<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Editor - in - Chief</td>
<td>Ayanna Nelson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Editor</td>
<td>Gayle Grace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art Director</td>
<td>Chris Knox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Art Director</td>
<td>Joshua Hupper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copy Editors</td>
<td>Tieran Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kuumba Editor</td>
<td>Fawn Howard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Manager</td>
<td>Shenika Oliver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo Editor</td>
<td>Josh Dudeck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Designer</td>
<td>Student Media Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Advisor</td>
<td>Dean E. Timothy Moore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Manager/Student Media</td>
<td>Elizabeth Dellinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising Manager/Student Media</td>
<td>Lori Cantor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Table of Contents

- **Editor's Notes** ........................................... 2
- **Assistant Editor's Notes** ................................. 3
- **Blacks in the Media** ...................................... 4 - 6
- **Fashion** .................................................. 7 - 11
- **Embrace Oscar Ritchie Hall** ............................. 12 - 16
- **Huumba** .................................................. 17 - 23
- **Spotlight** ................................................ 24 - 26
- **Black Youth in Gangs** .................................. 27 - 28
- **Where has Our Family Gone?** ......................... 29 - 30
- **Youth Activism** ........................................... 31 - 33
- **Testimonials** ............................................. 34 - 37
- **Community** ............................................... 38 - 40
In the 1980’s it was believed that the children were the future. If taught well, they could lead the way. We are those children. What is being taught to us, as well as, who is teaching us, during our primary, secondary and college education, will aid us in becoming the leaders of our society. Just passing each grade is not enough. Understanding and applying knowledge is the key. More important is to make sure the knowledge we receive is accurate. The Euro-centric educational system we are taught under has a way of feeding us false information and theories as facts, such as the myth of Christopher Columbus discovering America and The Theory of Evolution.

African-Americans are hardly encouraged to do their own research. We rely on others to give us information instead of obtaining it on our own. Without independent research we probably would still be lead to believe that our history began with slavery. More than book knowledge is needed to become a successful leader; we also need experience. Plenty of opportunities are available during our school years to gain valuable experience. Active participation and office holding in organizations are major components of becoming an effective leader. If one has not held any leadership positions in high school, and has never been a part of any type of organization, do not let college pass by without doing so and better yet, holding an office.

A lot of emphasis is placed on finding a good job after graduation. African-Americans need to look more toward entrepreneurship. Attaining a degree is fine, but let us use that degree and knowledge gained to create our own businesses. Our black communities can be rebuilt if we stop being number one consumers of other people’s goods and services, and start being our own producers and consumers. We need to take a look at ourselves and see if we are the type of person we would hire. After doing so, if we come back with a negative reaction, we will then know what we need to work on. We have to be honest with ourselves. If we can’t be honest with ourselves, how can we expect others to be honest with us? We all need to take a look into a mirror and say, “I am the future of society!” If we are not confident, but rather fearful of that thought, we need to find the necessary tools to make it a positive reality. Like it or not, we are the future. It is up to us to determine what kind of future it will be.
Learn from the past, while in the present, so it can help build the future.

The past helped to make us who we are today. From the way our parents were raised, to the rights they stood up for, to the style of dress that they wore. The past is a tool for learning where we came from, so we can figure out where we need to go. It should be a bond that ties us all together and shows us that no matter how different we may look, act, or think, we are still one in the same because of what our ancestors have shared and gone through. Not knowing your past is like not knowing yourself. Life should be what you make it. The day-by-day process of living is all up to you and the choices you make. From the clothes you wear, to the classes you choose, to the people you allow into your life, each decision adds a piece to your growing life. It shouldn’t be something you rush past just to get to another point. Now is the time to prepare for the life up ahead. Rushing through the present is like rushing past the process of building yourself.

Ever been asked where do you see yourself in ten years? Can you answer the question? The future will only be as good as you make it. We’ve all heard the saying “You only get out, what you put in”, and I think this could be a perfect outlook on the future. Everyone has the power of shaping the future within him or herself.

With all of this said, I hope you enjoy this issue of UHURU, and take from it what you can for a better piece of mind. Only you can live your life, therefore only you can hold yourself back.
Compared to 50 years ago, there are many black faces flashing across our television and movie screens. African-Americans have conquered the realm of broadcasting news, network television and feature films. Some may argue that while there has been quantitative growth in the diversity of the media, the quality of such programming has a long way to go.
“It used to be all we saw of black people on the news were ones who were being arrested or being interviewed in curlers and housecoats,” said psychology major Christal Reaves.

Indeed, the media has come a long way in its portrayal of blacks in society. In the 1980s there was a heavy focus on crimes committed by African-Americans in the inner cities. Gang violence was always in the news and further perpetuated the stereotype that blacks are angry, violent and uncivilized. Rarely was there a news story that put a positive light on the black community.

Today, through the efforts of news directors, producers and broadcasters around the country, there is a concerted effort to put diversity at the forefront of the television news industry objectives. Instead of the typical one-sided view, stories that are reported give a multifaceted account of the world and of different races. The broadcasters are not the “Barbie and Ken” news people of yesteryear; they are people of all races and backgrounds.

Entertainment television has also come a long way, but still has far to go.

“Some of these black shows on TV aren’t even worth watching,” said fashion design major Garland Collier. “I get tired of actors portraying the stereotypical black character.”

These “stereotypical black characters” draw on stereotypes that began centuries ago in the time of slavery. White Europeans created the jolly, happy-go-lucky Sambo and the not-quite-right Zip Coon characters in order to justify the degradation of the black race. The characters were prominent in the entertainment world of the 1820s and 1830s when minstrel shows were the popular form of entertainment. White actors would put on “blackface,” a concoction of cork ashes and water, and pretend to be black people on stage.

In the 1920s and 1930s a few black film actors managed to get away from having to play the Sambo and Zip Coon roles. Dorothy Dandridge and Paul Robeson were two of the finest actors of the 20th century. Dandridge was the first black woman to be nominated for an Academy Award for her role in “Carmen Jones.” Robeson refused to perform in blackface.

Today, black movies have a modern stereotypical feel to them such as “Booty Call,” “Friday,” “A Thin Line Between Love and Hate” and “Don’t Be a Menace to South Central Without Drinking Your Juice in the Hood.” While those films are funny and entertaining, they still portray African-Americans as sex-crazed, alcoholic, drug-addicted and plain crazy. But these movies can’t be made if actors choose not to act in them. Actors such as Denzel Washington, Angela Bassett, Laurence Fishbourne and Loretta Devine choose sophisticated roles that portray blacks in a positive light.

“In the 1960s and 1970s television programs such as “Good Times,” “What’s Happening,” and “The Jeffersons,” featuring all black casts, began to surface on network television. These programs paved the way for the popular ‘90s television shows “The Cosby Show,” “A Different World,” and “Living Single” all promoted
positive black images.

Today, shows like “The Parkers,” “The Hughleys,” “My Wife and Kids,” and “Girlfriends” carry on the newfound tradition of positive black television, promoting such values as education, family, success and diversity.

