

# The Journey

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

Volume 2 - Issue 3

Spring 2009

## Dr. Jeanette Diaz-LaPlante: 'We are all role models for each other'

by Jerel Griffin

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

I've been here since July 2008, so this is my first year on the job. I know there has been a lot going on. There have been new changes in the psychology department; for example, the new doctoral program. We're currently accepting our third class coming in. We are also talking of ways to internationalize. So most of our changes have been current or in progress.

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

Well, I did my undergraduate in human development and my plan was to get my doctorate in clinical

psychology. However, after I got my bachelor's, I worked as a counselor for schizophrenics and adolescents. Then I went back to get my master's degree in developmental psychology before working with traumatically brain injured adults. In the process of all that, my desire for clinical psychology shifted and I wanted to focus on the larger, social aspects of psychology.

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

Well, that is interesting because I come from a multicultural background. My father is an immigrant from Greece and my mother is an immigrant from El Salvador. They met in California where I was born. When I was a kid, we would go pretty regularly to



Dr. Jeanette Diaz-LaPlante

El Salvador to visit my family there. I remember being very disturbed by economic inequality and injustice. While traveling back and forth, I wondered, what are these differences? What is going on here? This experience has impacted my focus on social justice and psychology. For me, it is really looking at the historical aspects of economics and politics and how those provide a larger social context for understanding individual development.

**I see you have worked on several publications including, *Humanistic Psychology and Social Transformation*. Explain.**

Prior to coming here, I worked as a faculty member at Saybrook Graduate School, which is another humanistic school. About ten years ago, I started working in Haiti and I remember thinking to myself, "what would humanistic psychology look like if developed in Haiti?" Here, there are no privileged communities like back home in California. So one of the things I write about in this article, in particular, is some of Maslow's work on the hierarchy of human needs. In order for any one individual to actualize his or her potential, they need to have all the basic human needs met. In many ways, this is a political statement. Do we think that only wealthy or privileged people should be the ones to the right of self-actualization? If everyone has that right then it demands psychology to say that we have to work on making sure everyone has food, shelter, clothing, security, creativity, and their jobs. We have to be clear on whether humanistic psychology is implicitly or explicitly a political psychology. On the other hand, once you have all your needs met, can you really be self-actualized? How about being self-actualized through development work? Why is it that you can not be a fully self-actualized spiritual being unless you have basic needs met? What if through the process of planting trees in the community (to provide food), that you become self-actualized? So these are some things I talk about in the article.

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

I am working on a writing project on the topic of psychology and globalization. I am also looking at social justice in psychology. How has psychology historically used, talked about, applied and theorized about social justice? I have plans to go to Haiti and begin working on a community mental health outreach project modeled after a non-profit organization in India. So I am looking to have community meetings, focus groups, and get to understand the resources that are available there for this work.

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

I really like teaching the undergraduate students here. Before, I have only taught at a doctoral level. So it is something different to me coming into an undergraduate classroom. I really like the diversity and it is very challenging. It is just not ethnic diversity; there is class diversity, age and motivational diversity. So I really like the challenge to teach in a way that everyone in the class can feel like they are represented in the classroom.

**What else do you hope to accomplish here before you leave?**

I would definitely like to create service learning opportunities in Haiti for our students. Haiti is a place that I feel transforms you. You will not come back the same person. I want to see that relationship institutionalized on this campus. I also want to see community psychology be an element of the psychology program and offered on a regular basis.

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

My dissertation was community-based and looked at Korean American and African American relations during the time of the Rodney King disturbance in Los Angeles. So working with the communities during these deeply distressful times really influenced me a lot. You cannot understand psychological dynamics without understand the social economic political context of the dynamic. This involvement helped me realize that.

**How do you feel about your position of being a role model on this campus?**

Well up until now, I have always been in the distance learning environment. So this is all new to me. I think we are all role models for each other.

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

I think that the Latino and Asian community is still an invisible group on campus. I would like to be more involved in the advocacy for those students and their representation. There is definitely a challenge to diversify the faculty and everyone is aware of it. From the student level all the way up, the diversity becomes thinner in both gender and nationality.

