

# The Journey

from the **Office of Minority Affairs**  
of the University of West Georgia

Volume 2 - Issue 1

Spring 2009

## Dr. Don Rice, Interim Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

*Leadership spans more than three decades here*

by Jerel Griffin

Dr. Don Rice is a long-time faculty member at the University of West Georgia and was among the first African American faculty members hired at this institution, and the second hired in the Department of Psychology. Dr. Rice is the first African American chair of the Department of Psychology and is serving for the second time as Interim Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. He is the first African American Dean of Arts and Sciences, interim or permanent. Dr. Don Rice gracefully agreed to sit down with *The Journey* for an interview.

### **How long have you been at the University of West Georgia? What changes have you seen take place?**

I have been at West Georgia since 1978. One of the changes I've seen was West Georgia College with about 4,500 students go to the University of West Georgia with 11, 200. Obviously, that is the biggest change. We have also added to the structure quite a bit.

### **How did you become interested in the field of psychology?**

I became interested in psychology in high school after I took a psychology course.

### **How do issues of race affect the psychology of an individual or society?**

I think everyone is affected by several factors such as psychological, social, cultural, and definitely race. There have been numerous studies that show race can determine a number of things. It shows how one perceives his or her race. With African Americans, studies show that some are proud of their race, others are ashamed. As much as we talk about transcending race, it is a factor; especially now in the present political climate.

### **What current research interests do you have?**

I'm supervising some students in research for the effects of different meditative practices and how they might be useful in a clinical setting. These practices

are to alleviate stress and anxiety. We are using electro psychological recording equipment like the electroencephalograph. It measures brainwave activity. We also have another device that measures heart rate variability and something that is referred to as 100% response. All of the psychological measurements that we get are being compared with subjective or qualitative responses for the individuals being tested. They keep journals about their engagements in these practices and whether or not they personally experience their meditative practice to alleviate stress and anxiety. So we're comparing what they are reporting with the psychological measurement that we're taking.



Photo by Steven Broome

Dr. Don Rice, Interim Dean,  
College of Arts and Sciences

### **What are some of your most fulfilling contributions to West Georgia?**

The most fulfilling was the granting of a doctoral program in psychology which we got in June 2006. As a department, it was something that we have been wanting for a long time. This achievement is the most gratifying.

### **What else do you hope to accomplish here at West Georgia?**

I have been able to contribute to several areas in the university. In addition to serving as department chair, I also served as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. I have been on numerous committees that involve writing bylaws and making changes that govern the university. I contribute to the service areas of the campus by being on committees and state boards.

### **Describe your community involvement and how it has influenced your life?**

I served on the Carrollton City Zoning Board for six years and was chair for one year. I was also on the board for Alice's House Children Home. I've been in various civic groups like Kiwanis and Rotary Club. My involvement influences me to continue on when I see it has a positive affect on people.

### **How do you feel about your position of being an African American role model on this campus?**

I am aware of my position, but I don't think about it like that every day. I know that there are a lot of people who look towards me for direction. So I trust that I have the wisdom to be able to be a good role model.

### **How do you feel about the representation of minority students, faculty, and staff here on campus?**

It's clear the population has increased over the years. However, I would like to see more African Americans in faculty roles. I know that there are techniques being implemented to get more of us here at West Georgia.

### **If you could tell all of West Georgia's students one thing, what would it be?**

I would tell them that they are really living in a global society. The competition is not the students here at West Georgia, students in Carrollton, or Atlanta, or Georgia, or even the United States, but it is the world. That is your competition and you should begin to treat your studies that way. Every day that you decided to slack off is another day that someone else in the world is exceeding.

## **Dr. Pamela Anderson teaches diversity in COE**

by *Tristan Ervin*

According to a description on the Health and Physical Education Department's web page, Dr. Pamela Anderson has an eclectic background. She lived in Amsterdam, the Netherlands for five years, during which time, she traveled extensively throughout Europe, parts of Southern Africa and South America. She is also very interested in issues related to "teaching diversity" in the classroom.

### **How long have you been teaching here at the University of West Georgia? What is your department? What classes do you teach?**

This is my second year at West Georgia. I teach in the department of Physical Education and Recreation. I am sort of the 'utility player' in our department. My main teaching responsibilities include the science related classes for our teaching majors and the Personal Wellness classes for students in the College of Education (COE). Additionally, I teach classes in the COE which are related to diversity in educational settings. I also teach classes associated with physical fitness. I have even taught a class in the Sport Management major.