American media and society has come far in its portrayal of black images from watermelon-eating idiots to sophisticated and educated people. Stereotypes still exist in the American psyche and because of that they will continue to be seen, either subconsciously or on purpose. If people can learn to clear their minds of negative images that aren’t true, then society will be better for it.
Fashion. Do you go with the trends or create your own sense of style? Does it rule you or do you rule it? And who would have ever thought that at the age of seven, or even 11, that the daily task of choosing what to wear would be so hard later on in life? But once that sense of style popped into our minds, the “world” of the closet changed forever...

**The 70’s:**

Well, it must’ve been the “night fever,” or at least most people thought it was. Booty tight bell-bottom pants were just prefect for booty shakin’. Flower power, polyester, big floppy collars and sleeves and Afros were in style. Let’s not forget the afro pick with the black fist on it. Some of us probably still have one. It was black love and power mixed with peace and happiness. Everyone threw black light parties in the basement, and wore platform shoes and big belts.

**The 80’s and 90’s:**

Guys were rockin’ high top fades and British Knights; girls were sportin’ L.A. Gears, blue jean skirts with the ruffles on the back, black biker shorts with hot pink stripes running down the sides and M.C. Hammer pants. If you didn’t own a pair, you knew someone who did. Shirts with the alligator logo, wearing three pairs of socks, which were, of course different colors, sportin’ a head full of crimps and neon bright wind suits were all in style. We all wore one, more, or all of these items during our lovely youth in the 80’s and 90’s. My fondest memory has to be a Friday dress down day at my Catholic school. I was “Cross Colored” out. Don’t act like you don’t remember Cross Colors! I had on pants with about 10 different colors on each leg, and they were baggy. When I was in the 8th grade, saggin’ and baggy clothes were just becoming the nationwide craze. With a matching black shirt and a hat with 10 colors on it, I deemed myself a fashion goddess for the day! It was about wearing a head full of beads to ‘dookie’ braids because Poetic Justice came out in theaters. Just letting “Yo Soul Glo” with Jheri curls for girls, and guys getting’ their name or some word shaved in the back of their head. Shoes that lit up when you walked and Nike “Pumps,” the self-inflatable shoe that promised to make you run faster and jump higher.

People loved wearing overalls and silk shirts with ruffles on the collar and sleeves. And please let’s not leave out wearing clothes back-wards and inside out, although I never did it, or knew anybody that did besides the rap group Kriss Kross and and the R&B group ABC. The list could go on and on.

**The present:**

Who knew there were so many different styles of jeans? We have regular, tall, petite, boot cut, bell bottom, embroidered, studded, relaxed, hip huggers, jeans with no belt loop, ripped up jeans, jeans with one leg cut off, bleached, tie dyed, sparkly, which even guys have gotten into, plus many many more, I’m sure. And if all else fails, you can cut the jeans up and make a skirt!

These days there is a tennis shoe for almost any and every outfit from sports to dress up. And skin seems to be in, the more the better. Holes have appeared in the most unfamiliar places and are considered “in.” Everything from shirts to hats to pants are half the pair they use to be. Shirts have become smaller and smaller to wear. You just tie it in a knot in the back and pray that nothing pops out! Who knew that wearing a key chain around your neck would be so popular? Let’s not forget that if it doesn’t have a familiar name, then we wonder why are we wearing it? Now I am not a fashion designer, critic, or even fashion major, so I went straight to the peo-
“Clothes are a form of expression.”

I like to wear clothes that other people don't have,” D’artagnan Glen, a communications major, replied.

Even still, more people wear certain clothes for the look and how it will look to other people. Elisha Jones, a theater technology major, systems major commented when asked about her chosen style of dress. “I wear whatever shows my features,” Lashannon Foster, a therapeutic recreation major answered. And even with all these reasons, there are still more. Some say they just dress according to the weather.

“It’s according to your personal style and the weather,” Leah Nickerson, a nursing major, commented. Finally, you always have the few lucky people who were blessed with caring not about how things look, but with how they feel. If it doesn't feel right, then it's not going on their bodies.

“I wear clothes to be comfortable,” Shatreitia Jones, an early childhood education major, stated. “I don't wear style clothes. I don't let style make me, I make my own style.” Angela Giddions, a graduate student, said. Personally, I like the quote from Elisha Jones, a theater technology major: “I wear what I wear because it's me.” That seems to be the best explanation for why people wear what they wear. It's all about how they feel, what kind of person they are, and what they like. This is why fashion will always be ever-changing. Because for as many fashions as there are, there are even more people out there to create even more.
The Pan-African Faculty and Staff Association
Kent State University

"...Working to Assure
Equal Educational &
Employment
Opportunities for All
Pan-Africancans!"

Formed in 1972, the association continues to promote better communication and interaction among the Pan-African faculty and staff, and their increased involvement in the academic and socio-cultural affairs of Kent State University, especially as they relate to black student enrollment, retention and graduation.

PAF&SA can only be effective on this campus with the full participation of Pan-African students. Student participation in PAF&SA can help bring about meaningful & productive benefits for all Pan-African faculty, staff and students.

The association meets on the last Thursday of each month of the academic year, September through May. The standard time for these meetings is noon, in the Lecture Hall of the Department of Pan-African Studies, or as noted. PAF&SA also supports a host of student and campus-wide events.

SEE YOU THERE!
PAF&SA Executive Board
UHURU is currently accepting applications for the Spring 2002 staff:

- Editor
- Assistant Editors
- Staff Writers
- Copy Editors
- Photographers
- Graphic Designers
- Webmaster
- Advertising Sales

www.uhuru.kent.edu

“IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED”

UHURU would like to encourage the submission of articles, poetry, art and opinions to be featured in the magazine and/or website.

UHURU Magazine
101 Taylor Hall
330.672.0888
330.672.2586
330.672.3269

DISCOVER THE POWER OF IMAGINATION.

Imagination. It's what sets universities apart from any other place on earth. At Kent State University, our commitment to using the power of imagination sets us apart from the rest.

Discover the power of imagination for yourself at Kent State. It's a place where you can find your own voice, use your gifts and express your dreams. The opportunities are limited only by your imagination.

www.kent.edu
Have you ever wanted to be totally immersed in love? Surrounded by the spirit of your ancestors? Connected with something greater than you? We have all had those feelings at one time or another in our lives. Here at Kent State University it is easy to lose touch with self, but that does not have to be.

When I need to feel connected I find that one place on this campus where the whiteness of my reality is not so white – Oscar Ritchie Hall. Do not get me wrong, Oscar Ritchie Hall is not some proverbial dreamland where my problems disappear. It is quite the opposite. I go to that building to gain perspective. Upon walking through the doors a spiritual transformation takes place. Instantly I am in the presence of my ancestry. Not just my familial ancestors but also all who have come before me marching, protesting, enduring, surviving, uplifting, overcoming, progressing, fighting, fighting and fighting. It is with that fight that the story of Oscar Ritchie Hall begins.

