr. Georgia Dwele, HS, '00, the first Spelman graduate to attend medical school, was also featured.

1973

### Daria Bryant

**Professional:** Received full accreditation from the Georgia Accrediting Commission for the educational program at Proclaim Academy. January 5, 2009 marked the fifth anniversary of the school.

### Fleda Mask Jackson

**Professional:** Featured at Atlanta University Center Public Health Alumni's Where Are They Now? — a lecture & networking series — on February 24, 2009, at Spelman College.

## Take Note!



"Access Hollywood" weekend co-anchor **Shaun Robinson, C'84**, was pictured in the May 2008 issue of Ebony magazine at the Ebony Pre-Oscar Celebration — Take 4 at Boulevard 3 in Hollywood. Jet magazine highlighted Ms. Robinson when she signed a new contract with "Access Hollywood" in the September 8, 2008, issue. Her new book, *Exactly As I Am* (Ballentine), was featured in the Books section of *Essence* magazine's May 2009 issue. The week of June 8, 2009, Ms. Robinson filled in for Meredith Vieira as guest host on the hit show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."







**Delores L. McCollum**

**Personal:** Received the 2007–2008 Community Service Award from Eta Phi Beta Sorority Inc., Gamma Chapter, and the 2008 Educational Excellence Award from the Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission.

**1974****Gail O. Baity**

**Professional:** Joined the Corning Community College's Regional Board of Trustees. She will serve on the board until June 30, 2014.

**1975****Annette Norwood Hill**

**Personal:** Received a proclamation from Spelman College on December 18, 2008, in honor of her retirement from the United States Environmental Protection Agency after 33 years of service. The occasion was celebrated at a luncheon at Dailey's Restaurant, Atlanta.

**Brenda Siler**

**Professional:** Joined the independent sector as vice president of communications & marketing, effective April 29, 2008.

**Deborah Prothrow-Stith**

**Professional:** Joined the Boston office of Spencer Stuart executive search consulting firm on October 7, 2008.

**1977****Jo Edwards**

**Professional:** Founded Camp Village, a co-educational summer program for children ages 5–13 in Atlanta.

**1981****Angela Benson**

**Professional:** Held a book signing at the Spelman College Bookstore on September 12, 2008, for her book, *Up Pops the Devil*, released August 1, 2008.

**Kimberly Brown Davis**

**Professional:** Spoke at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University's 20th annual symposium on November 13–14, 2008, in Indianapolis.

**Cynthia Jackson**

**Professional:** Spoke at "Women Who Change the World: Spelman Alumnae in Leadership" on October 26, 2008, at the closing Homecoming Worship Service in Sisters Chapel.

**Omelika Kuumba**

**Professional:** Celebrated 15 years of "Drumming, Dancing and Singing While Daring to Do Them Differently," with her ensemble, Giwayen Mata, at the Rialto Center at Georgia State University on September 27, 2008. She was featured in conjunction with the celebration in the September 19, 2008, edition of *Emerging Minds*, an online news and cultural magazine.

**1983****Cynthia DeBerry Flowers**

**Professional:** Awarded the Phoenix Award on March 14, 2008, at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta by the Atlanta Board of Realtors for 10 consecutive years of membership in their Million Dollar Club.

**Anita Johnson**

**Professional:** Nominated for best resale/vintage store in the Atlanta area for Upscale Fashions Inc. on www.cityvoter.com.

**Susan L. Johnson**

**Professional:** Featured speaker for the Alumna 2 Student Conversation on April 2, 2009, at Sisters Chapel.

**Jamice Obianyo**

**Professional:** Honored with the 2008 Technology All-Star Award for her demonstrated exceptional achievement in the workplace and community at the Women of Color Stem Conference on October 23–25, 2008, in Dallas.

**1984****Deidra Fryer**

**Professional:** Spoke at "Women Who Change the World: Spelman Alumnae in Leadership" on October 26, 2008, at the closing Homecoming Worship Service in Sisters Chapel.

**Cynthia Whitehead-LaBoo**

**Professional:** Wrote a chapter in the book, *Effective Clinical Practice in the Treatment of Eating Disorders: The Heart of the Matter*, edited by Margo Maine, William N. Davis and Jane Shure.

**1986****Eloise Alexis**

**Professional:** Served as faculty chair at the CASE Summer Institute in Alumni Relations, July 27–31, 2008, at the University of Vermont in Burlington.

**Dazon Dixon**

**Professional:** Spoke at "Women Who Change the World: Spelman Alumnae in Leadership" on October 26, 2008, at the closing Homecoming Worship Service in Sisters Chapel.

**Layli Phillips**

**Professional:** Spoke at "Where African Spirituality and Women's Studies Meet: A Conversation About Santeria and Womanism" on October 7, 2008, at the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art.

**Donna Wilkerson Wever**

**Birth:** Daughter, Aala Astara Delores Wever on December 8, 2008.

**1987****Candace Pryor**

**Married:** Mark Frederick Brown on August 23, 2008, at the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in East Orange, New Jersey. Their announcement ran in the August 24, 2008, Sunday edition of *The New York Times*.

**Joni Johnson Williams**

**Professional:** Appeared in the October 16, 2008, issue of *Rolling Out Atlanta*, in the article "Most Influential Women in Atlanta" for her position as special assistant to the president, Atlanta Technical College and primary adviser of Spelman's Eta Kappa chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

**1988****Yolando Andrews**

**Professional:** Earned missionary certificate from Biblical Institute of Southwestern Florida Jurisdiction Church of God in Christ and 2008 Soror in the Spotlight award from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc.

**Pamela Bigelow**

**Professional:** Celebrated the 12th anniversary of Bigelow's Bar & Grill on August 24, 2008, at the restaurant.

**1989****Mitzi Bickers**

**Professional:** Participated in The Gospel Choice Awards in Atlanta on September 29, 2008, in conjunction with 2008 being her 19th year of preaching and teaching the Gospel and 10 years as pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church and Family Worship Center.

**Latanya Hammonds-Odie**

**Professional:** Honored at a farewell reception on July 30, 2008, as she transitioned from Spelman College to a position as an assistant professor and interim chair of biology at Dillard University in New Orleans.

**Cathy Hampton**

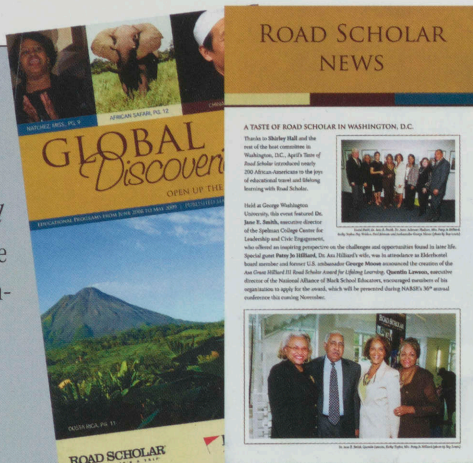
**Professional:** Served as the speaker for the Alumnae Voices series on February 26, 2009, at Spelman College.



## Take Note!

**Jane Smith, C'68**, was featured in *Global Discoveries, Open Up the World* in May 2008, for her participation in the "Taste of Road Scholar" event in Washington, D.C., in April 2008.

**A. Michelle Smith, C'69**, was featured in the July 2008 issue of *Atlanta Tribune: The Magazine* in the article "Culture Shock: The National Black Arts Festival's First Executive Director Waxes Nostalgic About Its Inception." She also participated in the Black Arts Roundtable on July 19, 2008, and was pictured in *Connect Atlanta*, the Summer 2008 issue, in the article, "Inside Scoop on the National Black Arts Festival." **Pearl Cleage, C'71**, was also pictured in *Connect Atlanta*.



### A TASTE OF ROAD SCHOLAR IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Thanks to Shirley Hall and the rest of the Road Scholar community in Washington, D.C., April's Taste of Road Scholar event was a joyous celebration of the past and future of the organization. The event was held at the historic Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, and featured a variety of activities, including a tour of the estate, a presentation by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and a performance by the National Black Arts Festival. The event was a great success, and we look forward to future events.



Georgia's African American Heritage Guide ran a spotlight on activist and songstress **Bernice Johnson Reagon, C'70**. **Tomika DePriest, C'89**, also contributed to the publication.