### **What interests you in your field, and how do you get your students to share those same interests?**

Well let me talk in terms of diversity, given that there is a broad spectrum of classes that I am teaching. What interests me most about this topic is learning about dissimilar cultures and distinct people groups. This does not necessarily mean that I must travel internationally to be exposed to diverse cultures. I am originally from California, so living in the South initially facilitated a huge cultural adjustment for me. We are all different, and discovering what makes each of us unique, and then facilitating communication and understanding between diverse peoples, excites me. As a wise person once told me, 'Where you stand will determine what you see.' This is one of my favorite quotes; it has



Photo by Angel Bivins

*Dr. Pamela Anderson*

become one of the mantras. My goal is to attempt to better understand individuals by 'standing in their shoes' and challenging my own world view in order to understand and enhance communication between myself and other individuals in my world. I would hope that I could inspire some of my students to realize that we actually have more in common than different, and to focus on what we do have in common. In other words I

want my students, as educators, to be able to enter into their classrooms and model an ability to accept and understand the diversity represented. Eventually, their attitude will transcend the classroom and aid in breaking down the barrier which crosses all of society.

### **Describe your educational background.**

I attended Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) for my undergraduate degree in Physical Education. After I completed my Bachelor's of Science degree, I was offered a Graduate Assistant position at Austin Peay State University where I received a Master of Science Degree in Exercise Science and in Sports Administration. Finally, I was asked to return to MTSU to complete my Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Health and Human Performance, where I served the university as a Graduate Teaching Assistant in our department.

**What has been your most rewarding/your most positive experience as a professor here at the University of West Georgia?**

I would have to say challenging my students with new ideas and watching them 'get it' is the most rewarding piece of all that I do. I love to see the moment that the light goes on; they connect all the dots, and incorporate the new thoughts/ideas into a new schema that is their own. For example, we watched the movie *Freedom Writers* in one of my classes this past semester. It is the story of a group of students from the inner city of Los Angeles who were inspired by their teacher, Erin Gruwell, to write their personal stories as journals. The journals were the key which afforded Ms. Gruwell insight into the misunderstood lives of her students. She then leveraged the information that she gleaned to impact her students. Once my students had watched the movie and we discussed it in class, they wanted Erin Gruwell to come and speak at the University. Their exuberance showed me that they 'got it' and wanted to know more. They were excited about teaching, and even more excited about trying to find ways to reach out to students that many teachers would write off.

**Have there been any challenges that you care to relate?**

Parking!

**During the time that you have been here, what type of cultural growth have you seen at the University?**

The COE, and even more specifically Dean Metcalf (the dean of the COE), is placing more emphasis on exposing our students to diversity and international opportunities. I have the pleasure of serving on a new committee whose purpose is to provide cross-cultural, international exposure to our students in the COE. I am looking forward to the possibilities the committee will facilitate for our pre-service teachers.

**As diverse as our campus is, do you think our university should see more blending between race/cultures/ethnic groups?**

It definitely could. In fact, I'm the chair of the Diversity Committee for the COE and one of the things that we are trying to do is figure out a way to help organize all of the various 'diverse' entities on campus together for two main reasons: communication and facilitation. Let me explain, there are a lot of activities happening on campus in terms of International Studies, Minority Affairs, and student groups. Somehow, if we could facilitate a way so that all groups are all on the same page, each group would know what all the other groups are doing ahead of time. If this were done, the faculty and students could support the 'diverse' meetings and activities. For example, professors could assign groups of students to attend certain functions, and therefore support the activities.

## *The Journey*

**Vol. 2 Number 1 · Spring 2009**

*The Journey* is a publication of the Office of Minority Affairs of the University of West Georgia, published twice annually.

**Jack O. Jenkins, Ph.D.**

Special Associate to the President for Minority Affairs  
Row Hall  
2nd Floor, East Wing  
678-839-5400

**Felicia Humphries**

Office Manager

**Deirdre Rouse**

Program Coordinator

**Contributing Writers**

Mistie Butler  
Jerel Griffin  
Tristan Irvin  
Jack O. Jenkins  
Cortesia Oxford  
Stania Philizaire  
Deirdre Rouse  
Felicia Watts

**Photography**

Steven Broome  
Minority Affairs Student Assistants

# National Hispanic Heritage Month

by Felicia Watts and Jack O. Jenkins

National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated in the United States every year from September 15-October 15. Hispanic Heritage Month was not always celebrated for four weeks. At first, beginning on September 17th 1968, National Hispanic Heritage Month was celebrated for only one week. However, on August 17, 1988, PUBLIC LAW 100-402, approved on August 17, 1988 by the 100th Congress was passed stating that National Hispanic Heritage month would last from September 15 to August 15.

The purpose of National Hispanic Heritage Month is to honor diverse people of Spanish speaking backgrounds who have migrated to the United States from more than 20 other countries. The U.S Census Bureau defined the term Hispanic as "Spanish Speaking people of any race." National Hispanic Heritage month is celebrated on September 15th because it is the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries. Those countries are Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Mexico declared its independence on September 16th and Chile on September 18th. National Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated by having festivals with music, food, and dancing.

