The Department of
Pan-African Studies

Our department offers an undergraduate major leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree and a minor in the College of Arts and Sciences. Pan-African Studies includes the study of Africa and the African Diaspora. Our major and minor course sequences are structured to provide an in-depth study of history, language, philosophy, education, literature, art, music, science, sociology, and other subjects as they relate to people of African descent throughout the world. These courses also expose students to theoretical, practical, and domestic and national issues facing African Americans. Majors and minors can choose from five areas of concentration, including a generalist Pan-African Studies emphasis; African Diaspora Studies; Literature, Arts, and Culture; Pedagogy; or Theoretical and Applied Research. Students are encouraged to use their intellectual skills to bring about better organization and development within the African American, African, and African Diaspora communities.

Students majoring in any field—from Business or Education to the Humanities and Fine and Professional Arts—are encouraged to consider Pan-African Studies as a minor.

The PAS curriculum includes courses which cover a broad spectrum of the Pan-African experience. Its purpose is to provide students with basic information and questions which will lead to further research, study, and analysis. The curriculum also seeks to investigate the African connection and/or influences among other ethnic groups, particularly Native Americans and Latin Americans, and the extent to which these may be reciprocal.

Please find below a list of general courses offered in the Department of Pan-African Studies. (For available courses each semester, see General University Catalog and Schedule of Classes for each semester.)

**PAN-AFRICAN STUDIES (PAS) for placement and credit in foreign language courses see Arts and Sciences—Foreign Language requirement—placement and credit.**

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“The Best Is Yet To Come…”

To all UHURU readers:

One thing I love most about college is the fact that however your life was before you arrived here does not matter as much as the things you have yet to accomplish. It doesn’t matter that you and your mom barely managed to make ends meet and it’s a struggle just for you to be here. It doesn’t matter that you grew up in an abusive household or that you were told all your life that you weren’t smart enough. Your past doesn’t have to hold you back. You are here to carve out a future for yourself.

The best years of your life are the ones ahead of you. Our time here isn’t about getting a degree and then going out and getting a job. As corny as it sounds, we are building futures here. Every generation is given something that previous generations did not have. Our generation has more black students in college than ever before. You have a chance to do whatever you want. Learn as much as you can about your chosen field, then go out and perfect your talents.

This is my last semester as editor/general manager of UHURU. I have worked with this magazine since I stepped foot on campus, when I was a naïve freshman still trying to figure out how to read her schedule. But now, as I inch closer to graduation, I realize how much UHURU has grown and how much I have grown in the process. We’re both a little more refined these days and still growing at every opportunity.

Because this is my last chance to spread my thoughts, let me just say this: Don’t let anyone derail your dreams. Don’t let anyone tell you that because you grew up in the projects, you ain’t never gonna amount to nothing. Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t. Just tell them that the best is yet to come, then show and prove.

Much love,

Tara M.L. Pringle
Editor/General Manager

P.S. After a long tradition of bringing quality journalism to our readers, uhuru is finally getting the respect it deserves from professional journalism organizations. Last semester, uhuru won second place in the regional Society of Professional Journalists competition. We have always known we had something special here, but we are glad others in country know it too. Watch us capture first place this year! As always, if you have any comments, questions, concerns, article suggestions or poems, please email them to uhurumag@yahoo.com.

Tara M.L. Pringle is a junior magazine journalism major interested in Pan-African issues and women’s issues. After graduation, she intends to start her own magazine for young women of color. She also is dedicated to eliminating bias in the media and intends to start a company that will hold media outlets accountable for their content.
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not pictured: Autumn Ritchie, staff writer / Adria Barbour, staff writer / Mike Magnes, Ad sales
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What happens to a dream deferred?

does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

—Langston Hughes
THE LIFE AND LEGACY

By Adria Barbour

Born into poverty and raised on the streets, he used his determination and courage to propel him to the ranks of glory in the world of black journalism. Sound like an E! Hollywood True Story? It’s not.

One of America’s most shining examples of ingenuity and entrepreneurship died this summer. John H. Johnson, the founder and publisher of Ebony magazine and Jet magazine, died on August 8 at age 87 of heart failure. Individuals from all around the world came to his funeral at the University of Chicago’s Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. His funeral was elaborate, with former President Bill Clinton and Sen. Carol Moseley Braun giving words of praise and power to this champion.

When I was given this assignment, I didn’t have a clear definition of who this man was. As a journalist, and a black one at that, I’m ashamed. I read his magazines at a young age and didn’t know he founded them. I even used Ebony Fashion Fair cosmetics as a teenager and didn’t know he helped to create it. I am a black woman working in the field he excelled the most in and I didn’t know with which the ranks I wished to aspire to.

John H. Johnson was born in Arkansas City, Arkansas on January 19, 1918. Like most black children in America today, he didn’t grow up with his father. His father died in a sawmill accident. His mother, Gertrude Jenkins Johnson, worked as a cook and washerwoman for years until she saved enough money to move the family to Chicago in 1933. Once there, he saw something that most his age had never seen before: middle class blacks, successful blacks, blacks with purpose and drive. This was a stark contrast to what he was used to in life and read about in the papers, and this would become a recurring theme in his work and ideologies.

On the eve of his graduation, Johnson was invited to speak at a dinner being held by the Urban League. One of the people in attendance, Harry Pace, took an interest in Johnson and offered him a job as a clerk and a scholarship to attend college part-time. So after graduating high school, Johnson went to work for the Supreme Life Insurance Co. and founded the Johnson Publishing Co. in 1942 while still working there. The first magazine called the Negro Digest and later called The Black World, showcased works written for and by African
Americans. Johnson’s job at the insurance company had been to collect clips about blacks in the national newspapers. These clips did nothing to paint blacks in a positive light, and finally Johnson decided enough was enough. Johnson wanted to let his people and the world know that blacks were more than what the mainstream media painted them to be.

Johnson had the dream, and now he needed money to finance it. His mother borrowed $500 dollars against her furniture to give him the money to advertise, which he did through the mailing list of the insurance company he worked for. The return proved fruitful, with almost 3,000 people subscribing to it sending $2 each. By June of 1942 the paper had a circulation of 50,000. To spread the word out about his publication, he started to ask co-workers to go to newsstands and ask for it, showing the newstands the paper was in demand and eventually they began stocking it. If his friends bought the magazine, Johnson bought the copies from them and resold it to others.

This publication sold for two reasons: Johnson’s marketing skills and the mission the paper stood for. The publication found its niche by promoting a sense of intelligence, sophistication and pride for its readers. In 1943 the number of readers doubled after guest columnist and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, “If I was a Negro.” Naturally, one publication did not satisfy Johnson. He started Ebony magazine in 1945 and then Jet, a weekly publication, in 1951. Ebony was a breakthrough in the world of journalism because it showcased black models in advertisements aimed toward black people. The publication was “right on time” so to speak, because World War II was over and blacks were coming home with not only money, but also a greater sense of accomplishment and self-worth. Jet was a goldmine, showcasing blacks in entertainment, sports, and politics.

Johnson didn’t limit himself to journalistic ventures. Leaders recognized Johnson’s significance, because pretty soon he was traveling all over the world with politicians and other influential people. From 1957 to 1959, he and Vice President Nixon went on a special Goodwill tour to nine countries in Africa, Russia, and Poland. President John F. Kennedy appointed him as a U.S. ambassador to the Independence Ceremonies of the Ivory Coast in 1961. President Lyndon B. Johnson appointed him as a Special U.S. ambassador to the Independence Ceremonies of Kenya, a National Selective Service Commission member, and a member of the President’s Commission of the Observance of the 25th Anniversary of the United Nations.

Johnson’s daughter, Linda Johnson Rice, is head of Johnson Publishing, after years of her father’s grooming. Ebony now has a circulation of over 1.9 million. Jet’s circulation is now more than 8 million. His personal wealth was $150 million before he died. By the time he died, he left a legacy of poise, fortitude and impregnable determination that I am proud of.

I didn’t write this article as an alleviation of guilt for not knowing more about my roots as a journalist and as an African American woman. I didn’t want this article to be some clichéd, unfeeling expose of a great man; it would tarnish and cheapen his legacy. I just don’t want people, black or otherwise, to admire and uphold only the journalist in front of the camera.