### Bernice Johnson Reagon, Activist Songstress

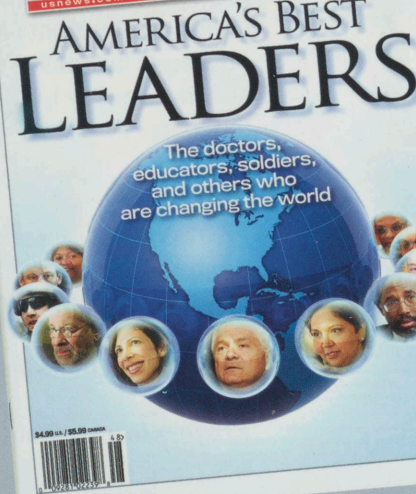
For more than forty-five years, Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon has moved audiences. For thirty of those years she led the internationally acclaimed African American capella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock, retiring in 2004. A celebrated singer of Southern Georgia congregational sacred song and singing traditions who raised her activist voice as a freedom singer, Reagon worked as a folklorist, program director, and curator for the Smithsonian Institution from 1974 to 1995. A composer of documentary film scores, including a Peabody Award-winning, four film series for PBS, Reagon was the primary scholar and voice for *Wade in the Water: African American Sacred Music Traditions*, a Peabody Award-winning radio program produced by National Public Radio and the Smithsonian Institution. A Spelman College alumna, Reagon served as the 2002-2004 William and Camille Orlita Hanks Cosby Endowed Professor at her alma mater. She won the prestigious Hasty Award for the Arts and Humanities in 2003 and the MacArthur Fellowship in 1989. "As a student leader and activist in the Albany Movement, I sang and stood in the sound of the congregational singing of the freedom songs changing the air we breathe," notes Reagon in her Web site biography. "For the first time, I understood how the singing not only pulled us together, but became our articulate collective testimony to all who stood within the square."



Dr. Bernice Johnson Reagon, an Albany native, was a Freedom singer and civil rights activist.

### World's Top Universities • Obama's Next Moves

**U.S. News & World Report**  
AMERICA'S BEST LEADERS



Children's Defense Fund (CDF) president **Marian Wright Edelman's, C'60**, new book, *The Sea Is So Wide and My Boat Is So Small*, was featured in *People* magazine in conjunction with the September 14, 2008, People Red Carpet Fun Run. Ms. Edelman is pictured with actress Jennifer Lopez who helped honor the CDF at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver. Ms. Edelman has made several appearances, including one at her alma mater as the speaker for Sunday Worship Service in Sisters Chapel on October 12, 2008. She was also honored at the African American church Inaugural Ball on January 18, 2009, with the Keepers of the Flame Award and was featured in *U.S. News & World Report* in their December 1-8, 2008, issue. On March 5, 2009, she served as a panelist at President Obama's Health Care Summit at the White House.



**Alonia Jernigan**

**Professional:** Emerged victorious in the "Success Against the Odds" category from the Atlanta Business League's 2008 signature event, Super Tuesday. She is also the editor of *Shaping the Future*, the quarterly publication of the Atlanta Business League; she wrote an article, "ABL Spearheads Amazing Economic Development Effort: Plan Could Generate Billions in New Money, Millions in Overall Economic Activity," highlighting the 24th Annual Super Tuesday Conference.

**Patricia Kolaras**

**Professional:** Appeared on "The Today Show" on June 23, 2008, representing her business, The Rum Cake Fairies.

**Dawn K. Lewis**

**Professional:** Associate professor of psychology at Prince George's Community College in Largo, Maryland.  
**Married:** Kemani B. Wadud on May 25, 2008, in Maryland.

**Cheryl Mann**

**Professional:** Participated in a six-member delegation that attended the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's 38th Annual Legislative Conference held in Washington, D.C., September 24–27, 2008.

**Kimberly Williams**

**Professional:** Appeared on ABC News "20/20" on January 25, 2008, to discuss what exacerbates anger and how to improve relationships between parents and children.

**1990****Tracey Hughes**

**Professional:** Appeared on "The Today Show" on June 23, 2008, representing her business, The Rum Cake Fairies.

**Terrilyn J. Reynolds**

**Professional:** Appeared on Spark-PlugPeople.com in the online magazine *People You Need to Know*.

**Zipporah Slaughter**

**Education:** Awarded a Fulbright U.S. Student scholarship to Brazil in anthropology for the 2008–2009 academic year.

**1991****Lisa Denise Blackmon Haynes**

**Birth:** Son, Chandler, born on December 31, 2008.

**Tayari Jones**

**Professional:** Recipient of a 2008 United States Artist Fellowship announced November 10, 2008.

**Sherri McGee McCovey**

**Professional:** Released her third book, *Beacon Hills High*, published by HarperCollins on September 23, 2008.

**Yolanda Watson Spiva**

**Professional:** Appointed by the Project GRAD Atlanta Board of Directors to the position of executive director on July 1, 2008.

**1992****Kim Barnette**

**Professional:** Appeared in the October/November 2008 issue of *Washington Women's Journal*.

**Meiuttenun Chong Marie Brown**

**Professional:** Finished residency in obstetrics and gynecology at Akron City Hospital in Akron, Ohio, on June 5, 2007. Presently practicing in Detroit.

**Married:** Aaron Brown on October 13, 2007, in Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

**Kimberlee Scott**

**Married:** Philip Mayes on May 2, 2008, at Sea Pines Resort, Hilton Head, South Carolina.

**Hillary Woodson**

**Professional:** Relocated to St. Thomas, USVI, to join the Dermatology and Wellness Center as a holistic family medicine doctor in September 2008.

**1993****Russlynn Ali**

**Professional:** Announced by Education Secretary as Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights at the Department of Education on February 4, 2009. She was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on May 1, 2009.

**Cindy Blasingame Baker**

**Birth:** Daughter, Keren Blasingame Baker, born on February 21, 2008.

**Taji Coleman**

**Professional:** Appeared in the comedy *Daddy's Dyin'... Who's Got the Will?* November 20 – December 21, 2008 at Theatre/Theater in Los Angeles.

**Erika J. Gardner**

**Professional:** Opened Curls to Cuts children's salon in Atlanta.

**Karin Gist**

**Professional:** Producer during the 2007–2009 seasons for shows including "Girlfriends," "One Tree Hill" and Disney's "Camp Rock."

**Afi Harrington**

**Professional:** Appeared in the October/November 2008 issue of *Washington Women's Journal*.

**Allegra Lawrence-Hardy**

**Professional:** Awarded the Leah Ward Sears Award for Distinction in the Profession by the Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys on June 28, 2008, at their annual Glitter Gala & Auction in Atlanta. Named in the cover story "40 Under 40: Young, Gifted & Black" in the February 2008 issue of *The Georgia Informer*.

**Riche' Richardson**

**Professional:** Associate professor at Cornell University in the Africana Studies and Research Center. Participated in a lecture series in Paris, January 11–17, 2009, sponsored by the U.S. Embassy. Released a special edition print card

of her quilt, "Obama Time: Always (Congratulations, Mr. President!)" at the Ambassador's Residence.

**Maricia Woodham**

**Birth:** Daughter, Gabrielle Michael Woodham, born on April 24, 2007.

**1994****Christine Crawford**

**Professional:** Featured in the article "Hard Work Brings Reward" in the *Augusta Chronicle* on August 18, 2008. The article highlighted Ms. Crawford taking over the day-to-day operations of her mother's McDonald's franchises.

**Nadra Daniel**

**Birth:** Son, Ellison Earl-Daniel Lord, born in October 2008.

**Kotina Williams Hall**

**Education:** Received doctorate in leadership on October 17, 2008.

**Kera Johnson**

**Professional:** Selected to receive a 2008–2009 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship.

**Sherri Lee Keene**

**Professional:** Began working as the associate director of the Law Writing Program at the University of Maryland on July 1, 2008.

**Kristy Rachal**

**Married:** Tyrone Rachal on September 22, 2007, at Villa Christina in Atlanta.

**Meta Smith**

**Professional:** Released the novel, *Whip Appeal*, on August 19, 2008.

**Chrystal Stokes**

**Married:** Anthony Williams on September 14, 2008, at Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, New York. Their wedding was announced in *The New York Times*.



## Take Note!

**LaTanya Richardson Jackson, C'74**, appeared in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, the Bartlett Sher's revival of the August Wilson Play at the Belasco Theater in New York, April 16 – June 14, 2009. President Obama and the First Lady attended the show on May 30, 2009. She and her husband, actor Samuel L. Jackson, hosted the 16th annual Trumpet Awards that aired in March and April 2008. The pair was featured in The April 14, 2008, issue of *Jet* magazine.



## White Director Prompts a Dispute for an August Wilson Play

For some black directors, a decision represents lost opportunities.



Robinson, from left, LaTanya Richardson Jackson and Marsha Stephanie Blake in the current production of "Joe Turner."

CHANCE: "JOE TURNER" — Even Broadway's revival of an old play can be a hotbed of controversy. In the case of August Wilson's "Joe Turner," the play's director, Bartlett Sher, has been accused of being a white director who has not done enough to support the play's black director, LaTanya Richardson Jackson.