There are a number of "firsts" by Hispanic Americans\*:

- U.S. Secretary of Housing and Urban Development: Henry Cisneros, 1993.
- U.S. Attorney General: Alberto Gonzales, 2005.
- Secretary of the Navy: Edward Hidalgo, 1979.

- Flying ace: Col. Manuel J. Fernández, Jr., who flew 125 combat missions in the Korean War.
- Astronaut: Franklin Chang-Díaz, 1986. He flew on a total of seven space-shuttle missions. The first female Hispanic astronaut was Ellen Ochoa, whose first of four shuttle missions was in 1991.
- Pulitzer Prize for Fiction: Oscar Hijuelos, 1990, for his novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*.
- Pulitzer Prize for Drama: Nilo Cruz, 2003, for his play *Anna in the Tropics*.
- Opera diva: Lucrezia Bori, who debuted at the Metropolitan Opera in 1912.
- Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee: Carlos Santana, 1998.
- Oscar, Best Supporting Actress: Rita Moreno, 1961, *West Side Story*.
- Star of a network television show: Desi Arnaz, 1952, *I Love Lucy*.
- First American Baseball League all-star: Alfonso "Chico" Carrasquel, 1951, starting shortstop for the American League.
- First NFL starting quarterback: Tom Flores, 1960.
- First NFL #1 draft pick: Jim Plunkett, 1971.

\*Source: Used with permission from Fact Monster ([www.factmonster.com](http://www.factmonster.com) and its sponsor infoplease.com). Please go to <http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0933896.html> for additional information on Hispanic Firsts in America.

## Donna Haley brings new perspective to Registrar's Office



Donna Haley, Registrar

by Felicia Watts

Ms. Donna Haley, new Registrar at the University of West Georgia, sat down for an interview with *The Journey*.

### How long have you worked at the University of West Georgia? Where did you work prior to UWG?

I've been here since September 15, 2008. Prior to UWG I worked at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

### What exactly do you do in the Registrar Office?

Since I am the Registrar, I am responsible for the accuracy and integrity of all student records. I oversee processes including registration, grades, transcripts and graduation.

### What are your research interests? Do you do any research in your spare time for fun?

In the Registrar Office, the main research we do involves student



records and this happens usually when there is some pending issue. No, I really don't research anything in my spare time for fun.

### **Where did you grow up?**

I grew up in Hawkinsville, Georgia. That is about three hours from Carrollton; it's close to Macon, Ga.

### **Any comparisons between Carrollton and your home you might want to make?**

They both are very small towns. My home town area is a lot smaller than Carrollton. I would compare my home town to somewhere like Bremen.

### **Who and/or what influenced you to choose your profession?**

In 1985, my husband and I were both soldiers in the military. We were in Tennessee and came back to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. My first job as a civilian was working at a university as a departmental secretary. I really enjoyed working with the students and helping them get their education. I also finished my education as well. It wasn't really a person that influenced my decision; it was just my first job experience that

helped me to make the decision to continue with this career.

### **How do you like working at UWG?**

So far it has been wonderful. I'm the type of person who has to be busy, and this is a good challenge coming here and learning the way that West Georgia does things. People here are just so helpful. When I came down for my interview, one thing that my husband and I noticed was that everyone was so nice and polite. Even in the community when we went out to eat, stayed in the hotel, or even visited Wal-Mart.

### **What are one or two of your proudest professional accomplishments?**

One of my proudest professional accomplishments was finishing my undergraduate degree. I went through a divorce during this time and became a single parent working two jobs and going to school and was able to finish my degree with a 3.7 GPA. That was a wonderful experience. I felt like I was superwoman, because I had my son and it was just me and him; me and him against the world!

## **Dr. Farooq Khan's teaching incorporates world events**

by *Tristan Ervin*

Dr. Farooq Khan is an associate professor of Chemistry at the University of West Georgia. We are happy that Dr. Khan agreed to grant an interview to *The Journey*.

### **How long have you been teaching here at West Georgia, what is your department? What classes do you teach?**

My Department is Chemistry. I have been here since September of 1994 – about 14 years. I teach Introductory Chemistry, which is Chemistry 1211 and 1212. I also teach an upper level course in Physical Chemistry, and occasionally I have taught Environmental Studies as well.

### **What interests you most in your field, and how do you get your students to share those same interests?**

When I started out, I was probably focused on areas that tie in with my own research, which is in the area of physical chemistry; it is understanding reactions between molecules, at the small molecule level. Increasingly, I have become more and more interested in tying in concepts that I introduce in the classroom with what is going on in the world

outside. Every October we talk about the winners of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry, sometimes in Physiology and Medicine. We talk about new materials, energy. Often times, we also talk about things mentioned in the national media. We have an election going on and issues of energy come up, so we discuss those as well, because many of these ideas I just mentioned [new materials, energy] tie in very nicely with the concepts I introduce in the introductory chemistry courses.