But the real question is would I have continued to be in the dark if I had not been given this assignment? Probably. Fortunately, I’ll never know.

Adria came to Kent State University to study magazine journalism. She will graduate in August 2006 and intends to work for a variety of magazines in the future to broaden her perspective on life.
It was a landslide. This movie is hands-down the number one movie. Everyone added this movie to his or her list, solidifying its place as the movie to define our generation. With this movie, Cuba Gooding, Jr. and John Singleton left their respective mark on Hollywood.

2. Lean on Me (1989)  
An outstanding performance by Morgan Freeman, who played the role of Principal Joe Clark. With a baseball bat and a stern demeanor, Freeman made us believe in the students of Eastside High.

3. Love and Basketball (2000)  
Stars Taye Diggs and Sanaa Lathan, the respective king and queen of black movies in the late 90’s. It seemed like every time you turned around, this pair was in a movie. This movie made us all believe our great love might just be the girl or boy next door.

Considered by many as Denzel Washington’s best performance ever, Malcolm X is not just a great “black” movie, but simply a great movie. Spike Lee’s movie about the great Malcolm Little made a huge impression on our generation.

5. Friday (1995)  
Directed by F. Gary Gray. “How you gonna get fired on your day off?” With that quote, one of the funniest men in America landed in movie theatres and living rooms and made himself a household name. While Chris Tucker may not have been in many movies currently, we still believe he is one of the funniest men around.

6. Roots (1977)  
Starring LeVar Burton, Maya Angelou, Louis Gossett, Jr. The miniseries still holds the record for being one of the most watched shows on television – ever. We all know the name Kunta Kinte, thanks to this movie. Roots helped generate interest in genealogical searches, as everyone desired to research their family history and find their roots.

How many of you knew this movie was written and directed by Eddie Murphy? This movie had great performances by Eddie Murphy, Richard Pryor and Della Reese. Enough people enjoyed this movie for it to land at number 7 on our list.

8. The Color Purple (1985)  
Directed by Steven Spielberg. Many doubted Spielberg’s ability to take a well-known black story and translate it accurately to the big screen. Spielberg silenced most of his critics with this movie, a powerful story of one black woman’s life in the early 1900s. This movie was nominated for 11 Oscars, but was shut out at the 1986 Academy Awards.

Directed by Malcolm D. Lee. This all-star cast of black actors (Morris Chestnut, Monica Calhoun, Taye Diggs and Terrence Howard) made this movie about sex, lies and literature an instant classic. All the characters have serious flaws, but that is what makes it so fun to watch.

10. Coming to America (1988)  
Be honest. How many of you actually went to a map of Africa and tried to look up Zamunda? Coming to America was filled with memorable quotes (“She’s your queen to be...”), funny guest appearances and was one of our first glimpses of Samuel L. Jackson.

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Movies are such an integral part of our lives that we don’t even notice their impact. Whether it’s memorable quotes or the feeling we had when we first saw our favorite movie, movies have a certain way of making us feel connected to other people.

Black movies seem to connect us in ways other avenues cannot. We all remember the first time we saw Juice or Menace II Society. We remember what it felt like to see people on screen who looked like us and in this issue, we are here to celebrate that.

UHURU magazine recently asked students on campus what were their all-time favorite black movies. In order to qualify as a “black movie,” movies had to have a black director, producer and/or a majority black cast. Here are the top 10 black movies, ranked in order of popularity by the students of Kent State.

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Honorables mentions

- Baby Boy (2001)
- School Daze (1988)
- The Last Dragon (1985)
- Jungle Fever (1991)
- Five Heartbeats (1991)
- Boomerang (1992)
- Bamboozled (2000)
- Do the Right Thing (1989)
“I AM AMERICA.
I AM THE PART YOU WON'T RECOGNIZE.
BUT GET USED TO ME.
BLACK, CONFIDENT, COCKY;
MY NAME, NOT YOURS; MY RELIGION,
NOT YOURS; MY GOALS, MY OWN;
GET USED TO ME.”

MUHAMMAD ALI

“AMERICAN MEANS WHITE,
AND AFRICANIST PEOPLE STRUGGLE
TO MAKE THE TERM APPLICABLE TO
THEMSELVES WITH ETHNICITY AND
HYPHEN AFTER HYPHEN AFTER HYPHEN.”

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HURRICANE KATRINA

LET THIS BE A LESSON

By Tara Pringle
It’s amazing that it took a natural disaster to open up a dialogue on race and poverty in America. A hurricane that could have struck anywhere happened to descend on New Orleans, one of the poorest cities in America, which also had the unfortunate distinction of having been built between two large bodies of water.

From the beginning, the media was there covering the story, bringing us pictures to show the rest of the country, and the world, what was happening in our own back yard. Victims waited days in the grueling hot sun with no food or water and most, if not all, of their possessions destroyed. Places they had been just days ago are now only memories. Homes they lived in were stuck underwater. Pictures began to surface of dead bodies floating down the street, bloated from days of soaking in water. Separated loved ones had no idea if their family members had survived the storm.

Victims and others around the nation waited for help to arrive. One day turned into two, two days turned into three...

The seemingly slow response from the federal government prompted cries of racism. “Help would have been sent the first day if the victims were white!” was the attitude among those who felt race was a factor. Others also noted the speed with which reporters and celebrities made it down to New Orleans and wondered why the federal government didn’t or couldn’t react that quickly.

During a live telethon, Kanye West made the infamous remark that “George Bush doesn’t care about black people.” Many wondered if he was right.

It did seem like the federal government took its time coming to the aid of the victims, who were guilty of nothing but living in the wrong place at the wrong time. When Katrina hit land, Bush was at his Crawford ranch, enjoying the last few days of his vacation.

But there was enough blame to go around and most of it started at the top with Federal Emergency Management Agency, Mike Brown, former head of FEMA, received most of the heat and later resigned. Critics of the Bush administration pointed the blame at the president for having incompetent people at the head of such an important agency. Then the blame was shifted to state officials, then at local officials, who claimed the hurricane simply overwhelmed them.

As help was being coordinated slowly, victims were becoming desperate. Reports of looting, rapes and murders arose from the chaos.

It will take months, if not years, to begin to rebuild New Orleans and other cities that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina.

But how will New Orleans look in the future? Will many of the residents still languish in poverty, unable to remove themselves from the path of danger? Or will the rebuilding process include a plan to revitalize the city’s economy and help those who are at the bottom of the ladder?

As we begin to rebuild lives that were ruined by this disaster, let’s not forget the lesson it has taught us. Poverty, as well as race, is not a topic that can be swept under the rug for too long. Let us hope that it doesn’t take another hurricane to address the problem.
Congresswoman

Stephanie Tubbs Jones
(11th-OH)

Celebrates UHURU at Kent State University

Paid for by the "Tubbs Jones for Congress Committee"
Saundra Draper-Berry, Treasurer • 3729 Stibby Road, Cleveland, OH 44118
IF A MAN IS CALLED TO BE A STREET SWEEPER, HE SHOULD SWEEP STREETS EVEN AS MICHELANGELO PAINTED, OR BEETHOVEN COMPOSED MUSIC, OR SHAKESPEARE COMPOSED POETRY. HE SHOULD SWEET STREET'S SO WELL THAT ALL THE HOSTS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL PAUSE TO SAY, "HERE LIVED A GREAT STREET SWEEPER WHO DID HIS JOB WELL."

MARTIN LUTHER KING

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Celebrating over 30 years of advocacy and service, PAFSA formed in 1972 to promote the participation and contribution of the Pan African Community to the growth and success of Kent State University.

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“The School of Journalism and Mass Communication has laid down a good foundation for me to build my future career upon. The school offers many opportunities inside and outside of the classroom, such as TV2, the Stater, UHURU, and The Burr. The school also supports different organizations like NABJ that allows students to meet with other students around the country, further their skills and make necessary contacts to help with their future.”

