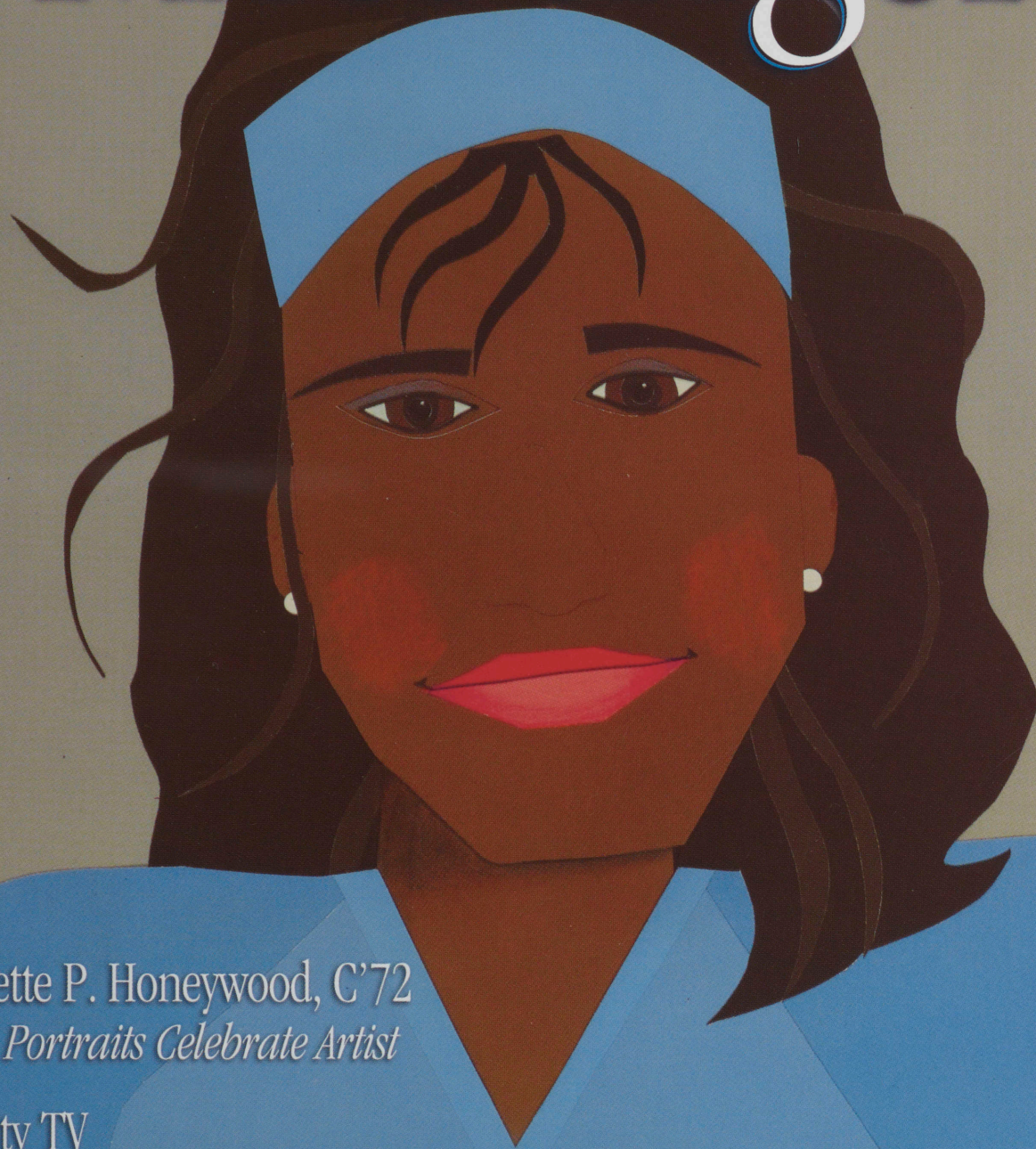


Messenger

SPELMAN



Varnette P. Honeywood, C'72
Word Portraits Celebrate Artist

Reality TV
Alumnae Excel on Popular Shows

Varnette P. Honeywood
an original



Spelman College

A Choice to Change the World

SPELMAN

Messenger

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The *Spelman Messenger* is published twice a year (Fall and Spring) by Spelman College, 350 Spelman Lane, S.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30314-4399, free of charge for alumnae, donors, trustees and friends of the College. Recipients wishing to change the address to which the *Spelman Messenger* is sent should notify the editor, giving both old and new addresses. Third-class postage paid at Atlanta, Georgia. Publication No. 510240

C R E D O

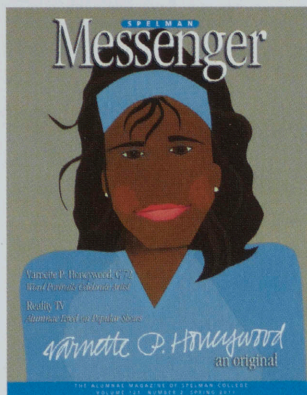
The Spelman Messenger, founded in 1885, is dedicated to participating in the ongoing education of our readers through enlightening articles designed to promote lifelong learning. The Spelman Messenger is the alumnae magazine of Spelman College and is committed to educating, serving and empowering Black women.



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ON THE COVER

1984 "Spelman the Spirit of Success"

by Varnette P. Honeywood:



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Remembering Varnette Honeywood

Artist captured positive view of Black life

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, C'60
CHILD WATCH® COLUMN

Artist Varnette Honeywood had a clear vision of how she perceived Black people and families and a gift for sharing her joyful, colorful perspective with the rest of the world. Her paintings became familiar to fans everywhere after several of them, including "Birthday," were featured in the Huxtables' home on *The Cosby Show*. She was a dear friend to the Children's Defense Fund and the illustrator and creator of our beautiful logo for the Black Community Crusade for Children's Leave No Child Behind® movement. Her death in September at age 59 was a sad loss for all of us.

Varnette grew up in Los Angeles, where her parents, who had migrated from Mississippi and Louisiana, were both elementary school teachers. She remembered that she and her beloved sister Stephanie would often help them test art projects they had designed for their students. Her parents nurtured her childhood talent, and Varnette started taking art classes at age 12. As an undergraduate at Spelman College, my alma mater, she originally planned to study history and become a teacher like her parents, but her drawing teacher and fellow students who saw her early work strongly encouraged her to change her major. She graduated with a degree in art in 1972.

After Spelman, Varnette returned to Los Angeles, where she got a master's degree in education from the University of Southern California and began working as an art teacher and developed what became her signature artistic style of simple silhouettes and bold colors. Just as important as her innovative style was her choice of subjects. At a time when many other Black artists were depicting poverty or struggle in their work, Varnette often chose family themes or portrayed church or community gatherings. She was deeply influenced by her own close family and childhood summers she spent with her extended family in Mississippi and her art showed loving, vibrant, joyful and positive scenes from Black life.

In the mid 1970s she and her sister Stephanie founded their own distribution company,

Varnette P. Honeywood
Founders Day 2005





"Leave No Child Behind" by Varnette P. Honeywood

Black Lifestyles, which featured Varnette's work on posters, prints and note cards. Honorary Spelman alumna Camille Cosby and husband Bill began collecting her work after seeing one of her sets of cards. When Bill Cosby had the opportunity to help choose artwork for the set of *The Cosby Show*, he knew the look and feel of Varnette's paintings would be a perfect fit. They partnered again when she created the artwork for his children's book series *Little Bill*, which became an award-winning animated television show. The *Little Bill* series again showcased Varnette's signature talent for depicting a positive, loving Black family. Creating these kinds of images for Black children was always a deliberate goal in her work.

As an art teacher in Los Angeles, Varnette worked in a juvenile detention program and designed a multicultural arts curriculum for use in the public schools. She understood the power positive images could have on children's self-esteem and development. When the Children's Defense Fund's Black Community Crusade for Children was launched, we wanted to convey the ideas of love, warmth, family, unity and community caring for children that represented our mission. She was the first and obvious choice to create the logo. The gorgeous result, *Leave No Child Behind*, shows four sets of strong Black adults of all shades, each standing behind and firmly and protectively embracing a beautiful Black child's shoulders – a gesture of loving protection and guidance.

Varnette also created posters for CDF's teen pregnancy prevention campaign and Beat the Odds® awards program and charged not one penny. Although she was one of the nation's most prominent Black artists, she was always a caring mentor and generous friend who never lost her original calling to teach and reach back to help others. She used her gift to uplift and inspire other people. I am so grateful for Varnette Honeywood's life and all of the beauty and joy she leaves behind in her work.



PHOTO: BUD SMITH

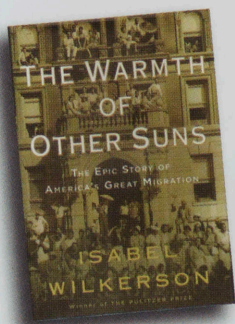
MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, C'60, is President of the Children's Defense Fund and its Action Council whose *Leave No Child Behind®* mission is to ensure every child a Healthy Start, a Head Start, a Fair Start, a Safe Start and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities.

BOOK REVIEWS

ANGELA BROWN TERRELL

The Warmth of Other Suns by Isabel Wilkerson. (Random House)

It took 10 years of intensive research and interviewing over a thousand people, for Pulitzer Prize Winning journalist Isabel Wilkerson to pull together this epic document that chronicles the Great Migration from 1915 to the 1970s of some six million African Americans from the South to northern and western states.



Fed up with the South's abusive Jim Crow laws, subsistent wages and poor educational facilities, Black families looked to improve their lives with the promises of better jobs and housing to be found in cities like Chicago, New York and Los Angeles.

Many of the migrant families found disillusionment in their move, however, since discrimination and poverty were often present in their new homes as well. On the positive side, many found a sense of freedom through better-paying jobs, more available education and the right to vote to make changes in their communities.

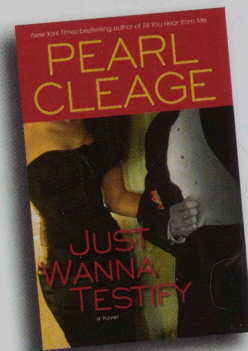
Wilkerson followed the moves of three individuals to

tell this compelling tale of massive relocation. In 1937, Ida Mae Gladney left sharecropping in Mississippi for a blue-collar life in Chicago; she wound up voting for then State Senator Barack Obama. George Swanson Starling's hot temper caused him to flee from Florida in 1945 for Harlem. But he continued fighting for civil rights on his job in the North. Robert Foster left Louisiana in 1953 to study medicine in Atlanta, where he met and married Alice Clement, C'41, the daughter of Atlanta University's president, Dr. Rufus Clement. The family finally settled in Los Angeles where, after many struggles, Dr. Foster's career led him to become personal physician to Ray Charles and other notables.

How these people traded cruelty, pain and personal deprivation for the hope of a better life for themselves and others, is a tribute to the perseverance and spiritual strength of the African American. Their experiences are a microcosm of what so many others have endured.

Wilkerson's compelling prose was honed during her extensive journalism career. She won the Pulitzer in 1994 for feature writing as the Chicago bureau chief of The New York Times, and she has taught narrative nonfiction at Harvard's Nieman Foundation, Princeton, Emory and Boston Universities.

All of this makes *The Warmth of Other Suns* (title taken from a poem by Richard Wright), a fascinating, easy-to-read, extensive, fact-filled journey that will enlighten the reader about a little-known era of American history.



Just Wanna Testify by Pearl Cleage. (One World)

Author Pearl Cleage, C'71, is not shy when it comes to writing stories with new challenges. In *Just Wanna Testify*, she tackles another worldly theme in the familiar West End neighborhood in Atlanta, the setting of several of her novels.

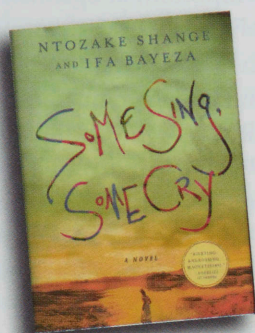
This time, the mystical Blue Hamilton, former R&B singer with many past lives who has cleared the community of crime, tackles the unknown when five gorgeous vampires, called "The Too Fine Five," come to town to model for a cover photo spread for *Essence* magazine. Suspecting ulterior motives, Blue, a kind of anti-crime godfather, is bent on finding out what the undead beauties are really up to, especially since their presence involves his wife Regina and photographer friend Althea, hired to shoot the scenes.

The models, who are extremely tall, thin and pale, glide about in their five-inch super spiked heels to their assignments, never smiling, and causing a stir of wonder and excitement wherever they appear. Where did they come from? If they are truly vampires, what do they feed on? Is the community in danger? And is Blue in danger, since the super vamp leader, Serena, seems to have her eyes especially on him.

How Blue and his colleagues go about discovering

the background and motives of the vamps, while preventing fear and panic from spreading among the people, is artfully handled by Cleage, with the suspense, romance and humor for which her books are known. As always, a bit of folklore is added to provide us with some cultural education. The narrative will keep readers turning pages nonstop to see how these mysteries are unraveled. Those who are familiar with her previous books, will be glad to be re-acquainted with her characters to see how their lives are evolving.

One thing is sure, Pearl Cleage is not going to let you guess if or how Blue and his "peeps" will solve this mystery – you'll be surprised to the end. But you can be sure that love rules.



"Some Sing, Some Cry"
by Ntozake Shange and Ifa Bayeza. (St. Martin Press)

At the end of the Civil War, former slaves Bette Mayfield and her granddaughter Eudora leave the South Carolina plantation they shared as home and head for a free life in Charleston. Thus begins a tale of several generations of Mayfields – Black and white – and how both slavery and freedom defined their lives.

Woven into the women's survival is the gift of music, which threads its way through their history, providing spiritual relief, expressing pain and celebrating freedom, from the plantation to the Harlem Renaissance and into the 21st century. The women of each generation sing to dry tears, to soothe pain, to feel joy. Slavery, segregation, family disunity, World Wars, discrimination, epidemics – nothing could stop the music that poured from one generation to the next.

The women sing ancient African chants brought to the new world during the Middle Passage, their songs: gospel, jazz, blues, opera, R&B, and rap. Each era brings a new song to live by.

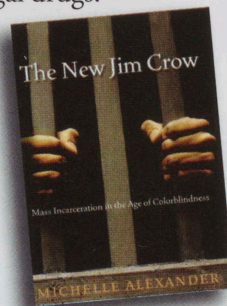
Award-winning writer Ntozake Shange (*For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuff*) and her sister, playwright Ifa Bayeza (*The Ballad of Emmett Till*) have delved into American history, giving new life to forgotten facts, as they weave this saga of family in elegant, poetic prose.

As Liberty, the current generation daughter, a DJ, spins music for a party, she sums up the power of the family's lives: "The music always the music, as soon as it's born fading away, giving birth to somethin' else and somethin' new...New life. To the seventh generation.... This night, this dance, this song...she laid down a groove that surged...the crowd catching the spirit... Everyone is there, in call and response, callin' up the ancestors and wakin' the yet to be born, the

notes dancing in the air, a world without bounds at the tip of her fingers, the music, always the music."

The New Jim Crow:
Mass Incarceration in the
Age of Colorblindness,
by Michelle Alexander.
(The New Press)

It's no secret that the incarceration of young Black men and other minorities in the United States far outnumbers that of white offenders, even though the crimes committed are the same – for example, the use and distribution of illegal drugs.



Civil rights and racial justice advocate, Michelle Alexander, has compiled the needed statistics and studies to point out that racial discrimination in the justice system is real, and that it has become big business in many communities, with prisons providing economic stability to areas that have lost jobs and businesses to overseas ventures. The result, she writes, is that racial injustice has the same effect of creating a second-class caste system as did the Jim Crow laws of the past.

The facts: "The United States now has the highest incarceration rate in the world..." Alexander writes, adding, "The racial dimension of mass incarceration is its most striking feature. No

other country in the world imprisons so many of its racial or ethnic minorities."

