

The Black Oaks Newsletter

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Spring 2012

Black History is Everyone's History: Elon Celebrates



Without a vision for their futures and the lives of generations yet unborn, African and African-descended peoples in the United States would not have overcome the limitations others placed on their value as human beings. From the arrival of the first African slaves on Virginia's shores in 1619 to the inauguration of Barack Hussein Obama on January 20th, 2009 as our nation's 44th and first African-American President, the Elon University campus community joins the nation in formally recognizing and celebrating the nearly four hundred years of a proud and royal peoples, whose stories of struggle and achievement define what it means to be American, to be human.

Quite fittingly, our nation's focused celebrations and reflections each February, what we now call "Black History Month," begin in 1915 in Chicago with the vision of Dr. Carter G. Woodson. After participating in events celebrating emancipation's 50th anniversary, a few months later, Dr. Woodson formed the Association for the

Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) and the *Journal of Negro History*. In 1926, his organization launched "Negro History Week." Until his death in 1950, Dr. Woodson advocated for the study of Black history beyond the compressed timeframe, not a week, not a month, not a supplement or a complement, but a year-long, daily study and engagement among *all* peoples of Black intellectual and cultural history as a vital and integrated component of their lives.

The Elon University Black History Month Steering Committee takes "Black History is Everyone's History" as its 2012 theme. Our mission is to begin a permanent series of programming that further enriches the appreciation, awareness, and understanding of Black intellectual and cultural life and contributions to Elon, the United States, and the world at large. Our responsibility is to lead the campus community in its efforts to recognize and celebrate Black lives, cultures, and achievement. Campus organizations, departments and programs planned and hosted events and speakers throughout the month. A showcase of those events can be found by visiting our website at <http://www.elon.edu/blackhistorymonth> Black History Month events that honor the rich histories and diverse traditions of Black people in the United States, Africa, the Caribbean and throughout the globe.

In addition to the conferences, panel discussions, film screen-

ings, and other events offered throughout the month, a student-coordinated art installation, under the leadership of Ethan Moore, showcased pieces from Elon's International Art Collection and Prof. Jason Aryeh choreographed student performances of West African dance in Yeager Recital Hall. The Electronic display boards in the Moseley Center helped the campus community (re)discover Elon's Black history and achievements as we celebrated the legacies of Elon's Black Alumni, six of whom contribute retrospective to the February edition of *The Elon Magazine*.

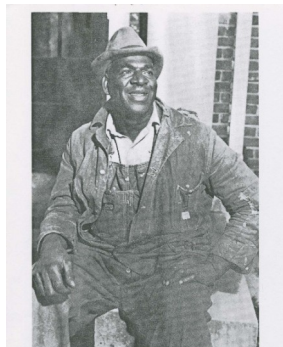
Surveys of Sunday worship services in the United States have led that period to be called "the most segregated day in America" (Malcolm X). In the *Get on the Bus!* Series, students, faculty, and staff were invited to attend a worship service at one of the many historically Black churches in Elon, Burlington, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem featured each Sunday in February.

In honoring the founder of Black History Month, Dr. Carter G. Woodson, we urge everyone to celebrate Black history and achievement throughout the year and to join us in honoring the many Black men and women who continue to make our campus community and this nation GREAT! Send your feedback and suggestions for Black History Month 2013 to aaase@elon.edu Planning is already underway.

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Elon's Black History Spotlight: Andrew Morgan by Jess McDonald '12



ANDREW MORGAN IN FAMILIAR POSE—Painted above is Andy Morgan as he is remembered by thousands of students and faculty faculty members during the thirty-eight years he served in the campus maintenance program.