Chandra Phillips
Electronic Media Production, undergraduate degree Spring 2002
Media Management, current graduate student
If you haven’t noticed it, the South is running this rap game, from trends such as platinum grills and those Young Jeezy snowman t-shirts to seeing rising stars all over your favorite magazine, television, or radio show. Adding onto that explosion, Field Mob has been through its share of ups and downs. Field Mob has had two critically acclaimed albums that were commercially slept on. They were then introduced to industry rule #4080 and were raped by a few record labels. They even had to duck a few rumors about the group disbanding. The Field has been given a new lease on life.

After signing a deal with Ludacris’ “Disturbing Tha Peace” recording label, the Mob has a new album on its way in November.

“Light Poles and Pine Trees” is the calm after the storm. Shawn Jay and Smoke are focused, mature, and ready for competition. The album features appearances from Ciara, Bonecrusher, Bobby Valentino, and the CEO, himself – Ludacris. The Georgia duo sits down with staff writer Kevin Clark to talk about the album, why life is good with DTP and their contributions to society before and after Hurricane Katrina.
UHURU: First things first, talk about what's going down with the new album, "Light Poles and Pine Trees." Who's all on the album? Who's handling production duties? When is the album slated for release?

Field Mob: First off, let us introduce ourselves – I'm Shawn Jay, right here with my boy, Smoke – aka, Chevy P. The album will be coming out this November on Disturbing the Peace records. If you listen to the first two albums, you'll see how we've matured. We got Jazze Pha and Kenjo doing the production. Ludacris, Ciara, Bonecrusher, and Bobby V [Valentina] on the album, ya know. We just shot a video for the first single and we'll be doing a shoot for the next joint, "Friday Night" sometime soon.

UHURU: Your first two albums were critically acclaimed, yet, heavily slept on by the mainstream. What is going to be so different with this album as opposed to the other two?

Field Mob: Well, with the first two albums – they weren't trying to push neither one of them albums. It's a blessing to be in this position. Big shout out to Ludacris and Big Jeff for giving us the opportunity to shine. I don't think that it is going to be a little different, except that we're a little bit matured than when we did the last album. We're going to give you a grown man album with some fun and humor with the best lyrics that you'll ever hear.

UHURU: It seems that y'all and record deals seem to not want to go hand-in-hand. What went so bad to where you ended up being at Luda's DTP Record Label? And where did the rumors come from about the both of y'all breaking up?

Field Mob: Two years after the last album, when we were messed up contractually with "Rapin' U Records" we were trying to record separately. They [the public] thought that we were separating or not a group. They were trying to get us wrong with no lubrication. But right now, life is good. I mean, I got on a $18,000 necklace on. My daughter is doing great. We're having fun. The difference between Luda and the other record labels is that we can profit off of our creativity. The other labels would make us change what we would say. We didn't appreciate what those other labels like "Rapin' U" were trying to do. With Luda... he would let us do what we do, and I appreciate that.

UHURU: What should make your album standout amongst the other albums already out that have similar subject matter?

Field Mob: Man... you can talk about nothing new under the sun, but I feel like you can though. Nobody is original anymore. We aren't worried about people knowing us or our name. We're just trying to get people to understand the music that we create.

UHURU: Off the subject of the album – with the controversial comments being made by Kanye West, Barbara Bush, and even the likes of Bill Bennett – do you think that the music will become a reflection of the times, like in the days of Public Enemy?
The hook-up
see where we can take you and 60 of your closest friends daily | pick up a service schedule or check partaonline.org
Cleveland......three dollars*
Akron............one dollar*
Kent.............free ninety-nine

Field Mob: The music has been a reflection of the times. Of course, it’ll be like that and it’ll definitely show up in our music. It will show up. We just recently went to the club the other day and saw Juvie [Juvenile] and he had the whole 8th ward with him, showing love as always.

UHURU: After all the tragedy with Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, a lot of the victims took up residence in Georgia. Have you done anything to support or help any of the victims there and in the other states – Louisiana and Alabama?

Field Mob: We’re a part of the Ludacris Foundation. Disturbing Tha Peace and ourselves have been helping out communities before the Hurricane came through. You know that people try to downplay us because we’re not public with our charity. We’re not trying to profit off of tragedy.

We don’t want the publicity. We’re doing this from the goodness of our heart. We’re not doing it so that we can pay off our taxes.

UHURU: Last but not least, is there anything that you’d like to say to the people out there?

Field Mob: Put it like this… We’re the best!!! Smoke and Shawn Jay!!! We’re the best rap group doing it right now. Go check the résumé. In fact, go check the last two albums. We’re the best and we’re saying it! You got people calling themselves the King and the Prince, and all that royalty talk. But Field Mob is here to say that we’re the best!
By Azzah Gallab

Why?
Why is it such a challenge for us to attain self respect
Why must we subject ourselves to suspect conjectures that project destructive reflections of our people which WE KNOW to be incorrect?
Why can't we reflect on constructiveness, neglect negativity, collect self-consciousness, project our voices direct to the world and end with a positive effect?

WHY
Why must we define our dark exterior attributes as inferior compared to the erroneous 'white superior'?

WHY
Why can't I attain information on ANY nation of my people's foundation in my formal education?
My mind once was in isolation, separated from an explanation
In desperation for salvation to alleviate it from all its frustration

In need for an invitation to a destination with the CORRECT information of my peoples creation
Not some faulty abbreviation
misinterpretation 'philosopized' in some fools imagination that my histories location began on a plantation...
That same fool denied the annihilation and termination of my brothas and sistas, decreasing our population without any hesitation.
Then helped in the colonization and transformation of our minds and nations
Lead in our transportation and forcefully provided slavery as our occupation
Then... set us 'free' on vacation to a place called segregation
This situation still haunts my generation, but because of deficiency in communication they cannot form a realization
Aint no anticipation for our high school graduation nor determination to fill out a college application
We have an infatuation for procrastination and no innovation for a revelation
Lack of self appreciation... claim our hair must be stressed so we put it through 'relaxation'
We run a 'nigga' corporation, participating in our own discrimination

Why?
Why do we lie and say that we embrace our race?
Then deny that our characteristics we try and replace?
A Eurocentric look we strive to chase
By bleaching our skin and changing our face
The outside world say we a disgrace
So we marry others in hopes that our color and African features will completely erase

Why?
Why is it so rare for us to be aware?
Why should we make a prayer to rid our life from despair?
Protest our existence remains unfair
Yet not dare to spare time and declare to try and repair?

Why do we not care?
Why do we not care...
WHY DO WE NOT CARE?

Why?
A NEW DAY DAWNING

By Kevin L. Clark

It’s been a pleasure experiencing this story with a beauty like you.

Receiving the love from a family that has cultivated an angel like you.

My history is past – no need to relive such strife...

As this new day dawns, I yearn to make you my wife.

A goal not just filled with hot air.

I pledge to you my love, honesty, allegiance, and my life just to show you I care.

No one loves you like I do and vice versa.

Through it all I will love you during the best time and the worst ones.

I imagine how the end will be – where our names are unified in holy matrimony.

Friends and family, all standing in attendance – witnesses to our testimony...

Acknowledging in public, what we’ve known all along that our love was strong.

My eyes have never seen a blessing like you.

My arms have never held a song before.

You must be what a living melody looks like.

You’ve carried my heart gently – and that is a debt that I can never fully repay.

You’ve opened my eyes to the truth – as you are a gorgeous woman to behold.

As the sun rises, I want to let you know that you are more than a dream come true.

You are to be the mother of my children, the teacher of our future, the best friend in my life, and wife – just to name a few.

I am lost in a lovezone, stuck in your ways.

Caught up, I never want to be gone from you – not even for a few days.

I am yours – forever and a day till infinity meets an end.

You have my heart and love forever.

I love you, Gwen.

UNTITLED

By Adrian LaDon Neal

Who is to say that my mind is at a lost,

Like intellectual beings come priced without a cost.

My minds dynamic is like Gods rewind spinning,

Like girls with lost souls wear clothes with tight linens.

Now where are our minds; infatuated with the times

Like we aren’t true Gods that didn’t exist within the lines.

We’ve lost ourselves caught up in lyrical materialism

Where heads are caught up fixed with sexism.