In this subject, Michelle Alexander is armed with an impressive background. She served as director of the Racial Justice Project at the ACLU in Northern California, directed the Civil Rights Clinics at Stanford University Law School, and is now a joint appointee at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State University. She also is a former law clerk for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry Blackmun.

This volume documents the need for concerned citizens to take a fresh look at the new forms of discrimination that are fashioned to trap minorities in a paralyzing caste system that can keep ex-offenders, even those with small infractions, from job opportunities, the ability to vote and adequate housing.

Despite advances for many African Americans since the Civil Rights movement, for example, Alexander notes that the poverty rate among black people has not improved.

We need, Alexander writes, "If we want to do more than just end mass incarceration ... we must lay down our racial bribes, join hands with people of all colors who are not content to wait for change to trickle down, and say to those who would stand in our way: Accept all of us or none."

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

Varnette P.

VARNETTE P. HONEYWOOD, C'72: AN ORIGINAL

There is nothing in the world like an original. Varnette P. Honeywood was an original. Likewise, there is nothing as colorful, nothing as powerful, nothing as rich as an original piece of artwork created by Varnette P. Honeywood.

I am one of the fortunate to witness her talent in progress and to document her version of Spelman College as we shared a twin vision, collaborated and persevered for over 25 years. During this period of time, we converted her brilliant originals into holiday cards, event posters, brochures, inaugural invitations, campaign collaterals, admission packages, books, postcards, Founders Day and Reunion programs, and numerous *Spelman Messengers*. In the process, Varnette changed the color and texture of Spelman's world.

This Varnette Honeywood timeline is only a reproduction of her art. It merely offers a glimpse of the intensity of her originals. This documentation of her Spelman artwork leaves all of us begging for more.

The timeline begins with Honeywood's first Spelman exhibition in 1981. Since this documentation of her work will continue to evolve far beyond the 125th anniversary Spelman College Founders Day celebration in 2006, there is no closing date. In fact, even in Varnette's last life moments, she shared with her cousin that she had caught a quick image of her long-departed infant brother. She explained, "He is so beautiful! I wish I could paint him for you."

Revelation is the book of visions and symbols. It ends with a picture of a new heaven and a new earth. Indeed, Varnette Honeywood left Spelman College with a bright open ending because she was an original.

Jo Moore Stewart
Editor, *Spelman Messenger*
Sister Friend to Varnette P. Honeywood

Editor's Note: The following Word Portraits of Varnette P. Honeywood have been lovingly shared by members of the art and Spelman College communities.

VARNETTE HONEYWOOD: GENIUS

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, C'66
Professor and Director of the Spelman College
Women's Research & Resource Center

*"We are a people. A people do not throw their
Geniuses away. If they do, it is our duty as witnesses
for the future to collect them again for the sake of our
children. If necessary bone by bone."*

Alice Walker
Pulitzer Prize-Winning Novelist
Former Spelman Student (1961-1963)

At the very beginning our sister/friend was present. When the Women's Research & Resource Center, founded in 1981, held its "coming out" event October 21-23, 1982, the first symposium at Spelman on Black women and public policy issues, we chose Varnette Honeywood's "African Women," an acrylic on canvas, for our theme poster. Having graduated from Spelman only a decade earlier in 1972, Varnette was pleased about her important artistic role in the Center's inaugural public gathering, "Black Women and Public Policy: Issues for the 80s." We chose her riveting portrayal of African women because we wanted to capture visually the uniqueness of the Center's mission. We were the first women's research center on a historically Black college campus, and the only women's center in the U.S. academy whose focus was women of African descent.

In her keynote address, Dr. Margaret B. Wilkerson, former director of the Center for the Study, Education and Advancement of Women at the University of California at Berkeley, former program officer at the Ford Foundation, and now Lorraine Hansberry's official biographer, had this to say: "And now



Honeywood

an original

the **nerve** of us here to take two days out of hectic and demanding schedules to discuss policy for Black women in the 1980s in the midst of the Reaganomics era, a time in which our complaints are lost in a sea of human misery caused by unemployment or ignored in the din of jubilation over a bullish stock market.” Despite the “spectre of the plight of our sisters,” in Wilkerson’s words, there were Varnette’s defiant Black women, standing tall, determined, in solidarity – reminding us of the “nerve” of Black women, in Wilkerson’s words again, our resilience, our beauty, our grace in struggle.

When Varnette was asked to create images for our 125th anniversary keepsake, “Spelman: A Woman’s Place, 1881–2006,” I thought about the power of her art. Inspired by her genius at capturing the realities of Black womanhood, I described Spelman for the first time as...a scholarly place, a sacred place, an activist place, an artful place...a woman’s place!!! I have never been more pleased with anything I ever wrote about Spelman. I am sure that staring at Varnette’s initial drawings provided the inspiration for the final page of the booklet. The original artwork, “The River That Flows Through Time,” reminded me of “African Women” and that historic gathering in 1982. In her new commissioned painting, there was the magnificent lineup of determined, self-assured Black women, which began with a sister draped in Kente cloth, perhaps from Ghana. Shoulder to shoulder, holding on to each other, there were Black women from different generations, with different hues, different hairstyles, different sizes and, of course, Spelman women dressed in blue and white. I cannot recall any other Black artist who captured with such delight the bonds that connect Black women in the ways that Varnette did. There is no artist, to be sure, that painted the Spelman story as Varnette did, over and over again, and no one more loyal. I am convinced that Varnette is still singing the hymn, “Spelman, thy name we praise . . . We’ll ever faithful be. Throughout eternity.”



“African Women” by Varnette P. Honeywood



“The River That Flows Through Time” by Varnette P. Honeywood



1987 Production of
The Cosby Show on
Spelman's Campus

PHOTO: BUD SMITH



1996 Program Cover of the Cosby Academic Center opening



Messenger/Annual Report Cover

COVER DESIGN: JO MOORE STEWART

COVER DESIGN: JO MOORE STEWART



From the book "*The Other Side of Color*" by David C. Driskell
"Precious Memories," 1984, collage and
"Honor thy Father and Mother," 1983, collage
by Varnette P. Honeywood from the African
American Art Collection of Camille O. and
William H. Cosby Jr.

Varnette P. Honeywood: Collectible

Drs. Bill & Camille Cosby

The Black Lifestyles note cards, by Varnette P. Honeywood, were the influences for us to become collectors of her paintings and collages. We were thrilled to see profound, unambiguous, positive imageries of Black people. Some specific highlights of Ms. Honeywood's artistry that were and are meaningful to us:

1. The vivid colors in her compositions
2. An acknowledgement of the varied skin colors clearly evident among African Americans, and respect for their hair textures and body shapes
3. The diversity of the lives of African Americans, which was often overlooked by her contemporaries
4. And that skillful humor that was frequently in her art made us smile

In total, those characteristics rendered new definitions of people of color.

When Bill developed the character of Little Bill for Scholastic books, Ms. Honeywood was his immediate choice to illustrate that beautiful small child. He knew that she would imbue in Little Bill the human qualities that people would find identifiable and lovable.

So he then chose Ms. Honeywood's paintings to enhance the home of the Huxtable family on *The Cosby Show*. Bill felt that her works and his had synergistic themes of family, protection and love.

The loss of Ms. Honeywood is difficult; but her creativity is in perpetuity. Her magnificent art enables us to feel the warmth and, most importantly, the truths about a people who have been consistently maligned in history, media and art.

Varnette Honeywood: Symbol

Robust, Distinct, Diverse: Definitely Honeywood, Definitely Spelman
Tomika DePriest, C'89

Executive Director of Communications at Spelman

I was very definite in my choice to attend Spelman College. There were other strong possibilities, but it was Spelman that struck the most significant chord within me. And it was the power of the images that I associated with Spelman that cemented my college decision.

These images were robust, distinct and diverse: Black women with different career backgrounds, from different walks of life and in a multitude of shades and sizes. Robust, distinct and diverse is how I identified with them, along with the attributes smart, beautiful, family-oriented, creative, community-focused, spiritual – the list goes on. I also consumed these images through the artwork of Varnette Honeywood, to whom I was introduced through the College.

As a student, I saw her distinct images broadly displayed – on admission materials, note cards and posters that could be

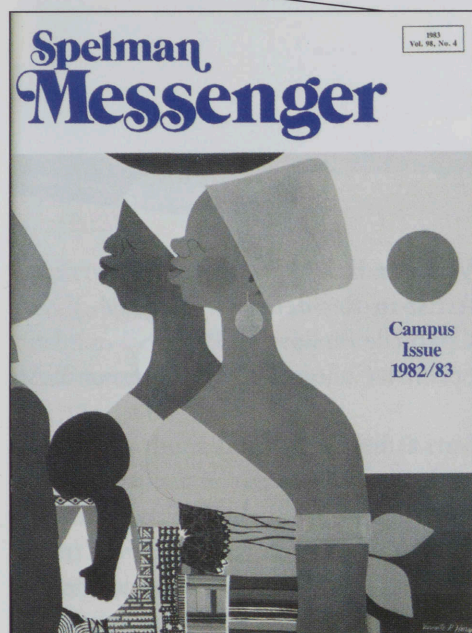
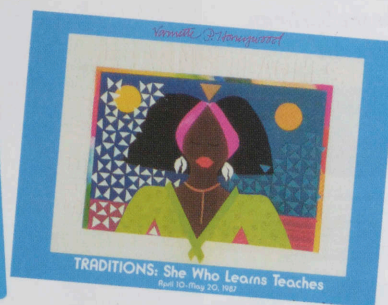
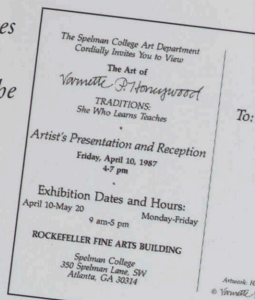
purchased in the bookstore, posters promoting key events, college holiday cards, etc. Her artwork featured Black women prominently in various scenes of Black life, rooted in African tradition and thought and in abstract form. The images were fresh to me. As a junior, I came to love "She Who Learns Teaches," which I once owned in poster form. I later bought a set of notecards bearing the same image and proverb. I came to see Varnette Honeywood's artwork as definitively Spelman – the two were inextricably tied.

As an alumna, Honeywood was a powerful symbol of the value of a Spelman education. Her artwork reinforced the reality that Spelman was built just for

1984 "Spelman the Spirit of Success" admission materials



1987 Invitation features
"Hearts Make Friends"
collage to Traditions: She
Who Learns Teaches
exhibition



me; it put Black women at the center of life, while Spelman put young Black women at the center of the academic experience. How could it not be my number-one choice for college?

Varnette Honeywood: Heart
TaRessa Stovall
Author/ blogger
Former Spelman College Public
Relations Director

I loved Varnette Honeywood even before I came to Spelman as director of public relations and special events in 1987. I had discovered her work a few years earlier in my hometown of Seattle, and since I hadn't been able to find a print, I bought a packet of cards when I first moved to Atlanta and had those cards framed to hang in my apartment.



2011 Tribute Painting by
Calida Garcia Rawles, C'98
for Los Angeles Spelman
Alumnae Chapter of NAASC

Discovering that Varnette was not only a Spelman Woman, but had created the sumptuous admissions materials with which I would be working in my new position was like winning a creative lottery. I took it as an auspicious sign that I was "meant to be" at Spelman, this incredible community of brilliant, gifted women who freely shared their talents with the Spelman family and the world.

When Lev T. Mills, chair of the art department, organized an exhibit of Varnette's works at the College, it was my privilege to interview – and thus get to know – the artist whose voluptuous, vibrant works seemed to pulse with the rhythms and truths of the most colorful aspects of Black family and community life. The collage "Hearts Make Friends" used for the postcard/invitation to this exhibition reflected her joyful spirit.

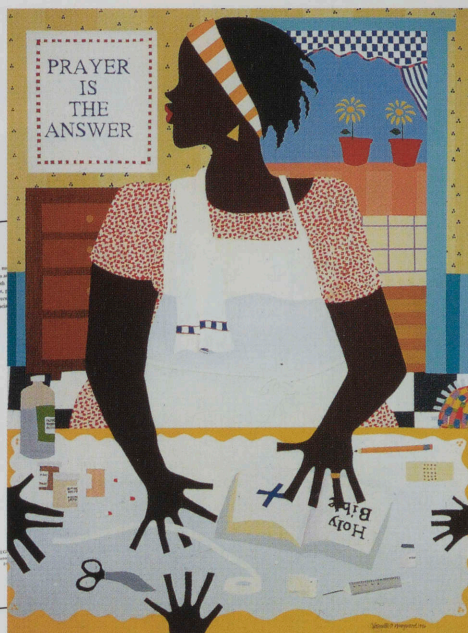
There could not have been a more perfect marriage of images or brands. Varnette created many iconic works for Spelman – each more perfect than the last. Varnette was every bit as lovely as her creations. She had a heart that just con-

nected directly to yours as soon as she smiled, with a voice as rich and smooth as honey, and a laugh like a hug to the soul.

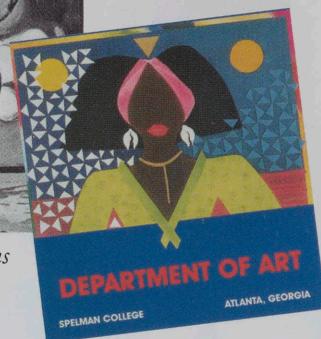
Varnette Honeywood: Inspiration
Calida Garcia Rawles, C'98
Artist and author of *Same Difference*

I can't quantify the magnitude of Varnette Honeywood's influence on my artistic style and my experience as a Black woman artist. As I painted the tribute piece for the Los Angeles Spelman Alumnae Chapter Varnette Honeywood Art Scholarship, I relied on Honeywood's past work for inspiration, specifically the ways in which she breaks down her subjects to their simplest forms while maintaining the spirit of the people she paints. Her work is not only visually beautiful, but it also captures a sense of pride in the African American experience and the diversity within our culture. I am honored to follow in the footsteps of this legend. Thank you, Ms. Honeywood.

"The Caregiver" for Bearing Witness opening exhibition for the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art



Senior photo in Reflections 1972 Yearbook



Varnette Honeywood: Generous Spirit

M. Akua McDaniel, C'69
Associate Professor/ Chair of
Department of Art
Interim director (1995) of Spelman
College Museum of Fine Art.

Varnette Honeywood and I first met at the National Conference of Artists in the late 1970s. Her warm personality and infectious laugh made it easy to like her, but it was Varnette's passion for making beautifully rendered, heartfelt images of Black life that made her an extraordinary person. In 1995, when I became the interim director of the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Varnette was at the top of our list of invited artists who we hoped would participate in our first major exhibition. Since her student days at Spelman, Varnette had become tremendously popular both through her artwork and her affiliation with "The Cosby Show." Therefore, we were delighted when she accepted our invitation.

When the crate containing her art arrived, I was struck by the intricate details in one of Varnette's mixed-media images and captured by its universal content. "The Caregiver," a collage emblematic of her personal life, depicts a young Black woman standing behind a table filled with bottles of pills and medical supplies. An open Bible lies near the center of these assorted remedies and a framed

cross-stitched sampler bearing the words "Prayer Is the Answer" can be seen on the wall behind the central figure. From each side of the table, a hand stretches forth. These three hands may have represented her parents and her sister Stephanie, family members for whom she provided care during their illnesses and their transitions. But this artwork was not just an illustration of Varnette's unwavering support of her own family; she was also reaching out to millions of Black women who find themselves in similar circumstances, reassuring them that they are not alone.