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

Be thirsty to know. It is such a privilege to be here. This is a place where we can really learn. Be open with your heart, learn to be compassionate, and not be afraid of challenge.

# Sylvia Shortt, long-time international student advisor

by Stania Philizaire and Jack O. Jenkins

Ms. Sylvia Shortt is an international student affairs expert. She received her A.B. degree from Brown University and M.Ed. and Ed.S. degrees from West Georgia College.

Ms. Shortt is the Assistant Director for International Services and Programs at the University of West Georgia. Her work often begins with processing necessary immigration forms so that an international student can matriculate to UWG. This is a very important function of her position. However, Ms. Shortt states that her primary role is to ensure that international students have a smooth transition to the University of West Georgia and are successful here.

Ms. Shortt stated that she values the time she spends with international students. She began work as a counselor in the Student Development Center at West Georgia College on November 1, 1983 and did both jobs until July 1, 2007. West Georgia College had few international students at that time and Ms. Shortt began advising them in 1984. When she began advising international students, the institution had approximately 18 such students. During fall 2008 the University enrolled 128 international students.

Ms. Shortt's duties include making certain that international students are picked up from the airport and otherwise are able to get to the campus satisfactorily.

Once on campus new international students attend a three-day orientation. The purpose of this orientation is to ensure a smooth transition to life at UWG and our community. Students register for classes, have sessions on Immigration issues, cultural issues, and are oriented to the UWG Campus and Carrollton community. They are taken to Wal-Mart and other stores during the orientation and the Carrollton Civic Womans Club always sponsors a superb dinner. Ms. Shortt has dedicated herself to ensuring that the needs of international students are addressed throughout the year.

Ms. Shortt serves as advisor for the International Student Club. She stated that she works to help the organization stay focused on the goal of educating the campus about different cultures and exposing the University community to information about different cultures around the world. Through the magnetic and well attended event that is International Night, cultural panels where students talk about their home countries, and other initiatives, international students are great ambassadors in conveying information about other cultures to the UWG and Carrollton communities.

International Night began in 1985 with 18 students and 100 dollars. It has grown mightily since that time. Ms. Shortt stated that the program has practically outgrown the Food Services building where it has been held for many years, but unfortunately there are no larger facilities with a full kitchen on campus to hold the event. The

International Student Club and Ms. Shortt would like to make International Night an even better event with more food, dancing, and more countries represented by students who attend school here.

Ms. Shortt has worked at the University of West Georgia for many years but still very much enjoys her work with international students. She stated that she

has an immense amount of respect for the students and their work ethic towards their studies. They are "some of the brightest students" with whom she has worked and Ms. Shortt admires them for leaving their homes to study in a foreign country. She enjoys learning about the world from them.

Ms. Shortt continues to enjoy the excellent relationship International Services and Programs has with other offices on campus. She stated her greatest accomplishment at UWG is working with the international students in a mutually respectful relationship: "They have nominated me



*Sylvia Shortt, International Student Adviser*

for distinguished service awards over the years. Those have been rewarding moments knowing that I am making a difference in the students' lives."

During her career at UWG, Ms. Shortt has taught classes in career planning, study skills and co-taught some graduate counseling classes. Unfortunately, some of these are not offered anymore. Those classes would be beneficial to many students who have undeclared majors or figuring out their callings in life. While teaching, among her most memorable moments in the classroom were seeing the students realize what they wanted to study and to have a goal for the rest of their college career. Ms. Shortt stated, "those aha moments are exciting, because it completely changes their college experience once they have a goal".

Ms. Shortt's advice to students to be successful is to experience everything they possibly can while at college. Students should keep up with their studies so that they can be successful in academics. She also advises participation in extracurricular activities "because that is what helps you grow, not just schoolwork."

By now many are aware of the Sylvia Shortt Scholarship. In response to the scholarship that was named after her, Ms. Shortt stated at an international student reunion in Paris:

"I had nothing to do with the scholarship. They were willing to start the scholarship under the condition that it was named after me. It was a very touching and emotional moment for me. I think I have touched them over the years and this is their way of thanking me for the job I have done. It is especially exciting to have a scholarship dedicated to help international students. It makes my entire career a success to have that honor. It was a complete surprise."