On the second floor of Belk Library, in the vicinity of the DVDs section, sits a portrait of a man named Andrew Morgan, an African-American man of large stature. Curious about the role he played in Elon's history, I decided to investigate further. Andy Morgan was raised in Alamance County and lived on a farm in Mebane, NC until he was 21 years old. He worked for a textile mill in nearby Glencoe before joining the Elon College staff in 1926. Though he and his wife Hattie Burton Morgan did not

have any children, they raised nine of their nieces and nephews as foster children. Morgan worked in the campus maintenance department at Elon for thirty eight years, and he became somewhat of a fixture on campus during that time. Former students recall that he was "so so tall!" They report that he knew everyone by name and always had a smile on his face. In addition, he was close with Dr. Danieley's father and his family. The university community was saddened by Morgan's sudden death in

1964. While working on the plumbing underneath his home, he was electrocuted and died at the age of 64. His obituary from *Elon Alumni News* refers to him as "one of the oldest and best-loved employees" at Elon, and many members of the Elon community attended his funeral. The Andrew Morgan Memorial Scholarship was set up in his name following his death. The painting in the library was done from a photograph of Morgan at work at Elon, sitting in his typical spot near Alamance Building.

Who was
"Uncle Pinkie"
Comer and does
his legacy
continue?

Unearthing Elon's Untold Black History: "Uncle Pinkie" Comer

In *Elon College: Its History, and Traditions*, Durward T. Stokes documents Elon's physical and academic growth at the turn of the 20th century: West Dorm was built in 1906; the Physical Plant was under construction in 1908 and several awards for scholastic achievement "were won by men and women who later became instructors, trustees or benefactors of the college" (109). During this time,

the Rev. James W. Wellons, became the college patriarch. The Elon Archives owns an extensive collection documenting his life and work; however, lesser known is the life of "Uncle Pinkie" Comer, a black man who was hired "to care for the old minister's needs" (110). Not much is known about Mr. Comer, but combing the Elon Archives, one discovers the faces of other

Black employees as early as the 1900s, even if their names are unknown. Stokes' work offers only a cursory reference to Mr. Comer, but points to the need to unearth, investigate, and document the untold and often unrecognized stories of Elon's Black community, especially those whose service were and are so vital to our institution's operations and legacy.

Generations of Service to Elon: Clementine Pinnix

Generations of families have long established connections with Elon, either through their matriculation as university students, employment, or both. Clementine Pinnix and her family are no exception. Ms. Pinnix joined the university in 1998 as an environmental worker before her retirement in 2010. Her sister, Eva Boone, followed her one year later, and they were soon joined by another sister. Subsequently, Ms. Pinnix's sister-in-law,

daughter, and grandson joined the Elon staff. While she never graduated from high school, Mrs. Pinnix stressed the importance of education to her family and one of her granddaughters worked at the institution and graduated from Elon with a degree in Business Administration. She also recalls her Elon-sponsored trip to London in 2005 as one of the highlights of her career. Historically, African American families like the Morgans, Haiths, Pinnixes and

countless others have found Elon an attractive place to work because of the stability, employment benefits, and the opportunity to receive a college degree. Our custodial staff often work in obscurity, some in the dead of night, while Elon sleeps, but their work comprises more than keeping Elon clean. Mrs. Pinnix recalls being a confidante to countless students, serving in ways most never see. All we can say is thank you for a job well done

Black Faculty at Elon & The Promotion & Tenure Process

During the formative years for faculty before they stand for promotion and tenure, the preparation involved includes attention to and development of their teaching, mentoring, scholarship and research. While Elon in theory still considers teaching the first level criterion in this process, recently, it has been moving towards a more “research-one-like” evaluation of faculty members’ research and scholarship. For Black faculty at PWIs (Predominantly White Institutions), the road to tenure is

booby-trapped with landmines and pitfalls, which must be avoided. If Elon is serious about its unprecedented commitment to diversity . . .” and in recruiting and retaining excellent faculty of color, then it needs to equip and resource them with the tools they need to succeed. It must also recognize the unique challenges this demographic will encounter in the classroom and other facets of their university career, especially, but not limited to, when they are “the lone face” of their department program, or

the institution. Faculty of color need to be immersed in formal, structured, sustained mentoring and support systems that provide regular meetings, feedback, assessment, and goals for their success. They must be given the confidence to affirm their racial and ethnic identities and related-work, when relevant, without “wearing the masks” of fear or recrimination, and among other factors, they must not be constantly tagged to serve “diversity” agendas without the space to do the other work demanded.