We don’t know who we are,

Our face it says Guess,

But we don’t allow ourselves to worry,

Because our jeans are steamed pressed

We’ve lost ourselves,

We don’t know who we are until we see the next video,

Or what to say next until we turn on the stereo.

They say, “do the dew”,

But you can’t even do you,

So now you looking in the mirror but can’t understand the view

Who knew that yo’ soul could turn so blue,

Now you’re left all alone, and you crew can’t save you.

More worried about the story of how yo’ clothes got made,

Instead of listening to the sadness of how yo’ roots got played.

Strayed aside like wrong and less constructed lies,

Killing us softly, but we refuse to hear the cries.

It’s like the true color of life is really red,

Because we never appreciate it until we’re left with nothing but blood shed.

Come together is a hard phrase to praise.

We steady wishing for the next better dollar instead of praying for better days.
WHAT’S DEEP?

By Rakavious Claiborne

So what’s deep?

Deep is the burn from the brand that signifies my crossing the sands into the land of Omega.

Deep is twenty thousand leagues under the Atlantic searching for remnants of my ancestors.

Deep is the desire for equality and opportunity sought in every ghetto, borough and hood in America.

Deep is the fountain of youth we all search for that can be found within our souls.

Deep is how far you have to go to get to our roots in order to predict the fruit we hope to bear.

Deep is the womb of the woman—the true cradle of fertilization.

Deep is the scar left by the wound from the crack of the whip on my grandfather’s back, passed down to me in the form of a birthmark.

Deep is my sincere pity for the Roman Catholic church, false prophets, idolaters and blasphemers.

Deep is having faith in a higher power while believing that you are responsible for everything that happens.

Deep is listening to the wise wordszh of the elderly, despite their informal education.

Deep is the bottomless pit we all create in our minds to discard those thoughts we’d rather not think about.

Deep is more than an adjective; it’s an experience!

MEMOIRS OF A MODERN DAY SLAVE

By Latresha Morton

Slavin’ away from nickels and pennies,
Break ing your neck just to do their bidding
Overtime. Feels like I’m losing my mind,
Taxes. Surcharges. Fees.
All in the vice of greed
Chopping away at what’s mine
My friends, it’s the white man’s design
Struggling to keep my head above water
Checks don’t get no bigger,
Bills don’t get no smaller.
The less you make, the more you work
The more you work, the more they take
Bureaucratic demands
Capitalist chains.
All this drama is driving me insane
When will we as a people be running thangs?
SADNESS
By Latresha Morton

Sorrow, pain, defeat
Darkness fills my heart
Thinking of us apart
Then the tears start

This is the hardest part
The tears flow deep from the ocean
of my soul
Pools of pain, rivers of regret,
Flooded with failure
The harsh reality of life,
Stabs at me like a knife

People ask if I’m alright as they walk
by
I wanna scream, “Do I look alright?”
Deeply depressed, overwhelmingly
stressed
I need a long rest to get away from
this mess
To just disappear, evaporate right
into the atmosphere

AFRICA
By Alisha Alls

From the riches of Africa
To the swaying boats crossing the
Atlantic
Dropping off in the South of the US.
They have stripped us of our riches
And our freedoms untold.
They have stolen the dignity of our
women
And lowered the heads of our men.
Robbed of our rightful names
And given a new home.
Working for the white folks
And doin’ what we’re told.
Feeding babies, pickin’ corn,
Shearin’ crops and eatin’ slop.
Times were hard
And money was bad.
People were tied and beaten
Then thrown into sheds.
Glorious times forgotten.
Bad times remembered.
But, the pain will always remain the
same.
I'M TRYING TO BE...

By Rakavious Claiborne

I'm trying to be the brother that can incorporate locks and a dashiki into corporate amerikka.

I'm trying to be the militant man exercising my right to bear arms without causing mass hysteria.

I'm trying to be the father that can provide for my wife and kids without having to look for love on the outside.

I'm trying to be the hopeless romantic that can find the one; moving pass past relationships taking them all in stride.

I'm trying to be The Man making ends legally and not worrying about spending them on a new Benz.

I'm trying to be the same guy you grew with as child; known for always being a good friend.

I'm trying to be the serious type that can have a sensitive interior even when sporting a frown.

I'm trying to be the Emperor of Ice Cream, never losing or giving up my crown.

I'm trying to be the conscious African-Amerikan that doesn't defile my temple with pollution, poison or swine.

I'm trying to be the only, every now-and-then socio-casual drinker that doesn't get too elevated off the wine.

I'm trying to be the force of nature that can calm a storm at my command.

I'm trying to be the Renaissance scholar that can feel self-worth in the presence of any man.

I'm trying to be the believer that can quote scriptures from the Code of Hammurabi, the Holy Bible and the Koran.

I'm trying to be resolute; still solving the problem without having to resort to a gun.

I'm trying to be the carrier of the Panther Party's dream, becoming the 21st century Bobby Seales.

I'm trying to be the next black millionaire without having to sign a sports contract or a record deal.

I'm trying to be uplift for Jessie and help him further the purpose of the Rainbow Coalition.

I'm trying to be I-N-D-E-N-T, living my life and dealing with the consequences of my decisions.

I'm trying to be an amerikan idol without having to market myself based solely on song and dance.

I'm trying to be praised, revered and sometimes feared because I have planted my feet and taken a stance.

I'm trying to be down with the cause and Total Experience; putting my work out there, while helping Scoop get recognition.

I'm trying to be strong like the mighty Mississippi and continue to flow despite my current condition.

I'm trying to be the voice of the people relaying their thoughts on the steps of the Capitol.

I'm trying to be the massive tectonic-plate shift that reunites the world and makes Afrika the capital.

I'm trying to be the constant source of revenue that keeps the economy from going into a recession.

I'm trying to be the reason that history doesn't repeat itself leading to a second Great Depression.

I'm trying to be the lawyer that wins the case that gets us reparations- our land, homes, dignity and history back.

I'm trying to be the truce that ends the war and brings our troops home from Iraq.

I'm trying to be "the rock, the river, the tree" upon which this nation was built and still stands on.

I'm trying to be that staple or cash crop that the small, independent, southern farmer depends, thrives and relies on.

I'm trying to be the polite people-greeter that speaks to everyone that passes by,

I'm trying to be something before I die!
Dear Kent State Students,

As you know, I have decided to retire as president. Although it will be a while before Kent State’s 11th president arrives, and although there will be many occasions for reflections and farewells in the coming months, I want to take this opportunity to share some thoughts with you. This is because getting to know, work with and serve Kent State students—from student-athletes to student senators; from associate-degree students to doctoral candidates; from lifelong locals to visitors from around the globe; and from freshmen who are members of the “Millennial” generation to senior guests who are part of the “Greatest Generation”—will always stand among the greatest privileges of my presidency.

During the course of nearly 15 years, I have seen compelling proof that Kent State students are second to none! I have been bowled over by your academic, athletic and artistic talents. I have been buoyed by your enthusiasm for learning. I have been inspired by your perseverance in juggling demanding coursework with on- and off-campus jobs. And I have had my faith in the future renewed countless times by your willingness to support meaningful causes and reach out to those in need within our campus community and throughout the world community.

I will leave this once-in-a-lifetime job with the highest regard for Kent State’s student body and for the dedicated faculty and staff members who have made a Kent State diploma a passport to unlimited opportunities. I have personal evidence of that fact, as my youngest daughter found that her Kent State education was a springboard to success in a field she loves. Whatever field you have chosen to pursue, I am confident that each of you has an equally fulfilling future ahead of you. That is because despite the change in who occupies the office overlooking Risman Plaza, Kent State’s commitment to student success will not change.

I will miss that bustling office and its birds-eye view of a richly diverse and wonderfully dynamic student body. I will miss regular interactions with students on every Kent State campus. But as I explore my own new path, I will continue to cheer you on as you pursue the dreams closest to your hearts, and I will look forward to hearing about your accomplishments with great Kent State pride.