*Dr. Farooq Khan*  
Associate Professor of Chemistry

### **Describe your educational background.**

I did my undergraduate work in India at the Institute of Technology in Kanpur. These are some very prestigious universities in India and the one that I went to was actually set up by an assortment of American Universities. Then I did my graduate work at Columbia University in New York and I did some doctoral work at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. I lived in many different places. I often joke with my students that when I went from Columbia University to Salt Lake City, the population dropped probably

by more than a factor of ten. Then when I came to Carrollton, Georgia, the population dropped again by a factor of ten. I pray that I never move again!

**What has been most rewarding/your most positive experiences as a professor here at the University of West Georgia?**

To see a student who has a particular moment; when they see and understand a concept for the first time and I can see a light shining in their eyes. That is very rewarding. What is also interesting is when I do undergraduate research, I usually start off with students who have not been exposed to very sophisticated ideas of an instrumentation, and then they go on to graduate school and they actually graduate and get their Ph.D.'s and continue in the chemistry profession. That's also a very rewarding experience. There have been several times when students in a large classroom where I've had freshmen, who may or may not have been chemistry majors but they're having a good time, they're understanding concepts, and they'll perhaps use them in some fashion in what they later decide to do in life. There are times when I have one on one experiences with students in the research lab where I hope that part of the process in training young students and helping individuals will eventually get them to be my colleagues in a few years.

**Have there been any challenges that you care to relate?**

The difficulty for any faculty member, especially in the sciences, is to find a level at which one can introduce ideas accurately while maintaining the enthusiasm of the students. It is also important to create some kind of excitement in them for the discipline required in Chemistry, so that they'll be able to do all the hard work that is necessary in this course. Simplifying things down without losing the accuracy is also a challenge. I think that it's the hallmark of any good teacher, whether they're trying to explain a complicated crisis on Wall Street, or a complicated phenomenon in Chemistry. It has to be done in a language that is simple, understandable, but still accurate. That to me [and to any faculty member], is the hardest challenge that is unique to Chemistry. If that is accomplished, the student will not only do well in the course, but will be able to apply the knowledge to their profession, whatever that may be. A student in a Chemistry class may have a different major: physical science, engineering, or a health care profession. Although they may not get an undergraduate degree in Chemistry, they're still using these ideas and discipline, and they can still understand the concepts and apply them accurately.

**During the time that you have been here, what type of cultural growth have you seen here at the university?**

The campus is a lot more diverse than it was before. One certainly sees a much larger number of international faculty members, certainly in my

department, which holds approximately 50 percent international individuals. By that, I mean individuals who did their undergraduate work overseas before they came to the United States. So roughly half of our department consists of faculty members of international origin. They represent Asia and Europe. Also, if I take a look at colleagues across the campus, I see that the a number of faculty members who are foreign born is substantially larger. I also see a larger and more diverse international population. I see a lot more students who are from Nigeria or from India right now, than there were 14 years ago. I had lived in the United States for nine years before I came to West Georgia. In New York, it doesn't matter because there is such a mixed population there. When I got to Carrollton, I felt some strange looks directed towards me, because there weren't many people around in Carrollton who were foreign born. I don't feel that way now, but it might be that I'm use to it, or maybe that the community in Carrollton is more used to an international presence. I cannot be entirely certain about it, but surely our campus has become a lot more diverse with our faculty members and students.

**As diverse as our campus is, do you think our university should see more blending between race/cultures/ethnic groups?**

I think we do a very good job. I've been a minority all my life. As long as attention isn't more drawn towards the fact that I'm different, I think the campus does a good job with that. I did not feel in any way out of place on this campus. I have a fairly diverse population in my classes and I think I see that all of my students get along very well with each other, regardless of national origin. That is good to see. I see that many students organize events on campus, which promotes the diversity. International night, for example, is a wonderful idea. You have a huge population and involvement of individuals, which is wonderful. I'm an advisor for the MSA (Muslim Student Association), and recently they did an event for the month of Ramadan, the month of fasting. It drew about 100 people and I think events like that help promote knowledge about various cultures and nationalities. I think that since most of our students are at least 18, they've already been exposed to a lot of minority students while they're in middle school, high school, etc. They come to college and see more cultures, probably more so than they would 20 or 30 years back. They see that a lot of their teachers are from different places, and these teachers talk about a lot of their experiences, which helps the process in which people are simply used to having different people around them.

# Howard Winters: Long-Time Employee

*'Treat students like family,' he teaches*

by Mistie Butler and Jack O. Jenkins

Mr. Howard Winters, a Carrollton native, works in the custodial department at the University of West Georgia. Mr. Winters is the assistant supervisor to Mr. Romeree Cospy and works mainly in residence halls. *The Journey* was pleased to have the opportunity to interview Mr. Winters.

## How long have you been here at the University of West Georgia?

I've been here roughly 23 years.