AAASE Participates in Inaugural Interdisciplinary Programs Fair

On Tuesday, March 27th, AAASE joined interdisciplinary programs from across the university for the inaugural annual IP Fair held in McKinnon Hall and sponsored by Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences. The Fair is the brainchild of Associate Dean Nancy Harris and was designed to promote and showcase the offerings of interdisciplinary majors like International Studies, pro-

grams like Pre-law, and minors like AAASE, & W/GS. With food and prizes designed to entice attendees, the fair was a success. In addition to information from our student-affiliated organizations, STAND: Students, Take Action Now Darfur and Invisible Children, representatives from the Black Cultural Society and the Elon African Society joined current AAASE minors to discuss im-

proved course offerings, study abroad, research, internships, service opportunities, and ways students can become involved in the program.

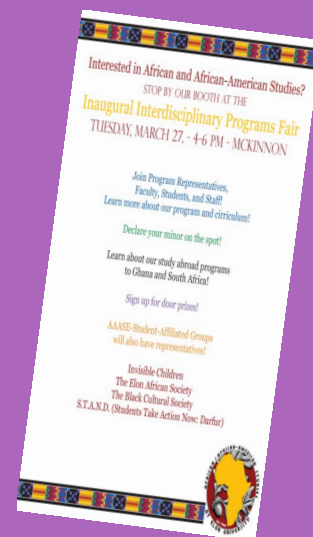
Representatives from Academic Advising helped students determine how classes they had taken could count towards any of the programs, and out of the event, AAASE secured new minors!

Kony 2012: Making Who Famous?

The Invisible Children viral video phenomenon Kony 2012 has been viewed more than 100 million times, The organization describes Joseph Kony “as one of the world’s worst war criminals” and vow “to support the international efforts to arrest him, disarm the LRA, and bring the child soldiers home.” While Kony 2012 has been hailed by Bono and others as PR genius and everyone agrees that Kony is a murderous tyrant, the absence of

Ugandans from the film as critical partners or in solving their own problems is but one of the cultural biases the film betrays. The oversimplification of history and the problems have also led to other omissions, such as the fact that government forces booted Kony and the Lord Resistance Army from Uganda in 2005. Since that time, the LRA has decreased in size and now comprises mainly Sudanese and Congolese. On March 16th, Jason Russell, the

Kony 2012 filmmaker, became even more famous for another video, when he was filmed running naked through the streets of San Diego. Even before this incident, people have been asking, “Who’s more famous: Kony or Russell?” Is advocacy big business and what are Invisible Children’s real goals? Join AAASE and Invisible Children on April 18th at 7 pm in Whitley Auditorium for a discussion of these and other issues from Kony 2012.



Congratulations to the AAASE Graduating Minors, Class of 2012

The ten members of the Class of 2012, graduating with a minor in African & African-American Studies, will leave an indelible mark on the program. Their interests and talents are diverse, but their curiosity about, advocacy and passion for Black life and culture will continue long after they have left

Anna E. Becker is an Honors Fellow majoring in International Studies with an Africa concentration and English, with a Professional Writing and Rhetoric concentration and additional minors in French and Nonviolence studies. Anna worked extensively in summer 2009 as part of the inaugural intern team for a nonprofit organization, Calling All Crows, which works to mobilize musicians and their fans to end violence against women and promote public service. She has also worked with such causes as Stoves for Sudan and the Sudanese Education fund. In January 2010, Anna studied abroad in South Africa.

Jasmine H. Gregory has worked as a columnist and frequent contributor to The Pendulum throughout her Elon career. Hailing from Charlottesville, VA, Jasmine is a Strategic Communications major with an additional minor in History. Jasmine has worked as the Social Media Marketing Intern at Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro, served as Team Leader at Live Oak Communications, interned at the US-UK Fulbright Commission and the Communications Intern for Semester At Sea / ISE (Enrichment Voyages). Her other positions have included work as the Account Executive at Live Oak Communications a Multicultural Ambassador (Tour Guide), Resident Assistant at LEAD Summer Business Institute, and intern at Comcast Government and Community Affairs. After graduation, she is interested in working in public relations, social media marketing or higher education.