Mr. Sher's experience on "Joe Turner" was not in a boarding house in Pittsburgh in 1911, but in a rehearsal room in New York. He had been asked to direct the play by Mr. Sher, who plays the character of Joe Turner, a black man who is the central character of the play. Mr. Sher's experience on "Joe Turner" was not in a boarding house in Pittsburgh in 1911, but in a rehearsal room in New York. He had been asked to direct the play by Mr. Sher, who plays the character of Joe Turner, a black man who is the central character of the play.

**SOUTHERN SEASONS MAGAZINE**

**Lovette Turymann Russell**

Lovette, a highly accomplished wife, is currently training a remarkable team of young women in her sport. "I love to mentor these women and help them to live their dreams and become the best they can be."

**KENTUCKY DERBY SPRING SOIREES TRAVEL TO WALES**

**THE HOUR RAISING**

**Lovette Turymann Russell**

Lovette, a highly accomplished wife, is currently training a remarkable team of young women in her sport. "I love to mentor these women and help them to live their dreams and become the best they can be."

**KENTUCKY DERBY SPRING SOIREES TRAVEL TO WALES**

**THE HOUR RAISING**

**Susan G. Komen for the Cure**

**Alexine Clement Jackson**

Alexine Clement Jackson chairs the Susan G. Komen for the Cure® board of directors as it governs the world's largest breast cancer organization in fulfilling its promise to save lives and end breast cancer forever.

A 23-year breast cancer survivor, Jackson has been a long-time advocate and public spokesperson for cancer prevention, early detection and quality health care for all.

In addition to her work with Komen for the Cure, she is also a current board member and past chair of the Intercultural Cancer Council, an organization which addresses the unequal burden of

**Alexine Clement Jackson, C'56**, was named chair of the board of directors for Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, the world's largest breast cancer organization. A 23-year breast cancer survivor, Ms. Jackson has been a long-time advocate and public spokesperson for cancer prevention, early detection and quality health care for all. She is a current board member and past chair of the Intercultural Cancer Council. Ms. Jackson is the immediate past president of Black Women's Agenda. She recently retired from the board of The National Museum of Women in the Arts after 12 years of service and is recent past chair of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. Ms. Jackson served a five-year term as national board president of the YWCA of the USA.

Community volunteer **Lovette Russell, C'83**, is featured on the cover of *Southern Seasons Magazine's* Early Spring 2009 issue. The article, "The 'Real' Atlanta Out-of-the-House Wives," features five Atlanta women who spearhead many of the city's most fabulous fundraisers.



**Erica Darlene McGhee**  
**Whittington**

**Birth:** Daughter, Skylar Noelle Whittington, born on December 28, 2008.

**Erica Wright**

**Personal:** Participated in the February 2009 African American Read In.

**1995**

**Tesa Gunby**

**Professional:** Served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Malawi, Africa, as teacher development facilitator from September 2006 – December 2008. Featured in the *Lincoln Journal Online*, of Lincolnton, Georgia, for her efforts as a Peace Corps volunteer.

**Na'Taki Osborne Jelks**

**Professional:** Served as the keynote speaker for the Spelman College Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Convocation on January 22, 2009. Featured at Atlanta University Center Public Health Alumni's "Where Are They Now?" – a lecture & networking series – on February 24, 2009, at Spelman College.

**Gail Johnson**

**Professional:** Featured as the bridal consultant for a couple on WE TV's "Platinum Weddings" in July and August 2008.

**Leslie Knight**

**Education:** Received her education specialist degree from Nova Southeastern University on October 31, 2008.

**Jamillah Anika White**

**Professional:** Received her ministerial license with New Hope Baptist Church in Griffin, Georgia, on December 31, 2008.

**1996**

**Laurel Beatty**

**Professional:** Appointed to judgeship on the Franklin Common Pleas Court. Her appointment began on April 6, 2009.

**Ada Brown**

**Professional:** Appointed to the Texas Public Safety Commission by Gov. Rick Perry on October 22, 2008.

**Keisha R. Flemister**

**Professional:** Published a short story book, *Raquel's New Career Story: Sisterhood and Rivalry*, in August 2008.

**Candice M. Jenkins**

**Professional:** Received The Modern Language Association of America's seventh annual William Sanders Scarborough Prize for her book *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy* in December 2008.

**Kimya S. P. Johnson**

**Professional:** Joined Cozen O'Connor's Philadelphia office as an associate in the labor and employment group in December 2008.

**Andrea Lewis Johnson**

**Professional:** Launched Merry Go Round Consignments, a maternity and children's consignment shop in Atlanta.

**1997**

**Miriam Jackson**

**Birth:** Son, Lattimore Blaise Alexander Scott, born on June 7, 2008.

**Zandra Jordan**

**Professional:** Named an Early Career Literacy Educator of Color Award recipient sponsored by the National Council for Teachers of English.

**Cara Grayer Johnson**

**Professional:** Designed five limited edition inaugural ties in honor of Barack Obama under her design label, Ella Rose.

**Keyoka Smith**

**Education:** Graduated from New York College of Podiatric Medicine with a doctor of podiatric degree on May 28, 2008.

**1998**

**Kimyata Butler**

**Married:** Darrin C. Butler on May 5, 2007.

**Janene Jones Campbell**

**Personal:** Appeared on the cover of *People* magazine in January 2007 in the "Half Their Size" issue after losing over two hundred pounds. She also made appearances on "The Tyra Banks Show" in February 2007, "the Today Show," "Showbiz Tonight," "Entertainment Tonight," "The Insider," "Inside Edition" and on the covers of *Grace*, *TEA*, and *NEA* magazines in addition to ads for *In Touch* magazine and LA Weight Loss.

**Monica Cox**

**Professional:** Featured in the April 2008 issue of Purdue University's *Black Cultural Center* magazine in the article "Dr. Monica Cox and Ishbah Cox – Diligence and Hard Work: A Winning Combination."

**Robin Dionne**

**Professional:** Debuted her movie, "Something Is Killing Tate," on July 25, 2008, at the High Museum in Atlanta.

**Heather M. Hudson**

**Professional:** Succeeded into the position of president of the National Conference of Black Mayors on November 3, 2008.

**Karan Kendrick**

**Professional:** Made her television movie debut as 'Helen Durant,' one of the teachers of the "Fab Five" in the Lifetime Television Movie Premiere of "Fab Five: The Texas Cheerleader Scandal," on Saturday, August 2, 2008. She accepted a position as the adjunct professor of theatre and director of the department's Theatre Guild at Fort Valley State University. She also appeared in Tyler Perry's movie, "Madea Goes to Jail," released in 2009.

**Calida Garcia Rawles**

**Professional:** Created the print, "The Patriot," inspired by Barack Obama; donated all net proceeds to his presidential campaign.

**Ann Marie Stephenson-McInnis**

**Professional:** Appointed to a Gastroenterology and Hepatology Fellowship position for July 2008 at St. James Hospital in Chicago.

**Azure Utley**

**Birth:** Daughter, Cerise Brandy, born on November 22, 2008, in Weiden, Germany.

**1999**

**Nangula Kauluma**

**Education:** Received an MBA with concentration in management consulting from Stellenbosch University in 2009.

**Malikha Mallette**

**Professional:** Named afternoon host on Power 105.1 (WWPR) in New York. She's voiced national spots for companies like McDonald's and Pantene and worked as an actress on ABC's "One Life to Live" and in the movie "Cadillac Records."

**Shannon L. Omisore**

**Professional:** Accepted the position of writer-editor for the Writer-Editor Services Branch at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.



## Take Note!

Actress **Keshia Knight Pulliam, C'98**, starred in the blockbuster film, Tyler Perry's "Madea Goes to Jail," released on February 20, 2009. She was featured in several publications, including the cover of *Ebony* magazine's March 2009 issue, *Jet*'s September 22–29, 2008, issue, *Jezebel*'s May 2009 issue, the cover of *Rolling Out Atlanta*'s February 19, 2009, issue, and on the cover of *How We Live*, Spring/Summer 2009, highlighting the article "Catching Up With Keshia Knight Pulliam: The Actress Maps Out Her Future and Reflects on Past Success."

**Betrice Scott, C'93**, was featured in the article, "They Thought I'd Never Get Married!" in the July 2008 issue of *Essence* magazine.



News anchor **Marion Brooks, C'88**, walked the runway at the closing show of the 50th Anniversary tour of the Ebony Fashion Fair in Chicago. Ms. Brooks is pictured in a feature about the event in the June 16, 2008, issue of *Jet* magazine.



## 2000

### Kyrel Buchanan

**Education:** Received a Ph.D. in health education from Texas A&M University in May 2007.

**Married:** Justin Kyle Buchanan on August 9, 2008.

### Omara S. Harris

**Professional:** Participated in the 2008 Entertainment and Sports Law Symposium at Spelman College.

### Kimberly Haynes

**Professional:** Participated in the 2008 Entertainment and Sports Law Symposium at Spelman College.

### Joni B. Jefferson

**Education:** Awarded a doctor of osteopathic medicine degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine on June 1, 2008.