The scholarship is expected to help many international students. In addition to traveling to Paris, Ms. Shortt has also traveled with President Sethna and others to Istanbul, Turkey to establish an UWG alumni chapter. She stated that this was an amazing experience. To see many alumni and faculty after having not seen them for a long time was a very rewarding experience. The goal is to see UWG alumni chapters established around the world.

As the international student regulatory expert for the state of Georgia, all other universities who accept F-visa students frequently call Ms. Shortt to partake of her knowledge and experience in processing international student visas. Ms. Shortt belongs to NAFSA: Association of International Educators. The association meets four times a year at various locations including other universities. In addition to her travels mentioned above, Ms. Shortt traveled to Germany to help establish an exchange program with UWG in which 8-10 German students come to UWG to study each year and 14-20 American students travel to Carl von Ossietzky University of Oldenburg in Oldenburg, Germany. Students pay tuition and fees at their home universities and only have to pay room and board at the

foreign institution.

Ms. Shortt would like to adopt a one-stop shopping international office including undergraduate and graduate admissions and transfer evaluations to make it easier for students to get as many things as possible done at one location on campus.

## *The Journey*

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# Historian of the American Experience Dies at 94

*John Hope Franklin*

by Dr. Stephanie Wright

Born in Rentiesville, Oklahoma on January 2, 1915 and named for famed black educator and President of Morehouse College, John Hope, John Hope Franklin went on to become the leading scholar of the African American experience in the twentieth century. Professor Franklin was educated at Fisk and Harvard Universities. He received his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1935. While writing his dissertation, "The Free Negro in North Carolina," Franklin's presence in the archives was met with surprise. He was often forced to sit in segregated areas in southern archives that had never had to accommodate a black scholar. At the time of his graduation from Harvard, white colleges did not hire African Americans. Dr. Hope began his teaching career at St. Augustine College, a historically black institution in Raleigh, North Carolina. After teaching at North Carolina Central and Howard Universities, Franklin became the first African American appointed as a department chair at a historically white college or university. Although he was not the chair of the History Department at Brooklyn College, he faced extreme difficulty in finding a place to live in what was supposed to be the more liberal north. Franklin's appointment as chair of the History Department would be one of many firsts. He was the first African American to hold an endowed chair at Duke University, where he went on to become Professor Emeritus. He was also the first black president of the nation's largest historical

society, the American Historical Association.

As an historian, Franklin set the bar high for all who came after. His groundbreaking work, *From Slavery to Freedom*, was and continues to be standard reading in African American history courses. He was a meticulous researcher and prolific writer who insisted that American history could not be understood without examining the role played by black people in it. His work is part of the reason that U.S. history classes, at least the really good ones, include people of color in the telling of American history.

In addition to his scholarly work, Dr. Franklin played an important role in ending segregation and pushing the nation to engage in frank conversations about race. He helped the legal team at the NAACP in their preparation for the famous *Brown v. Board of Education*, which overturned legalized segregation in the public schools. Later in life, President Clinton appointed him to head the Advisory Board for the Initiative on Race. Franklin's many accomplishments would take up pages. Perhaps the best way to end a remembrance of him is to use his own words on the significance of history and historians: "One might argue the historian is the conscience of the nation, if honesty and consistency are factors that nurture the conscience." Through his scholarship and activism, John Hope Franklin served as the conscience of this nation. His death leaves a profound void in both the historical and professional areas of African American history, but his work leaves a foundation for current and future historians to build upon.

## An Example of the Diverse Community that is the University of West Georgia

*Dr. Euisuk Kim*

by Tristan Ervin

**How long have you been teaching here at UWG? How has the University changed over the years?**

"I have been teaching here since 2004; this will be my fifth year. There are more students interested in our department. We have more and more Spanish majors and minors students, which is an incredible change. When I first came here, I taught two language classes and one upper level course. In that upper level class, there were only seven or eight students. Now we have

15-20 students in each of our upper level classes. It is amazing to see how the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature is growing and how much students want to learn the Spanish language. They are opening their eyes to the Spanish world."