In the late 1990s, Varnette gave the Museum and the department of art her cards and posters to sell with the understanding that all of the proceeds were to be used to support students majoring in art. As a result, the department was able to establish the Varnette Honeywood Student Travel Grant, which helps to subsidize conference travel, special projects, research and exhibitions. She also funded the art department's first newsletter and actively encouraged high school students who were interested in the visual arts to apply to Spelman College. The impact of Varnette's generosity on the department of art can never be fully measured, but her legacy will, I hope, inspire our students to realize their own potential for excellence in the visual arts and discover the rewards of giving to others.

Varnette Honeywood: Artist-in-Residence

Charnelle Holloway, C'79
Spelman College Associate Professor of Art

Varnette Honeywood spent a semester with the department of art as Artist-in-Residence during the 1990s. Her presence was a wonderful addition to the vitality of the department, as she was very open and interactive with students and others that visited her campus workspace. Her warm smile and sense of humor made students very comfortable in her presence. Our young artists were exposed to Varnette's monoprint techniques, her professional issues pertaining to art and business, her "no-nonsense" work ethic and a patient ear that listened to individual questions and concerns of students pursuing careers in the creative arts.

The College commissioned several projects from Varnette while she worked as Artist-in-Residence, and as a result, the students were able to witness her creative process from the idea to the finished product. She occasionally joked about the amount of commission work that she was requested to do for the College, saying that she would have to wait until her Artist-in-Residence position had ended to get any of her own work done. Kind and generous with a wonderful spirit, Varnette was a very valuable resource for our students and faculty, and I felt that she always kept Spelman close to her heart.



1992 Artist-in-Residence

Varnette Honeywood: Ambassador

Lev. T. Mills
Spelman College Professor of
Art Emeritus

During the 14 years that I served as chair of the department of art, I had the good fortune to connect with Varnette Honeywood in ways that were more than just sharing mutual respect as practicing artists. Our friendship continued to grow as we worked on important departmental projects. Varnette was invited to serve for a semester as Artist-in-Residence. Later, a very impressive retrospective of her works was curated by Dr. Jontyle Robinson. Whenever Spelman was mentioned in Varnette's presence, her face lit up! The thing that one noticed very quickly was that she had a special love for the College and the department of art.

She continually supported the department by being active in it, offering advice and recruiting students in the California area; she was also a generous donor to fundraising projects. In addition, there were times when she would allow proceeds from her commercial reproductions to be donated to the department of art. It is difficult to believe that Varnette Honeywood, one of the department's greatest ambassadors, will be "missing in action."

There is much to be admired about Honeywood's art and her warm-hearted spirit. She accomplished so much during her short lifetime. Her stylistic human

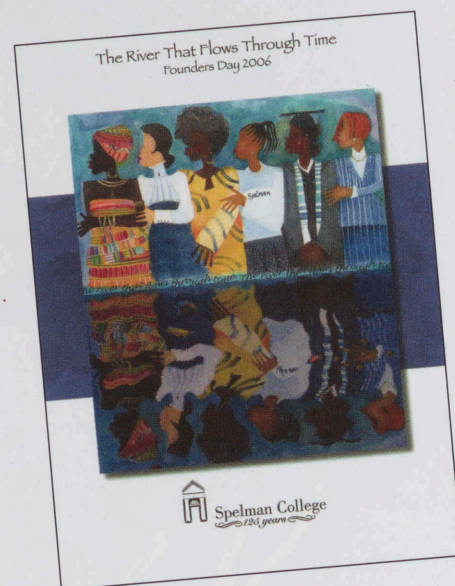
forms were trademarks, and her unique ways of humorously depicting African American lifestyles were appealing. Her art continues to offer "teaching moments." Her works are attractive to students and to many art patrons, including knowledgeable art collectors, as well as to those who can relate to art because it brings joy to their hearts. Many African Americans have said her works make them feel good about themselves. We will cherish the artistic gifts that Varnette Honeywood has left for the masses to remember and admire.

Varnette Honeywood: A Portrait of Unconditional Love

Eloise Alexis, C'86
Spelman College Vice President for
College Relations

Spelman frequently called upon Varnette Honeywood to tell its story in images. Every time, she responded with enthusiasm, talent and generosity.

On the occasion of the College's 125th anniversary, when we needed someone who could capture the visual essence of Spelman during those 125 years, I never considered anyone other than Varnette. She had proven through the years that she was the one to turn to. And, true to form, Varnette never paused to consider saying no, despite the personal and professional opportunities and challenges she faced. So we proceeded, and the



imaginative mind of Jo Moore Stewart and the creative talent of Varnette Honeywood-kicked into gear. From Atlanta, Jo began shaping the 125th anniversary program, while in Los Angeles, Varnette translated words into images. There were days when we would call her only to find out that she was creating Spelman's 125th anniversary visual in the hospital at her mother's bedside. Varnette was undaunted, through toil and pain. "The River That Flows Through Time" – the theme and the visual – came to be, capturing the legacy of Spelman's first 125 years, and inspiring us to ensure the College's empowering mission and vision for the next century.

One of the last contributions Varnette made to Spelman was in response to a call from Spelman for alumnae to help meet the Founders Day Challenge to reach 5,000 donors for the fiscal year by April 11, 2010. I can only imagine how she might have been feeling, with what she might have been dealing, but Spelman called and, as always, Varnette Honeywood answered. For me, the portrait she painted with her life was as beautiful, significant and eternal as the physical works she has left for us.



PHOTO: BOBBY HOLLAND

LaKeeta Howard, C'79 with mentor Varnette P. Honeywood, C'72

Remembering Varnette: My Mentor, My Friend

La Keeta Howard, C'79
Artist

Before the iconic paintings, "Dixie Peach" and "African Women" and before the national TV exposure, I – at five – met 12-year-old "Bop," as Varnette was affectionately called. I promptly noticed that Varnette liked to draw and paint and that she created images that looked like us. This was significant in 1962 when there were few images of "us" in mainstream media.

After my family and I moved down the street from Varnette and her family, Varnette became my babysitter, my big sister, my earliest influence in developing my talent, my mentor. She had a warm and artistic family. Her mom, Lovie Honeywood, had a potter's wheel and did ceramics, as well as designing clothes. Her older sister, Stephanie, also expressed herself through drawing, painting and poetry. Her dad, Stepney, expressed his talent through cooking and gardening.

In 1968, Varnette and her talent went to Atlanta where she attended Spelman College. Her initial major was history; however, Joe Ross, a drawing teacher, observed her work and convinced her to change her major to art. Her exposure to the arts while at Spelman ignited a spark and a quest for art that she explored her entire life. Again, she was my mentor

because I too enrolled at Spelman and majored in art.

This experience was repeated as Varnette demonstrated that you could have a career as an artist and make a living. I watched her paint and sell to admirers of her work. This encouraged me to create and sell my work.

It was a gift to have her as a mentor, a friend and a big sister. Now with her transition, it is important that I pass on to others the gift of her talent.

Varnette Honeywood: Visionary

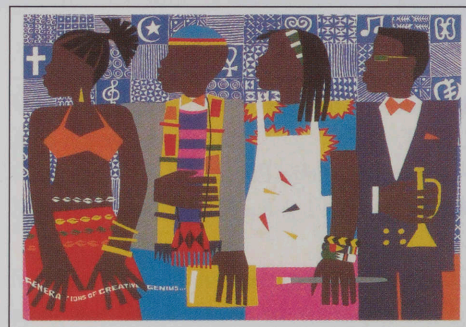
A. Michelle Smith, C'69
Founding Executive Director
National Black Arts Festival

As we planned for the second National Black Arts Festival in 1990, it was important that the visual arts continued to be both a highlight and a vehicle for promoting the festival and introducing festival patrons to a variety of artists and their work. The commissioned festival poster was the centerpiece of our marketing efforts, and we wanted an established fine artist whose work had broad appeal and reflected the vibrancy and pioneer spirit of the festival. Elizabeth Catlett had been commissioned to produce the inaugural limited edition festival print and as we searched for someone to continue that tradition, there was little doubt that Varnette Honeywood should be that artist. Her



PHOTO: BUD SMITH

Varnette Honeywood, C'72 and A. Michelle Smith, C'69, pose with painting at the 1990 opening ceremony of the National Black Arts Festival.



"Generations of Creative Genius"

work was colorful, contemporary and beautifully reflective of the African American experience. She didn't simply paint a picture; her work told a joyful story that incorporated complex designs, patterns and familiar images that reflected our African traditions. We were thrilled when Varnette agreed to create a limited edition print that could also be produced as a festival poster. She understood perfectly what the festival was all about and was a joy to work with. We were blown away when we received the spectacular final product. Called "Generations of Creative Genius," the print shows two female and two male images depicting dance, literature, visual art and music, set against a background of blue and white tapestry designs. It was wildly popular and remains one of the most popular posters in NBAF history. Varnette's "Generations of Creative Genius" touched people of all generations and backgrounds, including the Rockefeller Foundation that used the image as their 1990 annual report cover, a testament to the power of Varnette Honeywood's creative spirit.



Varnette Honeywood: Teacher

Tanya Coleman, C'72
Marketing Advertising Manager
Publix Super Markets
Atlanta Division

Varnette was born with two gifts. I met Varnette when she came to Spelman to learn how to develop her gifts and to grow into the woman who would embrace life, love learning and excel at teaching.

History will document Varnette's life as an artist. I will always remember her as a teacher. After college, Varnette and her sister, Stephanie, built a business, Black Lifestyles, which made art available to the greater community. Stephanie, an outstanding writer of poems and short stories, dedicated her life to helping her baby sister share with the world the vibrant, colorful images depicting African American life in all its riches – children at school, families at church, mothers combing hair, fathers working hard, friends sharing special moments.

The images sold by Black Lifestyles came in many forms, making them available to a diverse audience. Original paintings and collages for the seasoned collector, silk screens, serigraphs and monoprints for the informed and newer collectors, and signed reproductions and posters for the developing collectors were all available through Black Lifestyles.

Each art transaction invited a conversation with the artist. So it's no surprise that when I purchased my first piece of original art from my Spelman classmate, the transaction opened the door to an expanded world of friendship, art education and entrepreneurship.

Varnette used Black Lifestyles not only as a company to distribute and sell art, but also as a forum to mentor emerging artists, educate collectors and encourage the incorporation of art into everyday life.

Varnette Honeywood: Dream Maker

Tina McElroy Ansa, C'71

Author/Publisher

When I think of Varnette – and that is every day because my home is blessed to be graced with her beautiful, richly meaningful works – I see the palette of dazzling intense colors that defined her. I recall the first time I saw her, seeming to float across Spelman's campus headed for the Trevor Arnett Arts Building. She was swathed in vibrant multi-hued fabric from the crown of her head wrap to the hem of her flowing caftan. She looked like no one else around me in the late 1960s. And that was because she was and continued to be unique.

I asked around and discovered that this Spelman sister was an artist, a very advanced one. And when I saw some of her work, I knew right then that when I published my first novel, I wanted a Varnette P. Honeywood image to grace the cover.

For years, I dreamed of it, of course. But I don't know if I truly believed that this dream collaboration could come true – that the first artist that I admired in college, Spelman Class of '72, would actually create art for me, Spelman Class of '71, on the book jackets of my novels. Dreams are like that: too far-fetched to be tangible, yet too perfect to be abandoned.

Now that I think about it, I suppose Varnette, with her palette of vivid soulful colors in everything from her dress to her art to her choice in flowers, was a dream maker. She specialized in creating dreams and memories of African American life on the canvas and in making dreams come true in real life.

That's what she did for me.

In 1989, her reaction to my request to

“clothe” my first novel, my baby, in one of her beautiful “outfits,” was, “I read the manuscript. I love it! Let's get to work.”

Can you imagine how my heart took flight? By phone from her home on the West Coast to my home on the East Coast, she didn't ask anything but what was my choice of medium. “A collage!” I replied, with my heart beating at this collaborative dream come true. “Okay,” she said. Then, a bit later, she called to inquire what I thought of a family portrait of the book's characters. “Yes!” I screamed. I could barely contain my joy.



Tina McElroy Ansa, C'71 and Varnette Honeywood, C'72 at 2005 Women of Color LEADS conference.

This established artist turned this fledgling novelist's dream into a reality. It was so like Varnette: generous, kind, thoughtful, loving yet professional and respectful of the art.

She not only created a beautiful original work of art for my first novel. She made me her collaborator, asking me the exact shade of the mother's red hair, the exact coloring of the father's skin. She even enlisted her lovely mother's help in hunting down just the right red and green plaid material to create the main character's little dress.

Varnette did this for each of my subsequent four novels, as she continued making my dreams come true. And in the process of her offering me an immense generosity of spirit and time and talent and love, we became more than collaborators. We became friends.

My sister Varnette was and will always be my beautiful dream maker.



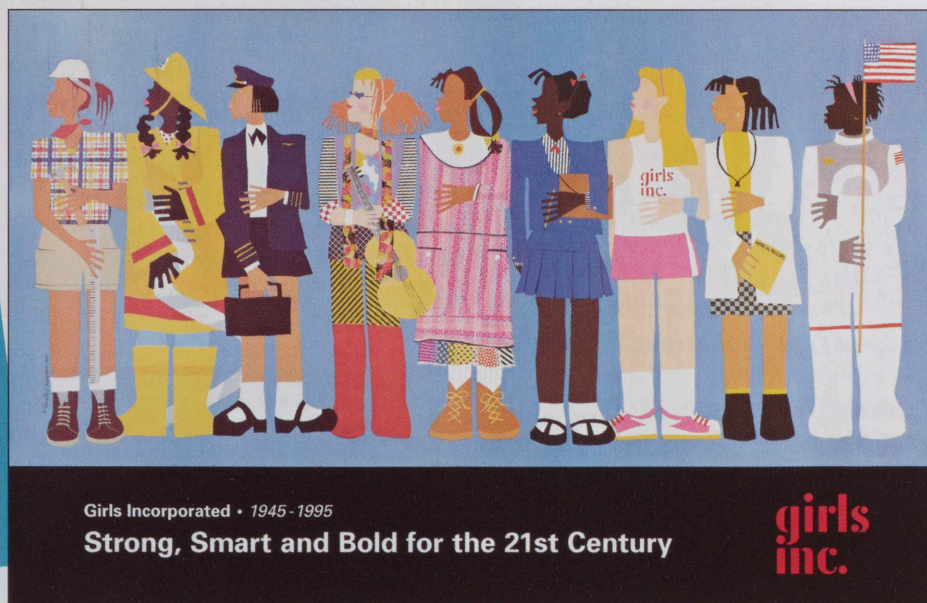
CARD DESIGN: JO MOORE STEWART

Campus Christmas (1984)



CARD DESIGN: JO MOORE STEWART

Christmas Carol Concert (1983)



girls inc.

Varnette Honeywood: A Treasure

Donald & Isabel Stewart
Spelman College President 1976–1986

Varnette's wonderful figures representing Spelman women captured much of the essence and feel of the college as we knew it in the 80s: distinctive and unique, feisty and colorful, positive and full of life. All of the same can be said of Varnette Honeywood, the person and artist whom we admired so much.

Beginning in 1983, she created our holiday card and event poster that captured the spirit of the Spelman Morehouse Christmas Carol Concert.

Our 1984 three-panel card titled "Campus Christmas" gave Spelman an opportunity to present Varnette's design

genius to a much broader audience. In fact, her card for Spelman won the CASE Bronze Award for Illustration in print. When Bill Cosby received his honorary degree from Spelman, this was the card that made him aware that Varnette was a Spelman graduate. In turn, Spelman became "Hillman," the focus for his hit show, "A Different World." In a lovely aside, Cosby featured Varnette as part of the walk-on cast in the Hillman presidential transition episode that launched "A Different World" (for which all of Atlanta turned out!) – and as they say, the rest is history.

As executive director of Girls Inc. in NYC, Isabel commissioned a Honeywood work that would convey that organization's intention to encourage the development of

"strong, smart and bold" girls. Her work depicts some of the many career paths that were opening up to girls in the 80s, again underscoring visually her belief in the power of girls and young women to create new horizons for themselves.