With best wishes,

Carol A. Cartwright
Misconceptions have exceedingly escalated concerning race, ethnicity and religion as issues in the Sudan, specifically the current political and humanitarian predicament taking place in the Darfur region and have attracted more of the Western media's attention. The media often deludes accurate information regarding ethnic, racial and religious diversity in the Sudan. What is often heard is the repeated stereotype of Northern Sudanese “Arab Muslims” fighting the Southern or Western “Black Christians.” This misinformation is often projected by politicians and journalists coming from outside of the Sudan and is more often than not conveyed because Arabic happens to be the national language of the country.

For one to fully understand the issues taking place in the Sudan, they must first comprehend the country’s history. First, one must look at the name of the country. The name Al Sudan (Bilad al Sudan), or literally, “the land of the Blacks” was presented by the Arabs to the Saharan African region. One must realize that from an American point of view the majority of Sudanese people would be considered “Black,” as their color shows. They must also understand that those of the 35 million Sudanese who do identify themselves as Arabs do so for the following three reasons. First, because the majority of Sudanese people recognize themselves by the region in which they come from and accordingly those specific groups trace their myth of origin to an Arab founding grandparent of their group. Secondly, most Arabic speaking Sudanese define Arabism within its linguistic rather than its racial aspect following the Prophet Mohammed’s hadith that “Arabism is a tongue.” Thirdly, during the 20th century, Pan-Arabism constituted an ideology against colonialism.

Since the Sudan gained its independence in 1956, the prominent rulers of the country have been the alleged Northern “Arabs.” The Sudanese elite who dominated the Sudanese political, economic and social life for the last fifty years were perceived by some as Arabized Northerners. Such a view is simplistic. Most of the Sudanese who expressed their disagreement with the successive government since independence, blame this government for unequal distribution of power and wealth and for the lack of recognition of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the country.

Sudan’s civil war in the Southern part of the country has always been portrayed in the media not only as a racial issue between the ‘Arabs’ and the ‘Blacks’ but also as a religious war between the Muslims and Christians. What the media fails to notice here is that the entire Christian population in the country is less than three percent.
Within the southern population, the majority follow neither Islam nor Christianity but African religions. Hence, the issues in relation to the war were essentially not about religion. What the war is about—as explained earlier—pertains to the preceding inequitable economic and political depiction of the south. Not only that, but since oil was discovered in the South, an additional reason was added: Who would manage the substantial oil reserves found in the southern region? The same goes for Darfur. Although there is no production of oil yet from southern Darfur, there is still oil there. This is substantial because oil buys weapons for Khartoum. Oil also appeals to foreigners from countries such as Germany and China.

In conclusion, these labels and classifications such as Arabs, Africans, Christians and Muslims that the media claims to set the hostility between different parts of the Sudan, do not illustrate the valid portrayal of the issues that have and that are taking place in the country. Neither Arabs, Africans, Christians, followers of African religions, nor Muslims in the Sudan constitute standardized static societies. If the rest of the world feels the need to act in response to the humanitarian and civil crisis in the Sudan, they must understand the significance in straightening out this misapprehension of race, ethnicity and religion and address the root causes of the problem which the dictatorial regime makes impossible for all sectors of the Sudanese people to resolve their differences in a civil manner.

Azza Gallab was born in Khartoum, Sudan. She currently is a sophomore at Kent with a double major in Pan-African Studies and journalism. She holds a position on the executive board of Black United Students as Afrikan Affairs chair.
THE STATE OF OUR UNIONS:

HAS MARRIAGE PLAYED OUT?
Fifty years ago, college was the time women began to think about husbands and babies and men began to entertain thoughts of having a pretty, young thing as a trophy wife.

Times have changed.

Glance around this campus and you might conclude that black students on campus are more concerned with how they are getting to the after party Friday night than they are about how they will ever make it to the state of matrimony.

“Basically, I think people are just here to have fun,” said Arika Maxwell, senior integrated health studies major. “People don’t think about marriage until they’re older. They want to get as much as they can before they settle down.”

Senior psychology major Niecee Moore agrees.

“More minorities aren’t here [in college] to get married,” Moore said. “We’re here to get the full experience of college, because [many of] our parents didn’t have that chance. But it’s not just minorities. Other races are getting married later, too.”

What happened? Is it a generational shift in the black community or are all races becoming less marriage-minded? Is marriage losing its place as a priority on our to-do lists?

A look at the numbers would indicate “yes,” African-Americans are less likely to get married than any other race, according to information from the 2000 Census. As a group, African-Americans are also less likely to stay married after exchanging their vows.

History of black marriage

However, it is not sufficient to simply quote statistics and draw conclusions without taking a historical look at the African-American family and the institution of marriage. Remember that African-American history does not begin with slavery, but in Africa. In the 2005 revised edition, Black Families at the Crossroads by Leanor Boulin and Robert Staples, the authors look at the preslavery period – more specifically the African community.

In the book, the authors state, “In African communities, marriage was not just a matter between individuals but the concern of all family members. A woman, for instance, was not just a man’s wife, but the wife of the family.”

Marriage was a sacred institution, one that the whole community respected. During the years of slavery, however, things began to change.

“Slave marriages were regulated at the discretion of the slave master,” the authors said. “As a result, some marriages were initiated by slave owners and just as easily dissolved.”

The instability in marriage created a lasting legacy, creating problems that are still seen in the black community today.

Why get married?

Marriage has its benefits that the black community may be missing. In the book Black Fathers in Contemporary American Society, the authors argue that married people manage money better,
THE ISSUE BEHIND COMPLEXION PERFECTION

By Autumn Ritchie

Redbone, darkie, brown-skinned, light-skinned, yellow, black. All these words are used to describe the different shades of color that are within our race. I have always felt that it was a great privilege to be a part of a race where we really do not all look the same. Growing up I came from a family where one side was very light skinned and the other was more brown-skinned. Even with these different distinctions in color of the people around me I never felt any better or less of myself. I was always content with just being me. While growing up I had heard from different people the “light skinned blacks thought that they were better” or “dark skinned blacks were all just jealous because they were not light.” I saw Spike Lee’s School Daze where they touched on “wannabes” and “jig-gaboos.” However it was not until I got half way through my college education that I realized that blacks were still being plagued with issues about the color of their skin.

The problem started when our people were taken out of Africa and brought over to American soil. When we were brought over here our only purpose was to serve as slaves to our white master. The surroundings and the system of things were new to our people because we were in foreign territory. The circumstances that slaves were made to live under did not leave them any choice but to do as they were told. Those who rebelled were greatly punished and some even put to death. The whites used their authority that they had over the slaves to keep them docile and ignorant so that we as a race would never be able to exist on our own. One of the ways that they felt that they could control us was to pit us against each other. They felt that if they could make us distrust one another then we would never be able to band together to fight them back.

According to legend, Willie Lynch gave a speech in Virginia in 1712 that proposed a definite way to disable us as a race. This method was to work for the next 300 years to come. I would advise all of you to take a look at the speech and then compare it to our society today. One of his methods was for the
slave masters to take their slaves of a lighter complexion and put them in the house. This is where the term house slaves came from. House slaves were to work in the house and be servants of the master. They were given better living conditions and a higher quality of food. A precious few even had a chance at education, typically through the white women in the household. The house slaves were even promised a chance at freedom though few ever got it. In some instances the house slaves actually became close with their master’s. This way of life actually fooled the lighter slaves into thinking that they were better than the darker field slaves. The field slaves were to have none of the same privileges. They were made to work in the field from sunrise to sunset and at harvest time it was 18 hours a day. They were not to go into the master’s house unless they were told. Their living conditions and the food that they were given was next to inhumane. This system that Lynch had come up made the slaves do exactly what he said that they would. The house slaves began to think that they were superior to the field slaves while the field slaves looked at the house slaves as “untrustworthy” because they were so close with the master. Forgetting that they were all black and still slaves, house and field slaves began to turn against one another out of their own ignorance to the fact that they were being manipulated to do so from the beginning.

James Weldon Johnson, who was so light that he was able to pass for white, touched on the issue of fairer skin in his autobiography. His “light damn near white” philosophy basically said that a person of a darker complexion would be better off marrying someone who was of a fairer skin tone for the simple fact that they would be economically and socially better off. This method of thinking actually still exists in some black people’s minds today. There seemed to be more opportunities for fairer skinned blacks. They were looked upon as better because they came out of the blood of a white man. These instances were the beginning of the problem that we are still seeing in our society.