The building that is now known as Oscar Ritchie Hall has not always been so. From 1949-1972 it housed the student union. It served as the gathering place for both students and faculty at Kent State. On November 10, 1977, the university formally dedicated the building in honor of Dr. Oscar W. Ritchie as a result of massive
activism and a campus walkout by the African and African-American student population.

You may be asking yourself, “Why the name Oscar Ritchie? What has he done for black folks?” To answer that question, A LOT!!

Oscar W. Ritchie was the first African-American faculty member, to serve at a predominantly white university in the state of Ohio. He worked hard from meager beginnings in Florida to playing in a band in Chicago to steel mill work in Cleveland and Massillon. While in Massillon, he began teaching immigrants who were studying for the American citizenship tests. Shortly after he taught he enrolled in Kent State University to study Pre-Law. He graduated, however, with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology in 1946 and began graduate work later that fall. Ritchie's work was so exemplary that he was recommended to fill a full time faculty vacancy in that department. It was in the fall of 1947 that Oscar W. Ritchie was appointed as full time faculty in Sociology. His appointment was a colossal milestone since discrimination and racism was prevalent at that time.

Some of Dr. Ritchie's accomplishments include:
- Yale Institute of Alcoholic Studies Scholarship; Julius Rosenwald Scholarship; Guggenheim Award,
- Ph.D. of Sociology - New York
University; established Epsilon Delta Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated; Co-Founded Portage County Family Planning, Counseling, and Mental Health Center in Ravenna; Urban League Service Award and Chairman, Sociology Department at Kent State University.

Dr. Oscar W. Ritchie was a gem of the Kent State University community even after his death on June 16, 1967. His legacy is a strong reminder of our obligation to our community and ourselves.

We continue his strong legacy by “being united and more conscious students,” according to Adrien Williams, student employee of the Department of Pan African Studies (DPAS). Raising our levels of awareness will enable us to strive for more resources as a community. More resources are necessary to maximize the utilization of Oscar Ritchie Hall and our experiences as a community.

It is imperative that we come together to educate one another. Adrien Williams also believes that our elders need to pass the torches of their experiences so that students know what to do. The university is not responding to our needs so we need to take responsibility as a community. Our elders expect us to know things they had to learn but did not teach us: Our educational experiences have been different and we need for our elders and experienced students to provide constructive criticism as well as a willingness to help us move forward.

The students’ vision of Oscar Ritchie Hall is a home, a place of relaxation and of rest. It should be a place that is set apart here on campus for us. Dr. Diedre Badejo, Chair of the Department of Pan African Studies, envisions Oscar Ritchie Hall as housing “one of the most competitive Pan African Cultural Centers in the country in terms of programs and quality.” She wants to complete the revisions of the undergraduate curriculum, get the Masters of Arts program up and running, complete the groundwork for a joint program with the College of Education and DPAS and increase enrollment with more students taking advantage of the classes.

In addition to curriculum revisions, Dr. Badejo is eager to begin the renovations to the physical structure. She is determined to preserve the murals that line the walls of the first floor. The murals represent an essential piece of the country’s Pan African culture and the history of Kent State. There are plans to schedule a capital campaign to renovate Oscar Ritchie Hall. Meetings are underway with university architects to reconfigure the space while physical renovations are set to begin by 2007. The year 2007 seems like a long time from now, but it is important to remember that there are programs and services that are currently offered. So in the words of Smokey from the movie Friday, “You need to take advantage.”

Taking advantage of the resources of Oscar Ritchie Hall means knowing what is going on in there. Oscar Ritchie Hall houses the Department of Pan African Studies, the Mbayo Lecture Hall with state-of-the-art audio and visual equipment, student organization offices,

**We continue his strong legacy by “being united and more conscious students,”**

-Adrien Williams, President of L.A.D.I.E.S.
The library, computer lab, a multipurpose room and the Center for Pan African Culture that includes the newly renovated African Community Theatre and Umbaji Gallery. According to the Director of the African Community Theatre and Curator of the Umbaji Gallery, Murphy Ajayi, the gallery hosts internationally renowned sculptors, painters and artists. In addition, the Umbaji Gallery showcases the talents of Kent State University students as well as children from the local community. Also, the African Community Theatre produces DPAS-sponsored productions, community plays, artistic performances and talent shows.

There are currently 8 minority student organization offices located in Oscar Ritchie Hall. They are:
- **Black United Students (BUS)**
- **Progressive Education Community School**
- **Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA)**
- **HARAMBEE**
- **Kent African Student Association (KASA)**
- **L.A.D.I.E.S.**
- **Minority Artists Student Association (MASA)**
- **NAACP, and**
- **UHURU Magazine.**

These phenomenal organizations represent a few of the many talented and empowered minority students at Kent State. For example, HARAMBEE won the Ebony Achievement Award for service for their work on campus and in Oscar Ritchie Hall. L.A.D.I.E.S. collects and donates clothing, food and toiletry items to area women’s shelters. And BGSA is actively involved in supporting student growth and providing cultural experiences for minority graduate students.

Without Oscar Ritchie Hall and all that it offers, Kent State would be the equivalent of a culturally deprived institution of learning, but definitely not one of higher learning. That is not to say that there are no other representations of “culture” here. Of course there is the Women’s Resource Center, and the Fashion Museum. These places have one commonality - the predominance of white culture.

Students, faculty, staff and administrators, I challenge you to utilize and maximize the invaluable cultural resources of Oscar Ritchie Hall.

**Students** – I challenge you to think of Oscar Ritchie Hall when organizing special events, organization meetings and class study groups. I push you to utilize it when coordinating community service projects and social gatherings. ORH is the “house that B.U.S. built,” I direct you to use it so you do not lose it.

**Faculty and staff** – I challenge you to consider Oscar Ritchie Hall when you need class and meeting space. I urge you to recommend Oscar Ritchie Hall as a must-see to students in search of cultural enlightening or those on campus tours.

**Administrators** – I challenge
you to “IMAGINE” Oscar Ritchie Hall when funds are available for remodeling and construction. I encourage you to remember Oscar Ritchie Hall when planning to increase minority enrollment and retention of students and faculty/staff. I dare you to invest in the future of a culturally diverse Kent State University.

Kent State University – I challenge you to truly embrace diversity, equality and knowledge of your past, present and future. Embrace Oscar Ritchie Hall.

“Students, faculty, staff and administrators - I challenge you to utilize and maximize the invaluable cultural resources of Oscar Ritchie Hall.”

---

KENT STATE STUDENT CREDIT UNION

Growing with you one step at a time.

FREE CHECKING, SAVINGS, MONEY MARKET ACCOUNTS, AND LOANS

MAC
National Credit Union Administration.
a U.S. Government Agency

LOCATED ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE STUDENT CENTER

Wasting Energy?

WATT’s up with that?

Contact the Office of Energy Management for more information, to share an energy saving tip or to report energy waste.

You could win a prize!

e-mail us at energy@kent.edu
Am I My Brotha’s Keeper?