Today, here in our home in Chicago, one of our proudest treasures is "Go Back and Fetch It," a Honeywood collage given to us upon our departure from Spelman by the Board of Trustees. We hope that someday it will grace the home of one of our two "strong, smart and bold" granddaughters. Is there a Spelman "descriptor" that can replace "strong, smart and bold" with more meaning for Spelmanites?

Varnette herself was a treasure.



Inaugural Gala 1988 watercolor

Varnette Honeywood: Magic

Johnnetta Cole

Spelman College President 1987–1997

When I joined the Spelman College family in 1987, I had never met Varnette Honeywood, but I knew of her as an accomplished visual artist whose vibrant works about African American life tickled my heart and made me smile. With great anticipation I waited for my chance to meet and spend some time with Varnette, an alumna whose personality as well as her art was loved by her Spelman sisters. When that opportunity came, there was something magical about being with Varnette and that same magic was there each and every time we were together.

Our sister Varnette graciously and generously responded to the call to play a prominent role in the life of Spelman throughout the decade of my presidency. It was her watercolor that captured the celebratory spirit around my inauguration. And during the Cole years of 1987–1997, Varnette's wonderful artistry appeared in the college's admission materials and on the covers of *Spelman Messengers* and the annual report that featured the opening of the Camille



1988 Inauguration Varnette Honeywood with President Johnnetta B. Cole

Olivia Hanks Cosby academic center in 1996. In 1992, Varnette spent time at her alma mater as Artist-in-Residence.

Several months before she passed away, I went to see Varnette in her Los Angeles home. Surrounded by the art work she was still producing, despite the intense challenges of her illness, Varnette was then and always will be Spelman's beloved sister artist.

Varnette P. Honeywood: Legacy *A Life Well-lived – A talent well-shared*

Remarks – Funeral Services for Varnette P. Honeywood, C'72 Friday, September 24, 2010

I am Beverly Daniel Tatum, and I humbly greet you in my role as president of Spelman College, where for 129 years we have educated women who change the world. Women like Varnette Patricia Honeywood, Class of 1972.

I join the family, friends and all assembled here as we fondly reflect on Varnette's life and legacy.

It is documented that Varnette was a history major at Spelman before an art professor saw her talent and potential, and gave her a "long talk." As a result, Varnette would go on to major in, and graduate with a degree in art from Spelman College. Although Varnette returned to her hometown of Los Angeles to study and pursue her profession, she remained connected to her alma mater, giving unconditionally of her time and talent on behalf of Spelman for nearly 40 years.

Of her time:

Varnette returned to campus time and time again – to share her artistic gift, experiences and inspiration with Spelman students, faculty, staff and alumnae during such activities as the Founders Day career convocations or serving as Artist-in-Residence. She would return to campus for her class reunion, or an exhibition of her work (such as *Traditions: She Who Learns Teaches*, in April and May of 1987, and *VH 4-Decades: The Art of Varnette P Honeywood*, in April of 1992); or she would visit the campus when in town for the National Black Arts Festival.

PHOTO: BUD SMITH

Change. Means. Action.

The Campaign for Spelman College

News

SPRING 2011

Strong Networks Expand Impact

Every Woman, Every Year Contributes Time and Talent

Alumnae Affairs Broadens Student Mentoring Programs

The Office of Alumnae Affairs is expanding its programming to support one of the goals of College's Strategic Plan for 2015, fostering strong relationships between alumnae and students. Their Alumnae-Student Connections plan includes six areas of focus: One-on-one and group mentoring, shadowing, internships, panels, networking socials, and co-curricular experiences.

Last March, the office piloted their Student Connection, Mentoring and Support program with a focus on connecting students interested in legal careers with alumnae who have experience with the law. Both groups were excited about the opportunities and the benefits.

"Alumnae felt it was a great way to give back and the students thought it was a great way to enhance their Spelman experience," said Sharon Owens, director of the Office of Alumnae Affairs.

Angela Glover, C'93, who participated in the pilot program, agreed: "The law social provided students with a chance to learn about all aspects of career opportunities from knowledgeable alumnae," she said.

The program has since been expanded to include three other disciplines, medicine, financial services, and hospitality over 13 months. Twenty-five students are matched with 25 alumnae in each discipline for one-on-one interactions, as well as collective sessions twice a semester that focus on career-building topics such as

performance image and exposure, trend analysis, networking and personal brand development.

In addition, students are trained on effective mentor relationships, and alumnae provide shadowing opportunities for the students to give them exposure to real-life situations in their particular industries.

Students and alumnae share different types of experiences while participating in the Alumnae-Student Connection Excursions. The partnership with the Spelman Student Government Association and the Office of Student Life & Engagement provides one local outing in the fall and one national trip in the spring.

The events have included excursions to see productions of plays by Pearl Cleage, C'71, and the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater. In March, 50 students and alumnae will travel to Washington, D. C., to connect with alumnae working on Capitol Hill and in the White House.

"The Spelman experience is a cherished one and many students appreciate access to alumnae," said Breyon Dixon, C'2012, the student coordinator for all of the alumnae-student connection programs produced by Alumnae Affairs. "While observing the successful programs, I saw students able to connect and seek personal and professional advice from alumnae they admired."

For more information about participation opportunities or supporting Alumnae-Student Connections, please contact the Office of Alumnae Affairs at (404) 270-5048.



Walmart Sponsors Leadership Development in First Generation Scholars

The Walmart Leadership Scholars Program is designed to develop the leadership qualities and skills of first generation college students to support their successful matriculation at Spelman. The goal of the program, supported financially by Walmart and launched in the spring of 2010 by the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement at Spelman College, is to create the family legacy of a college graduate.

Alumnae have been active participants in the initiative's speaker series, which features storytelling from first generation

Action By the Goals

Global engagement

Twenty Spelman students traveled to Buenos Aires, Argentina, in December as part of the Student Affairs Global Experience.

Opportunities for internships

Nearly 50 companies participated in the Spring Career Fair at Spelman College.

Alumnae connections

The College's Alumnae-Student Connections program expanded to include medicine, financial services, and hospitality.

Leadership development

Senior Sandra Erin Jones won the 2011 Gilliam Fellowship for Advanced Studies in science.

Service learning

The College launched Project Impact, a student-focused service initiative to revitalize the community outside Spelman's gates.



Dr. Nicole LaBeach, C'93, addresses students.

professionals or those who have worked with first-time college students. Rosalind Brewer, C'84, Spelman trustee, executive vice president, Walmart U.S., and president, Walmart Stores South, and Dr. Nicole LaBeach, C'93, were asked by LEADS, which makes an effort to recruit alumnae, to address the 60 students who are involved annually in the program.

"As a Spelman grad, it has always been impressed upon me to help those that are coming behind you navigate where they are going in their careers," said Dr. LaBeach, an executive coach who spoke to the scholars about positioning themselves for greatness, making good decisions, and not being paralyzed by fear. "The students were very receptive and inquisitive about their next moves and how my experience was going to help them progress to their next steps."

Participant Bathsheba Richards, C'2011, is appreciative of the guidance she received from the speakers about networking, time management, and balancing academics with extracurricular activities. "I have learned about communicating better, branding myself, and the importance of maintaining a positive self-image," said Richards.

Trustee Shares Experience with Scholars

Spelman board of trustees member, Vicki Palmer is committed to helping students with academic promise, a commitment to community service, and a demonstrated financial need. Through a scholarship in her name, the first five Vicki Palmer Scholars are reaping mentorship benefits in a unique program established in honor of Palmer, the former executive vice president of financial services and administration at Coca-Cola Enterprises

and a 16-year member of Spelman's board of trustees.

The Vicki R. Palmer Scholarship Program mirrors its namesake's longtime commitment to helping Coca-Cola's diversity and inclusion goals of recruiting, retaining and promoting minorities and women. Designated for all eligible students with academic promise, a commitment to community service, and a demonstrated financial need, the program provides students with a paid professional internship experience at Coca-Cola Enterprises. The scholars receive an annual scholarship award of \$5,000 after the successful completion of their internship.

Before the internship started last summer, Palmer set high expectations for



**Spelman Trustee
Vicki Palmer**

the students and she remained hands on, assisting them throughout their experience. "I told them 'You are my babies and the bar is high, and I expect all of you to exceed the bar.' They promised me they would not let me down and they didn't," said

Palmer, who accompanied the scholars to their formal internship orientation with 95 other Coca-Cola interns. She also helped each with their capstone presentations, even calling in her former employees to provide the scholars with feedback.

The guidance the students received from Palmer during the program fostered a special connection between her and the scholars, who interned in several departments, including Enterprise Project Management and Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability. "Having Mrs. Palmer as a mentor is completely invaluable," said Lauren Brown Jarvis, C'2011. "She really invested time in our progress and provided us with information to help us be successful professionally and academically."

Coca-Cola Supports Intergenerational Leadership

To ensure that Spelman students have exposure to a broad spectrum of leadership models, Spelman and The

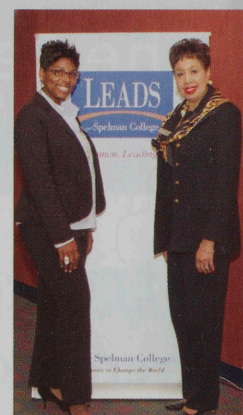
Coca-Cola Foundation developed the Coca-Cola/Spelman Intergenerational Leadership Mentoring Program. Since the program's inception in the spring of 2008, 79 students have benefitted from mentoring relationships with individuals who are leading change in the work force and have demonstrated their abilities to develop others.

Through the program, funded by The Coca-Cola Foundation, mentees learn how to effectively manage roadblocks and develop decision-making skills that accelerate their personal, professional, and community service endeavors.

"My mentor aids me in developing valuable leadership and professional skills by pushing me past my comfort zone, for example speaking in public and conducting informational interviews," said Jasmine West, C'2012.

To enhance the skills the students are developing to become global leaders who excel in diverse environments, a shadowing component has recently been added to the program. Students spend a day with their mentor in their professional environment interacting and asking questions of their mentor's colleagues and participating in work functions like meetings and conference calls.

"This experience helps students learn what they need to be prepared. Seeing what their mentor does day-to-day gives them real exposure to the many different elements of the workplace, whether they're seeing professionals work outside of a 9-to-5 or from a remote location," explained Jane Smith, Ph.D., C'68, executive director of the Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement. "They get to ask questions of professionals, even about appropriate attire. Four-inch heels may not work if your position takes you to a manufacturing plant regularly. Such exposure encourages students to think about the cultures in which they really want to work. It allows them to make decisions about their work life."



**Ashley Gilbert,
C'2013, and mentor
Darryl H. Griffin**

Spelman Leads the Way

As the premier historically Black liberal arts college for women, Spelman College has a long history of producing graduates at the forefront of the arts, child advocacy, finance, law, medicine, public service, science and many other fields. The College's legacy of leadership is being strengthened by its dedication to focusing on sustainability, expanding women's studies, and celebrating works of art by women of African descent.

Spelman's Namesake Building Gets 21st Century Makeover

Keeping in line with the College's environmental efforts, the transformation of Laura Spelman Hall into a state-of-the-art residence hall will qualify the new structure for a LEED Silver certified rating — the leading national sustainability standard. The project, , supports one of the priorities of the Campaign for Spelman College — to improve living and learning environments for the College's millennial students.

The cost of the renovations, including improved dormitory areas for 40 upper-class students and Spelman's first

ever 24-hour study center, is \$9.9 million. The College has secured \$7 million in funding, including several generous gifts made by leadership contributors like The Joseph B. Whitehead Foundation.

"We hope that the campus improvements will enable Spelman to

continue to attract, retain and graduate bright, ambitious young women from all over the country," said P. Russell Hardin, the foundation's president.

Named after the wife of John D. Rockefeller, Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Building for Home Economics opened on campus in 1918 and originally housed the home economics department. The structure has undergone only minor renovations in its lifetime.

The latest update of this historic living and learning environment will include a

new 24-hour dedicated study space with modern amenities such as state-of-the-art computer workstations, individual study group areas, an exercise facility, and ethernet/Wi-Fi access. Improvements to the living spaces include modern furnishings, ethernet/Wi-Fi access, cable television central air, full kitchens, shared bathrooms, lounge areas, and a fully equipped laundry room.

Construction is expected to take 15 months with plans to open the new Laura Spelman for the 2012-2013 academic year. Naming opportunities at the \$10,000 level and above are being offered and include the grand foyer, study areas, exercise facility, computer labs lounge areas, and wireless outdoor commons.

10 at 10 Supports \$1 Million Ford Match for Women's Center

The success of the 10 at 10 initiative is helping move the Spelman College Women's Research and Resource Center toward its goal of meeting a \$1 million challenge grant awarded by the Ford Foundation in 2008. Initially intended to interest 10 alumnae in the class of 1996 to contribute \$10,000 each to the Women's Center, the initiative — spearheaded by Spelman trustee and Women's Center National Advisory Board member Celeste Watkins-Hayes, Ph.D., C'96 — has now garnered support from 14 alumnae totaling \$140,000 and bringing the total amount raised for the match to \$430,000.

"Founded and run by Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ph.D., C'66, the Women's Center is a vital site for women's studies and advocacy projects, archival collections of Black feminist scholar-activists, digital media, and student activist leadership development," said Watkins-Hayes. "We hope to reach at least 20 donors by our May 2011 reunion."



Celeste Watkins-Hayes, C'96

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art Launches the 15 x 15 Acquisitions Initiative

The Spelman College Museum of Fine Art celebrates its 15th anniversary in October 2011. To honor the occasion, the Museum is launching 15 x 15, an initiative to acquire 15 works of art by 15 different artists. The



Chameleon by Ingrid Mwangi Robert Hutter

infusion of new works will ensure the steady growth of the College's permanent collection, and elevate the only museum in the nation dedicated to exhibiting works by and about women of the African Diaspora.

"Every effort will be made to acquire works by an array of emerging, mid-career, and established artists that have been featured in exhibitions that the museum has originated," explained Andrea Barnwell Brownlee, director of the museum.

Four works have already been acquired by the museum with support from donors — including Spelman trustee Vicki Palmer and her husband John — in honor of the 15 x 15 acquisitions initiative. The artists include Nandipha Mntambo, Renée Cox and Ingrid Mwangi Robert Hutter.

A public launch of 15 x 15 will take place on April 20, 2011, and features a conversation with Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims and Dr. Leslie King-Hammond, renowned art historians, art administrators, and curators of *The Global Africa Project*.

For more information about supporting Laura Spelman, the Women's Research and Resource Center, and 15 x 15, please contact the Office of Development at (866) 512-1690.

Giving Opportunities: The Founders Day Challenge

To celebrate our 130th anniversary, Spelman College is inviting 6,000 alumnae to participate in the Founders Day Challenge. Estimated gifts by invitees in this year's challenge will put Spelman within reach of a 50 percent alumnae participation rate — a significant milestone among the nation's women's colleges that will help leverage major gifts to Spelman. To amplify that effect, an anonymous donor will contribute \$250,000 to the College when we meet our donor goal by the deadline, Founders Day, April 11, 2011.

Be a part of this year's Founders Day Challenge, which will significantly multiply the value of your gift. Become one of the Spelman 6,000 today.

To contribute, call (866) 512-1690 or visit <http://www.spelman.edu> and select "Make Your Annual Fund Gift Now."

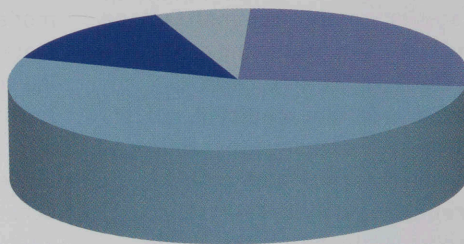
130 Years. Means. Action.

Every woman... Every year!