**How did you become interested in the field of Foreign Languages and Literature?**

"Being that I'm from South Korea, it is weird for a South Korean to teach Spanish at an American Institution. My mother language is Korean and I grew up in Korea until I was 20. When I had to choose my major in college, I knew that I held an interest in foreign language, but I

did not know which one I wanted to choose to pursue. When I was a child, I always dreamed of going to South America, especially after reading about the Ancient Mayan and Incan cultures in children's magazines. I figured, why not help make my dream a reality and study the Spanish Language? During my senior year in college in 1988 at Korea University, I participated in a foreign exchange program with a Colombian university for a year. I went to South America to learn more of the Spanish language and their culture. It was the first time I stayed away from my family, so I could enjoy the independence. What better place to do it than in another country? I had to manage everything by myself, which bettered the experience for me. Since all my credits were accepted from Korea while I was in Colombia, I graduated in Colombia. I didn't need to go back to Korea to participate in the graduation ceremony."

### **What classes do you teach?**

"In our department, we are all supposed know how to teach a variety of classes. I teach two language classes, and one upper level class. Sometimes I teach culture, sometimes I teach literature, sometimes linguistics, drama—it all depends on the students' demand."

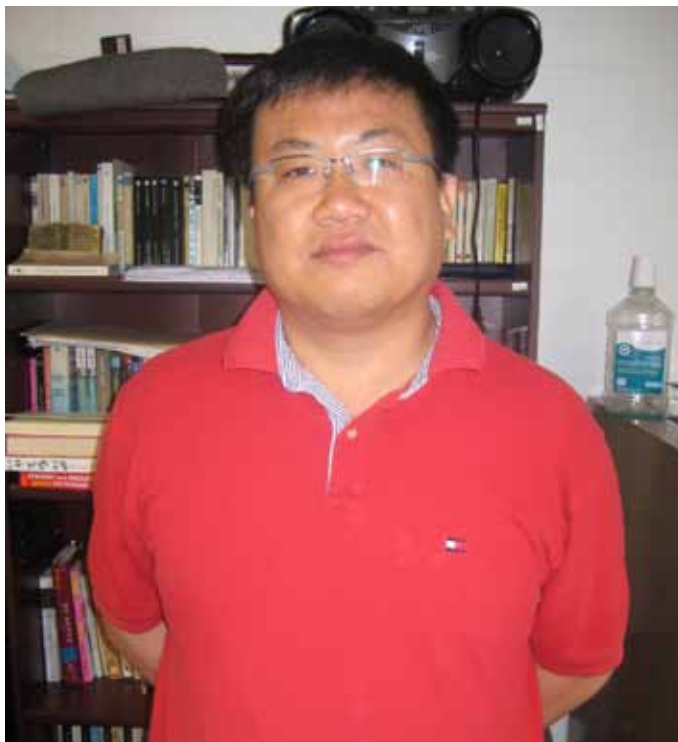
### **What has been your most fulfilling experience or contribution here at West GA?**

"It's hard to tell because I've only been here for five years. I will say that I am happy when some students come in and tell me that they have learned a lot, especially in my Spanish classes. They want to study more, and take more Spanish courses. When I see that my students are growing academically, and when I see that my students are interested in Spanish, then I think its part of my contribution to this university."

### **What type of cultures did you encounter in these countries and how have they influenced you?**

"My position in this department is very unique, being that I'm Korean, teaching Spanish, at an American university. The experience I had in Colombia is very important and valuable for me because when I talk about Latin American culture, I can talk about my

experiences first hand. I have traveled a lot, so when I talk about Latin American geography and lifestyles, I can just remember what I saw when I was there. The information I use to back up my teachings are very accessible to me—since I lived there for four years. In my case, I can talk about other cultures from an objective point of view. I am not South American, but I'm not American either. When Latin Americans talk about their own culture, they try to avoid saying anything negative. When Americans talk about other cultures, in most cases, they have biased opinions about that culture. I can talk about any culture from a neutral point of view—students like this because I'm not favoring their culture which allows me to have a neutral standpoint."