### Alisha Morgan

**Professional:** Named in the cover story "40 Under 40: Young, Gifted & Black" in the February 2008 issue of *The Georgia Informer*.

### DeBraca Dean Rodriguez

**Birth:** Daughter, Sydney Gabrielle Rodriguez, born on January 7, 2009.

### Jessica Page

**Birth:** Daughter, Isabella Rose, born on October 10, 2008.

### Tiffany Pryor

**Professional:** Promoted to associate director of MBA Admissions and manager of Diversity Recruitment for Emory University's Goizueta Business School.

**Married:** Johnny E. Nelson Jr. on November 1, 2008, in Atlanta.

### Erika Stallworth

**Educational:** Earned doctor of law degree, with a concentration in child and family law, from Loyola University Chicago School of Law in May 2008.

**Professional:** Featured in the *Michigan City News Dispatch* on June 26, 2008, in the article, "Changes Coming to Juvenile Center: Alevizos Believes They Will Make the Facility More Efficient, Effective."

### Kimberly Worthy

**Professional:** Named District of Columbia's Teacher of the Year 2009.

## 2001

### Corliss Newton Collier

**Professional:** Launched *Cena of Atlanta*, Daily Gourmet to Go, in Atlanta.

### Asha Ivey

**Professional:** Participated in the MBRS-RISE program, "A Panel Discussion: How to Select a Graduate School," on February 26, 2009, at Spelman College.

### Tameika Mapp

**Education:** Received a doctorate in pharmacy from Howard University in May 2009.

### Melissa McDaniel

**Professional:** Participated in the 2008 Entertainment and Sports Law Symposium.

### Jeanne Roberts

**Married:** Jay Johnson on August 30, 2008, on Paradise Island, Bahamas. The couple's wedding announcement appeared in the October 6, 2008, issue of *Jet* magazine and on September 11, 2008, in *The St. Louis American*.

### E. Vanessa Spearman

**Professional:** Spoke at "Women Who Change the World: Spelman Alumnae in Leadership" on October 26, 2008, at the closing Homecoming Worship Service in Sisters Chapel.

### Precious L. Williams

**Professional:** Accepted a position as a medical malpractice attorney at the law firm of Heidell, Pittoni, Murphy and Bach in New York starting on September 8, 2008. Was the keynote speaker at the Mathews-Dickey Boys' and Girls' Club "Say Amen" Banquet on August 16, 2008, in St. Louis, where she was also honored with the Angel "Say Amen" award.

## 2002

### Gabrielle Marie Allmon

**Married:** Julian Lewis Sanders on July 11, 2008, at St. Philip's Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Louis. The couple's wedding announcement appeared in the September 8, 2008, issue of *Jet* magazine.

### Deedra Hardrick

**Birth:** Daughter, Madison Elizabeth Hardrick, born on March 1, 2007.

### Leah Jackson

**Professional:** Participated in the Spelman College Advent worship service on December 7, 2009, with the Movements of Praise liturgical dance ministry in Sisters Chapel.

### Aithyni K. Rucker

**Professional:** Founded the blog, "The P.O.S.H. Life (Pursuit of Strength and Health)."

### Alyson Christina Shumpert

**Married:** Armond Kyon Dorsey on November 15, 2008, at Elizabeth Baptist Church in Atlanta.

## 2003

### Lorielle Broussard

**Professional:** Co-founded Barack-aware Inc. in 2007, manages the day-to-day activities and is developing a new line of T-shirts and denim.

### Veronica Chapman

**Education:** Graduated from Babson College with a master's degree in business administration in May 2008.

### Jessica Davenport

**Professional:** Served as the worship service preacher on September 21, 2008, in Sisters Chapel.

### Nicole Dennis

**Education:** Graduated from the University of Denver College of Law and Graduate School of International Affairs in Denver on May 19, 2007.

**Professional:** Accepted a position with the United States Department of Justice in the Office of Violence Against Women as a program grant specialist with the Legal Victim Assistance Unit.

### Niyoka Meishan Dixon-McCoy

**Professional:** Published first book, *My Father and Me*, and was featured in the December 17, 2008, issue of *The Savannah Tribune*.  
**Education:** Received her master of arts in teaching from Mercer University, Atlanta in 2007.

### Natane Eaddy

**Education:** Graduated on May 19, 2008, from the Columbia University School of Social Work with a master of science in social work.

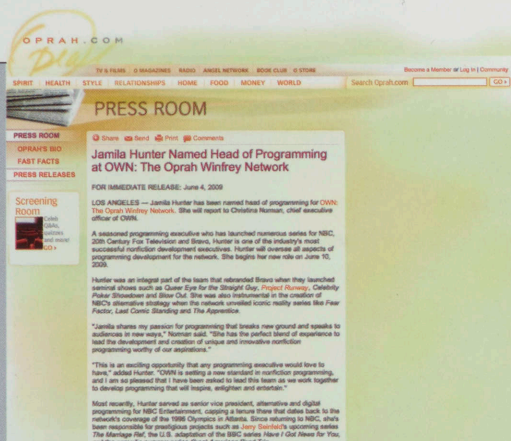
### Renata Fortenberry Hilson

**Professional:** Accepted position as the research coordinator in RIMI/Center for Health Disparities Research and Education at Spelman College.



## Take Note!

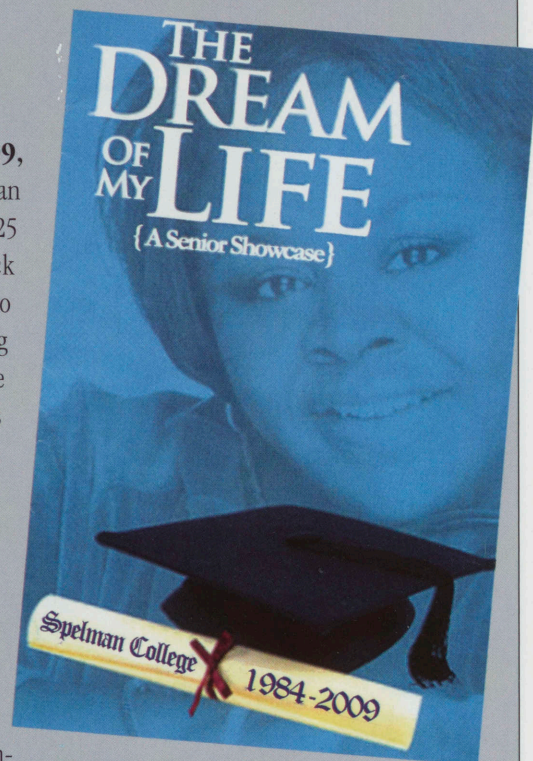
**Jamila Hunter, C'96**, began her new role as Head of Programming for OWN: The Oprah Winfrey Network in June 2009. A seasoned programming executive who has launched numerous series for NBC, 20th Century Fox Television and Bravo, Ms. Hunter is one of the industry's most successful non-fiction development executives. Prior to this appointment, she was senior vice president, programming and development — alternative and digital, for NBC Entertainment.



The play, *A Song for Coretta*, by author and playwright **Pearl Cleage, C'71**, was presented by the Black Rep. Grandel Theater in March 2009; it was listed in the March 2009 issue of *Ebony* magazine.

**Bridget Bland, C'2004**, stars in the BET reality show, "Harlem Heights," that premiered on March 2, 2009. The show provides a window into the world of New York's young, Black and fabulous. Set against the backdrop of the increasingly gentrified neighborhood of Harlem, the series features a diverse cast of eight young adults who share common goals as they make the post-college leap into adulthood, finding love and success in the big city on their own terms. **Kelli Coleman, C'2006**, and **Kelly Mitchell, C'2005**, also appear in the show.

Little did **Cassi Davis, C'2009**, know that when she left Spelman College for the stage and screen 25 years prior, she would be back within the Spelman gates to achieve another dream. Drawing from her previous experience with credits including Spike Lee's "School Daze" back when she attended Spelman, TV's "Living Single," "Chicago Hope," Eddie Murphy's "The PJs" and films such as Tyler Perry's "Daddy's Little Girls," and "Madea's Family Reunion," Ms. Davis wowed the audience with her performance during her Novem-



ber 2008 production "The Dream of My Life (A Senior Showcase)." Featuring members of the Spelman College Glee Club and artists from the College's department of drama and dance, Cassi's showcase of talents unveiled her tenacity and her personal Spelman story as she satisfied the requirements for the department of music. Making a heartfelt presentation to her mother during the show and later reflecting on the importance of receiving her degree and preparing for Commencement in May 2009, Cassi said "When [Tyler Perry's] 'House of Payne' started filming in Atlanta back in 2006, I realized then that after all these years, I had to finish college. I am a country girl from Holly Springs, Mississippi, and I realized that I had to complete this goal for all those who sacrificed back home so that I could have an education."