Goal by Priority

Goal: \$150 Million

Total Raised: \$96 Million



Scholarships

\$80 Million (53%) - Total Raised: \$36 Million

Faculty and Academic Programs

\$40 Million (27%) - Total Raised: \$34 Million

Campus Environment

\$10 Million (7%) - Total Raised: \$9 Million

Annual Fund

\$20 Million (13%) - Total Raised: \$17 Million

Data as of February 28, 2011

The Campaign for Spelman College Donor List

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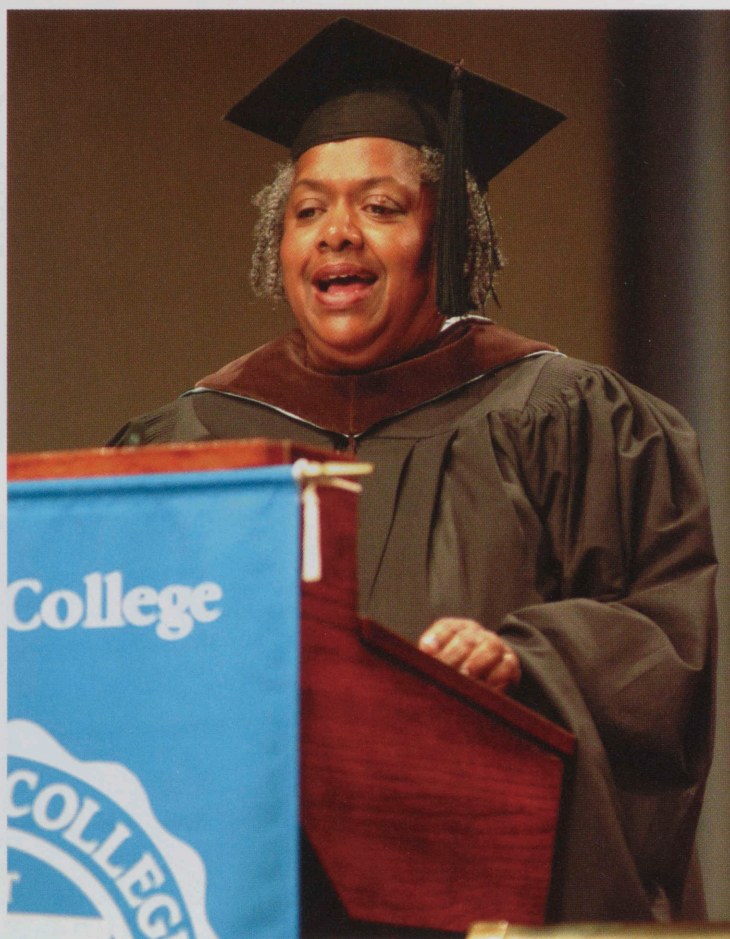
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Founders Day 2005 Varnette Honeywood with President Beverly Daniel Tatum



PHOTOS: JULIE YARBROUGH

Varnette P. Honeywood receives an honorary degree from Spelman College in 2005

Varnette also returned to Spelman to receive some much deserved recognition, including an Alumnae Achievement Award in 2003 and the College's highest honor, the honorary degree, in 2005.

Of her talent:

Spelman has over 25 years of Varnette's vision of Spelman, as depicted in her art. Someone once wrote: "What defines art? Making the audience feel something and think about the world in a new way, from a different perspective, or a broad view is what artistic endeavors are about."

Varnette P. Honeywood, C'72, did just that for Spelman. She made us feel and think. She broadened our perspective and our view.

Varnette's Spelman work began with the piece, "African Women," which served as the poster for the first conven-

tion of the Spelman College Women's Resource & Research Center in 1982.

Her other Spelman works of art include:

Three College Christmas/Holiday cards, the second of which won a coveted Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) award for Spelman.

- The artwork that adorned the cover of Spelman's Admissions materials in the 1980s
- The literature for the inauguration of Spelman's seventh president (Dr. Johnnetta B. Cole)
- Six covers of the College's alumnae magazine, the *Messenger*
- Artwork for the groundbreaking and the 1996 opening of the Camille Olivia Hanks Cosby Academic Center at Spelman College
- The visual theme for the 125th Anniversary of Spelman College in 2006, "The River That Flows Through Time."

Varnette's classmate and former Spelman staff member, Tanya Coleman, C'72, best described the vibrancy of Varnette's artwork when Tanya (as I understand from Jo Moore Stewart, director of publications) reminded the staff that using Varnette's artwork in printed pieces always required a 16-color job rather than the traditional four-color process.

Indeed, Varnette P. Honeywood added new and impactful colors to Spelman's palette and, as a result, captured the bright vision of our past, present and future.

In turn, Varnette will live on through the vivid illustrations of life, love and legacy that her life well-lived and talent well-shared leaves on the hearts and minds of her Spelman sisters, the campus community and the world.

Alumnae Keeping It Real

*Spelman Women Bring Class
and Inspiration to Reality TV*



BY TARESSA STOVALL

Kelly Smith Beaty, C'2002, had been in love with “The Apprentice” reality TV show hosted by real estate magnate, businessman and television personality Donald Trump, since it debuted in 2004, but she never dreamed she’d become a contestant.

In March 2010, two weeks after she lost her job, she learned of a casting call for “The Apprentice” and joined other hopefuls at the Marriot in Atlanta. “It was really one of those ‘Oh, why not?’ on-a-whim things,” she said. The tryouts this year specified “regular people” who were out of work, and they attracted a huge turnout.

After surviving two rounds of casting and submitting a 10-minute video about her life, Kelly flew to Los Angeles for the semifinals along with hundreds of others. “About a week later, I got a call saying they were flying me to New York to do the show. It was a complete whirlwind – a very happy couple of weeks. The first time it all felt real is when the first boardroom piece was taped,” she said.

“I didn’t come in with a game plan or strategy,” Kelly explained. “I didn’t want to be the first to go home. I wanted to play the game, do well and not embarrass my mother.”

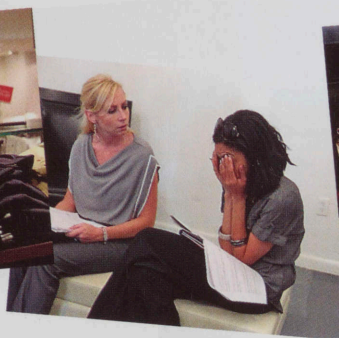
The difference between competing on “The Apprentice” and competing in business “is *everybody* is literally out to get you. Being around that many hungry sharks, it was important for me to figure out exactly who I was up against.”

She held her own until she was “fired” in the sixth week. Still, she views the experience as an unqualified success. “It was never about money and it wasn’t even about being on TV. It was truly the fact that it was the one reality show I would have actually done.”

The biggest surprise was when Donald Trump’s daughter, Ivanka, approached



Kelly Smith Beaty, C'2002



"The difference between competing on 'The Apprentice' and competing in business 'is everybody is literally out to get you.'"

—KELLY SMITH BEATY, C'2002

Kelly after she was cut. "She came to me in the boardroom and said that she was very impressed with the way that I'd carried myself, and that I should be proud of my performance in the competition. That was the greatest compliment I could have been paid."

Kelly learned a great deal from this experience and has this advice to give:

- Be yourself. Be assertive and your own advocate but not bitchy or boastful.
- Don't expect friends to put you before themselves.
- Life is filled with semicolons, not periods. It's never too late to start over.
- Leadership is not about money or titles. It's about what you do.
- When others laugh at you, you're probably closest to your breakthrough.

Kelly recently accepted a position as vice president of marketing and communications for Dress for Success Worldwide in New York City.

While Kelly is the most recent alumna to appear on reality TV, a strong sampling of other Spelman women have graced reality television with their presence, including:

Autumn Lewis, C'2000, edged close to the finish line in season seven of "Hell's Kitchen," which aired in the summer of 2010. After making the cut, Autumn told Fox News that she was both excited and very nervous. "I've worked in kitchens with screamers and yellers, but I think [Chef Gordon Ramsay is] on a level of his own."

She and another contestant were cut following a dinner service in which each of the four remaining finalists took turns running the kitchen. "I'm handing you the reins of Hell's Kitchen, and each and every one of you is going to have to show me what it's like running it as your kitchen," Gordon told the contestants.

Now a personal chef in North Hollywood, California, Autumn found value in the culinary competition. "I got stronger and stronger and I never gave up," she told *Reality TV World*.

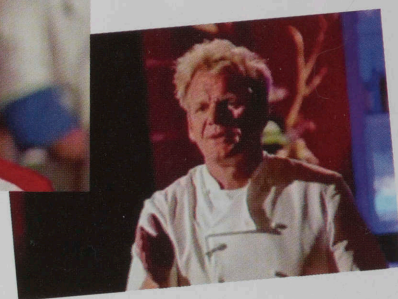
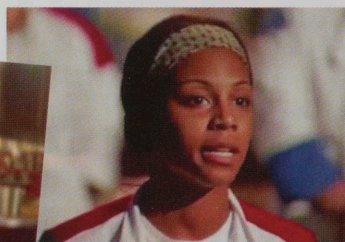
She also revealed her secret weapons for great cooking: "You can't go wrong with some really good salt ... and butter. How could I forget butter?"

Bridget G. Bland, C'2004, and **Kelly Mitchell, C'2005**, helped light up "Harlem Heights," a reality docu-drama about a group of friends moving from college into the working world to make it big in New York City, which aired for a single season in spring 2010.

Bridget, an English and women's studies major at Spelman, juggles multiple careers as an attorney, an entertainment writer for AOL's *Black Voices*, and an independent social media manager for several major corporations. A graduate of Rutgers University Law School, she's lived in Harlem since 2004.



Autumn Lewis, C'2000



"I've worked in kitchens with screamers and yellers, but I think Chef Gordon Ramsay (far right) is on a level of his own."

—AUTUMN LEWIS, C'2000

Though she's worked in entertainment – including as a producer/writer at MTV – Bridget said she "never wanted to be famous." When one of the show's creators asked her to join the cast, she agreed because "I really enjoyed the idea that this was a show that incorporated positive images of African Americans, which you don't see a lot in reality TV series." The overall experience was fun, Bridget said. "I had a really great year, hanging out with my friends, with our lives being taped everywhere we went for about eight months."

Kelly, C'05, an English major from Somerset, New Jersey, was also recruited by a friend who helped create "Harlem Heights." "They said they were looking for someone who was somewhat of a socialite, really focused on her work and really fun," she said. The overall experience differed from her expectations. "I was reminded how little control you have over your image. That was eye-opening. It brings a lot of self-awareness because you have to be yourself and be confident in who you are since you can't control what happens in the editing process."

Despite the producers' attempts "to create conflicts and bickering," Kelly found it to be "a unique life experience, a story to tell. It definitely altered some relationships ... it was ... a little out of my comfort zone, but I'm glad I had it and I wouldn't take it back," she said.

Both Kelly and Bridget said that their Spelman experience prepared them for success in all of their endeavors, and gave them the extra confidence to thrive on "Harlem Heights."

One of Spelman's most televised alumnae, **Keshia Knight Pulliam, C'2001**, has lent her star power to reality TV. Shortly after graduation, the sociology major joined several other TV child stars on a celebrity version of "The Weakest Link" game show, winning the competition and donating her \$37,000 in winnings to Spelman. She went on to win a celebrity edition of "Fear Factor" in 2003, and took part in "Celebrity Mole 2: Yucatan."

Rolonda Watts, C'80, who has enjoyed a successful, multi-faceted television career that includes dramatic and comedic roles, voice-over work, an internationally syndicated hit talk show and

much more, was featured in Season Six of Tyra Banks's mega-popular "America's Next Top Model."

A Spelman family was featured on the BET reality series, *Baldwin Hills*, in 2007. **Ashley E. Calloway, C'2012**, and her parents – actress Vanessa Bell Calloway and anesthesiologist and Morehouse man Dr. Anthony Calloway – appeared in the show about well-to-do African American teens living south of Los Angeles from 2007 to 2009.

Spelman's own college archivist and historian, **Taronda Spencer, C'80**, was also a contestant on "The Weakest Link." After several rounds of questions, the history major was invited to compete. She taped the show in California in November 2001 and it aired in April 2002. "I got to the elimination round, but lost," said Taronda. "It's a winner-take-all contest. I answered my first question correctly, [then] in the second round, I couldn't remember Beowulf," Taronda said. "Doing a game show is harder than it looks. It was fun, but I don't think I'd do it again."

Spelman women have appeared on other reality TV programming. **Omelika**

No Skinny Dipping! No Hot Tubs!



Name: Reisha
Age: 30
Occupation: Owner, Info Systems Firm
Hometown: Fort Washington, Md.
What I'm Looking For: A tall, educated, God-fearing black man
Turn-Ons: Dance hall music, well-dressed men
Turnoffs: Earrings, kissing on the first date

"Before going online, I used to think that all of the good men were gay or already married."

Reisha L. Raney, C'95, braved the cameras to share her quest for Mr. Right in the ABC five-part documentary, "Hooking Up,"

Kuumba, C'81, who graduated from Spelman as Avis Bynum, made it through the first round of "America's Got Talent" in 2008, but elected not to continue the competition because of a conflicting opportunity, the long sought-after chance to perform in the renowned annual Dance Africa concert at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) in New York. Omelika's Giwayen Mta (Elephant Women) Dance Company was invited to audition for "America's Got Talent." Jerry Springer was the host and David Hasselhoff was a judge. "We did traditional African dance and drumming for the audition, and the judges said they wondered how marketable that was in America," she recalled. "Jerry Springer was very encouraging and said to be true to the culture. That changed my opinion" of the TV shock jock, she confided.

Helynn Stephens Nelson, C'2001, credits an appearance on "Emeril Green on Planet Green" on the Discovery Network with boosting her culinary confidence. In the July 14, 2008, episode, "A Winning Combo," famed chef Emeril Lagasse helps Helynn, described in the online show promo as "great at everything except cooking. Her husband, on the other hand, can make a gourmet meal out of beans and boudin. Helynn's competitive nature won't allow her to settle for second place, even in the kitchen."

First, they taped a dinner party for six of the couple's friends, where Helynn cooked, to less than enthusiastic responses.

Next, she met Emeril in the Whole Foods store in Fairfax, Virginia. "We cooked a meal together in the middle of Whole Foods on an open set, so customers were coming up and everything. At the end, my husband came up and tried the meal and gave it a thumbs-up." The takeaway is that Helynn is now "less intimidated in the kitchen."

Reisha L. Raney, C'95, braved the cameras to share her quest for Mr. Right in the ABC five-part documentary, "Hooking Up," which aired in July, 2005. Reisha was one of a dozen women featured in the exploration of online dating. "I'd started dating on Match.com because Ted Koppel said on "Nightline" that more singles were meeting online." The documentary producers approached Reisha through Match.com and selected her, though she hadn't yet been on a date.

Her motivation for taking part in the documentary was more socially conscious than romantic. "'The Apprentice' had just done the first season and I felt that Omorosa was exaggerating [characteristics] just to become a character at the expense of Black women in general. When ABC contacted me, I was like, 'Why am I going to put my dating life out in public?' Then I thought, if I don't do it, somebody else will and they might try to exploit it like Omorosa and put another negative image of us in the public. I went to Spelman; I felt an obligation to try my best to put the best image possible of Black women in the media."

Reisha, who earned a dual degree in math from Spelman and mechanical engineering from Georgia Tech and is president and chief executive officer of the Ency de Corporation in Fort Washington, Maryland, was selected even though she told the producers that while she was open to dating men of different races offline, she wouldn't do so online.

The camera crew followed Reisha for four or five months as she talked on the phone and dated at least eight men, including 10 dates with one guy. About 75 percent of the men she met online said they'd like to get to know her *after* the show was done filming. While she achieved her goal of putting a positive image out there, Reisha said she found it frustrating that they boiled each participant down into a character "by focusing on one strand of your personality."

Reisha is still happily single, but no longer dating online.