Gretchen Honnold comes from Charlotte, NC and will receive her degree in International Studies (Africa concentration). Following her study abroad experience in Ghana, she became involved in ABAN (A Ban Against Neglect), a non-governmental organization founded in 2008 by three students who took notice of the large number of trash and neglected children on the streets there.

Brooke V. Kassner served as president of Model UN, Chief of Staff of the International Crisis Conference at Elon, Secretary of Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Society and is a member of Pi Gamma Mu Social Science Society. majoring in Political Science with a double minor in International Studies and African/American Studies. Prior to taking the position of President, Brooke served as the Vice President and Treasurer as well as a Chair and Crisis Director for Elon MUN's International Crisis Conference. Her passion for MUN, however, began long before starting her college level career at Elon. She attended high school in Leysin, Switzerland where she was fortunate to take part in MUN for all four years and attend the annual conference at The Hague, Netherlands during her Junior and Senior years. Her passion for international affairs was sparked at a young age as her family lived overseas from the time she was three years old. Her travels have taken her all around the world and currently her family resides in Sumatra, Indonesia. Brooke is also the Chief of Staff for the International Crisis Conference at Elon (I.C.C.E.) which has put on ten successful simulations thus far. Most recently she has interned at the Genocide Intervention Network and Georgetown's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership both of which have led to her growing interest in foreign affairs. Brooke's language skills consist of a fluent level in French and an intermediate level in Arabic which she is still advancing. She loves to snowboard, travel, swim, and cook!

Daniel Koehler is a documentary filmmaker, whose award-winning work has been entered at film festivals around the country, including RiverRun, Silver Docs and was a 2012 Ivy Film Festival finalist. Dan's work has consistently won first place at the Broadcast Education Association's Festival of Media Arts. Such work includes Burlington, A City Divided (2010), which examines the history of race relations in Burlington and The Tobacco King (2012), which shares the story of George Botha, a white farmer in Zambia who relocated to the African nation after he lost his land in neighboring Zimbabwe. Dan explores the racial complexities at play between Botha and his 200-strong black workforce. At Elon, Dan is a media arts and entertainment major and Lumen Scholar, who spent seven months in Zambia interviewing and collecting footage for his most recent work.

Brittany Moore is an International Studies major and Study Abroad ambassador, who spent the Fall of 2010 studying abroad in Senegal. Brittany is also a member of the Periclean Scholar Class of 2012, who attended the Clinton Global Initiative University conference in Miami in 2010 to develop their proposal focusing on the Adolescent Girls' Program run by Comprehensive Rural Health Project, an India-based NGO with whom her class is working.

Cedric Pulliam will receive dual degrees in International Studies & Political Science. At Elon, he served as the Student Program Coordinator for the S.M.A.R.T. Mentoring Program, a Multicultural Ambassador, SGA Senior Class Senator, a Charles B. Rangel Scholar '11, a Periclean Scholar '12 and a member of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity. Following graduation this summer, Cedric will hold an online internship with the United Nations, responsible for planning a scholarship program for vulnerable children of Tanzania with the African Rural Sustainable Development Association. Cedric has been accepted to Central European University in Budapest, Hungary for the 2012/2013 academic year. Cedric was selected from among over 6,000 applications from more than a hundred countries in a highly competitive selection process. In addition he will receive a full CEU fellowship, covering tuition and expenses.

Francis Stiefel, IV from Haddonfield, NJ graduates with degrees in Political Science and an independent major in African and African-American Studies, the first student to do so since Sowande' Mustakeem in 2000. Frank has studied abroad in South Africa, worked with the Periclean Scholars to fund service projects in Ghana, served as the Truitt Center's Reconciliation and Justice Coordinator, interned with

the Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office in New York and with the Genocide Intervention Network, founded the Elon University chapter of STAND (Students Take Action Now: Darfur) and was a finalist for the prestigious Truman Scholarship.