I don’t want to keep my brotha locked away from freedom running as wild as the trees
Trees so alive they bring new life whenever they praise
Praise so glorious the angels dance on high
Highs so magnificent the winds, stars, sun and moon never come down
Down to where the earth meets the sky and they begin to unify
Unification of all nations of the world
Worlds away from the cell of my soul
Souls of a lynched, forgotten yet revolutionary people
People who are kings and queens many times removed
Removed from their homes on the most fertile lands
Lands so beautiful that the angels dance, trees praise and my brotha is running free
I am my brotha’s keeper.
**Untitled**

Larry Adams  
Age 15

We went from friends to lovers,  
lovers to friends  
We promised to always be together to the very end.  
I remember when I first saw you  
I wanted to get next to you  
All I really wanted was to get the best of you  
I promised to stay real  
As long as you stay trill  
Sorry for being so deep  
But that's how I feel  
The money I have I love to spend all on you till the end!  
"And do you remember how"...  
We went from friends to lovers, lovers to friends.

---

**Feelings**

Shandra Edwards

If I could only let you know the feelings I choose not to show,  
then maybe you would understand...  
why I don't want to let you go.  
If only you could see how much you really mean to me,  
then maybe you could make up your mind about the few feelings you keep deep inside for me.  
Every time I see your face,  
I long to feel your embrace.  
If only you knew these things,  
then maybe you would tell me the same,  
or is it just a game?

---

**Tone**

Xsais Mwanaidi

On the stomping ground,  
feet pointed east,  
the warrior poet sets the tone  
for the sun's-go-round.  
Like hands and clay debate,  
lives crumble in the kiln of hate.  
At dawn a man can mend the sky with his fingers,  
by dusk spill the pavement with his skull.  
The leader whom does not mistake roots for shackles  
understands unity  
sets the tone  
for the world's-go-round.

---

**Racism Schism**

Anaya Heaton

My hair is straight, my brown skin light  
People don't like the way that I talk  
Some others even consider me white  
Based on how I dress and walk  
To whites my skin is dark and inferior  
My hair is coarse and drab  
Yet no one thinks of my interior  
Or the many ideas I have  
I've been told that I'm not "black enough"  
From the tone of my skin and my voice  
It's ridiculous, believe me I've had enough  
But I don't have much of a choice  
To be black and proud is not enough  
A stereotype must be filled  
My blood should never be questioned  
Whether it's braids or curls I yield
You were meant for me and I for you.
Us two make the beautiful one.
In the future there are daughters and sons.
Love...
I never thought I'd have it.
But you gave it...to me.
Found it for me.
Will never fully understand how much you fully love me.
That's why when you walk pass my window I smile...
because I finally found something worthwhile....
Sometimes I wanna curse my mind, my imagination.
so vivid that I can actually feel the way your arms would feel if they ever held me.
The way your cologne would surround me...
You don't even know my name.
In the world of day to day living I probably don't even exist to you...
You have a whole other life you don't even know I've created...
but it's beautiful.
And I see you.
So I'm stuck with this magnetic lust, don't know if I can call it a crush...
but I'm drawn to you.
Stuck wanting what I can't have...
Getting to have you is all I want.
Thanking the temptations for creating a song about my warped lust.
My heart is weak, but my mind got me imagining everything I don't know about you
that I can't draw the line between fiction and reality...
who do I trust?
We could have a dog and a white picket fence...
At least if we shared conversations that might kill the suspense...
"But it was just my imagination...running away with me...
Are There Limitations?

Sheronika Crain

For a while we've been together
and we've done so many things-
But...
what was your reason for doing to me
what you did last night?
Is there a limit- a limit to this love?
You see I felt like you were
trying to tell me how you felt about me
sexually- I was blinded by this light
this sensuality
You made me quiver, flow and shake
like tides rising on the beach like
waves, like the lake
You made me explode while feeling you
mentally...hmmm...physically
having brain orgasms and muscle spasms
so long till nothing else
came out
Is there a limit- a limit to this love?
I can do nothing but think about you
I guess that's why I am writing this poem
and every night I lay with you I just want
to stop myself from wanting you
I just try to lay there while we
hold each other- you know fight my urges
but, I can't- can't go without touching you
kissing you and that's when we start
Is there a limit- a limit to this love?
I feel the need to
touch you tease you to
please you
and my body cannot resist your touch
or your kiss-
all this is just sweet bliss
It just feels like my tongue
has to trace you tasting your sweetness
Is there a limit- a limit to this love?
I need to know

State of confusion

Ayanna Nelson

People from a broken background
Medium, dark, light
Mix in European blood
Still not white
Yet one drop of Afrikan blood
Classifies you black
Trace back
To my nappy roots
In search of facts
Distorted by westernization
Miseducated information
A confused people
Without reparation
Need a label to classify
Afro-American
Negro
Self-hatred leads us to
White superheroes
Wealthy millionaires
Minstrel you as rap sambos
Reaching so hard for the American dream
Not knowing
You're Afrikan
And your goal should be king
And queens
Not baseball, country, and hot apple pie
We rely on lies
Just to survive
Sacrificing each other's lives
No matter the cost
There's nothing that can be said
To get back what was lost
Stolen is our past
The present is masked
False signs of empathy
Makes us
Free at last?
Oh Beautiful Brother of Mine, Thank You

Original Man, Son of the Black Mother, it gives me great honor to call you brother. It is you who planted seeds throughout the world: India, China, Australia, Columbia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, Puerto Rico and Jamaica, just to name a few. It is you who built the pyramids of Egypt and Nubia, the great walls of Zimbabwe and the civilizations that we live in today. It is you who educated the Greeks with mathematics and science.

Oh beautiful brother of mine, I thank you for being the first to perform open-heart surgery, which saves millions of lives today. I thank you for giving the world the automobile, refrigerator, guitar, typewriter, clothes dryer and the telephone system.

Oh beautiful brother of mine, I thank you for being strong during the times of slavery. After being asleep for so long, I thank you for waking up. I thank you for being there for your fellow sister and brother. I thank you for fighting for us to be a free and independent people. I thank you for living and dying for us. I thank you for admonishing us. I thank you for rectifying the wrongs in which you have done. I thank you for respecting the Black Woman, as our mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces and comrades. I thank you for being patient with me. I thank you for educating me with the light. I thank you for attempting to bring us together.

Oh beautiful brother of mine, it is you who looked the oppressor in his eye and told him that you will no longer accept his abuse and mistreatment. It is you who was man enough to apologize to the Black Woman for the pain that you have caused her. It is you who told the Black Man to stop killing his brother and to love and respect his brother. It is not you who gets credit or air play for the good and positive images you display, but rather for all the bad decisions that you have made. Black Man, it is you who must evoke the mentally dead Black Masses if we are to have a future. It is you who are in fact “our future!”

Oh beautiful brother of mine, all praise is due to Allah (God), and I would like to thank you for being my father, my son, my nephew, my uncle, my friend, my confidant, my mentor and my comrade. I would like to thank you for loving me, respecting me and for being my brother.