When producers want sisters with brains, substance, class and style to spare, they know the power and value of the Spelman brand and how beautifully it translates to TV.

TARESSA STOVALL is the author of several books including, *My Blue Suede Shoes: Four Novellas about healing from different kinds of domestic violence, and part of the Uppity News Network (www.UppityNews.com)*. She lives in Montclair, New Jersey, with her family.

Sister to Sister:

SPELMAN ALUMNAE...CELEBRATING 130 YEARS AND LEADING

For 130 years Spelman College has educated and nurtured generations of women who go forth and change the world. Some might ask how Spelman has sustained this rich legacy. Perhaps, one need only look at the first four lines of our Spelman Hymn to get the answer to what motivates us:

*Spelman thy name we praise
Standards and honor raise
We'll ever faithful be
Throughout eternity*

As alumnae, we are true blue; our love and passion for our alma mater is like none other. The standards of excellence and honor raised in us as Spelman students motivate achievement toward new heights. We know the value of a Spelman education and how it enriched our lives. And we are loyal and faithful to protecting this legacy for future generations of Spelman women.

Last year, we set a new standard when 39 percent of our alumnae made a gift to the College. Two factors that motivated us to achieve such extraordinary heights were: a \$300,000 dollar matching gift from an anonymous donor, and our determination to protect our legacy by ensuring that we had the resources to graduate another class of Spelman women. In doing this, Spelman became a leader in alumnae participation amongst historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

What's next? Each of us must move forward and continue elevating our alma mater. As we approach the next milestone in Spelman's history – 130 years and leading, we realize that Spelman not only can compete as a top HBCU, we must set the standard and become a leader amongst all liberal arts and women's colleges. We are among the likes of Smith, Mount Holyoke, Barnard, Agnes Scott and Scripps College. To reach this milestone, we must set a new goal of increasing alumnae participation to 50 percent by the end of the 150 million dollar campaign in 2014. At 50 percent, we will have one of the highest participation rate among all women's colleges, not just HBCUs.

To help us reach our goal and in celebration of our 130th birthday, we have set our 2011 goal at 42 percent, which equals a total of 6,000 donors. We are currently at 1,277 alumnae donors and need 4,723 more to make a gift to the college by Founders Day, April 11, 2011. To amplify this effect, an anonymous donor will contribute \$250,000 to the College when we achieve our goal. This will significantly multiply the value of

your gift and move Spelman toward the 50 percent mark.

Spelman can only reach this goal when we as alumnae get down in the trenches to make it happen. We only need to look to last year to see that collective effort equals outstanding results! After all we are dynamic, creative, talented women, who always achieve our goal! Each alumna must find her own way to engage her fellow sisters and give back to Spelman. As the only student trustee to return as a board trustee, Celeste Watkins Hayes, C'96, was determined to raise the largest class gift in celebration of her 15-year reunion. She challenged a circle of sisters within her class to join her in becoming members of an elite group of donors that pledge to give \$10,000 to the Women's Center Ford Foundation matching gift. She affectionately calls this group the "10 at 10." Celeste demonstrated her passion for this cause by making the leading \$10,000 dollar commitment to Spelman College, and now 13 of her sisters have followed her example.

Cynthia Jackson, C'81, understands the need to have each classmate step up and financially support the campaign. She has challenged her classmates to give according to their capacity. As class president, Cynthia has a special relationship with her classmates, so she is making personal calls and visits to each one of her sisters to solicit their gift. Currently her class is leading in financial commitments.

So what is your strategy to help us achieve our goal? What will you do to be faithful to Spelman? Will you reach out to your Spelman sisters on Facebook and Twitter? Are you willing to make personal phone calls and visits to solicit gift? Or perhaps you have another creative way to assist us in reaching our goal. In honor of our 130th birthday, I encourage you to reach out to 30 of your Spelman sisters and ask them to make a gift to the College. If everyone will do her part, and I know you will, we can achieve our goal of 6,000 donors by Founders Day.

Happy 130th Birthday Spelman College! We as alumnae will forever be faithful to do our part to ensure that the future of Spelman College sustains the next generation.

Sisterly,

Sharon E. Owens

Sharon Owens, C'76
Director of Alumnae



1935

Marguerite Simon*Personal:* Celebrated her 98th birthday on October 30, 2010.

1939

Dorothea Jackson*Professional:* Honored at Georgia Tech's Women's Leadership Conference in October 2010, as they celebrated the 50th anniversary of the matriculation of Black students, for being one of the first Black women to attend the college.

1941

Vivian Hunt Johnson*Personal:* Celebrated her 90th birthday on June 26, 2010 at a luncheon hosted by her daughter.

1942

Georgia Dickens*Personal:* Celebrated her 90th birthday among Spelman sisters at the home of Evelyn Chisolm, C'49, in December 2010.

1943

Elizabeth G. King*Professional:* Honored as a 2010 Athens Legacy Recipient for her public service as an outstanding educator and coach in Athens, Georgia.

1958

Pauline E. Drake*Professional:* Honored at a tribute by the Pauline E. Drake Scholars on November 12, 2010, at the NASA Auditorium in the Science Center, for her dedicated years of service to the Pauline E. Drake Scholars Program.

1964

Eleanor Hoytt*Professional:* Hosted a blog radio discussion about Black women's health and affordable health care in September 2010.**Henrietta Turnquest***Professional/Personal:* Featured in the December 2010 edition of *People You Need to Know* magazine in the article, "Attorney Henrietta Turnquest: Building a Lasting Legacy."

1968

Jane E. Smith*Professional:* Honored with the Trailblazer Award at the 100 Black Women Metropolitan Atlanta Chapter's 14th annual "Unsung Heroines" luncheon on August 17, 2010, at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta.

1969

Laura English-Robinson*Professional:* Performed a diverse repertoire of classical music and spirituals with Dr. Joyce Johnson in Sisters Chapel on November 7, 2010. The performance was presented by The Pro-Mozart Society of Atlanta and the Atlanta Music Club.

1970

Joyce Dorsey*Professional:* Served as the keynote speaker at My Girlfriends, Inc.'s 2nd Annual Women's Empowerment Conference and Expo Propel 2010 on November 13, 2010, at the Georgia International Convention Center.

1973

Delores L. McCollum*Professional:* Published the book *If Bible Stories Were Reported in Today's Headlines* by RoseDog Books in 2010.

1974

Deborah A. Robinson*Professional:* Retired on June 15, 2010, from the Duval County Public Schools in Jacksonville, Florida, after 33 years of service as a school guidance counselor. She celebrated her retirement on August 7 with more than 150 guests including 26 former students ranging in age from 17 to 46.

1976

Marla Currie*Professional:* Published The Urban Shopper web magazine featuring product reviews, consumer news, profiles and resources.**Brenda Stanford***Professional:* Received a proclamation from the Atlanta City Council in recognition of her efforts towards November being celebrated as National Epilepsy Month.

1977

Geneva H. Baxter*Professional:* Quoted in the article, "College 101 for Freshmen," in *Jet* magazine, the August 30, 2010, issue, highlighting the importance of student study habits.

1980

Phyllis Anderson*Professional:* Featured in a networking event at Spelman College on October 7, 2010.

1981

Tanya Walton Pratt*Professional:* Confirmed by U.S. Senate for a seat on the federal bench in the southern district of Indiana. She is the first African American to be named a federal judge in Indiana.

1983

Carretta Holliday Eke*Professional:* Celebrated 11 years of success for the *Call Center Times*, the Eke family business.

1984

Rosalind G. Brewer*Professional:* Opening speaker for GreenBusiness Works Expo in Atlanta in October 2010 as an executive vice president of Walmart and regional head of America's largest retailer. Named one of *Fortune's* 50 Most Powerful Women in 2010.

1986

Dázon Dixon Diallo*Professional:* Featured in The Center for Health Disparities Research & Education's "Healthy Loving is Healthy Living: Women Taking Risks for Love in the Age of HIV/AIDS," talk on November 18, 2010, at Spelman College.

1988

April Barnett*Professional:* Launched Fuzzy Babies, a pet-sitting business, in 2010.**Mia Fuse Chidebelu-Eze***Education:* Received her MBA in public administration from Ashford University in Clinton, Iowa, in November 2010.**Melynee Leftridge***Professional:* Appointed judge on the Magistrate Court of Fulton County on July 22, 2010.**Subriana McFadden Pierce***Professional:* Recognized by *The Network Journal* as one of the "25 Influential Black Women in Business" for 2011 and featured in the November 2010 issue of *People on the Move*.

1989

Monica McCoy Purdy*Professional:* Appointed in June, 2010, as an associate municipal court judge for the City of Dallas, Texas. The appointment is for a two-year term.**Tomika DePriest***Professional:* Named to the Board of Directors of Public Broadcasting Atlanta (WABE 90.1FM and PBA-30). Also, Ms. DePriest was voted chair-elect of the Black Women Film Network. She will become the new board chair June 2011.

1990

Traci Blackwell*Professional:* Named in the September 2010 issue of *Essence* magazine as a speaker for the Unleash the Power in You Women's Conference.**Ngiri Lawrence***Professional:* Left her position at Comcast on December 23, 2010, to run her franchise, Granny Nannies, full-time.

1991

Tracey Hughes*Professional:* Launched a devotional blog, in October 2010. She also writes the column, "Pew Talk," on her church's website.

1992

Marlisa Johnson*Professional:* Appointed to the Advisory Board of the University of California College Prep Online Program.

1993

Shari Mattison Coleman

Professional: Celebrated 11th Anniversary as first lady of Fifth Street Missionary Baptist Church in Norman, Oklahoma.

Karin Gist

Professional: Writer for top ranked Disney Original Movie, *Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam*, which premiered on September 3, 2010.

Elyce Strong Mann

Married: Seith Mann, in Atlanta on April 3, 2010.

Tameka Montgomery

Professional: Appointed to The Colorado Black Chamber of Commerce board of directors for 2011.

Darla Lynn Neal

Birth: Daughter Zoe Elektra born on November 17, 2009.

Professional: Named assistant principal for the University Prep Science and Math Middle School in Detroit in March 2010.

Toni Herron Savage

Married: Mark Savage at the Intercontinental Hotel O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois, on October 23, 2010. Their wedding was featured in the October 31, 2010, issue of *The New York Times*.

Kai Williams Slaton

Education: Received her master of library science degree from the University of North Texas, College of Information in August 2010.

Maricia Bennekin Woodham

Professional: Promoted to administrative law judge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on January 3, 2011.

1994

Cherise Belnavis Johnson

Professional: Served as chair for the Martin Luther King, Jr., national holiday celebration planning committee for the city of Charlotte. She was the mistress of ceremonies at their event on January 17, 2011. Also, Candra Davis, C'96, participated in the event with the Leap of Faith Dance Company.

Tara Jones

Professional: Recently joined BET Networks as vice president for public affairs.

1995

Shani Curry

Professional: Accepted a position at SUNY Canton, teaching criminal justice.

Mendi Lewis Obadike

Professional: Recently completed a three-year postdoctoral fellowship at Princeton University and was appointed assistant professor in humanities and media studies at Pratt Institute. She is also an artist-in-residence at the Tribeca Center for Performing Arts and a poetry editor for *Fence* magazine, an online publication.

Morrisa Rice

Professional: Recognized by Surgeon General Vice Admiral Regina Benjamin for role as lieutenant commander and senior public health analyst and received the 2009 Health Service Responder of the Year award on May 25, 2010.

1996

Candra Davis

Professional: Participated with the Leap of Faith Dance Company in the Martin Luther King, Jr. national holiday celebration for the city of Charlotte on January 17, 2011. Cherise Belnavis Johnson, C'94, served as chair of the planning committee for the event.

Jamila Hunter

Professional: Named vice president of comedy development for ABC.

Andrea Ford Wilkerson

Professional: Appointed consumer & market knowledge (CMK) senior manager for North America Baby Care and Relationship Marketing on February 15, 2011. She will provide CMK leadership across the North America Pampers business to influence strategies and grow the business. Additionally, she will play a pivotal role in shaping the course for developing relationship marketing across the globe.

1997

Yvette Brown

Married: James E. Brown IV at The Word Church in Warrensville Heights, Ohio, on May 23.

Keyoka Smith

Birth: Son Hampton Michael Ade Smith born November 11, 2010.

Tiffanie Stuckie

Birth: Daughter Corine Kimberly Stucky born May 10, 2010.

1998

Tia Fuller

Professional: Mentioned in the article, "Turn Your Headphones Up: A Jazz Crib Sheet," written by Jalyah Burrell, C'2002, on September 20, 2010, in *Clutch Magazine* online.

Christina Hayes

Married: Paul Miller, July 4, 2010, Atlanta.

Avery Sunshine (Denise White)

Professional: Performed in *I Dream: The Story of a Preacher From Atlanta* directed by Jasmine Guy at The Alliance Stage at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, July 2010. Nia Lancelin, C'2009, and Jazmine Dinkins, C'2010, were also a part of the cast. Featured in September 2010 *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* article, "Avery Sunshine Brings Warmth in New CD," highlighting her new self-titled album.

1999

Malikha Mallette

Professional: Selected as one of the top 10 finalists for "Live with Regis and Kelly's Women of Radio Co-Host for a Day Search" in August 2010.

A. R. Tulani Grundy Meadows

Married: Othello H. Meadows III in Atlanta on September 12, 2010. The wedding was featured on *Essence.com*'s "Bridal Bliss."

Joy Singleton

Birth: Son Marcus Singleton II born on April 25, 2010.

2000

Tai Beauchamp

Professional: Featured in the article, "Closet Envy: Tai Beauchamp," on October 6, 2010, on *Essence.com*. She also emceed the 20th Anniversary Covenant House Candlelight Vigil in Times Square in New York on November 16, 2010.

Phylicia Fant

Professional: Promoted to vice president, media relations, at Universal Motown Records in May 2010.

Jeanine Hays

Professional: Featured in the article, "Stylemaker Spotlight: Jeanine Hays, Legal Eagle Trades Cases for Design," in the Home section of the January 9, 2011, issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *SFGate.com*.

Kimya Imani Jackson

Professional: One of the featured images in the *How Philly Moves* exhibition, mural and video.

K. Jacquelyn Omotalade

Professional: Named in the article "40 Under 40: From the Verizon Studio," in the November 2010 issue of *Pittsburgh Magazine*.

2001

Andrea Jackson Butler

Married: Richard Butler, Jr., in Atlanta on October 2, 2010.

Melanie E. Jones

Professional: Named the 2010 Young Professional of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce in Columbia, South Carolina. ○

Danica Camille Tisdale

Married: Damany Morris Fisher in Charleston, South Carolina, on October 30, 2010.

Take Note!



On August 22, 2010, **Christine King Farris, C'48**, and Isaac Newton Farris, Sr. renewed their marriage vows on their 50th wedding anniversary. The ceremony took place at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta with a reception immediately following at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta. Ms. King Farris and **Virginia T. Dowell, C'47**, were mentioned in the Oct. 29-Nov. 4, 2010, issue of the *Atlanta Voice* in the Metro Roundup previewing the National Alumnae Association of Spelman College Atlanta Chapter's 33rd Scholarship Brunch and Fashion Show where both women were honored.

WXIA 11Alive TV in Atlanta aired "Finishing the Dream: Learning from the Civil Rights Era," on December 11, 2010, at 2 p.m. and on myAtTV, Channel 36 at 9 p.m. The town hall meeting was taped in the Cosby Academic Center Auditorium on September 16 and featured President Beverly Daniel Tatum, **Elder Bernice King, C'85**, and Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed.

Jerri DeVard, C'79, Spelman College Trustee, was appointed executive vice president and chief marketing officer for Nokia, the world's largest maker of mobile phones. She started her new role, based in the London office, on January 1, 2011, and is responsible for all of Nokia's marketing, brand management, communications and selected industry collaboration activities. Her announcement was featured in numerous print and online media outlets.