*Dr. Euisuk Kim*

### **What type of cultural growth have you experienced here at the university?**

"My first two years here, I was extremely busy doing my own thing, trying to establish myself as a professor. It was very hard for me to open my eyes to see what else I could do here at the university. Now, for example, we have a film series. Students are interested in international movies—they are different from your typical Hollywood films. That is a big change for me because students are used to these Hollywood style movies, with the Hollywood plots, and Hollywood story-telling. When they see Latin American films, it is very strong. Their films are not as dramatic as Hollywood

movies. They have to realize that other cultures are different. I think that is one of the cultural growths at this university. In addition, we organize cultural events here in the department, like film studies, study abroad (Mexico, Germany, France), we have conversation clubs. We try to gather all the students outside of the classroom in order to continue that teacher-student relationship. We also try to involve our students more and more with our extra-curricular activities on campus. In the beginning, it is hard because students do have busy schedules. They work and have other classes, so when we hold events, few people show up. The good thing is, is that when those two or three students begin to trickle in, the number can only grow from there. I am not trying to make some fabulous change, but that tiny change has brought many differences in this [our university] culture.

## Office of Minority Affairs

# Ms. Felicia Humphries, former speech language pathologist, is office manager

by *Tristan Irvin*

### **How long have you been working here at the University of West Georgia? Where did you work prior to coming here?**

I have been working in the Office of Minority Affairs since July 2006. I worked in the Graduate School as a Student Assistant while receiving my undergraduate degree as well. Prior to being offered the position in Minority Affairs I worked as a Speech Language Pathologist.

### **Do you do any type of research? If so, what does it consist of?**

Yes, I do. My research consists of diversity and cultural issues, graduate retention and the ethnicity of graduate students enrolled in certain degree programs. I am also very interested in how media and technology is used to further the education of our youth.

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

I was born in Boston, Massachusetts but I graduated from Statesboro High School in Statesboro, Georgia. I received my bachelor's degree from the University of West Georgia in Speech Language Pathology and I am currently pursuing a Masters in Education with an emphasis on Media and Instructional Technology.

### **Eventually, you'd like to become a professor, correct?**

Yes, I would like to become a professor and be able to provide the same type of encouragement and personal attention to my students that I received from my major professors as an undergraduate and currently as a graduate student.



*Felicia Humphries*

### **What is your proudest achievement since you have been here at West Georgia?**

My proudest achievement, which came as a surprise to me, was receiving the Divisional Award of Excellence and the Distinguished Service Award, from my peers and UWG students. I also received the Brick award from the Black Student Alliance organization at the Student Activities Awards program. What an honor from the West Georgia community!

### **What type of cultural growth have you seen here at our University since you have been here?**

With regard to the Minority Affairs department we are continuously offering various cultural events and programming that is frequently attended by campus and community supporters. As a society many people are currently subjected to stereotypes that are seen and heard from the media, so our goal is to reach each person regardless of their race and model a positive example. Our planning committee for the Multicultural Ball is comprised of students and faculty members from several cultural backgrounds. I have met students from many cultures and I enjoy working with them all. I have reviewed courses over a five year span to ensure that the University includes cultural representations in each course. I also had the pleasure of assisting a South African student with the careful selection of the cultural artwork that is presented in the Minority Affairs office. This was a very special moment for me because I was able to experience and learn the different aspects of art from different cultures.

# Student Opinion Survey

Students give their opinions on various issues.

by Jerel Griffin and Tanya Chin

Laura Fenley, Junior,  
Psychology Major



## 1. If you could change anything about West Georgia's campus, what would it be?

-With the campus being so pretty, I would probably wish that people would be a little more environmentally friendly. I'm really big into the whole eco thing.

## 2. What is your favorite campus hangout spot in between classes?

-Probably the quad on a sunny day.

## 3. Do you think that West Georgia has enough diversity, both with students and faculty?

- Yes, I feel like West Georgia is a pretty diverse campus.

## 4. Do you feel safe at West Georgia?

- I do feel safe, even with the incidents that have taken place here lately, I still feel safe.

## 5. What are your plans for the summer?

- I'm doing a study abroad program in Spain with Georgia State. I will be taking some classes there for 6 weeks and then just doing some backpacking and stuff like that.