Lauren R. Wilmer is the immediate past president of the Xi Omicron chapter of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and studied abroad in South Africa in Winter 2012. Lauren too demonstrates a strong commitment to volunteerism and has worked with Habitat for Humanity, Burlington Housing Authority, Women's Resource Center, Freedom Schools, as well as Campus Kitchen, volunteering at least ten to fifteen hours a week. Lauren will graduate with a major in Philosophy.

Lindsey Yasso is a History major from The Woodlands, TX. Lindsey is involved with Phi Alpha Theta, Phi Alpha Delta and served as the Vice President of Alpha Omicron Pi and as a member of the Panhellenic Judicial Board. Lindsey has raised money and awareness for arthritis research, ALS and juvenile diabetes, and worked with Friendship Adult Day Services, the Boys and Girls Club and the Alamance County Child Custody Mediation Department. Lindsey spent Winter 2012 studying abroad in South Africa, and will attend law school following graduation.

AAASE STUDENT- & FACULTY SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHTS

Sarah Harris '14 - AAASE minor Sarah Harris '14 travelled to Utah to present her research "From the Bottom Up or the Top Down? A Comparative Analysis of Government and Grassroots Organizations in Uganda" at the NCUR conference. Sarah will also present at Elon's SURF conference and return to Uganda this summer for the third time to continue her research and gathering data. An abstract of her work follows:

Through a comparative analysis of grassroots organizations and government programs in Uganda, this paper explores the effectiveness of each in aiding women and children. Through a study of levels of funding, the utilization of resources and how aid recipients and non-recipients perceive the different organizations in the rural Western area and the central suburban and city areas of Uganda, this research answers the following question: are government programs or local grassroots movements more effective in providing aid to the impoverished women and children of Uganda? Utilizing organizational theory, this paper hypothesizes that local leaders of Ugandan grassroots movements are more effective in helping Ugandan women and children because of the mechanisms they use to dispense funds and to connect with the people they serve. Furthermore, the structure of non-governmental organizations fosters more interest and concern among workers for their clients and breeds less corruption than government agencies due to the workers' proximity to the people receiving aid. The paper uses methodological triangulation analysis, which involves: interviewing leaders of orphanages, schools, rural health programs, and government officials; studying the budgets and annual reports of the Ugandan government and select grassroots organizations; administering questionnaires to women who receive assistance from government and grassroots organizations; testing non-recipients' perceptions of the government and grassroots agencies through surveys; and researching the history and leadership of social movements in Uganda. Ultimately, the results of this research will be used to determine how to minimize waste and bureaucracy, limit corruption, and work most effectively with the Ugandan government and/or local NGOs to ensure that the maximum amount of resources and donations get to the women and children who most need them.

Dr. Thomas S. Henricks, Danieley Professor of Sociology and Distinguished University Professor, published a new book *Selves, Societies, and Emotions: Understanding the Pathways of Experience* from Paradigm Publishers, February 2012. He is the author of many writings on the organization of human expression in societies, including his most recent book *Play Reconsidered: Sociological Perspectives on Human Expression*. Building on contributions from sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, literature, and neuroscience, he develops a more general account of how people discover and reproduce the "meanings" of their involvements with others. Among its many themes are treatments of selves as "projections of personhood," of the ways in which self-expression has changed historically and is now experienced in our electronically mediated era, of emotions as "framing judgments," and of ritual, play, communitas, and work as four distinctive "pathways of experience."