Oh beautiful brother of mine,
Yours truly.
**UHURU** is the journalist’s voice of the minority students at Kent State University.

**UHURU** is committed to providing a cultural lens that exposes readers to perspectives not offered in mainstream media.

**UHURU** is a platform for issues on religion, race, education, entertainment, Pan-Africanism, and music, just to name a few.

---

**For more information, please call Shenika Oliver at 330-672-2586 or e-mail sioliver@kent.edu**
Congratulations and Best Wishes to the December 2001 Graduating Class

Office of University Ceremonies

Black United Students
Without U, BUS is just BS

Philosophy:
We, the members of Black United Students, have seen the need to redefine this organization for the attainment of our goals; which are equal distribution of justice, financial autonomy, and the reactivation of our consciousness.

Office: 232 Kent Student Center
Phone: (330) 672-7985
www.kent.edu/stuorg/bus

The College of Continuing Studies.
We’ve been educating learners of all ages since...

Elvis and Priscilla’s divorce
Deliverance
Calgon’s “ancient Chinese secret”
Dick visited China
Maude
Stairway to Heaven

...which was probably way before you were born. But we’re here for you now.

By the way, if you’re enrolled for at least 11 but not more than 18 credit hours at the Kent Campus, the tuition for credit workshops is included in the fees you pay at Kent State registration for spring or fall. For more information, call us at (330) 672-3100.

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY
kentstatecontinuinged.com
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By Sheronika Crain

Jason Betts
Christopher Knox
Many Minority students have a lot of involvements on Kent State University’s campus, but these two are just a couple of students that stand out!

Jason Betts and Chris Knox, are both involved in WKSR, which is a radio station. When asked questions about their involvements their responses were as follows:

**UHURU:** What struck your interest to be a Communications major?

Jason Betts: Radio Broadcasting has always been an interest of mine since 1995 when I was in high school. I used to have a Jazz show in Dayton called WDPS. I was on television as well. I got into Public Relations because I like dealing with people, trying to get the word out, and being persuasive. That’s pretty much what Public Relations is about, but I strayed from that and moved toward communications.

**UHURU:** What are your aspirations for the future as far as your career goals?

Jason Betts: I want to land a job in promotions and work for a well-established record label, also promotions in Marketing.

**UHURU:** What types of activities are you involved with here at Kent State University?

Jason Betts: Well, right now I am working pretty heavily with WKSR. I just started to become active with KNABJ, which is the Kent Student Chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. I am trying to get involved with several committees such as Black United Students as far as the Public Relations chair and I’m trying to help out with P.E.C. School. The radio station pretty much just keeps me busy. I’m the R&B and Hip-Hop director and I am interning with Loud Records.

**UHURU:** What sort of promotions or activities would you like to pursue here at Kent State?

Jason Betts: As far as campus involvements I would like to see more diversity programming.

**UHURU:** What positive role would you play or what type of example would you set being an outstanding successful minority?

Jason Betts: Holding my leadership position, kind of being a mentor for young African American men preferably ones that are in high school. I would definitely like to target those individuals, especially in urban areas, as a motivator. I know personally when I was growing up, or when I was in high school, I did not have someone whom I could look at and consider him or her to be a positive role model. I would like to act or play the quote “Big Brother Role” and just kind of act on that and make a difference in someone’s life.

**UHURU:** Thanks for the interview!

Jason Betts: No Problem!

*Jason Betts is from Dayton Ohio, and he is a Senior Communications Major.*

UHURU: What made you chose Communications for your major?

Chris: Personally, I do things that work well for me. If I earned that label it was not intentional, but I’d wear it proudly and try to live up to it. I try to participate with different organizations and do different functions and try to do my best at them.

**UHURU:** What type of events would you like to see happening in Oscar Ritchie?

Chris: I would like to see more cooperation and more involvements between organizations on campus, more group effort as far as organizations on campus and more minority participation in these organizations.

Christopher Knox also has involvements with NABJ and WKSR as well, and is currently working on the Graphic Design Portion of the Uhuru Magazine. Chris is originally from Cleveland, but now lives in Detroit. Chris is an Organizational Communications Major.
Who is the Undergraduate Student Senate?

**D'ANDRA MULL**
Executive Director
dmul@kent.edu

The Executive Director is the chairperson of USS. He or she is responsible for the administrative functions of the Student Senate.

**USS:**
An organization committed to all forms of student representation.

The Undergraduate Student Senate represents the entire undergraduate student body in all matters of student interest.

**SARAH BARTOLONE**
Academic Affairs
sbarto10@kent.edu

The senator for Academic Affairs is responsible for student input into academic policy and monitors proposals affecting the academic curriculum.

**STACIA CLARK**
Community Affairs
svclarck@kent.edu

The senator for Community Affairs is responsible for monitoring all local legislation and acts as a liaison between the community and the student body.

**MICHEAL DOERSHUK**
Business & Finance
mdoersch@kent.edu

The senator for Business and Finance is the coordinator of the entire allocations process including both yearly and summer allocations.

**JAMIE MARTIN**
Student Advancement
jimarti@kent.edu

The senator for Student Advancement oversees and coordinates all areas of capital improvement projects that would benefit the undergraduate student body.

**MICHEAL MARTENS**
Governmental Affairs
mmartens@kent.edu

The senator for Governmental Affairs monitors all national and state legislation that may affect undergraduate students.

**NATALIE ANN VBRANIC**
Student Relations
nvranic@kent.edu

The senator for Student Relations maintains open lines of communication between the student body, senate, student organizations, and the administration.

**KATIE POLICE**
University Affairs
cpolice@kent.edu

The senator for University Affairs is responsible for monitoring all matters that deal with the university as well as coordinating the committee on committees.

**THOMAS SMITH**
Research & Development
tmsmith4@kent.edu

The senator for Research and Development is responsible for conducting research, polls, forums and focus groups to evaluate trends and concerns of the undergraduate student body.

2001-2002

Get involved

Their job is to act as the voice for the student body. Your job is to make sure they know what to say. One voice can make a difference. Yours included. So use it. Get involved.

http://www.uss.kent.edu or http://www.kent.edu/stuorg/uss
Phone: 330.672.3207 Fax: 330.672.2517

FALL 2001
What does the Webster's Dictionary tell us about the word “gang?” Gangs are classified as a “group of persons working together to unlawful or antisocial ends, especially a band of young adolescents.”

It used to be hanging out with your homies on a block, pouring a little liquor for the ones that were dead and gone, or just chilling on a stoop with your best friends singing doo-wop tunes. Well, times have changed! Instead of sitting, chilling with your homies, you are out on the block ducking gunshots and trying not to get “knocked.” How many times have you heard about or seen headlines of your local newspaper stating six dead, two wounded or two juveniles reprimanded for violence in society and shooting each other over turf? Too many, right?