**DaNita Brady McClain**

**Professional:** Featured in National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association magazine with her article, "I May Have SD But It Does Not Have Me!" and was a Top 5 Share Your Story winner on [www.dysphonia.org](http://www.dysphonia.org). She also contributed to Spelman's SGA *Taking Action Towards Obesity* newsletter with the article "The Low Down on Sodium."

**Danielle Ducre Rawls**

**Professional:** Co-authored the article "Is Your Joint Defense Agreement Privileged?" in *The Journal of the Trial Practice Committee Association*, Winter 2009.

**Ericka Stokes Thomas**

**Birth:** Daughter, Kaedyn Thomas, on February 19, 2009.

**2004****Courtney Clayton Jenkins**

**Education:** Received a master of divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

**Married:** Cory C. Jenkins (Morehouse, Class of 2003) on October 4, 2008, in Cleveland.

**2005****Lillian M. Blackshear**

**Professional:** Accepted a position with Bass, Berry & Sims in the commercial transactions and real estate practice of its Nashville office in October 2008.

**Melanie Bullock**

**Professional:** Wrote the article "Leadership Fellows Multicultural Programming: Let's Celebrate!" in the January/February 2009 issue of *Campus Activities Programming*.

**Toccarra Cash**

**Education:** Received an M.F.A. from the Graduate Acting Program of the University of Missouri in Kansas City in May 2008.

**Personal:** Received the 2007 Princess Grace Award in Acting and was awarded a \$10,000 scholarship.

**Shalondra McCullough**

**Professional:** Appeared in *My Sister by No Other Name* and *And My Sisters* with the The Three Seats Play series, on October 11-12, 2008, in Atlanta.

**Maxine Thompson**

**Education:** Received her master of divinity from Emory University's Candler School of Theology in 2008.

**2006****Chanel Bailey**

**Professional:** Co-wrote and published her first handbook, *The Catholic Choir Handbook*, in the summer of 2008.

**Audrey Cox**

**Professional:** Crowned Miss Black North Carolina USA 2008 and was third runner-up to Miss Black USA 2008.

**Nancy Goler Freeman**

**Professional:** Appeared in Tyler Perry's movie, "Madea Goes to Jail," released in 2009.

**Rachel Wilfred**

**Married:** Nathaniel Briggs on July 18, 2008, in Orlando, Florida.

**Latosha Williams**

**Professional:** Accepted the position as area director in the Housing and Residence Life Department at Spelman College in September 2008.

**2007****Amanda Aiken**

**Education:** Completed master of arts degree in curriculum and teaching at Columbia University on July 11, 2008.

**Dana Collins**

**Education:** Featured in *Hand in Hand's* fall 2008 issue, in the article "Research Summer: Summer Student Researchers Look at Diseases Hitting Close to Home." She was one of 47 young scientists in Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute's Summer Student Research Program in 2008.

**Crystal Daniels**

**Personal:** Appeared on the Lifetime Real Women Network's "Mom's Cooking" on December 24, 2008.

**Professional:** Modeling with Elite Atlanta Modeling Agency with appearances including Fox News, TBS, Macy's, *Essence* magazine and Nordstrom.

**Anisah Hassan**

**Personal:** Joined Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. — Kappa Omega Chapter, Atlanta in 2008.

**Eniola Mafe**

**Education:** Selected to receive a fellowship from Mortar Board National College Senior Honor Society. The \$3,000 fellowship will help support her post-graduate studies at Georgetown University.

**Tjazha Mazhani**

**Professional:** Accepted a position as the student activities coordinator for West Central Technical College's four campuses in September 2008.

**2008****Samantha Houston**

**Professional:** Presented research at the CDC on August 7, 2008, in Atlanta.

**Rosalyn Reed**

**Professional:** Selected as one of 21 students in the nation to serve in the inaugural class of City Hall Fellows, an elite new public policy fellowship program that started in August 2008. She is spending her fellowship year working for the city and county of San Francisco.

**Kashara Robinson**

**Personal:** Participated in the Hapeville Charter Middle School Black History Program on March 2, 2009. She spoke about the history of Black colleges.

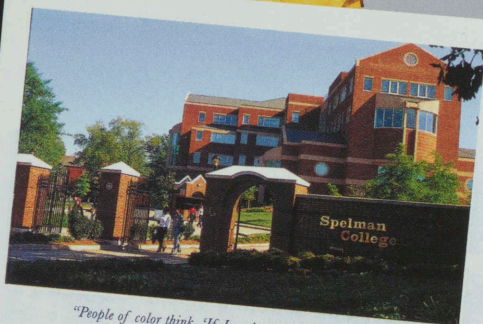
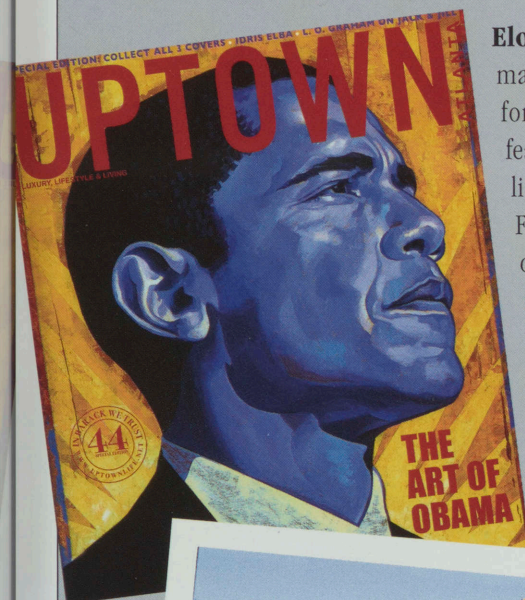


## Take Note!

**Marguerite Simon, C'35**, was featured on Atlanta's "11 Alive News" as she celebrated her 96th birthday. Former educator and a Diamond Daughter, Miss Simon celebrated at her residence, singing spiritual hymns and favorite songs with Spelman sisters of all ages, neighbors and caregivers. She was interviewed by 11 Alive's Donna Lowery.



**Eloise Alexis, C'86**, Spelman College vice president for College Relations, was featured in an article spotlighting the College, in the February/March 2009 issue of *Uptown Atlanta*. She noted the students' need for continued financial support through the Starfish Initiative (also known as the President's Safety Net Fund) and the Annual Fund.



"People of color think, 'If I can't give a lot I can't give.' But no money is too little."

#### SPELMAN COLLEGE

##### What it's known for:

One of our most famous and beloved HBCUs, Spelman has been educating black women for more than 125 years. It's been named one of the nation's top colleges by *U.S. News & World Report* and was the first HBCU to be named a "Women's Research and Resources Center." It's no wonder it's one of the schools that inspired Bill Cosby's 1987 hit series *A Different World*.

##### How it has been affected:

In 2007, the global investment bank Lehman Brothers pledged \$10 million to establish a center for global finance and fund scholarships at the school. But the financial plans were disrupted in the fall of 2008, and to date, Spelman has received only a third of the initial pledge. Though Eloise thinks the school's vice president for college relations, remains cautiously optimistic, she's "concerned that some of our students who are privately funded won't be able to get loans."

##### The best way to help:

Alexis, a Spelman alumna, suggests donating to the school's Starfish Initiative—it helps to fill the financial gaps that could hinder some 300 students from obtaining diplomas. She also encourages people to give regularly—whether it's \$25, \$50, or \$100. To donate, visit [spelman.edu](http://spelman.edu).

#### THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

##### What it's known for:

At 95 years old, Chicago Community Trust (CCT) is the largest funder of the nonprofit sector in Chicago, awarding \$115 million to the region's not-for-profit organizations in 2007. It provides grants for education, arts, community, economic development, health, housing and homelessness initiatives, legal services, and programs for the youth, elderly, and the disabled. It also promotes philanthropy in the African-American community.

##### How it has been affected:

As Chicago's largest nonprofit, CCT is witnessing a sharp increase in demand for the programs they assist, from the Salvation Army to neighborhood clinics. But, says President and CEO Terry Masany, "Corporate donors are not entertaining new requests and are over-increasing their payments."

##### The best way to help:

With hundreds of nonprofits counting on the CCT every year, Masany says, "Even in the good times, we're only able to meet half of the needs that are presented to us." Visit [cct.org](http://cct.org) to make an online donation. The website is also stocked with useful tips on making your charitable donations more effective, such as coming up with an annual giving budget, so allow yourself time to browse.

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## YOUR ENTERTAINMENT SOURCE

### OUR NEW SHOW

Want the 411 on everything Hollywood? Tune in to our new Web show, *Extra on Essence*, with Tanika Ray every Friday. And read her blog, *Scene & Heard*, on Mondays and Wednesdays, for the latest scoop on your favorite celebrities. Also check in daily for exclusive interviews, polls and all the info you need to stay current. **DAILY PHOTO GALLERIES:** Flip through pics from the hottest parties, shows, weddings and events—they're updated every day—and rate the best looks.