## What are your primary responsibilities working with maintenance?

My primary responsibilities are to make sure that the building supplies are kept up and to assist the supervisor in different tasks in whatever he may need or what he wants me to do. I assist with the inspections of the carpets, windows, and work here at Row Hall. I have different areas that I clean over here. I just work here and there, wherever I'm needed, or wherever I need to go to fulfill a task.

## What interests you most in working here at the University of West Georgia?

What interests me most are the students. You get to meet a variety of students and also see a variety of personalities. We try to do our best to take care of them because this is their home away from home, and we try our best to cater to their needs. They are important to us. I look at it like being a family because

I know how it would be if my child went off to college, so I look at it from that perspective. If anything comes up that they may need or anything we could do for them, I just try to go out of my way to provide the best of service and the best of care that we can for the students.

## Since you have been here, have you seen any big changes in the diversity of the student, faculty, and staff?

Yes I have, because you meet a variety of people. West Georgia is big, and it's getting bigger and bigger every

year, so it has a big impact on the University of West Georgia every year to have diversity in the midst of this growth. There's been a lot of change since I first started.

## What about in the city of Carrollton?

I can roughly say yes, because you have a lot of different nationalities of people that are moving here in the city, and the population is greater than it used to be. I was born and raised here in Carrollton and a lot of people and a lot of things that you see now weren't here then. So in my perspective, yes, there has been a great impact.



Howard Winters

## What do you hope to see continue in the near future at UWG when it comes to diversity?

Well I'm hoping that it will get even better as the college grows. That will be something. That's what I would like to see.

# Akilah Heggs named director of Speech Language Pathology Clinic

by Stania Philizaire

Ms. Akilah Heggs, Director of the Speech Language Pathology Clinic, sat down with *The Journey* for an interview.

## How long have you been with the university?

Since August of 2008

## Describe your experience at other colleges. Can you give any advice to transfer students or UWG students?

This is my first time working in the academic field. UWG is a friendly and open university. There are many opportunities to get involved and become successful. My advice to transfer students is to find your niche on campus and stick to it. Seize every opportunity that comes to you. Find your place at the university to make a difference.

## As a new faculty member at UWG, tell me your thoughts on teaching at UWG.

I enjoy being in the academic setting even though I am new to academia. There is a lot of support for faculty members and I find the students to be extremely bright and eager to learn.

## What is your first impression of diversity at UWG?

My first impression is that we can increase diversity at UWG. However, I am very glad to see an office promoting diversity and working toward increasing the visibility of minorities and individuals from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In addition, I like seeing the exposure and support that the Office of Minority Affairs offers the UWG community.

## Can you describe how different the diversity of UWG is compared to other campuses where you have gone to school?

I enjoy the welcoming and accepting atmosphere that the university provides... I experienced limited support for diversity from the universities where I obtained my training, so this is a nice change.

## What do you consider some of your greatest accomplishments in teaching and in life?

My greatest accomplishment so far is having the

opportunity to serve as the State Director of the Universal Newborn Hearing Screening program for the Georgia Division of Public Health. I was able to have an impact on infants from birth by optimizing their developmental and educational outcomes through the early identification of their hearing loss by developing statewide policies and programs.

I look forward to the opportunity to accomplish great things here at UWG as well as we expand the programs and services offered through the Speech and Hearing Clinic.



Akilah Heggs, Director of Speech Language Pathology Clinic

## What is your definition of success and how do you suggest students apply this to their lives?

My definition of success is when you are able to find your passion and dedicate yourself to it; then use that passion to make the world a better place. Success is really about making an impact...one person, one family, one community at a time.

My favorite quote is: "To whom much is given, much is required." This quote is the driving force for my success. Given a talent, it requires a lot from you to succeed, actually put forth the effort to accomplish a successful goal with your

given talent. This quote is a good formula for everyone. It sets a standard of excellence.

## Have you been involved in any other activities/programs you would like to share with readers of *The Journey*?

I am currently involved with the student organization for the speech language pathology program, the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association. I support our students as they work to promote Speech Pathology as a profession and educate the public about the services we can provide to the community.

## Have you made presentations on diversity issues?

No.

## Are there any particular issues you would like to see *The Journey* address?

I would maybe like to see collaboration across departments and the university and additional opportunities for faculty and students to get involved in diversity issues.



# Student Opinion Survey

by Jerel Griffin and Felicia Watts

*The Journey* asked students their opinion on some currently relevant issues.