## 6. If you could be any person on campus for a day, who would it be and why?

-Dr. Sethna, just because I love his accent and he's really cool.

## 7. What website do you spend the most time on and why?

-Recently it's been this website called broken picture telephone, and it's like the old game telephone except it's with a series of pictures.

Chioma Okafor, Senior,  
Psychology Major



## 1. If you could change anything about West Georgia's campus, what would it be?

- A little bit more student interaction with the student organizations. Mainly just for all the Greek and non-Greek organizations to work together. Also I would have more forums with professor and student interaction.

## 2. What is your favorite campus hangout spot in between classes?

- I don't really hangout on campus anymore since my freshman year but if there was one it would be at the UCC or campus center.

## 3. Do you think that West Georgia has enough diversity, both with students and faculty?

-Faculty not so much, but the student population is pretty diverse.

## 4. Do you feel safe at West Georgia?

-For the most part, yes.

## 5. What are your plans for the summer?

-I'm taking one class, graduating, and hopefully will start working before grad school.



**6. If you could be any person on campus for a day, who would it be and why?**

I would be Robert Kelly, because he is very smart and motivated and an inspiration to many students and possibly faculty as well.

**7. What website do you spend the most time on and why?**

I'm on face book a lot and CNN, mostly for news.

*Kylene Cepeda, Junior,  
Mass Communications Major*



**1. If you could change anything about West Georgia's campus, what would it be?**

More free events offered here on campus.

**2. What is your favorite campus hangout spot in between classes?**

The TLC because there is a lot of coffee and stuff and also the library is good because you can rent lap tops.

**3. Do you think that West Georgia has enough diversity, both with students and faculty?**

I would say yes.

**4. Do you feel safe at West Georgia?**

When it's not dark I do. When it's really dark and I'm by myself, I don't feel so safe because of all the recent activity. It's not the campus though, it's the people.

**5. What are your plans for the summer?**

Lots of summer school and lots of working. Then I plan to travel.

**6. If you could be any person on campus for a day, who would it be and why?**

Dr. Sethna because he makes all the rules.

**7. What website do you spend the most time on and why?**

Facebook, because of my email messages.

*David Jones, Sophomore,  
Mass Communications Major*



**1. If you could change anything about West Georgia's campus, what would it be?**

Less of the campus security and more free events. Security is ridiculous here.

**2. What is your favorite campus hangout spot in between classes?**

The UCC

**3. Do you think that West Georgia has enough diversity, both with students and faculty?**

Yea, we're pretty diverse.

**4. Do you feel safe at West Georgia?**

Yes, because I don't think many girls are going to try to mug me.

**5. What are your plans for the summer?**

Well I'm trying to be in summer school and work.

**6. If you could be any person on campus for a day, who would it be and why?**

I would be all of the campus police because then they will start making sense.

**7. What website do you spend the most time on and why?**

Facebook, because you can wonder around on there.

## Mrs. Deirdre Rouse, Program Coordinator for Minority Affairs

by Felicia Watts

### **How long have you been working at UWG? What is your job title at UWG?**

I have been employed with the Office of Minority Affairs since August, 2008 as Program Coordinator, but employed with the University as an adjunct instructor since 1998. From 1998 to Spring of 2008 I was an adjunct in the Department of Sociology & Criminology.

### **And what exactly do you do?**

Our office seeks to implement programs/events that are enriching, empowering to students and the UWG community, and the Carroll County community, as a whole. These programs may range from collaborating with another department, such as the Ingram library assisting in bringing Dr. Bass, a WWII Veteran to the Multicultural Ball featuring various student groups, organizations, cultural entertainment, and the community. We strive to have programs that will compliment the University and create awareness and sensitivity to issues or situations relating to diversity and culture.

### **What University did you graduate from? What was your major? Were you in any groups or Organizations on Campus?**

On the undergraduate level, I graduated from Spelman College receiving a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in history. Then I continued into graduate school at Georgia State University earning a Master's of Science in community counseling with a special concentration in gerontology.