"Extra" weekend co-anchor **Tanika Ray, C'94**, launched a new Web show, "Extra on Essence," every Friday and a blog, "Scene & Heard," on Mondays and Wednesdays on [Essence.com](http://Essence.com).

**Mitzi Slack Reid, C'84**, a seventh- and eighth-grade social studies teacher at R.A. Black Magnet School in Chicago, appeared on the Judge Mathis television show on January 13 and February 13, 2008, with her 2008 graduating class for the show's Celebrate Black History Moment.



# Reunion 2009

## The *Compass* for Change



*Diamond Daughter Dorothea Jackson, C'39, and members of the Golden Girl Class of 1959 assemble on the steps of Reynolds Cottage during the Golden Girl Tea.*



*Diamond Daughter Dorothea Jackson, C'39, signing in before visiting with her Spelman sisters at the Reunion 2009 Golden Girl Tea.*



*New director of Alumnae Affairs, Sharon Owens, C'76, takes in the moments of reflection and connects with Golden Girls.*



**Editor's Note:** To view and order your class photos, please visit: [www.curtismcdowell.com](http://www.curtismcdowell.com).





BLUE NOTE  
2009

*Reunion*



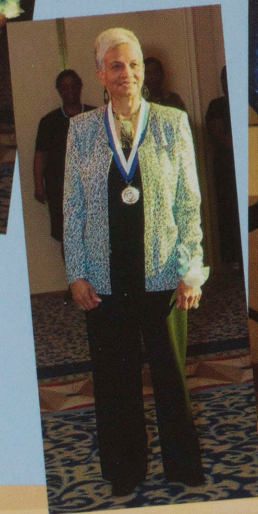
*Alumnae celebrate one another during the class roll call at the Reunion 2009 Convocation.*



## *Journey Through Reunion 2009* *The Golden Girl Class of 1959*

Roedean Strong Anderson  
Minnie Alderman Barnes  
Janice Bottoms Batts  
Geneva Evans Bishop  
Harriette Dean Brown  
Barbara Garlington Carrier  
Carolyn L. Crawford  
Ola Kinsey Crowder  
Anna Daniels  
Teena Scott Delgado  
Jacquelyn Smith Demons  
Dorothy Thompson Deramus  
Evelyn Ingram Dorsey  
Christina Jaffer Draquez  
Isabel Dean Dyer  
Betty Echols  
Ruby Dell Eley  
Christine F. Ellis  
Inett E. Ellison  
Merian Theresa Ezzard  
Jean Strickland Fleming  
Lucille Patricia Fultz  
Julia Martin Gilmore  
Joan Anthony Gresham  
Helen Kerr Hall  
Elizabeth O'Kelley Harper  
Anna Gustina Harris-Sinclair  
Dorothee Carithers Henderson  
Charlene Herbert-Williams  
Lillie D. Hobbs  
Sylvia George Howard  
Irene Stokes Ingram  
Jerris Yvonne Irving  
Sara Jean Jackson-Moore  
Kathryn Johnson-Drew  
Huellen Morgan Jones

June King-Poitier  
Eva Thomas Kinsey  
Marilyn Francis Krigger  
June Hector Lewis  
Eva Marshall Leysath  
Corrine Long  
Kay Bell Mack  
Marva C. McGriff  
Mary McRae Mitchell  
Jane Bond Moore  
Anna Bell Olive  
Arminta Partridge Owens  
Ara Ann Yates Patridge  
Dorothy Coleman Peay  
Barbara King Peek  
Janie Owens Peters  
Roslyn Pope  
Priscilla Anderson Rucker  
Margaret Rucker Sheftall  
Theresa Wiggins Shields  
Betty Smith  
Johnnie Mae Tate Smith  
Joan W. Stewart  
Roslyn Washington Sylvester  
Olivia Travitt  
Grace Joy Traylor  
Dorothy Robinson Tucker  
Patricia Carter Walker  
Shirley Graham Wallace  
Mary McDowell Ware  
Geneva Hood Watson-Dean  
Frances Glover Weaver  
Christine Fears Weems  
Jamie Johnson White  
Minnie Boyer Woodruff



*Golden Girls sing the Spelman Hymn alongside other reunioning alumnae during Convocation in Sisters Chapel.*

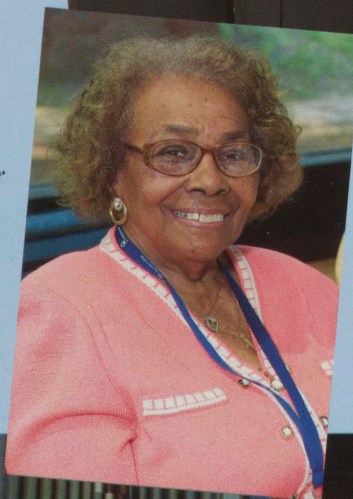
## *Golden Girl Class of 1959*







Deidra Fryer, C'84, president of the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College, presents Golden Girl Dorothy Robinson Tucker, C'59, (above) with the Hall of Fame Award on behalf of the association. She presented alumnae Eloise Alexis, C'86, (top right) and Jennifer Doggett La Point, C'84, (right) with the Merit Award.



Diamond Daughter Lula Whatley, C'44, celebrates during Reunion 2009.

## The *Compass* for Change

Reunioners Dr. Evelyn Willis Chisolm, C'49, and Mrs. Muriel Ketchum Yarbrough, C'49, connect as they celebrate their 60th reunion.



College organist Joyce Johnson acknowledges the applause during the Reunion 2009 Convocation.



Members of the Class of 1999 and Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum are acknowledged as the 10-year reunion class hosts the Reunion Convocation.



## Zenobia Lawrence Hikes, C'77

*August 27, 1955 – October 27, 2008*

Dr. Zenobia Lawrence Hikes was born on August 27, 1955, in Tuskegee, Alabama, to Mildred Clark and the late Harry Richard Lawrence and raised in Melbourne, Florida. Dr. Hikes distinguished herself as a student affairs administrator serving as the vice president of student affairs at Spelman College from 1999 to 2005 and chief executive officer for Virginia Tech's Student Affairs division from 2005 until her passing.

As a valued member of the Spelman administration for six years, Dr. Hikes touched the lives of many students through her motivational speeches, her individual mentoring and her innovative programs. The creator of the very successful "Woman of Excellence" (WEL) seminar series, Dr. Hikes inspired students to imagine powerful visions of the future they wanted. When she left Spelman in August 2005 to assume the position of vice president of Student Affairs at Virginia Tech, Dr. Hikes became the first African American woman to occupy such a senior administrative role at Virginia Tech. As the chief executive officer for Virginia Tech's Student Affairs division, she provided compassionate and wise leadership while helping to unite the Virginia Tech community during the hours and days following the tragic events of April 16, 2007.

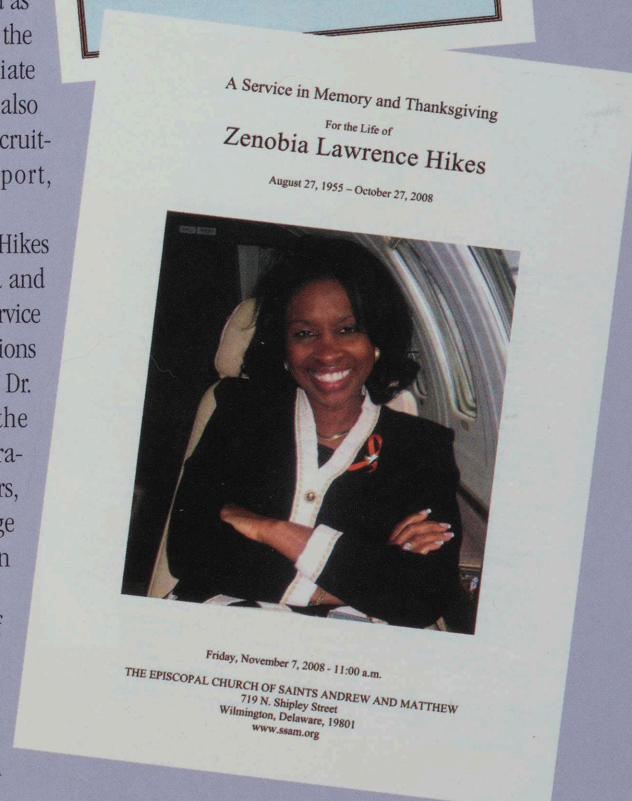
Prior to her position at Spelman, Dr. Hikes served as the assistant to the vice president for Student Life at the University of Delaware from 1996–1999 and associate director of Admissions from 1992 to 1996. Dr. Hikes also served as the assistant director of Admissions and Recruitment at Louisiana State University in Shreveport, Louisiana from 1986 to 1992.