## How do you feel the recession is personally affecting you?

1. It's made things a little harder, especially being a commuter student. - Lauren
2. It's not affecting me at all. I don't work and my parents pay for everything and they don't complain. - Diana
3. It's not affecting me that much. I have some stocks and their value went down a lot. - Josh
4. It's not. My parents pay all of my bills. I asked my mom and she said it doesn't affect her at all. - Whitney

## What events geared towards diversity would you like to see on campus?

1. I would like to see more cultural fairs and dances. - Lauren
2. I just want to see more students come out to the African Student Association events. - Diana
3. I'm not really sure because I'm not that involved on campus. - Josh
4. I want to see the comeback of *Friday after Dark*. It had a mix of different people on campus. - Whitney

## What was your favorite movie of this summer?

1. The Dark Knight - Lauren
2. Hancock. It had a different perspective on the superhero. - Diana
3. The Dark Knight - Josh
4. The Dark Knight - Whitney

## Do you feel there is a need for more blending of cultures on campus?

1. Yes, because if you walk around, you see segregation amongst the students going on. - Lauren

2. Yes of course, because everyone needs to see different parts of the world. - Diana
3. No, I think they are doing a very good job. - Josh
4. Yes - Whitney

## What curiosities do you have about other cultures?

1. I want to learn about different traditions. Things like markings and tattoos on the body. Stuff like that. - Lauren
2. I'm just a curious-minded person. I like to watch the Discovery Channel. One thing I want to learn about is all the Jewish holidays - Diana
3. I'm friends with a lot of African students and I know they have different backgrounds and traditions. I want to know the comparisons between them. - Whitney

## How long have you attended West Georgia and what do you like most about it?

1. This is my second year and I really like the newness of the campus. Like the campus center. - Lauren
2. This is my second year and I like the fact that everybody knows everybody. You can walk outside and see a handful of people you know. - Diana
3. This is my first year and I feel like there are not a lot of cliques. Everyone seems to get along. - Josh
4. I've been here five years and I like the fact the it's a smaller school so it's more personal. You get to have relationships that help you pursue your goal. - Whitney



Lauren Corbit  
Sophomore, Global Studies



Diana Obodoako  
Sophomore, Political Science



Josh Albey  
Freshman, undecided



Whitney Richardson  
Senior, Biology

## Ronlee James leads as International Student Club President

by Jerel Griffin

### What is the mission of the International Student Club?

The mission of the International Student Club is to make international students as well as Americans aware of different cultures of the world.

### About how many students make up the ISC?

We have over 200 students that make up the club, but about 150 that are international students. Anyone is free to join.

### How did you become involved with ISC?

Once you enter school on a student visa, you are automatically a part of the club. I got more involved after attending meetings and being interested in the things that we do. I love relating to the international students because we share a lot in common.

### As president, what are your expectations for the organization?

My expectation includes everyone being educated about different cultures and making sure their stay here is as comfortable as can be.

### What goals do you have specifically for this semester?

I want everyone to be successful in their studies and enjoy all that we have to offer.



*Ronlee James, International Student Club President*

### What upcoming events can the university look forward to this school year?

We have International Week here at school and the International Leadership Conference. For International Week, we're going to have a cultural board walk stretching from the library to the UCC. The displays will have interesting facts about different countries. We're having an international volleyball competition at the Suite Center. We're having a cultural panel in the TLC about students' experiences and perceptions in America. We're also

having a Taste of Africa, where different African foods will be present. The Latino Culture Society is finishing the week off with a party.

### What are the benefits of becoming a member of ISC?

One of the main benefits is being able to relate to the other students. It is also a lot of fun through events and seminars.

### As a voice of the international students, what is one message that you would like to inform the university?

I would let them know that we are cool people because there is a culture barrier between the internationals and the Americans. We should do more to close that barrier and become one body of students.

# What the election of Barack Obama means to me

by Jack O. Jenkins, Special Associate to the President for Minority Affairs

The election of our first African American president is extraordinary. I was born in a little community called Sandfly, which lies just outside the city limits of Savannah. Later my parents moved to a place called Wormsloe which was located about a mile from Sandfly. I started elementary school in 1954 at Haven Home Elementary, a segregated, all Black school. The elementary school I should have attended was within bicycle riding distance, but Haven Home was a good bit further.

I later attended and graduated from Sol C. Johnson high school (home of the "Atom Smashers") in 1966. These days, students from Sandfly, Isle of Hope, Pinpoint, Grimball Point, and Montgomery probably all attend school at Jenkins High where we would have gone if not for segregation. Nevertheless, I owe a debt of gratitude to all of the fine African American teachers at Haven Home and Sol C. Johnson.

I was in my 10th grade algebra class when President John F. Kennedy was killed. I remember vividly how Mrs. Robinson, our teacher, just sat down and stared out the window when Mr. Dwight, our principal, made the announcement over the intercom. At that time I am certain many of us were thinking, "What now? It looks like we finally had a president who was really going to lift us up as a people and then he gets assassinated. What does the future hold for us now?" Well, President Lyndon Baines Johnson was able to get civil rights laws passed and other legislation helpful to African Americans, the poor, and many other Americans.