I was involved in the student government association on Spelman College campus (secretary and other offices). My senior year I was on the committee to select the speaker for our college graduation. I'm happy to say that our speaker was Cicely Tyson, that's who I was pulling for. I think that she is not just a great actress but a great individual in the types of roles she chooses. I became a member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc, very active in community service, a peer mentor in college, volunteered at the John O. Chiles (a high rise for senior citizens), the psychology club, and a tutor for kids in Perry Homes Housing Complex.

### **What is the most exciting thing about your job and why?**

The most exciting thing about my job I would say is meeting people. I love conversing with others; getting to learn about other cultures, other individuals, their likes and dislikes, and purpose. I just enjoy communicating with people and expanding my horizons.

### **How do you feel about the changes that have come with the year 2009? And in what was had it affected you?**

Hopefully one of the things I would like to enhance is my own personal attitude. I know that I am already a positive person but I aim to increase this attitude to an even higher than I already have and hopefully influence others. In terms of change, obviously our country has changed some with the election of our current president. I am confident our country will gravitate more toward community service.



*Deirdre Rouse*

### **What is your favorite book and why?**

I don't know that I have a favorite book. I love reading! One of my favorite authors is Zora Neale Hurston who wrote 'Their Eye's are Watching God' (written in dialect). Books that are written in dialect can be somewhat challenging, but I enjoy those kind of books. I enjoy reading autobiographies to historical novels to magazines to children's books. I think children's literature is really important and I also make an effort to encourage kids to read. One of the ways try to contribute and promote reading is whenever I have to purchase a gift for a child, I usually select a book because I figure that's probably one of the few presents they will not receive as a gift in this day and time, since our society is more technologically advanced.

### **What are some of your research interests? Things you like to look up for fun?**

I love knowing about cultural histories, specifically about American Black history. I was really intrigued by black history from one of my favorite teachers from, high school, Mr. Michel Searles. He taught us American History, but he incorporated some black history and since then I've had a hunger and thirst just to learn more about my own family and American history. I'm also very interested in the field gerontology. I love knowing and learning about older individuals (I lovingly refer to them as seasoned citizens); their advice and insight, maybe why they think the way that they do.

**Why Gerontology?**

As a kid, we always attended the family reunion on my father's side, and one of the things I noticed was that I only had a few cousins around my age. Most of my relatives were a lot older, which I don't think is old now but in their forty's and older. I grew up around older people and I enjoyed that environment because they had so much wisdom. As I got older I just became more interested in gerontology. Also on my paternal side of the family, there is longevity. My grandmother died when she was 92, and most of her aunts and uncles were in their eighties and older before they died. I remember one family reunion I attended, my grandmother was 85 and she said "I'm going over to talk to my auntie". Some people looked at her as if she had lost her mind because she was 85, so how could she have an auntie? But she did have one aunt that was living which was my great great aunt. She died in 2006 at 110 years. Another key fact that encouraged my interest in being in the company of older individuals

is that I love good food. They could really cook; homemade cornbread, deserts, fresh vegetables, and rolls. Everything was truly homemade; nothing was prepackaged; boxed. I didn't mind helping in the kitchen or doing whatever they requested. In the midst of helping them in the kitchen, I didn't realize I was receiving a history lesson when they would share their childhood memories and reminisce.

**Do you have any words of encouragement for the students at UWG?**

I would encourage all our students to strive to do their best in all endeavors, always have a zeal for knowledge, make time for family and friends, and contribute to the community through community service. I'm a big promoter of community service, so I would hope all our students while they are here, and when they leave the walls of UWG, engage in serving others, because we each can make a difference in our communities/society.

## **Words of Gratitude**

Those of us in the Office of Minority Affairs would like to express our heartfelt appreciation to the University of West Georgia and the Carroll County community for those who supported our various programs through collaboration, attendance, constructive suggestions, cooperative spirit, and commitment to education and cultural diversity. Your support has been invaluable and has not gone unnoticed. The UWG Village does indeed raise fine individuals who will do great things for Georgia, the United States and the world.

**THANK YOU!!!**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Multicultural Ball 2009  
October 28, 2009  
Campus Center Ballroom**