In addition to her career in student affairs, Dr. Hikes has been a high school English teacher in Georgia and media specialist for the Navy/Marine Corps Family Service Center in Okinawa, Japan, where she led public relations programs and media campaigns. During her career, Dr. Hikes' professional affiliations have included the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, Southern Association for College Student Affairs, The College Board, National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

She received her Ed.D. from the University of Delaware, a master's from Georgia Southwestern University and a bachelor's degree with honors from Spelman College in 1977. She was a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. A proud Spelman

graduate, Dr. Hikes was a woman of excellence and purpose. She was the loving mother of two daughters, Amber and Brittany, and will be deeply missed by an abundance of family, friends, colleagues and students.

Dr. Hikes was a member of The Episcopal Church of Saints Andrew and Matthew in Wilmington, Delaware where her services were held on November 7, 2008.





# Wandra Cortella Hunley, C'96

September 26, 1974 – March 28, 2009

Wandra Cortella Hunley was born on September 26, 1974, in Atlanta. As a child she was raised by her late mother, Lucye Ann Hunley, her grandparents, Theodore and Cora Hunley, and her aunt, Edna Hunley.

As Wandra grew up, it quickly became obvious that she had a ferocious love of learning and a boundless intellect. When she reached Washington High School, her abilities as a scholar truly began to blossom. At 15, she was invited into the prestigious Governor's Honors Program, which she attended in Valdosta, Georgia. In the fall of 1992, she enrolled as a freshman at Spelman College beginning a rich relationship with the school she treasured for the rest of her life. While at Spelman she majored in English and was inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, the English honor society. She also sang in the Glee Club, a grand tradition at Spelman.

After graduating in 1996, Wandra went to the University of Vermont where she earned her master's degree in English and was inducted into Phi Beta Kappa, the oldest and most prestigious honor society. When she returned to Atlanta, she began teaching literature and writing at Kennesaw State University in 2001. In the fall of 2006, Wandra returned to Spelman College to join her former professors as an instructor in the English department. In her three years as a Spelman faculty member, she taught Shakespeare, Renaissance literature, world literature, and composition. She also advised students and helped faculty to understand the potential of visual narration on Web pages, and was the faculty adviser for the Sigma Tau Delta honor society. Many students found Wandra to be much more than an instructor, treasuring her as an empathetic listener and a mentor who always sought out and encouraged the unique abilities in each of them.

Wandra was a lifelong member of St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church where she actively participated in several ministries.

Her funeral services were held on Saturday, April 4, 2009, at St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church in East Point, Georgia.



MY AUNT WANDRA By Kireon Bunkley-Hill

She jumped on rhythm and rode the lines  
She cradled my soul in her melodic rhymes  
She painted each scene with extraordinary care  
And as her words took shape, I was left without air  
She advised her students to treasure words like gold  
They serve as glue uniting your mind and soul.  
She found beauty in italics and used commas to  
pause  
The spilling of her ink drew many rounds of applause  
She was a master of music, always humming a ditty

## A Celebration of Life Wandra Cortella Hunley



September 26, 1974

March 28, 2009

Saturday, April 4, 2009

11:00 A.M.

St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church  
2670 Hogan Road  
East Point, Georgia 30344

Rev. Earl L. Calloway, Officiating



### Lower Bearers

Washington High School  
Class of 1992

### ment

ryone for their kind words,  
comforting to see so many  
nd Family.



## Pinkie Gordon Lane, C'49

January 13, 1923 – December 3, 2008

Pinkie Gordon Lane was born on January 13, 1923, to William Alexander Gordon and Inez Addie West Gordon in Philadelphia. She was the youngest of four children, the only one to live beyond infancy. She graduated from the Philadelphia School for Girls in 1940 and enrolled at Spelman College on a full scholarship in 1945 after the passing of her parents. Dr. Lane graduated magna cum laude in 1949 with a bachelor's degree in English and art. During her senior year, she met and married her late husband, Ulysses Simpson Lane.

After graduation, Dr. Lane taught English in the public schools in Georgia and Florida. In 1956 she received her master's degree in English from Atlanta University. She and her husband relocated to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she taught English at Leland College before joining the English department at Southern University where she would teach for 27 years and serve as chair for 12 years. In 1963, their only son, Gordon Edward Lane, was born. Dr. Lane earned her doctorate from Louisiana State University in 1967, making her the first African American to receive a doctorate from LSU.

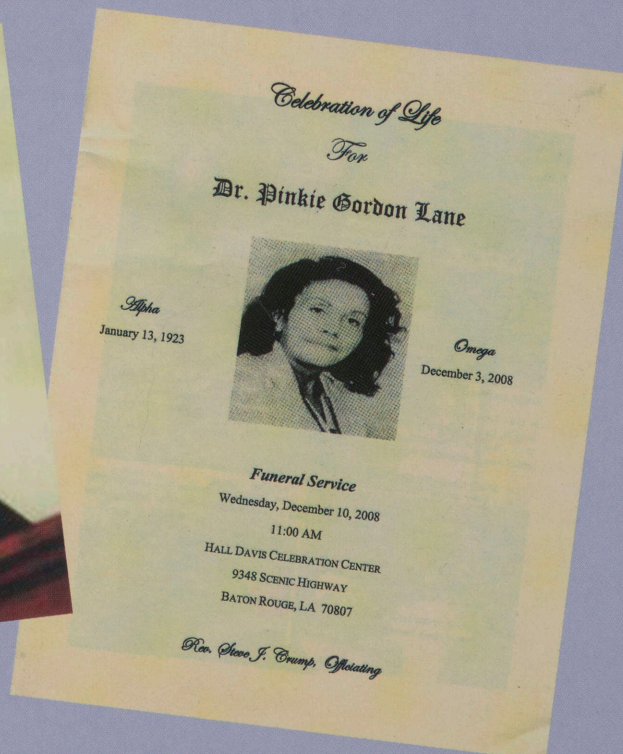
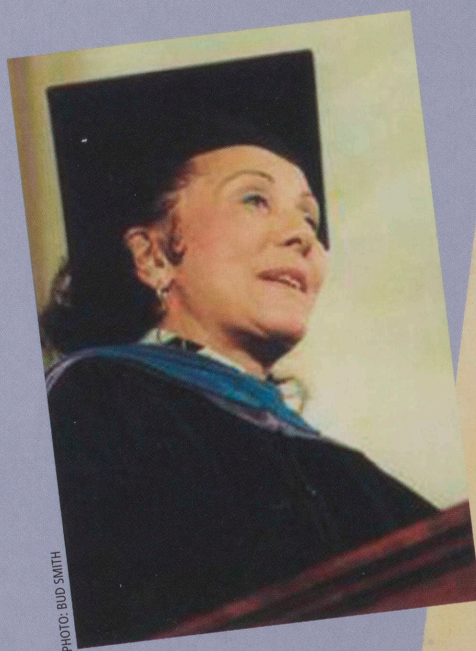
A nationally renowned poet and educator, Dr. Lane's literary career began in 1956 when she found some success as a short story writer. She chose poetry as her medium, and her first published poem appeared in *Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture* in 1961. In addition to her numerous publications in periodicals, she has published five books of

poetry: *Wind Thoughts* (1972), *Mystic Female* (1978), *I Never Scream: New and Selected Poems* (1985), *Girl at the Window* (1991), *Elegy for Etheridge* (2000). "Lyric: I Am Looking at Music" from *Girl at the Window* was read by actress Nia Long in the 1997 major motion picture, "Love Jones." She has served as editor or contributing editor to anthologies and periodicals such as *Poems by Blacks* (1973), *Discourses on Poetry* (1972), *Callaloo*, and *Black Scholar*. Dr. Lane was nominated twice for the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry.

Dr. Lane traveled globally, participating in numerous workshops, seminars and poetry readings throughout the United States, Africa, the Virgin Islands and Haiti. She held positions including director of the Melvin A. Butler Poetry Festival, Louisiana State Poet Laureate (the first African American to receive this honor), visiting Distinguished Professor at the University of Northern Iowa, Du Pont Scholar at Bridgewater College and 1996 Olympic Torchbearer representing the state of Louisiana.

She has received numerous accolades and awards including induction into the Louisiana Black History Hall of Fame in 1991, Mayor President's [Baton Rouge, La.] Award for Excellence in the Arts (2000), Amistad Arts Award (1998), Lifetime Achievement Award (James Madison University, Joanne Gabbin, director of Furious Flower conference, 1994), National Council of Teachers of English Image Award and the Women of Achievement Award (Baton Rouge YWCA). Dr. Lane was a proud member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc.

Her funeral services were held on December 10, 2008, at Hall Davis Celebration Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.