LEARNING TO LOVE THE SKIN YOU’RE IN.

Down through the years the issue of complexion still continued. If you look at some of the first covers of Ebony magazine, some of the first black news anchors, and the first black Miss America you will find that they were all of a fairer complexion. Up until a few years ago blacks of a darker complexion did not really have much to look up to in terms of their own beauty. Now in 2005 we as a people are finally seeing all of our shades of color sprinkled amongst the masses. We now have the Lauren Hills, Jill Scotts, and India Aries to look up to. The “chocolate” male especially seems to dominate Hollywood and all of the women want their men to look just like Taye Diggs or Morris Chestnut. I am happy every time that I open up a magazine and see Gabrielle Union in a Neutrogena ad or Queen Latifah as a CoverGirl spokesmodel. It also pleases me to see Beyoncé doing her thing with L’Oreal and Halle Berry who not only dominates Revlon, but also won an Oscar.

I still hear people gripe about the differences between light and dark and to this day I still do not fully understand. I comprehend the history surrounding the issue but I do not understand how we can allow ourselves to be so dissatisfied with what God gave us. I believe that with everything that comes against us in life at the end of the day self love is sometimes the only thing that we have to hold on to. I don’t care what the texture your hair is, what your complexion is, or how people view you, it is so vitally important for us as a race to embrace one another for who we are. The brief history above shows how we our slave masters tried to tear us apart so why would we want to continue living in bondage?

Autumn Ritchie is a Senior English major. She began writing short fiction at the age of seven and has been with Uhuru for four semesters. Upon graduation she aspires to one day become a novelist and travel the world.
BEFORE WE GO ON
LOOK BACK OVER THE POETRY SECTION ONE MORE TIME...

...and notice that you weren't in it. Why them and not you? The mind boggles, and reparations are owed. The progressively-minded staff of uhuru, however, would like to give you a chance to make up for this injustice of publication. Simply fill in the following items, and experience the fortune and glory that comes with publication in uhuru, one of Kent State University's most prominent student magazines.

title:  
(nothing too pretentious, please)

by:  
(your name here)

poem:  
(whatever's on your mind, but the shorter the better)

congratulations, you have just been published in this issue of uhuru. To be considered for publication in the next issue, rip this page out of the magazine, and direct it to this address:

UHURU
attn: "kuumba"
101 taylor hall
kent state university
kent, oh.
44240
thank you

ROSA PARKS

(1913–2005)
"I'm not comfortable being preachy, but more people need to start spending as much time in the library as they do on the basketball court. If they took the idea that they could escape poverty through education, I think it would make a more basic and long-lasting change in the way things happen. What we need are positive, realistic goals and the willingness to work. Hard work and practical goals."

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
4th Annual
Martin Luther King Jr.
Celebration
"The Unfinished Journey..."

Save the Date
Thursday
January 26, 2006
9AM – 7PM
Kent Student Center
Ballroom

For More Information:
Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity & Academic Initiatives
330 672 2442
diversity@kent.edu
By Sasha Parker

In 2001, Halle Berry starred opposite white actor Billy Bob Thornton in the film "Monster's Ball." Receiving great critical acclaim for her performance as a grief-stricken mother, Berry made history by becoming the first African-American woman to receive an Academy Award for Best Actress.

While Berry's award marked a milestone in Black history, it made many African-Americans question the media's interpretation of Black women.

Former radio host Kai Parker is very familiar with the way the media helps perpetuate stereotypes of African-Americans.

"When I first started doing radio, my alias was 'Da Homeboy,'" Parker said. "I was the sidekick to a white talk radio host. After I broke out on my own, I became very critical of the way Blacks, particularly Black women, are portrayed in the media."

Parker said the Black woman's image in the media is distorted.

"The media has turned Black women into this homogenized, conceptualized and over-sexualized version of the truth," said Parker.

While today there are more visual representations of Black women available for consumption in the mass media, the fact remains that these images are not an accurate representation of the Black woman.

"Black women are portrayed at two extremes," said Gwen Peake, a graduate student at Kent State
University. "We are either seen as the welfare drama queens with kids we can't take care of or as the very light-skinned, very lean woman with hair that looks like that of a bi-racial child."

Traci Williams, owner/CEO of Royalty Studios and television and film expert, is in agreement with this statement.

"The media promotes this idea that all Black women are light-skinned and thin with long hair. I'm not saying that we have to have these huge women on screen but we should see women on TV who look like they eat," Williams said.

This is not a new issue for Black women. As stated in an article published in Essence magazine in January 1993 by journalist Marcia Ann Gillespie, "The women you see in the media don't look like Grace Jones, Alfre Woodard, Leontyne Price or Whoopi Goldberg. The women you see don't reflect our range and depth of beauty."

Many scholars have noted that these depictions of Black women are results of stereotypes the media creates.

In *Freaks, Gold Diggers, Divas, and Dykes: The Sociohistorical Development of Adolescent African Women's Sexual Scripts*, Dr. Dionne P. Stephens and Dr. Layli D. Phillips explore these stereotypes by suggesting there are four foundational images of Black women in the media.

"The Jezebel, Mammy, Welfare Mother, and Matriarch image frame the existence of Black women in the media," Phillips and Stephens noted.

While the Welfare Mother and the Matriarch are rarely seen in today's modern media, the images of the Mammy and Jezebel are seen almost every day.

According to their study, Phillips and Stephens define the Jezebel as the "young, exotic, promiscuous, oversexed woman who uses sexuality to get attention, love, and material goods."

The Jezebel image can still be seen in music videos.

"Look at Beyoncé, she shakes her booty all over the television and she's famous for that. Honestly, the girl is really talented but you forget that when she's shaking her butt everywhere," said Parker.

Artists like Jill Scott and Angie Stone have taken a backseat to a generation that promotes scantily clad superstars.
"Jill Scott will never sell as many albums as Beyoncé, even though they’re both light-skinned and extremely talented," said Kristen Chesney, a sophomore psychology major at Kent State University. "It’s because Beyoncé runs around half naked. But let Jill Scott start running around half naked and I guarantee she’ll stop selling records all together."

The Black celebrities the media heightens to “superstar status” are similar to the girls that dance in rap videos.

“What’s the difference between Christina Milian and a video groupie?” Parker asked. “Honestly, there isn’t one. Christina is just a high-paid groupie. What message does this send to our young Black women?”

The Mammy image can be considered as the direct contradiction to the Jezebel image. Phillips and Stephens define the Mammy as portraying “the African American female slave or domestic servant. She is nurturing toward the white family, an idea that is reinforced by a belief that she puts her master’s family’s needs before her own family’s.”

Phillips and Stephens continued on to define the Welfare Mother image as the result of a shifting relationship with the white family unit from “the public to the private sphere that has led to African American women being openly critiqued within economic, political and social contexts.”

The Welfare Mother image is the lazy representation of the Black woman. She waits around all day to collect government checks and depends on food stamps to feed her impoverished children.

The Mammy image is still seen in today’s films, with plus-sized Black actresses, like Queen Latifah and Mo’Nique, playing these roles.

“I like Mo’Nique. However, in the films that she’s been in, she’s this overpowering, aggressive woman,” Williams said. “The same goes with Queen Latifah. With the roles they play, the audience never gets to see the soft side of them. Where’s the balance?”

In the film “Bringin’ down the House,” Queen Latifah personifies the Mammy image in the scene where she is dressed up as an old southern Mammy while she serves food to the White family. However, the stereotypes don’t stop there. Latifah also personifies another stereotype of the Black woman: the hood rat.

Latifah’s character is an ex-con who exhibits all the stereotypical behavior of a ghetto female. She’s loud, obnoxious, speaks in Ebonics and has no tact.

“It’s almost as if the director wanted Queen Latifah’s attitude to be as big as she is physically,” said Chesney.

Parker agrees.

“It’s no surprise that actresses like Queen Latifah and Mo’Nique always play these over the top roles. Even in ‘Chicago’, where Latifah was critically acclaimed, she was still someone’s Mammy. Today’s plus sized actresses are like the modern
day Hattie McDaniel, “said Parker, referring to the black actress from “Gone with the Wind.”