Does the home environment, society or single parent home contribute to the amount of black youths in gangs? Many people think that growing up in the ghetto makes youth want to join gangs; in reality it does not. “The environment has a lot to do with black youth [joining] gangs, however having a good upbringing or someone as a role model can help avoid that situation,” says Alphonso Hudson, senior graphic design and theater major.

Another question stands unanswered: Are we, the community, allowing this to happen? We do not realize that by having programs and using facilities, we are keeping young people from doing constructive activities that may keep them away from negative behavior. “People are beginning to accept black youth in gangs as a way of life, and until we take a stand nothing will change,” says Carmella Johnson, junior computer information systems major.

Gangs are slowly diminishing in the state of Ohio; they have turned themselves into sets and blocks. This means where you are from, what you represent, or where you live. According to sources, Chicago and California are the two largest gang environments in the world. The whole “gang” situation makes parents think, “Is my child in a gang? And if so, what was the cause of them getting themselves in that situation? Does the lack of a father figure make them want to go out and do something wild and crazy?”

I have had the chance to interview a former Long Coats gang member from Akron.

When asked why he chose to join he said, “I felt that the reason I had to join is because I did not fit into any other groups. I felt out of place, and I felt that my parents didn't care about me. I was picked on because of my disability and just being me. The reason I got out of it was because I found out how much trouble and pain I was causing my family, my friends, my Lord, and myself. I have now turned my life over to Christ, and have found the woman of my dreams who loves me for me,” says Tony Oliver, sophomore psychology major.

Children raised in a strict environment often go out and do wild and crazy things when they get a
bit of freedom, even being raised in a good household does not prevent one from being involved in violent activities. “I think that when children are raised in a strict household they are more likely to be engaged in inappropriate behavior. However, those that are raised in loose home environments are less likely to be engaged in wrongful doing because they had the freedom to make their own decisions as they got older. Many times parents feel as though they have to make strict rules in order for their children to turn out good, but that’s not always the case,” said Sumah West, junior business management major.

Society must think of ways to help these young people, to show them that life is more than just being loved or being in a group, and to show them that life is what you make it. “I think that we as society should try to speak with the youth to head them in the right direction. As far as gangs being prevented, limited or stopped, I think we have a chance if we work together,” says Robert Williams, senior marketing major.

Gangs are not your family nor do they love you. The only support they show is negative. There are many teen groups and crime prevention groups that are willing to help. Do not be afraid to call on them for help.

Gang Hotline
1-800-900-GANG (4264)
Also www.google.com,
Keyword: Gangs

Who Runs The Stater Anyway?
Be a part of THE DAILY KENT STATER and be part of the oldest and best student newspaper in the nation.

Get involved today!

STUDENTS LIKE YOU!
It’s your world, your university, your paper

Now On Line! Visit the Digital Stater at www.stater.kent.edu

Call or visit the Stater for more information.

330-672-2586 101 Taylor Hall

We’re committed to the free flow of news, ideas and information.
Black families have changed so much throughout history. Many of us have gone from tight-knit families to those that barely spend time with or know one another. What happened to our families? Once we find the answer to this question, we must ask ourselves: Where will we end up if we continue on the path we are taking?

I know many of you can picture the “Big Momma” type grandmother. She is beautiful from age and wisdom. Many times she knows what you are feeling without you saying anything. When you were little you couldn’t understand how she knew what she knew, but you came to realize that she did because she had already been through your experiences. You could turn to her for anything, and you dreaded the thought of her finding out something about you more than if your parents did. You had a special bond with her, and you never wanted to look bad in her eyes.

Then there was grandpa. Granddaughters really love their grandfathers. I remember sitting on my grandpa’s lap and watching The Price is Right and All My Children. I could talk to him about everything, and he always understood and made me feel better. It’s the same way with your father. They are always willing to do anything for you, and they would hurt themselves if it kept you from feeling pain. It is very hard these days to find a father or grandfather figure like this.

In the past families were more united. Everyone worked together and they spent more time with one another. When children came home, parents were actually interested in knowing how their day was. Children were expected to come home and do their homework, then they would eat dinner, and then they were sent outside to play. Most children were not allowed to sit in the house all day watching television. Then Sunday would come and the whole family would go off to Sunday school and church. After church, everyone was off to grandma and grandpa’s house for Sunday dinner. It was like having Thanksgiving every Sunday. You can remember running around outside playing with all of your cousins while dinner was cooking. Everyone sat around eating and talking, and just enjoying each other’s presence.

In the past young people didn’t talk back to their parents, or any elder for that matter. Your elders were older and wiser than you and to give them “lip” was considered very disrespectful. You were also scared you would “get the black beat off of you” if you talked back to your parents. Also, other adults in the community that knew your parents were allowed to whip you if they caught you doing something you weren’t supposed to be doing.
Today, families are a lot different. There are not many “Big Momma” types anymore. Many grandmothers are going out to clubs, drinking and “kickin’ it” like they are still in their twenties. Some say that grandmothers of the past held their families together. I wonder just how many of our modern families still have Sunday dinners?

Lately, many parents are too busy working and doing other things. They are not even home to ask how their child’s day went. Kids just go straight to the TV. They don’t do homework or go outside and play. But this is not totally because parents do not care. Some have to work constantly in order to keep their families housed and fed, especially in single-parent households.

There are many children growing up with single mothers and fathers. But because of these single-parent households many children are expected to help out around the house, and they tend to grow up a lot faster. What happened to the family of yesteryear when we all stuck together and cared for one another? These new families are not all bad. Many children grow up in single-parent homes, which are full of love, and support, and all of their needs are met. Unfortunately this cannot be said about all families.

I wish our families were more like the families of yesterday, when there was more love and togetherness. If our families continue to evolve in the way they have been, I’m afraid we are going to have more teen mothers, and more children growing up with single parents. These children will grow up not knowing where they came from, not knowing their family history, and not knowing themselves.
YOUTH

ACTIVISM

WORDS BY JEFF JOHNSON
There are more Black men in prison than there are Black coeds attending college. 50% of Afrikan-Amerikkkans are living at the poverty level, as opposed to 30% in the 80’s. AIDS could easily wipe Blacks (as well as Latinos) worldwide off of the planet in the next 100 years. Obviously something needs to be done to address these problems. We Black youth should be taking more active strides toward remedying these problems; it appears that nearly none of us are ready to take on these overwhelming tasks.

For years, a valid complaint concerning the young Afrikan-Amerikkkan population has been that an attitude of apathy has paralyzed any hope to build on the success of the Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights and Black is Beautiful movement. Material gains such as fast money, expensive clothing and luxury cars seem to have clouded the judgments of many of our young brothers and sisters. Chuck D, the lead rapper of the legendary hip hop group Public EnEMY, nicknamed this day and age the “Bling-Bling Era,” borrowing from the title of the popular song that exemplified these attitudes. It is apparent to our elders that we lack the discipline, vision and hunger to take on problems plaguing what we incorrectly call the “Black Community.”