Actress **Rolonda Watts, C'80**, starred in the Christmas movie, "Christmas Mail," released in December 2010. The film is a holiday romantic comedy also starring Ashley Scott and A.J. Buckley.

Ernestine W. Brazeal, C'63, and **Sylvia T. Robinson, C'65**, traveled to Nairobi, Kenya in November 2010 to celebrate Ms. Brazeal's 70th birthday. The pair, who attended Spelman's nursery school together, were hosted by **Wambui Ngugi, C'2002**, and her family. Ms. Brazeal met Ms. Ngugi when she was 14 in Nairobi. After hearing of Ms. Ngugi's desire to attend Spelman to become a leader in her country, Ms. Brazeal with the help of her family and her community, sponsored all expenses and provided room and board at her home. Ms. Ngugi, a Political Science major, earned her degree in four years and currently works in The Office of the President where she plays an important role in the reworking of the constitution, including services to the youth, the handicapped and disenfranchised populations of Kenya.

The Honorable Harriet M. Murphy, C'49, and **The Honorable Bernette Johnson, C'64**, were inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame at the 24th Annual Hall of Fame Luncheon during the National Bar Association's 85th annual Convention & Exhibits in New Orleans at the New Orleans Marriott on August 12, 2010. This is the highest honor bestowed by the National Bar Association upon members of the Bar who have served long and gallantly in the pursuit of justice and equality before the courts of the United States of America. Judge Murphy was featured in two newspaper articles, *The Villager* in Austin, TX, on September 3, 2010 regarding her induction and in *The Daily Texan* on August 2, 2010, in the article "Former Austin Judge Talks Texas Admissions."



2002

Jalylah Burrell

Professional: Wrote the article, "Turn Your Headphones Up: A Jazz Crib Sheet," published on September 20, 2010, in Clutch Magazine online.

Kafia Haile

Professional: Earned a certificate in interfaith conflict resolution from the United States Institute of Peace in 2009, the Global War on Terrorism Civilian Service Medal from the United States Department of Defense in 2009 and began serving as a cultural analyst for ADDX Corporation.

Jade Irving

Professional: Launched a clothing drive for Dress for Success Atlanta via her blog, PeachCityStyle.com, in November 2010.

2003

Lynnette D. Espy

Professional: Elected treasurer of the National Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division during the organization's 85th annual convention held in New Orleans in August 2010.

Meagan Tolentino Garland

Married: Voltaire Rico Sterling (Morehouse) at Old South Church in Boston. Their marriage was featured in the December 13, 2010, issue of *Jet* magazine.

Jocelyn M. Griffin

Education: Received her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law.

Courtney Jones

Education: Received a master's degree of public health from Georgia State University in May 2010.

Shayla Gordon

Birth: Twins Arielle Grace and Israel Glenn born on November 9, 2010, in Georgia.

Titilayo Tinubu

Education: Awarded a full scholarship to attend the University of California – Berkeley School of Law beginning in the fall 2010.

2004

Ahsaki Baptist

Professional: Honored by the Young Lawyers Division of the Tennessee Bar Association as a Star of the Quarter for her work in developing the Diversity Leadership Institute in November 2010.

Anatasha Crawford

Professional: Participated in the panel discussion, "How to Select a Graduate School," on September 30, 2010, at Spelman College. Joined the Spelman College faculty through the Fellowship in Research and Science Teaching Program.

Johnecia Hardaway

Education: Earned her doctorate in business administration with a concentration in international business from Argosy University.

Maya Prabhu

Professional: Joined the Patch as an editor in September 2010. Her work can be seen at GlenBurniePatch.com.

Victoria Ward

Professional: Joined The National Council on Aging as administrative project coordinator in December 2010.

2005

Christina Arthur

Professional: Participated in a delegation of transportation engineers who traveled to different cities in China in November 2010, exchanging ideas about transportation planning with local representatives.

Chelsey Rodgers

Professional: Included in the 2010 edition of *Who's Who in Black Washington, D.C.* She received an award at an official ceremony held in Washington on September 15, 2010.

2007

Chantel Monique Bryant

Professional: Began serving as a Mental Health Court monitor in Jacksonville, Florida, in January 2011.

Kristen Jarrett

Professional: Accepted a position in November 2010 as the new recruitment and staffing manager

for the D.C. Teaching Fellows through the New Teacher Project in Washington, D.C.

Jasmine Smothers

Professional: Serving as associate pastor at Atlanta First United Methodist Church.

2008

Acasia Barrett

Married: Christopher Olson (Morehouse) in Fort Belvoir, Virginia on May 30, 2010.

Hellana Irene Hayes

Married: Shannon Jerome Cox at The Ridgedale Church of Christ in Chattanooga on August 28, 2010.

Jessica Rowland

Professional: Keynote Address speaker for Spelman's Summer Research Symposium on Friday, July 23, 2010.

Paige Simpson

Professional: Promoted to recruiting and talent development manager for Disability Group, Inc. in Los Angeles.

2009

Yada Beener

Professional: Launched a daycare service for young children in the Atlanta area.

Cassi Davis

Professional: Performed the song, "We Are Christmas," with the Spelman College Glee Club during the 84th Annual Morehouse/Spelman College Christmas Carol Concert in December 2010.

Tiwanne Gifford

Professional: Featured writer in *Atlanta Journal-Constitution's* Opinion section in the article "Giving Foster Children a Voice" in the July 22, 2010, edition.

Nia Lancelin

Professional: Performed in *I Dream: The Story of a Preacher From Atlanta*, directed by Jasmine Guy at The Alliance Stage at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, July 2010. Jazmine Dinkins, C'2010, and Avery Sunshine (Denise White), C'98, were also a part of the cast.

Kyasha Moore

Professional: Conducted research in Salvador da Bahia on reproductive healthcare access for Afro-Brasilian women in 2010.

Roxanne Samuels

Education: Participated in a medical mission trip with Florida State University College of Medicine to Managua, Nicaragua, in July 2010.

2010

Jazmine Dinkins

Professional: Performed in *I Dream: The Story of a Preacher From Atlanta*, directed by Jasmine Guy at The Alliance Stage at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta, July 2010. Nia Lancelin, C'2009 and Avery Sunshine (Denise White), C'98, were also a part of the cast.

Daryllynn Nelson

Professional: Traveled to Tanzania, Africa, to conduct public health research sponsored by a grant awarded to Spelman and Morehouse Colleges by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Erica Wherry

Professional: Profiled in the article, "A Conyers Girl in Madagascar," in the RockdaleNews.com on November 25, 2010, highlighting her 27-month Peace Corps assignment to teach English in Madagascar.

Corin White

Education: Pictured in the article, "Professors Use Local Environment to Increase Their Research Efforts," published October 28, 2010, in the Kansas State Collegian online.

Remington Rochelle Wiley

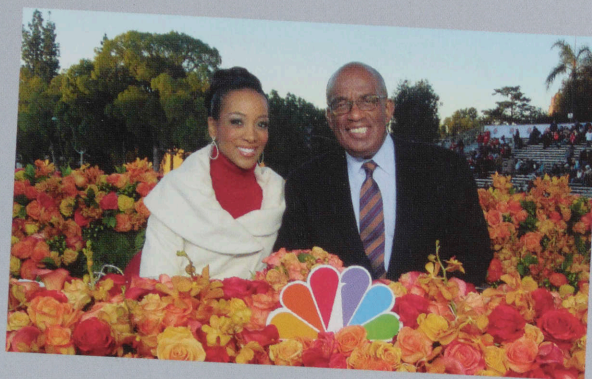
Professional: Pictured in "EbonyJet" online magazine's "Campus Queens" profile in June 2010.

Ashlei Williams

Professional: Selected as one of six 2010–2011 Urban Prep Academy Fellows.

Take Note!

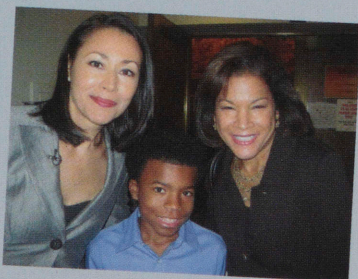
"Access Hollywood" television journalist **Shaun Robinson's, C'84**, recent visit to Atlanta was covered in the *AJC.com* on November 26, 2010. Ms. Robinson was in Atlanta to interview and be interviewed by television show host, Mo'Nique. She also co-hosted this year's Rose Parade with *The Today Show* star Al Roker on January 1, 2011, on NBC.



On November 7, 2010, **Major General Marcelite J. Harris, C'64** was honored with the Trailblazer Award at *Black Girls Rock!*, an awards show on BET highlighting the accomplishments of exceptional women of color who have made outstanding contributions in their careers, and who stand as inspirational and positive role models in their communities. Other honorees included actresses Ruby Dee and Raven-Symone; and author Dr. Iyanla Vanzant.

Wanda Brown-Cook, C'72, has been named Atlanta Public Schools High School Teacher of the Year 2010-2011. She is a teacher of American literature and a writer's workshop at Carver School of the Arts. Her non-traditional teaching strategies motivate students to make steady progress over the years. Her goal is to develop students into critical and independent thinkers. She often says, "Our children are our greatest investment. Let us deposit our manpower, time, and money to receive a great profit."

Susan Johnson, C'83, appeared on *The Today Show* on August 12, 2010 on a "Today's Working Woman" segment discussing whether working moms are penalized by employers. Shown here with Ann Curry (left) of the *The Today Show* and her son, Cameron Kinder.

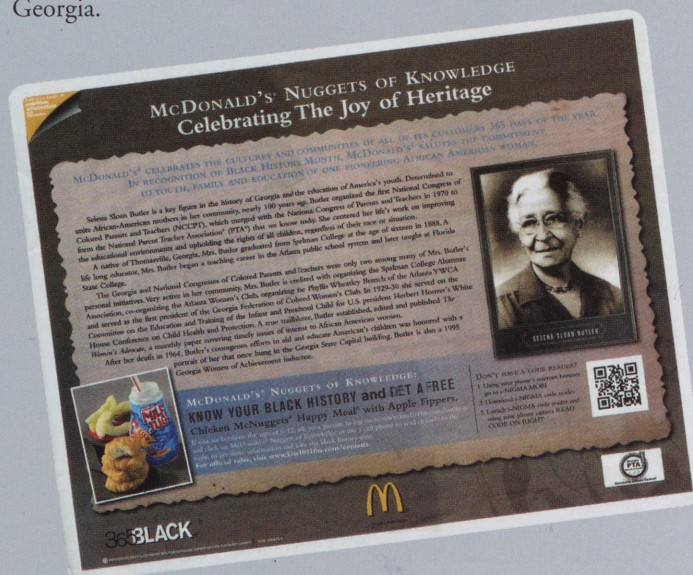


On August 25, 2010, Heineken USA announced the appointment of **Kheri Holland Tillman, C'92**, as vice president of trade marketing and sales strategy to help focus and enhance the company's efforts in creating the industry standard in delivering marketing programs to wholesalers, retailers and consumers. She joined the company in 2007 as vice president for the Amstel Light and Dos Equis brands.

Dr. Fleda Jackson, C'73, received the Live United Award from the metropolitan Atlanta United Way in 2010 for her work as the co-chair for the Babies Born Healthy Initiative. She was also nominated and approved by the White House and the Secretary of Health and Human Services to serve on the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant Mortality.

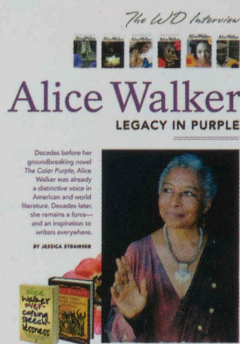
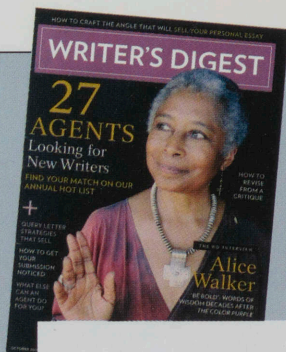
Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed named **Cathy Hampton, C'89**, his choice for City Attorney of the City of Atlanta on September 17, 2010. Ms. Hampton is the former chief legal officer, general counsel and secretary at RARE Hospitality International, Inc. Her areas of expertise include the management of litigation, employment, real estate, licensing, team development, outside counsel, cost containment measures and budgeting. She was chosen from five candidates recommended to Mayor Reed and City of Atlanta Chief Operating Officer Peter Aman by a 10-member search committee; and confirmed by The Atlanta City Council.

On November 11, 2010, **Stacey Abrams, C'95**, was chosen by Democrats in the Georgia House as the minority leader for the 2011 legislative session. This is the top position for the Democrats and Ms. Abrams is the first woman to hold the position in Georgia.



During the month of February 2011, more than 280 metro Atlanta McDonald's restaurants honored **Selena Sloan Butler, H.S. 1881**, by offering a commemorative tray liner featuring Ms. Butler and a link for children ages 6-12 to go online and take the McDonald's Nuggets of Knowledge Black History Quiz. Ms. Butler organized the first National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers and co-founded the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which is now the National Parent Teacher Association.

Literary great **Alice Walker** (**former student**) wrote the article, “Saying Goodbye to My Friend Howard Zinn,” published in *The Boston Globe* and Boston.com on January 31, 2010. The piece poignantly chronicles their relationship, leading off with their initial meeting as student and teacher at Spelman College. In an October 2010 *Writer’s Digest* interview, Ms. Walker stated that “Writing is not different from life – you want variety, you want refreshment and you want balance.” Last year, Ms. Walker added two books to her canon, *Overcoming Speechlessness: A Poet Encounters the Horror in Rwanda, Eastern Congo and Palestine/Israel*, and a poetry collection, *Hard Times Require Furious Dancing*. She posts her new poems and essays regularly at www.alicewalkersgarden.com.



Dr. Georgianne Thomas, C'64, was featured in the article, "Spelman College Alumna Tells Untold Story of Classmates' Involvement in Civil Rights Movement in New Documentary," in the *Atlanta Daily World*, November 27, 2010 issue. Dr. Thomas is the creator and executive producer of the documentary, "Foot Soliders: Class of 1964," slated to be completed in 2011. The project, directed by her daughter Alvelyn Sanders, was created to commemorate the 50th anniversary of their student activism as freshmen through their graduation.

Keisha Knight Pulliam, C'2001, appeared on the BET show, "106 and Park," on December 1, 2010. She was also featured in People Magazine's Television Shows that Changed Our Lives: Great Moments and Guilty Pleasures 1970-2010, issue on display through December 10, 2010.



Christine Crawford, C'94, was featured on the *Wall Street Journal* cover and article "On McDonald's Menu: Variety, Caution" in the December 27, 2010, issue. The article highlights the recent changes in McDonald's look and hours as well as the increase in healthier menu options. Franchise owners, Ms. Crawford and her mother, Dee, are pictured and profiled in the piece and discuss the evolution of their five restaurants.

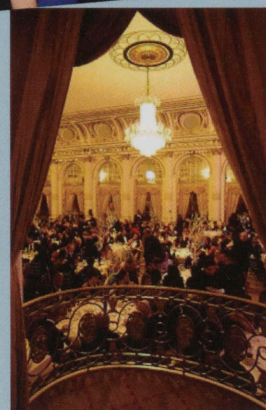
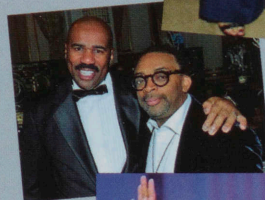
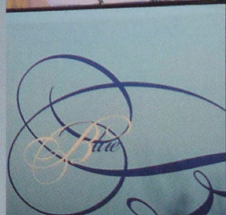
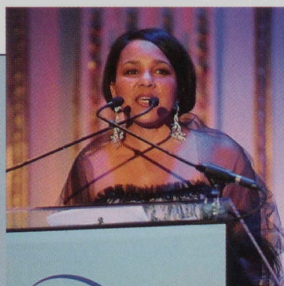
Brigitte Daniel, C'99, was named one of seven 2011 Eisenhower USA Fellows announced by General Colin L. Powell, Chairman of Eisenhower Fellowships. The Fellows spend 4-5 weeks abroad in a country or countries of their choosing. While abroad they pursue an individually-designed program in their field of interest. The program, customized to meet the goals of the Eisenhower Fellow, includes meetings with local experts and leaders in the Fellow's field, and generally includes cultural site visits and hospitality.