Dr. Amy Marie Johnson, assistant professor of history, will have her article, "Slavery on the Gold Coast and African Resistance to Slavery in Jamaica during the Early Colonial Period" published in vol 18 of *LIMINA: A Journal of Historical and Cultural Studies* on June 7, 2012. A graduate of Duke University, the article grows out of her dissertation research. An abstract of the article follows:

"Seasoning" is the process by which enslaved peoples became physically and socially acclimated to slavery. In examining the social aspect of "seasoning," scholars of slave resistance often focus on the expectations masters had of their bondmen, the processes by which they exerted their demands, and the impact these demands had on slave rebelliousness. This article explains what people from the Gold Coast of West Africa enslaved in early colonial Jamaica expected of their English masters and connects their expectations to their experiences on the Gold Coast. Many enslaved peoples on the Gold Coast had opportunities for social and physical mobility and advancement. Subsequently, conflicts arose between African bondmen and white planters when planters denied enslaved Africans in Jamaica the opportunities for improvement that they had come to anticipate. This research demonstrates a diasporic connection between slavery on both sides of the Atlantic, English and African interactions on the Gold Coast, and slave resistance in Jamaica from 1655 to 1766.

Dr. Gerald Knight, assistant professor of Music, performed, moderated, and helped organize the historic conference, Videmus@25, held at UNC-Chapel Hill from March 19th-25th, which brought together many legendary performers, composers, scholars, and pedagogues from around the country, including Herbie Hancock, Marquita Lister, and Dr. George Shirley. The conference celebrated the contribution made to classical music by women, African Americans, and underrepresented composers. Dr. Knight also moderated the panel "Spiritual vs. Art Song: A Matter of Interpretation."

Dan Koehler '12 will have his documentary *The Tobacco King* screened April 15 during the RiverRun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem, NC. The film shares the story of George Botha, a white farmer in Zambia who relocated to the African nation after he lost his land in neighboring Zimbabwe. Koehler explores the racial complexities at play between Botha and his 200-strong black workforce. The film was produced as part of his Lumen Prize work and a trailer of the film may be viewed by visiting <http://vimeo.com/38965224>

Mission Statement



The mission of the program is to promote the production and dissemination of knowledge about African and African-descended peoples through advocacy, learning, research, scholarship, service and teaching

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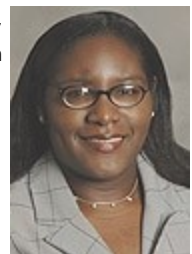


The Coordinator's Corner: Lifting the 'Hood' on Trayvon Martin

As rising pressure mounts from across the country for the arrest of George Zimmerman, who admitted to fatally shooting Black, unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin on February 26th in Florida, Zimmerman's account of the young man as "suspicious" and his response as "self-defense" has sparked a national debate (again) about the permeations of race in our "justice" system. The deadly consequences of cultural and racial biases and perceptions are nothing new to Blacks anywhere, but incidents like the cases of Trayvon Martin, Ervin Jefferson, Amadou Diallo, Sean Bell and the many young Black men most have never heard of usually 'lift the hood' temporarily on racial injustice until the sting subsides, we become desensitized and react to the next incident the media deems newsworthy to bring to our attention. How many more lives have to be lost before our

society views them as valuable enough to take action before, rather than after, such events? While George Zimmerman has gone into hiding, fleeing the public campaign to "make him famous" (much like Kony and Russell), this case is not simply about getting justice for Trayvon Martin's murder. This case is about justice itself; it is grounded in the racial profiling that police and other law enforcement officials vow is a tactic they do not use, especially in traffic stops, or is necessary and vital to national security interests. These responses are unsatisfactory as the problem of the color line continues to haunt us well into the 21st century, and our country remains inattentive to the racial powder-keg that keeps threatening to undermine our pursuit of a truly democratic post-racial society. Our campus community should capitalize on the opportunity

that our new strategic plan presents. By now, everyone can recite Goal 1 verbatim: "an unprecedented commitment to diversity and global engagement." Our shared vision for a fully inclusive campus will not be realized until we productively engage issues of race, such that our refrains of "not on our campus" will not have to be made into stickers, but will become imprinted on our minds and hearts. This issue of our newsletter has focused on shedding light, on the facets of the Black experience we prefer not to see, what students in Ethan Moore's "Museum Collections" course, "Obscurity in Plain Sight."



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