Office Max PDQ on Chagrin Boulevard in Woodmere, Ohio, is where you will find Gary Armstrong. Gary is a self-proclaimed “Jewish-Rasta” and is very knowledgeable about Afrikan history and culture and the Afrikan presence in the Bible. At his job, he will be found arguing with brothers and sisters about the mistreatment of Black people in Amerikkka. His arguments are in vain, because most of these brothers and sisters have no knowledge of the slave trade that brought Afrikans here and created Afrikan-Amerikkkans. Many of us at Kent State are like those brothers and sisters at the store who probably cannot see a reason to study in Oscar Ritchie Hall.

Any Afrikan-Amerikkkan reading this has encountered the results of a thorough brainwashing our people have fallen victim to in everyday conversation. Any Afrikan-Amerikkkan reading this has encountered the results of a thorough brainwashing our people have fallen victim to in everyday conversation. During one lunch period spent in the Student Center, kinky hair can be heard described as “bad hair,” dreadlocks will be called “dirty” and any shade of a man darker than a paper bag can often be referred to as “too dark.” So ask yourself, how can we be active in the fight against our oppression if we can’t break these chains in our brain that continue to hold us back from our greatest potential?

Most of us cannot tell you who founded the Black Panther Party. Most of us do not recognize the name El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. Most of us cannot quote Marcus Garvey. Most of us could not defuse the bomb that one angry white student planted when he wrote a letter to the Daily Kent Stater last semester calling Afrika the “crack smoking daughter of Mother Earth.” If most of us cannot do any of the above, along with numerous other things that would be required of us in order for us to call ourselves knowledgeable Black people, then how can we do anything at all to save our people from these problems plaguing us now and surely plaguing us into the future?

We are the only group of people in the United States that refer to each other affectionately as “niggers.” We are the only group
that casually refers to our women as “hoes.” We are the BET generation, force fed ignorance and washing it down with a forty ounce of self-hatred.

Last semester, a popular saying of the Black population on this campus was, “why didn’t BUS do anything?” They forget a popular saying among BUS board members, “Without U its just B.S.” This idea can be translated directly into mainstream Black Amerikkka. We seem to be waiting for a Black messiah to save us from our own apathy. When will we learn that this messiah is and always has been within us?

This situation cannot be cured by treating the symptoms, but by combating the disease of ignorance and self-hatred that is festering in the slavery induced wounds on our minds and spirits. How can we even begin to fight for our rights when we haven’t clearly identified who the enemy is or why we should fight at all? It would be pointless to try and be active until we have a working knowledge of who we were and are and what our role is in this world. It is time to stop letting BET define what Black is and start taking lessons from the Malcolms, Hueys, Nkrumahs, Harriets, and Garveys that have illuminated the path for us.

This situation cannot be cured by treating the symptoms, but by combating the disease of ignorance and self-hatred that is festering in the slavery induced wounds on our minds and spirits.
opinion
speak out
explain
enlighten
be heard
bear witness
perspective
rationalize
reflect
**UHURU:** How has black music (rap, hip hop, R&B, blues) impacted black society and American society as a whole?

It has both positive and negative points. Some of the music has degraded women, made them to appear as mere sex toys. As far as positive, since mostly white Americans purchase black music the music has been able to bring black culture into the minds and homes of white Americans. Thus allowing them to get a view of some of the black trials and tribulations of black life in America.

_Christal Reaves, Junior_

**UHURU:** Do you think there is still a problem with gangs in this country? If so, how do you feel gangs have affected black culture?

Yes, I feel that gang activity still exists in the United States. We don’t hear as much about it here in Ohio because there’s not much gang activity in Ohio. I think gang activity has affected the black culture and community severely.

1.) They are killing each other.
2.) Over 90% of gang activity is drug related, which means they are exposing our people to drugs.
3.) This gang activity is a main reason why we have an increasing number of black men in prison.

_Jason Betts, Senior_

**UHURU:** How do you feel that Oscar Ritchie Hall and the classes in the Pan-African department contribute to your education?

I feel those classes in Oscar Ritchie Hall and the Pan-African department have contributed a lot to my education. I have learned things about the African culture that I never knew before. I also feel that the things I am learning now are things that I should have been taught when I was younger.

_Jolicia Harper, Sophomore_

**UHURU:** What effects do you feel single-parent households have on the black community?

The divorce rate among blacks in America is drastically higher than the majority. Also the number of single parents who are unmarried is higher in the black community. I think the affect of these “arrangements” leave children more susceptible to bad influences, considering there aren’t two parents to guide them through adolescence.

_Stephen Dunwoody, Sophomore_

**UHURU:** Do you feel there is a lack of unity amongst black students here at Kent State? Why/Why not?

Yes, because people don’t really talk to each other. No one says hi when you walk by or is friendly. At least that is my experience.

_Glenn Minor, Freshman_

**UHURU:** Do you feel there is enough black representation in the media (i.e., television, movies, news, etc.)? Why/Why not?

I personally think that at times there is too much black representation in the media. The thing is that too often it is a negative and misleading type of representation. You see it in the news when someone is asked about the sequence of events that lead to a fire across the street. How many times have you seen someone well dressed or well spoken? What about the movies? All too often blacks are portrayed improperly. And why are there still so many all white casts on television shows in the year 2001? Of course you have your few exceptions in today’s world, but how often are blacks the butt of every joke? And why was Imhotep a white man in the “Mummy”
one and two? Was anyone black in “Hannibal”? And why, when you give us the chance to make our own movies, do we talk about sex and clothes? For instance “How to Be a Player” and “Two Can Play That Game”?

Nneka JuJauan Netherly, Sophomore

UHURU: What changes or improvements do you see being made in the black community in the future?

In the future I see our African American community uniting. I see more of us striving to become educated, and overcoming the stereotypes that have stigmatized our community for years. In addition to these visions, I see our black community becoming more economically enriched, and more involved in the issues that surround our community and also Americans. The black community will begin to take a stand for their rights, and therefore become an imminent force against hate, inequality, and civil rights.

Michelle Jackson, Sophomore

UHURU: Where do you think the future of music is going?

Hip-Hop is going to take over music world and business world, it took over fashion, and the internet. It’s going to keep growing.

Robillion Wheeler, Junior

UHURU: What do you think about the future of Oscar Ritchie Hall?

I feel that it is going down, enrollment is down, KSU doesn’t care about ORH or minorities on this campus. I think they will eliminate ORH so they can put up a landmark. Students don’t care much and only use ORH as an elective course and take easy classes to get easy A’s. They feel they are not learning anything from ORH. It’s not necessarily the teachers but the curriculum needs to be enlightening, and then the students won’t be bored.

Chris Butler

UHURU: How do you feel about minorities on campus?

I think it’s trash and not unified and we’re always fighting amongst each other, and we can maybe attract more people to KSU if we were united. People think of KSU as just a party school. They’re not saying it’s about education.

Chris Butler
Communicate the Dream

School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Major in
- News
- Broadcasting
- Advertising
- Photography
- Public Relations
- Electronic Media

Contact:
School of Journalism & Mass Communication

Gathering, preparing and delivering information is one of the fastest-growing career fields around. It’s the leading edge of the cutting edge. Be a part of it! Have an impact on the world.