## A QUIET POEM

By Pinkie Gordon Lane

This is a quiet poem  
Black people don't write  
many quiet poems  
because what we feel  
is not a quiet hurt.  
And a not quiet hurt  
does not call for muted tones.

But I will write a poem  
about this evening  
full of the sounds  
of small animals, some fluttering  
in thick leaves, a smear  
of color here and there—  
about the whispers of darkness  
a gray wilderness of light  
descending, touching  
breathing

I will write a quiet poem  
immersed in shadows  
and mauve colors  
and spots of white  
fading into deep tones  
of blue.

This is a quiet evening  
full of hushed singing  
and light that has no  
ends, no breaking  
of the planes, or brambles  
thrusting out.

If I were sitting  
on the banks of the river  
I would write poems  
about seaweed or flotsam  
making their way  
to the end of the sea  
or the expanse of the bridge  
that falls into the sky

If a flight to nowhere  
curled waves of air  
beneath my feet  
or framed my vision, a poem  
would draw images  
from wings of the jet  
filling corners of clouds

But my blue room—  
where I die each night—  
frames this poem  
The curtain is striped  
blue on white  
the walls the color  
of twilight just before death  
of the sun  
and the doors pale  
as the morning sky

And so I write  
a blue-room poem  
My mind penetrates walls  
and hangs like mist  
on the wake of trees  
swaying low over the town

Only the crickets know  
I am there, and they sing songs  
to the low-touching wind  
Only they  
will know

I have passed over the earth  
gathering periwinkles  
and ivy  
to take to the hills

This poem plants itself  
and grows like the jasmine  
coating my fence  
It creeps over the page  
like holly fern  
and bores into the depths  
of my mind like the wild palm  
that sentinels my yard's  
center, spreading fanlike  
at all points  
caught up in a web  
of light—  
a ring of gold  
painting the earth

Source: *Trouble the Water*

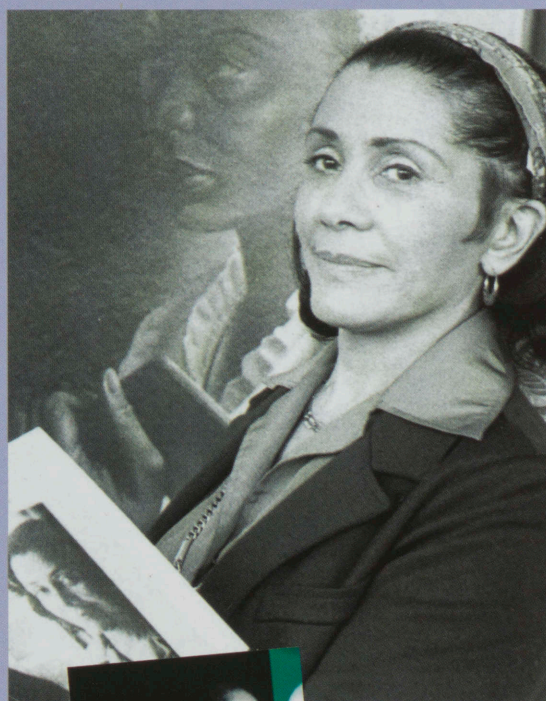
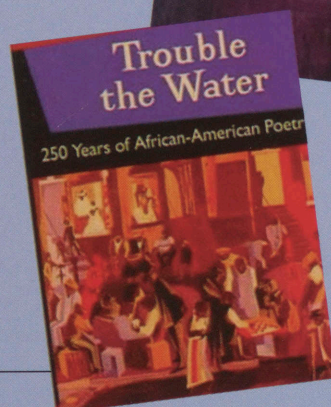
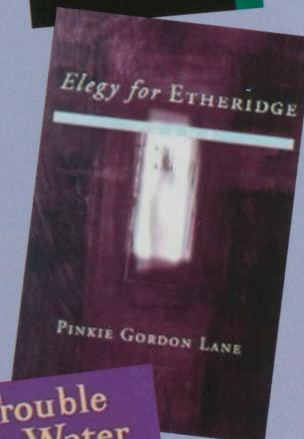
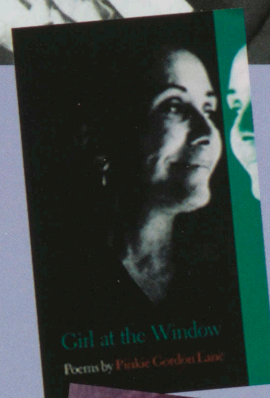


PHOTO: JO MOORE STEWART





## In Memoriam

1933

### **Alpha J.W. English**

Educator

Died: December 9, 2008

Services: December 16, 2008, Meniffee Church of Christ, Meniffee, Arkansas

1934

### **Thelma Parker**

Educator

Died: October 5, 2008

Services: October 10, 2008, Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Ocala, Florida

1944

### **Harriet Nash Chisholm**

Died: February 6, 2008

Services: February 9, 2008, Spelman College Sisters Chapel, Atlanta

### **Rudean H. Riggins**

Educator

Died: July 24, 2008

Services: July 31, 2008, Donald Trimble Mortuary Chapel, Decatur, Georgia

### **Lelabelle Christine Freeman Robinson**

Pediatrician

Died: October 30, 2008

Services: Memorial service, Chicago

### **Faustina Hall Tate**

Died: October 26, 2007

Services: October 30, 2007, Big Bethel A.M.E. Church, Atlanta

1945

### **Madeline Lorraine Patterson Cargill**

Community and Civil Rights activist

Died: November 2, 2008

Services: November 8, 2008, E.F. Boyd & Son Funeral Home and Crematory, Warrensville Heights, Ohio

### **Edith Gerard Johnson McClean**

Employment interviewer

Died: December 17, 2008

Services: December 23, 2008, First African Methodist Episcopal Church, Los Angeles

1950

### **Alma H. Roundtree**

Educator

Died: September 10, 2008

Services: September 17, 2008, Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity, Forest Park, Maryland

1951

### **Elynor Pettus Brown**

Educator

Died: August 3, 2008

Services: August 11, 2008, Mabrie Memorial Mortuary, Houston

### **Louisa King Carter**

Educator

Died: June 23, 2008

Services: Valdosta, Georgia

1952

### **Narvie Danese Puls**

Educator

Died: January 28, 2009

Services: February 3, 2009, Shrine of the Black Madonna, Atlanta

### **Roslyn Sellers**

Social Services

Died: December 19, 2008

Services: January 17, 2009, Central United Methodist Church, Atlanta

1963

### **Gloria Johnson Carlton**

Program manager, IRS

Died: May 30, 2007

Services: June 9, 2007, West Hunter Baptist Church, Atlanta

1965

### **Janice Gwendolyn Chappelle**

Educator

Died: September 9, 2008

Services: September 19, 2008, Morning Star Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma

1968

### **Joyce Shelby**

Journalist

Died: March 19, 2009

Services: Thursday, March 26, 2009, Calvary Baptist Church, Manhattan, New York

1971

### **Barbara Yvonne Fannin**

Educator

Died: July 25, 2008

Services: August 31, 2009, New Life Church, Lithonia, Georgia

1972

### **Carol Marie Rawls Davis**

Pastor

Died: January 2, 2009

Services: January 9, 2009, New Covenant Christian Ministries, Lithonia, Georgia

1975

### **Alice Jean Washington**

Atlanta Job Corps Center, Career Transition Services, Retired Supervisor of Student Records Department

Died: January 2, 2009

Services: January 10, 2009, Providence Missionary Baptist Church, Atlanta

1983

### **Dandrea Lynne Brooks**

Physician

Died: January 14, 2009

Services: January 19, 2009, True Vine Baptist Church in Texas

### **Cheryl Nesbitt McFarlane**

Associate Director, Verizon Wireless

Died: February 29, 2008

Services: March 7, 2008, Shiloh Baptist Church, Plainfield, New Jersey

1989

### **Leslie Bowie Wells**

Dentist

Died: November 4, 2008

Services: November 10, 2008, First United Methodist Church – Westchase, Houston

1990

### **Sonya Yvette Pryor**

Died: October 24, 2008

Services: November 8, 2008, St. John Missionary Baptist Church, Memphis

1991

### **Stephanie Jackson-Pace**

Educator

Died: January 17, 2009

Services: January 24, 2009, First Baptist Church of Suitland, Suitland, Maryland





“Another spring opens in the April air and  
Spelman finds a place caroling the morning and the sun.

On this day of brightness founded on the lives of two  
who turned a dream into wholeness, into fertile soil,  
we sweep away the darkness of unknowing.

We build — we women reaping strength  
from the mystery of the self.

We are women who change the world,  
who turn barren soil into fruit of spirit and of light.”

PINKIE GORDAN LANE, C'49

POEM EXCERPTS “FOR SPELMAN WOMEN: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE”

FOUNDERS DAY — APRIL 11, 1991





Spelman College

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JULIE YARBROUGH, C91

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Every Year!*

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