On April 4, 1968, Martin Luther King was assassinated in Memphis, TN. I was on choir tour with the outstanding Morris Brown College concert choir at the time. We arrived in Washington, D.C. the night after a riot that had occurred around 14th street. When we arrived in New York City and rode through Harlem, I remember never having seen so many policemen at one time. While civil rights laws had been passed

and enforced and the lot of African Americans had improved somewhat, after the assassination of Dr. King once again at least some African Americans must have asked, "Okay America, what now?"

I came along where, because of opportunities that occurred after the civil rights movement, I and many others were the first African Americans to do this or that (e.g., the first African American to receive a graduate degree from a department in an institution that previously barred African Americans).

I was amused when I would go into a department store to shop and because I would have on a shirt and tie, some Euro-Americans would think I was a manager and would come to me and ask me a question. I would think to myself, "This would never have happened only a few years ago."

But while there has been progress, there remain many problems for African Americans such as high rates of infant mortality, high rates of incarceration, high death rates from heart disease and cancer, and current high rates of unemployment. According to a Washington Post article dated January 10, 2009, "while unemployment among whites rose to 6.6 percent from 6.2 percent, among blacks, it rose to 11.9 percent from 11.3 percent."

But to have an African American president who was raised by a single mother, with biracial roots, from somewhat humble beginnings, with a law degree from Harvard, to be elected by a goodly majority of American citizens is extraordinary. As a child of the south who experienced the problem of segregation first hand, no matter what successes I have personally experienced, I cannot say that I saw the election of a Black president coming this soon. And if President Obama had not been the Democratic Party nominee, we could still have had either a woman president or woman vice president. What this election means to me is that we should all have the faith to go up to the mountain top and look over into the promised land to see what extraordinary things the future may hold for each of us. God bless America.



Photo by Steven Broome

Dr. Jack Jenkins



# Dr. Karen Harris

by Mistie Butler

Dr. Karen Harris, professor of Speech-Language Pathology, shares her insights about cultural competence in response to a rapidly changing American society.

Dr. Harris is the program director of speech-language pathology programs here at the University of West Georgia and is also the president of Georgia Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (GATESOL). She is affiliated with the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME). Dr. Harris, a licensed speech-language pathologist, also holds an ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence. With Dr. Harris' background in the field of speech-language pathology, *The Journey* was pleased to have the privilege to sit down and discuss her role here at UWG and how she feels diversity plays an important part in her field of expertise.

## Where are you from originally?

I am originally from St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands.

## How long have you lived in the United States?

I moved to Brooklyn, New York when I was one year and six months old and spent half of my childhood there. My father moved us back to St. Thomas when I was 10 years old. I returned to the U.S. mainland at the age of 18 and have been here since.

## How long have you been here at the University of West Georgia?

This is my second academic year here at UWG.

## How did you first find your passion in speech-language pathology?

I've always wanted to work in a helping profession; I've always wanted to provide service to people,

and as an undergraduate quite honestly, I did not know what it was that I wanted to do. Someone in my sorority suggested speech-language pathology to me. I went to the library and researched it during my senior year at the University of Miami. I was working on a degree in communication. My dual majors were speech communication and psychology, so you can see the connection between the two; understanding people, working with people, and speech. I think that in knowing that about me, that's how she was able to kind of push me in the direction of speech language pathology. After graduation, I applied and was accepted into a master's program in speech-language pathology.

## In reading your vita, I saw that you have worked as a speech-language pathologist in a variety of work settings. Which setting did you find the most rewarding and why?

I have worked with children, babies; with people literally from birth to 100 years of age. I have worked in private practice, nursing homes, hospitals, out patient clinics, and the P-12 setting. As you know or may not know, in speech language pathology, we provide services to people in educationally-based settings as well as in medical settings. I prefer working with children in either of the two settings. This is because I see progress with the little ones; I see progress as they grow in age, and for me that is rewarding just to see where someone started and where they can end up. With that said I love working with a variety of

clients, I love the challenge of being able to come up with a treatment plan for someone who is two months of age and having problems with nursing from his/her mom's breast, to working with someone who had a head injury from a motorcycle accident. I think that being able to have those varied experiences has made me marketable in the field. So while I do have a preference for working with children, I love the fact that I can work with any client in any one of the settings where we provide services.



Dr. Karen Harris

## I've also read that one of your primary interests in speech-language pathology is in providing services to families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Why do you feel that this is important in today's society?

You can't go too far and see the rapidly changing demographics in the American population. Gone are the days of the one size fits all model. Gone are the days of the status quo. There is a greater likelihood that we will work with clients who will represent a culture other than our own, who will not talk or look like us. We have a rich diversity that is represented in the American population. We have to understand that cultural mores, traditions, ideologies, and linguistics shape our communication styles and patterns. We have to understand that difference does not mean inferior; it just means different. It is imperative that we differentiate between a communication disorder and a communication difference. In order to provide accurate and culturally competent services, we



have to consider the culture and language of the clients we serve. Being careful not to stereotype, we must also keep in mind that within-group differences exist as well.