Make a difference

www.jmc.kent.edu

Campus Bus Service

With Campus Bus Service at Kent State University, there’s no need to bring your car to campus! Whether it’s to Campus, Downtown Kent, Akron, Cleveland...don’t worry! You have got us and we can get you to where you need to go!

Local Routes
- West Main
- South Water
- East Main/Allerton
- Campus Loop
- Stadium/Front
- Campus
- Extra
- Late Night Shuttles

Akron routes (METRO RTA)
- Route 31 Bailey/Stow
- University Express

Cleveland Services
- East Side
- West Side
- North Coast Express (METRO RTA)

Also, Campus Bus Service offers a variety of employment opportunities. Positions are available for service crew, marketing, graphics, and more.

We offer flexible hours and the opportunity to gain valuable experience.

For more information call (330) 672-RIDE (7433)
www.kent.edu/ksuts

Kent State Universities

Regional Campuses

Imagine Your Future...
Make It Happen at a Regional Campus

For More Information Call (330) 672-2286 ~ www.rc.kent.edu

Kent State Ashtabula
www.ashtabula.kent.edu

Kent State East Liverpool
www.kstelev.kent.edu

Kent State Geauga
www.geauga.kent.edu

Kent State Salem
www.salem.kent.edu

Kent State Stark
www.stark.kent.edu

Kent State Trumbull
www.trumbull.kent.edu

Kent State Tuscarawas
www.tasc.kent.edu

www.rc.kent.edu
The family is the oldest and most sacred institution known to humankind. Family life is universal and as the first unit of organization, the function of the family globally has been to insure the survival of the people. This survival is dependent upon the ability of human beings to organize themselves around values and ideas that keep the group cohesive. In fact, in all societies, family is the first introduction to all aspects of social organization—both private and public; one’s first introduction to economic organization; one’s first introduction to political as well as religious organization. Therefore, it goes to reason that whatever happens in the family unit has further ramifications for the wider community, as community is an extension of family.

A history of slavery, discrimination, segregation, and racism, which has shaped the lives of Black people who have come to reside in the United States. The Black family has not had the benefit of support institutions (i.e. educational, religious, recreational, etc.) that other families of diverse cultural origins have had, to facilitate functioning and survival amongst their people. Hundreds of years of oppressive forces have reshaped its form and function. Once an indigenous African people, with definitive cultural roles that provided personal as well as collective security, the transformed African family would undergo changes that would negatively impact family structure and consequently the African American community as a whole. The clutches of racism, capitalism and sexism enforced by hostile governmental policies would deliver a devastating blow on the Black community.

As one continues to examine the state of today’s African American community, evidence of a systematic design to undermine its growth and development still prevails. Black communities continue to be plagued with high rates of divorce and general distrust within male-female relationships. Disproportionate rates of unemployment maintain high rates of poverty, crime, drug abuse and imprisonment amongst the community, while racial profiling serves to precondition society to accept and maintain an image of a criminal as a Black or Hispanic male. Poor preventive health care measures allow for sickness and disease to infiltrate black lives and shorten life expectancy. The denial of access to resources to advance education amongst Blacks is an act of disempowerment. Black-on-black crime is yet another reflection of the inevitable end product of social disorder and dysfunction imposed upon Black people.

Manning Marable, reported that five million people in the U.S. get arrested each year in a presentation at Cleveland State. These people are a product of either a low income or no income environment. Many have no high school education. Of the two million people who are in prison today, one million of them are Black men and women. Prisons have become a virtual warehouse for young Black males who are either awaiting trial or on probation. The rate of Black prisoners has doubled in the past ten years. Another fact disclosed some years ago in my research for the African American Family course I teach is that a high proportion of imprisoned Blacks are the sons and daughters of teen-aged mothers. The implications are that teen-aged
mothers set their families up for a vicious cycle of poverty. They are usually undereducated and have children who themselves reach adulthood before their parent(s) attain (if ever) financial stability and are therefore at a disadvantage to further the education of the children. It is a fact that the majority of poverty-stricken people in this country are comprised of women and children; a dramatic increase in families headed by women draw this type of family profile.

As a result of the crackdown on drug use in the 1980's and 1990's during the ongoing War on Drugs, University of Minnesota law professor Michael Tonry, in his work “Malign Neglect” (1997), reported that a disproportionate number of Blacks and Hispanics comprise drug-prisoners, not because they use drugs more than whites, but because crack crimes which are frequently committed by inner city youths are punished 100 times more severely than the powdered-cocaine crimes that suburban youth and adults frequently commit.

However, Louis Hikin in “Imprisonment-America’s Drug Choice” (1995), reports that from 1989 to 1994 the greatest increase in the rate of criminal justice supervision has been among African American women as a result of the crackdown on drug abuse. He further notes that two-thirds of incarcerated women in the U. S. leave children under 18 years of age in other peoples care.

In terms of health, disproportionate numbers of African American people suffer from high rates of HIV/AIDS, heart disease, strokes, diabetes, obesity and infant mortality related to risk factors that are also associated with life-styles and habits that are historically rooted in the same beds of oppression. In addition, the cost of health care makes it less available to the poor working and non-working people.

Within the Black community, the agenda has only changed to the degree that the list has increased in length and intensity. America has not changed that dramatically therefore, the lives of African descendants in America in their respective communities nationwide have not changed significantly. The situation worsens.

Within the last decade, the Black community has seen its share of a million people marching. Each component of the family had its day - man, woman and child. Although The Million Family March (2000) led us into a new century by putting all the components back together into one unified entity, it was the least talked about. Is this a reflection of how Black people perceive themselves as a group? There is NO COMMUNITY without THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY. Any call to action for African people in America must first recognize that the plan of action must begin with strategies for correctives based upon an understanding of the forces against the family. If the African American family is to be properly equipped as a community in whatever actions it takes, it must have a foundation built upon a moral, spiritual and practical base.
UHURU is published each semester in the months of December and May by the Black United Students, Office of Campus Life, Kent State University, P.O. Box 5190, Ohio 44242-0001. Contributions in accordance with the MLA guidelines should be sent to the Editor. Requests for advertising rates should be addressed to Business Manage, UHURU, c/o the Department of Pan-African Studies, Kent State University, P.O. Box 5190, Kent Ohio 44242-0001. All submissions become the property of UHURU until 30 days following the publication, at which time all rights are relinquished to authors. UHURU reserves the right to edit materials as deemed necessary. Writers will be informed of all changes. Efforts will be made to return unsolicited manuscripts, but can not be guaranteed. UHURU is designed as a forum of exchange on matters concerning the Pan-African experience. The views expressed herein are those solely of the respective authors, and not necessarily those of UHURU, Black United Students, or the Department of Pan-African Studies.

Copyright © 2000 by the Black United Students: all rights reserved. Portions of material herein may be copied and quoted without further permission with the understanding that appropriate citation of the source be included in such copying.
UHURU