“These images help differentiate African American women’s identity from their peers’ cross culturally,” Phillips and Stephens said in their book. “Those select few African American women who ‘made it’ into these media are often fashioned into these pre-existing images.”

These media images send the same type of message to the Black community about how African American women should view themselves.

“The media sends this message to Black women that there’s very little hope. You either find a man to take care of you or you are going to be dependent on the system for the rest of your life,” Williams said. “Where are the role models for these Black women? Who are we looking up to?”

In an independent survey conducted on African American women, ages 15-25, 60 percent of the polled audience admitted to struggling with their self-image as a result of what they see in the media.

Many Black professionals in the film and television industry feel it is imperative for the media to start portraying Black women accurately.

“We cannot continue to let other people define us,” Williams said. “We know deep down what we want and what we want to accomplish with our lives. If we continue to let people do this, we’re never going to move forward.”

Sasha Parker is a junior magazine journalism major with a minor in political science. She is also the current Political Affairs and Grievances Chair for Black United Students.

“SUCCESS IS TO BE MEASURED NOT SO MUCH BY THE POSITION THAT ONE HAS REACHED IN LIFE AS BY THE OBSTACLES WHICH HE HAS OVERCOME WHILE TRYING TO SUCCEED.”

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON
acquire more wealth and experience less financial stress than singles with similar incomes. Studies have shown that marriage increases the likelihood that fathers have good relationships with their children and that divorce and unmarried child-bearing increases poverty for both children and mothers. All of these are problems in the black community. Maybe marriage is the answer.

Where have all the eligible black men gone?

We could rehash the same old argument that a shortage of eligible black men exists. According to a 2002 Justice Policy Institute report, the number of black men in prison has grown to five times the rate it was twenty years ago. In 2000, more than 460,000 college-age black men were in college, representing only 25 percent of the black men in that age range, according to the American Council on Education. However, that argument doesn’t give credit to the black men who have never been to jail and are earning advanced degrees.

The real answer could be that times have changed on all accounts, not just concerning black men. Many of us belong to the “Hip-Hop Generation,” which author Bakari Kitwana defines as being born between 1965 and 1984. You can’t measure all the different ways hip-hop has influenced our culture. From Harlem to Hollywood, hip-hop has permeated every aspect of our lives, including the way we look at love and marriage. Most hip-hop lyrics don’t exactly advocate fidelity. From 50 Cent to Young Jeezy, the lyrics focus more on sex and groupies than wedding vows and honeymoons.

However, no change is more significant to the downfall of marriage in the black community than the rise of the “baby mama” or “baby daddy.”

Baby mama drama

Before elaboration is given on the prominence of the “baby mama” status, the question must be asked: what is the difference between a “baby mama” and a single mother?

A typical depiction of a baby mama in movies and music is of a money-hungry, angry woman devoid of any type of moral values who is reluctant to loosen her ties to her ex-boyfriend. Baby mamas demand money for the baby, but then go spend the money on clothes and shoes for themselves.

Single mothers, on the other hand, welcome assistance from their child’s father but don’t demand it. They try to maintain a dignified relationship with the child’s father and they do what is necessary to provide for themselves and their child with or without his help.

Both types of women are prevalent in the black community, but the baby mama serves to destroy it. Black society accepts the baby mama’s place in our society and no longer looks down upon her. As American Idol Fantasia said in her song “Baby Mama”: “Nowadays it’s like a badge of honor to be a baby mama...”

With past generations, men and women knew the consequences of their actions: If they had sex and got pregnant, then marriage was the next step, giving birth [no pun intended] to the term “shotgun wedding.” However, now marriage is no longer the subsequent action.

Where to go from here

Many are concerned whether the sanctity of marriage can be restored in the black community. Nisa Islam Muhammad decided to do something about it. She started Black Marriage Day, celebrated in different cities across the country on March 27.

With the coordination of the Wedded Bliss Foundation, Muhammad wants to put the emphasis back on successful marriages.

“Much of what we hear about marriage in the Black community is a blues song about low rates, out of wedlock births, escalating divorces and how somebody done somebody wrong,” she writes on her web site. “We want to replace that blues song with a love song of joy.”
Other women have tried to do their part as well.

Maryann Reid, author of many books dealing with black dating and sex, has a book out this fall titled “Marry Your Baby Daddy.” In conjunction with the book release, she hosted “Marry Your Baby Daddy Day” in September, where 10 unwed couples finally tied the knot in an elaborate all-expense paid wedding.

“I’m not saying that marriage is the answer, but it’s a start,” Reid said in an interview earlier this year with BlackAmericaWeb.com. “There was a time, not too long ago, when black men would go to a club, see a woman and say, ‘She’s going to be my wife.’ Now, you have guys saying, ‘She’s going to be my baby’s mama.’”

“I want to turn baby mamas into wives,” Reid said in another interview. “I’m just a regular person who’s concerned with the direction that our community is going in and I want to do something about it besides talking.”
It's rare that an artist's career crosses into one-name territory, and everyone knows who you're talking about. The mere mention of this artist's name evokes feelings of passion, romance and true singing ability, as well as memories of blissful nights with the artist's music as the soundtrack. That one name is, of course, Luther.

Luther Vandross, the greatest rhythm and blues voice of the last 25 years, passed away July 1 at age 54, never recovering from a stroke he suffered in 2003. He left fans and his peers to mourn the loss of one of the true greats.

While many of us were not around when Luther started his amazing solo career, quite a few kids were born with Vandross’ smooth and versatile voice anchoring amazing music production. I know that the beginning of Luther’s solo success coincided with my birth, to hear my mother tell the story.

In the last week of September 1981, Paula Stevens brought home her 7-pound, 8-ounce baby boy from the hospital, still in pain from the labor of giving birth to this little guy. However, soon after entering the house, she was re-energized by a new upbeat romance track by a newcomer named Luther Vandross. The song was “Never Too Much,” from the album of the same name. Mom danced with me, who obviously was not paying the least bit of attention, in her arms. From that point on, that was the song that reminded her of her firstborn child, and whenever I hear it, I call her and say, “Mom, our song is on.” I’m sure we weren’t the only people who felt this way or had certain
Luther songs that reminded them of wonderful moments, because the man left behind a legacy that will go unmatched for some time. His reworking of the song Burt Bacharach wrote and Dionne Warwick made famous, “A House is Not a Home,” is a classic example of a singer making a cover song his own. Luther sang—no, he owned that song, courtesy of his amazing runs, especially the scatting. “Are you gonna be/say you’re gonna be/are you gonna be” still are among the smoothest words ever to be sung. Not to mention 1991’s “Here and Now,” a wedding reception staple to this day, along with other classics such as “So Amazing,” the heart-wrenching “Superstar,” and his ode to his late dad, “Dance With My Father.” The great list of Luther Vandross songs can go on forever.

Unfortunately, due to battles with weight and hypertension, his life could not go on forever. He ascended to, and then descended from, the 300-pound mark several times, culminating in the 2003 stroke that left him with a weakened version of the great voice we loved and knew. His weight was one thing that might have prohibited his crossover success from coming earlier in his career, making him another victim of a superficial society that said its romantic kings and queens had to be slim and trim.

Another might have been the question of Vandross’ sexuality, but it’s hard to find a Luther fan who gives a damn about that. My mother, who might in fact be the most conservative person I know on that subject, couldn’t care less whether Luther was gay. She loved the man’s music, as did so many others.

One thing is for certain: Today’s R&B new jacks have a ton of work to do if they ever want to fill the shoes of Luther Vandross. Luther’s poetic metaphors and implications are totally different from the “Raunch & B” style that most of today’s singers display. You knew that making love was a part of the message; you just wouldn’t get play-by-play from Luther. He left that up to the lovers who used his music as a mood setter.

That is what’s missing in rhythm and blues today. And it will be missing for quite a long time, now that Luther is dancing with his father again. And Luther, as you said in “So Amazing,” we hope to “follow you to the moon and the sky above.”