Award-winning novelist, journalist and playwright, **Pearl Cleage's, C'71**, play *The Nacirema Society: Requests the Honor of Your Presence at a Celebration of Their First One Hundred Years* ran at the Alliance Theatre at the Woodruff Arts Center in Atlanta from October 20 – November 14, 2010. The story is centered around The Nacirema Society of Montgomery, Alabama who is scheduled to celebrate its 100th anniversary with a cotillion. The gala introduces six African-American debutantes to polite society each year, however the year is 1964 and society is no longer "polite." The play's cast included **Andrea Frye, C'67**, **Karen Kendrick, C'98** and actress Jasmine Guy.

On October 4, 2010, the stars came out to the historic Plaza Hotel in New York to raise nearly \$2 million in scholarship funds at the Spelman Blue Gala. Spearheaded by Blue Visionaries **Jerri L. DeVard, C'79**, Spelman College Trustee, and actress **LaTanya Richardson Jackson, C'71**, the sold-out event welcomed celebrities from the private and public sectors including radio and television personality Steve Harvey, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, actresses Lynn Whitfield and Cecily Tyson, comedian Chris Rock, television journalists Deborah Roberts and Al Roker, and entertainment reporter, **Shaun Robinson, C'84**.

The backbone of Blue's success was the team of "Blue Champions," including **Marilyn Booker, C'82**, Judith I. Byrd, Kathryn C. Chenault, Esq., Sharon Collier, Malaak Compton-Rock, **Kim Davis, C'81**, Dawn Hudson, Melanie Kusin, Gwen Adams Norton, Marva Smalls, Sharon Taylor, Pauletta Pearson Washington, and Janice Savin Williams.

Kelly Mitchell, C'2005,
and **Kelli Coleman, C'2006,**
led GlobalHue's, a marketing
communications agency and
Blue supporter, creative devel-
opment and production of
both the gala invitations and
the gala program journal.



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Varnette Patricia Honeywood, C'72

December 27, 1950 – September 12, 2010

In Her Own Words ...

Varnette Patricia Honeywood was born on December 27, 1950, in the Watts community of Los Angeles to the late Stepney Robinson Honeywood and Lovie Varnette Allen Honeywood. She was the second surviving child of three children born to this union.

Varnette and her sister Stephanie confessed Christ at an early age. They were baptized on the same day at Messiah Missionary Baptist church in Los Angeles by Reverend Whalen S. Jones. She was a member of the youth choir, the youth usher board, and the Baptist Training Union (BTU). Reverend Whalen S. Jones and Mrs. Jones were a very important part of her early life.

Varnette attended Mona Park Elementary School in Willowbrook, California. She also attended Virginia Road Elementary School in Los Angeles. She attended Mount Vernon Junior High School and graduated from Los Angeles High School. She was a member of the arts clubs and president of the Thalian Fine Arts Club from 1965–1968.

Both Honeywood girls and their cousins, Joyce Faye Allen and Carolyn (Allen) Roper were members of the Xinos, a youth group for teenage girls. All later became teachers, college professors and counselors. Varnette later became a Soror in the Beta Phi Chapter of the National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, a professional organization of educators.

Varnette's parents were instrumental in her thinking, particularly in regard to how she should live her life. Her father taught her lessons through parables and stories. Her mother took her to visit her maternal grandparents, Vera and Hermon, in McComb, Mississippi and to visit her paternal grandfather, Jeff Honeywood in St. Joseph, Louisiana, to spend quality time and to teach her respect for her elders. Lovie Honeywood led by example. Both parents were loving and tough elementary school teachers. They were passionate about teachers and teaching!

Varnette and her sister learned more than words could say about surviving and thriving



in a hostile environment that came to a head with the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement. Varnette found her footing culturally and politically in the Black Power Movement. She graduated from Spelman College in 1972 with a bachelor of arts degree in fine arts. She never forgot the encouragement from her drawing instructor, Joseph Ross, who was the first person to encourage her to become a professional artist. Her painting instructor, Dr. Floyd Coleman, taught her a great deal about painting and content. In the '70s, Dr. Coleman, who had become chairman of the art department of Jackson State University in Mississippi, invited Varnette to come to Jackson State to encourage his young women art students. She was honored by this invitation.

Varnette joined the Teacher Corp Urban-Corrections training program in the School of Education at USC in 1972. She earned a master of science in education in 1974. She received a K–12 California State Teaching Credential in 1974. She was a teacher in the Los Angeles County Special Schools for a short period, but in 1975 she became the coordinator and later the director of art programs for the Joint Project at USC. Varnette

was able to use her education and her training to design art programs for young people. She designed programs that would allow anyone to become involved in creating. She had a special sensitivity and respect for culture in designing an art curriculum.

Varnette learned about the National Conference of Artists (NCA) by chance. The NCA was having a meeting at Cal Polytechnic State University Pomona (Cal Poly) in Pomona, California. There she became reconnected with some of her instructors and guest artists that she had met at the Atlanta University Center. The next year, 1975, Varnette met Roland Freeman and Worth Long at the NCA meeting in Jackson, Mississippi. They traveled with her to McComb, Mississippi, to meet her grandparents. Roland and Worth introduced her to the idea of African retentions. Varnette attributed her feeling of stability and confidence to the knowledge she gained from members of this organization.

Varnette and Stephanie founded Black Lifestyles in 1976. Black Lifestyles would later become a fully family-operated business and a key to much joy in the Honeywood family. Both parents retired and then worked in the business until poor health kept them from active participation. Varnette and her sister created a business out of the need for self-determination. The success of Black Lifestyles was based upon hard work and upon the contributions of many others who supported this business in many ways. Theresa Patterson, LaKeeta Howard and Grayland Steele all worked for Black Lifestyles at some point.

Unfortunately, in 1990, Stephanie was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. Her remaining years were filled with overcoming obstacles, learning new ways of doing things and igniting creativity – with lots of love. From 1994–2007, Varnette was both an artist and a caregiver. She continued to work and to create throughout these years. Her father's favorite saying was "Never Stop a Working Man." Her sister's favorite saying was "Make My Row." Varnette's favorite saying was a Ghanaian proverb, "Learning From the Past in Building the Future." A family favorite was from Alex Haley's *Roots*: "This Family Gon Move Forward." She and her father shared this saying weekly while they were working to build Black Lifestyles and work as a family.

Varnette P. Honeywood

Her services were held on September 24, 2010, at Messiah Baptist Church in Los Angeles.

The New York Times

National Edition
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2010
\$5.00
Vol. CLX, No. 55,167
A 2010 The New York Times
Dywall Flares
82.00

Varnette Honeywood, 59, Narrative Artist of Black Life

By WILLIAM GRIMES

Varnette P. Honeywood, an artist whose vibrantly colored oil paintings, drawings and prints presented a warm, upbeat picture of black American life and whose paintings were prominently displayed in the living room of the Houston house on "The Cosby Show," died on Sunday in Los Angeles. She was 59.

The cause was cancer, Joyce Faye Allen, a cousin, said. Ms. Honeywood, whose bright colors and simplified forms were strongly influenced by narrative artists like Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence, developed a richly textured style of green painting that showed black Americans in familiar settings: interacting with family members, gathering at church, socializing on a front porch.

"She can depict segregation, starving and homelessness," Mr. Cosby told *The Washington Post* in 1997. "But in Varnette's work, you can see teenagers doing homework, a family cooking a meal, girls doing their hair."

Her deep inspiration in her early work from the area around McComb, Miss., where her grandparents lived. Later, an assistant ministerial figure in complex parties, she depicted

A painter whose works were seen on "The Cosby Show."

daily life in the neighborhoods around her in Los Angeles.

"Like many black children in L.A., I was taken back to Mississippi in the summer," she told the reference work *Contemporary Black Biography*. "I grew up as the Black Arts Movement was exposed to black artists, and I saw myself as part of that legacy."

Her work found its way to "The Cosby Show," where it reached an audience of millions, after Mr. Cosby's wife, Camille, saw a line of note cards, posters and prints that she had collected for her company, Black Lifestyles.

The Cosbys began collecting Mr. Honeywood's work in the early 1980s. Several of her paintings were featured prominently on the set of "The Cosby Show," and she created the mural that served as a backdrop for Mr. Cosby's show "Kids Say the Darndest Things."

In the 1980s she collaborated with Mr. Cosby on the 12 titles in the series "Little Bill Books for Beginning Readers," creating the characters and providing the illustrations. The books provided the basis for "Little Bill," an animated series broadcast on CBS from 1990 to 2006, for which she served as a consultant.

Varnette Patricia Honeywood was born on Dec. 27, 1950, in Los Angeles. Her parents were elementary school teachers who had migrated from Louisiana and Mississippi.

At 12 she began studying art at the Cleveland Art Institute. She continued studying at Art Spectrum College in Atlanta, from which she received a bachelor's degree in 1972. After earning a master's degree in education



"The River That Flows Through Time," by Ms. Honeywood.

from the University of Southern California in 1974, she taught art and helped design multicultural arts and crafts programs for use in public schools.

In the mid-1980s she and her sister founded Black Lifestyles, one of the first art and greeting-card companies devoted to black themes.

Her 1974 painting "Birthday" was one of several featured on "The Cosby Show." Her work also appeared in the television series "Amen," "227" and "A Different World."

"Certain art is our culture depicts a deep feeling about how African-American people are treated," Mr. Cosby told *The Washington Post* in 1997. "They are poor and needy or need help in righting the wrong. Varnette's work lets us not forget the personal joys."



Varnette Honeywood

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Sunday, Sept. 19, 2010

ajc living&Arts

Appreciation Varnette P. Honeywood, 1950-2010

Generosity was her art

A friend recalls the artist's other great gift: her big heart.

By The Atlanta Journal-Constitution Staff

About 40 years ago, when I first knew Varnette P. Honeywood, the widely acclaimed artist of oil paintings, drawings and illustrations who died Sunday at the age of 59 in Los Angeles, she was a year behind me in her education at Spelman College in Atlanta. Yet, she was light years ahead of me in artistry.

I remember her as an art major – one of those cool kids who floated across campus past the English major reads from small bookshelves on the way to the Trever A. Arnett building near the entrance to the college. She wore counterculture rad-tans and African headwraps and seemed as ready to know where she fit into the large, scary world of life and art.

I was impressed, of course. But more than that, I was awestruck by her artistic sensibility. She seemed, as a 19-year-old student, to have already carved out her way of looking at and reflecting her African-American community and the world around her. Of course, growing up under the tutelage of her educator parents, who had emigrated from Mississippi to Southern California in the 1940s to broaden the canvas of life for the next generation, she had a head start.

And at the age of 12, she had begun serious art study at the Cleveland Art Institute in Los Angeles.

In the 1980s and early '90s, Varnette had not lived as well as she could. Over the next three decades, she refined her artistic view of the

world. Her work found its way to "The Cosby Show," where it reached an audience of millions, after Mr. Cosby's wife, Camille, saw a line of note cards, posters and prints that she had collected for her company, Black Lifestyles.

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At the end of her life, she was still working on a series of paintings called "The River That Flows Through Time," which she had begun in the 1980s.

She is survived by her husband, Roland Freeman, and her daughter, Stephanie. She is also survived by her mother, Joyce Faye Allen, and her father, James P. Honeywood.

Funeral services will be held on Sunday, Sept. 19, 2010, at 2 p.m. at Messiah Baptist Church, 1000 N. Main St., Atlanta. Burial will be in the same church cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Varnette P. Honeywood Foundation, c/o The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, 1000 N. Main St., Atlanta, Ga. 30309.

For more information, call (404) 525-4444 or visit the Atlanta Journal-Constitution website at www.ajc.com.

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In Memoriam

1941

Penelope Laconia Bullock
Educator
Died: December 25, 2010
Services: December 30, 2010
at Murray Brothers Cascade
Chapel in Atlanta.

1943

Ernestine Wallace Gipson
Social Worker
Died: August 9, 2010

Jerodene Gaines Lynch

Died: December 2010

Annette Evans

Died: December 12, 2010
Services: December 22, 2010
at Beulah Baptist Church in
Atlanta

1947

Josie Latimer Williams
Manager
Died: December 17, 2010
Services: December 28, 2010,
at Carl M. Williams Chapel in
Atlanta.

1950

Irene Bennett Schmoke Reid
Died: January 11, 2011
Services: January 15, 2011, at
Bethel AME Church in
Baltimore, Maryland.

Betty Peterson Johnson

Died: September 11, 2010

1956

Gilda Mizell Bryant
Died August 29, 2010

1957

Vivian Stodghill Williamson
Died: September 20, 2010

1960

**Barbara Ann Simspon
LeSeur**
Died: January 1, 2011

1963

Gwendolyn Kenner-Johnson
Died: September 2010

1964

Renee Adkins Alexander
Died: November 20, 2010

Myrtice Willis Dye

Educator
Died: December 10, 2010
Services: December 18, 2010,
at Wheat Street Baptist
Church in Atlanta.

1973

Juanita Law Barnes
Died: September 4, 2010

1976

**Soneni (Denise Bryant)
Smith**
Died: September 4, 2010
Services: September 10, 2010,
Christ United Methodist
Church, Piscataway, New
Jersey.

Rosa Fortune Gregg

Died: April 9, 2010
Services: April 17, 2010,
Mount Pleasant High School,
Elliott, South Carolina.

1979

Cassandra Jordan
Died: October 17, 2010

1987

Camille Yvette Hart-Shaw
Realtor
Died: December 3, 2010
Services: December 9, 2010,
New Mountain Top Baptist
Church, Winston, Georgia.

1990

Angela Rozier
Died: October 12, 2010
Services: October 15, 2010,
Resurrection House for All
Nations Church, Union City,
Georgia.

1995

Kendra Rochelle Manuel
Died: October 23, 2010
Services: October 30, 2010, at
Galilee Baptist Church,
Shreveport, Louisiana.

2012

Adrienne Bauduit
Died: January 5, 2011
Services: January 12, 2011 at
Sisters Chapel, Spelman
College



PHOTO: JULIE YARBROUGH, C'91



"Greens for Money, Peas for Luck" by Varnette P. Honeywood

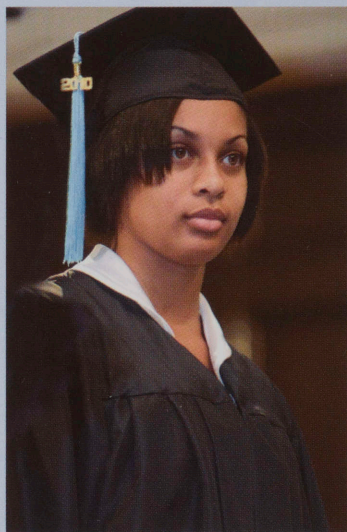
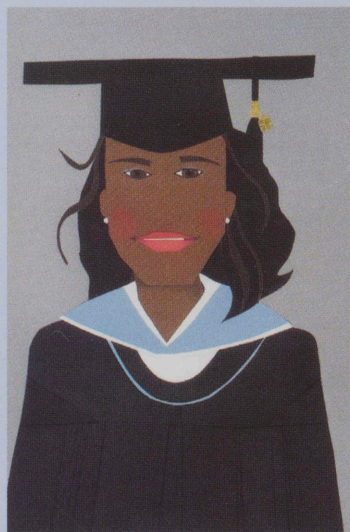


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