**What would you say is your biggest accomplishment since you have been here at the University of West Georgia?**

Well the former program director was able to obtain accreditation from the American Speech Language and Hearing Association (ASHA), specifically the CAA, the Council on Academic Accreditation in audiology and speech language pathology. I think that being able to take the graduate program to the next level has been an accomplishment. While this process has been a challenge, a great challenge, it has been an accomplishment in that we have been able to make curriculum changes; increase the type of settings and clientele that our students have an opportunity to experience and work with, respectively; increase collaborative efforts with

community partners, and increase the awareness of our program offerings. Additionally, our students are learning more about research and the scholarship of clinical practice; they are submitting proposals to national and local organizations for presentations at conferences and providing community service through service learning initiatives. I am very proud that our reputation is continuing to expand in a positive manner.

**What major changes in diversity have you seen in your department since you have been here? Throughout the university?**

We are a diverse group that includes women, men, and women of color. Additionally, people of color in our department, within the College of Education, and at the university level are serving in leadership positions. What we need, however, is to increase the type of diverse faculty for our field, specifically. We need more speech-language pathologists who are men, Asians/Pacific Islanders

and Latinos, to name a few. We have an area of need, which is improving the ability to provide bilingual speech-language pathology services. We need people who speak another language in addition to English, as well as understand variations within the English language. I would like to see more of the above mentioned cultures representing our field as professors, researchers, clinical supervisors, and as students. In addition to recruitment efforts, I would like for us to also focus on retention of faculty of color and subsequently increase the number of tenured faculty of color in the department and at the university level.

**I think that you actually answered my last question which is what changes in diversity do you hope to see in the near future and why?**

Yes, I think it's the same thing! But yes, again we definitely need more men and people of color. We need to get beyond just black and white representation.

## Office of Minority Affairs

### Upcoming Events

- **Diversity Training**  
Tuesday, February 3, 2009  
UCC Ballroom 108.3/4  
10:00-noon  
Presenter: Ms. Maggie Viverette
- **Medical Minority Panel**  
Monday, February 9, 2009  
TLC 1301  
7:00-8:30pm  
Presenters: Various Physicians and a Nurse
- **Geechee Kunda**  
Monday, February 16, 2009  
UCC Ballroom  
4:30-6:30 pm (Exhibition)  
7:00-8:30pm (Presentation)  
Presenter: Mr. Jim Bacote and Associates

- **Why I had to go to Africa**  
Wednesday, March 4, 2009  
7:00 -8:30 p.m.  
Campus Center Ballroom 108.4  
Presenter: Quencina Gardner-Hyde,  
Student, University of West Georgia

**Coming in March or April:**

- **Latino Psychology**
- **How to Buy a Home**
- **Being Sensitive to the Needs of the Elderly**

*For up-to-date information on campus events for Black History Month please go to the Minority Affairs web page at [www.westga.edu/minority](http://www.westga.edu/minority) and click on "Activities and Events."*

# What Barack Obama's Presidency Means to Me

By Deirdre Rouse

Tuesday, November 4, 2008 at approximately 11:00 p.m. will forever be etched in the forefront of my mind, like a name meticulously carved long ago in an oak tree. Months, days, and hours prior to this historic election year, my thoughts vacillated between yes, we can; to yes, it is possible; to concern about the potential road blocks of electing Senator Barack Obama to be President of the United States of America.

I began to reminisce over some of my personal life experiences. My thoughts wandered to the moment my children were looking in some old family photo albums. They were of course in disbelief that, yes, I was once a kid too. Upon further investigation of the treasure of these mementos, they stumbled across an old year book from I. Ellis Johnson High School in Laurinburg, N.C. Once my first grade picture was located, a puzzled look came over their faces and they asked the question "why is everyone in the school black? My daughter noted this was "way after" Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954. In my feeble attempts, I tried to explain that one cannot legislate people's hearts.

President Obama's presidency represents America's willingness to valiantly hold a mirror to her face and



Deirdre Rouse

acknowledge past atrocities such as Jim Crow Laws; Plessy vs. Ferguson, 1896; denying women (gained right in 1919) and blacks (Voting Rights Act 1965, though previous attempts were made) the right to vote; poll taxes and literacy test. The list could continue, however, the urgency to move America forward to embrace change emerged.

His presidency to me signifies an increased awareness of community service. I truly believe community service is an essential life line of any successful community/country. The eagerness to serve is one of the ultimate gifts to give to anyone.

Lastly, the election of President Obama hopefully awakens the positive change that exists in all of us, but for some unknown reason may lie dormant. I encourage each of us to take a personal inventory and ask a few questions: 1) what is your legacy? 2) How are you contributing to your family, friends, and colleagues? 3) What role do you play in your community? 4) Are you willing to come out of your comfort zone?

***We are each of us angels and we can only fly by embracing each other.*** (author unknown).