Chris Stevens is a student at Delaware State University. This article was made available by BlackCollegeWire.com.
BLACKS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE HISTORY OF MOVIES

By Timothy Fenner
Black people have come a long way in the movie business. Today, respected black movie stars like Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy and Whoopi Goldberg can only look back and shake their heads in dismay at the way black actors and actresses in the past were cast in stereotypical roles, such as Mammie, the maid in "Gone With the Wind."

Blacks in the 1980s have more opportunities to play starring roles in movies. Talented black actors have succeeded in dispelling the myth that films featuring blacks don’t make money in the box-office. Recently, Pryor directed "Jo Jo Dancer: Your Life is Calling," a box-office success with an all-black cast. "The Color Purple," another popular movie with an all-black cast, was nominated for eleven Academy Awards. "Beverly Hills Cop," starring Eddie Murphy, is among the 10 highest grossing movies ever.

Since the early 1900s, when the first film by a black man, "The Railroad Porter," was released, black movies have played an important role in the movie industry. The good movies exposed the plight and hardship of the blacks and helped to reshape people’s attitudes; the bad ones cast them in the stereotypical roles of nannies, housemaids and chauffeurs.

In most of the black movies made before 1930, the actors were whites whose faces were painted black. Blacks fought these stereotypical attitudes by producing their own movies, which cast them in a better light. "The Realization of a Negro’s Ambition" was produced by and starred a black man, Noble Johnson. Though they were few and far between, black films continued to be made. Black film producer/director, Oscar Micheaux was one of those who kept producing black films in that era.

But despite his efforts, only 199 all-black films were made between 1917 and 1950, an era when Hollywood made thousands of movies, and most of these were made for white audiences.

The advent of sound in films was a landmark for black people. For the first time, it was no longer enough to paint a face black. The roles now demanded a certain realism in acting and speaking that could not be easily camouflaged. Blacks had to play blacks on film.

However, this did not improve the parts they played. Black actors and actresses had to fight to break out of stereotypical roles.

The casting of blacks in leading parts did not become popular until the 1960s, following the civil rights movement and black consciousness. Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier and Sammy Davis, Jr. were among the first black leading men. Today, with the emergence of this new breed of actors, directors and producers, blacks are hailing an era of involvement in movies unequaled by earlier generations.

Editor’s note: This article appeared in the Fall 1986 issue of UHURU.
By Tara Pringle

On those cold, winter days when you can see the snowflakes falling from the warmth of your bed, it's hard to summon the strength or desire to get out of bed and walk to class. On days like that, it's hard to remember the people who struggled just for the opportunity to go to college. They wouldn't dream of sleeping in because of a few inches of snow.

Even today, minority students on majority white campuses often feel like it's a constant battle to prove they have the right even to be in the classroom. Eugene Williams, Jr., a graduate of a predominately-white school, wrote the book *Raisin in Milk Syndrome*, an apt description of what a black college student faces in his or her daily interactions on campus.

However, we're talking about the problems students face today. Can you imagine what it must have been like to be a black student at Kent State, or any other institution of higher education, during a more hostile time? At a time when white people, by law, did not have to respect your human rights? At a time when segregation was so prevalent that black students weren't even allowed to live on campus?

First, a little history. After the Civil War, thousands of ex-slaves, with no money and no education, flocked to schools set up by religious organizations and others. These original institutions were called colleges and universities, but they were teaching basic skills such as reading and writing.

These first institutions evolved into the modern-day HBCUs, producing some of the best black minds in recent memory. Occasionally, a few black students attended predominately white schools.

The Brown v. Board of Education decision came down in 1954. The court declared that "separate but equal" schools were unconstitutional and a mandate was given to integrate the schools "with all deliberate speed."

After the Brown decision, many black students opted to enroll at the predominately white schools versus HBCUs.

Edward W. Crosby earned his bachelor's degree from Kent State in 1957 and received his Master's degree two years later. As a Cleveland native, he didn't know much about Kent and its environment. Where he grew up, he said, people knew how to stay in their place. There wasn't much conflict.

But when he arrived in Kent, it felt like a whole new world.

"When I came here, it was the first time I ever experienced racism head-up. I got used to it very fast. In fact, I was lost, I was looking for someone's home and I went out on Route 44 toward Hiram and I stopped in this place just to get directions and I opened the door and immediately someone said, 'Watch the cash register!'"

Crosby became aware of the racism on campus as well.
“No sooner here, I noticed a number of things that couldn’t happen,” Crosby said. “One, you [black students] couldn’t live anywhere on campus. They only had one dormitory on campus and that was Stopher Hall. If you decided to live off the campus, then you had to live as far away from the campus itself as possible. Not only did students have to live there, but there was only one black faculty member at the campus at the time and that was Oscar Ritchie. He had to live down there too. There was nowhere in this city that a black person could live besides the South Side.”

Crosby found one advantage, if you want to call it that, to living off-campus.

“We didn’t have to pay for the place that we lived in because it didn’t have a toilet,” Crosby said. “We had to go down to the landlord’s place to use the toilet. So we refused to pay rent and he went along with it because we were supposed to have a toilet.”

The days of racism aren’t over, Crosby warns.

“Right now at Kent State, racism abounds,” Crosby said. “However, two things have happened. Young people come to this campus and they’re not aware of what’s happening. Racism still happens on this campus. However, it’s much more sophisticated. They don’t have to call you a nigger; they just treat you like one.”

Carolyn Dorsey, another student in the 1950s, described her first experience at Kent State University.

Dorsey arrived at Kent State and went to Terrace Hall where her room was assigned. She saw that her roommate had already moved in and her things were scattered throughout the room. So Dorsey began to unpack, but her roommate came in the room. The white woman looked at Dorsey, eyes lingering over her complexion, then turned and left the room without a word. The next day, Dorsey had a new roommate — a black woman.

“I imagine first thing Monday morning she was down at the Dean of Women’s Office requesting a transfer,” Dorsey said. “That was my welcome to Kent State.”

Dorsey figured Kent State must have thought she was white because she didn’t graduate from the “black” high school in Dayton, so they placed her with a white woman.

But she didn’t feel offended by the slight.

“It [racism] didn’t surprise me,” Dorsey said. “At my high school, we had two swimming pools – one for blacks and one for whites. I was used to it. You reach a point where it doesn’t incapacitate you. You just look at them and say, ‘Poor thing. It’s their problem, not yours.’”

Because she attended Kent State after the Brown decision, she believes the environment wasn’t so hostile. “The administration wouldn’t have been blatant about it. They wouldn’t have dared.”

After Dorsey became an AKA, the sorority gave her another place to be herself.

“Since we had each other, we didn’t say about it,” Dorsey said. “I had such a wonderful group of black friends and we just had a good time. We were close.”

Dorsey continues, “Yes, some professors were racist; you could tell by the grades you got or body language. Some wouldn’t call on us. It was definitely racism on campus. It was all over the country.”

Dorsey fondly remembers Dr. Oscar Ritchie, the first black professor at a public university in the state of Ohio.

“We admired him, so most of us took his class,” Dorsey said. “We could talk to him any time.”

Current KSU students may remember some of the most recent racial incidents to occur on campus, whether they received attention in the Stater or not. Some of the victims left the university and countless others now harbor distrust among members of different races.

Dorsey bristled at the thought of students transferring to another university after experiencing racism at Kent State.

“I wouldn’t let anyone run me away from anything,” Dorsey said. “I would expect the administration to make a strong stand. I would never run away from it. I wouldn’t ever give them what they want. I’ve been a fighter all my life.”
"THE MOST DANGEROUS CREATION OF ANY SOCIETY IS THE MAN WHO HAS NOTHING TO LOSE."

JAMES BALDWIN
“IF WE ACCEPT AND ACQUIESCE IN THE FACE OF DISCRIMINATION, WE ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY OURSELVES AND ALLOW THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO SALVE THEIR CONSCIENCE BY BELIEVING THAT THEY HAVE OUR ACCEPTANCE AND CONCURRENCE. WE SHOULD, THEREFORE, PROTEST OPENLY EVERYTHING ...THAT SMACKS OF DISCRIMINATION OR SLANDER.”

MARY MCLEOD BETHUNE