

This weekend to commemorate 50 years of racial integration

Students and alumni will celebrate the college's embrace of diversity since 1962

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Staff Writer

The Davidson College of 50 years ago looked strikingly different from the school we know today. Today, 24.2% of first-year students identify as students of color. Fifty years ago, there was only one student of color on campus.

In 1962, just as the United States was in the midst of great social change and the civil rights movement, so too was Davidson College. In the fall of that year, Davidson welcomed its first African student of color to the college as a first-year. Although a few international students had enrolled in the college prior to 1962, it was not until May of that year that the Board of Trustees released a new statement of policy:

"Neither the Charter of Davidson College nor the By-laws of the Trustees have ever stipulated that race, nationality, creed or class should be a condition for admission to the student body of the institution... The present Trustees of the College would affirm the spirit of that first charter, and in doing so would advise the Faculty to consider carefully all applications received from prospective students."

With this statement, the Board of Trustees ended segregation in the school and opened the doors for students of all backgrounds to attend, nearly a decade after the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Dr. Benoit Nzengu, from the

Democratic Republic of the Congo, and now a surgeon living near Paris, was the first African student to enroll.

He was followed the next year by Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, now a professor in African and Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who also came from the DRC. The first two African-American students to enroll, Leslie Brown and Wayne Crumwell, entered the college in 1964.

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the college's integration, the offices of Alumni Relations and Multicultural Affairs, along with the Alumni of Color Engagement Initiative, are putting together a series of events to take place Friday and Saturday during Homecoming Weekend, entitled "Reflections on 50+ Years of Integration."

"Davidson in many ways was behind in aggressively integrating. We want to celebrate the sacrifices the pioneers had to endure. When they were successful, they opened doors," Tae-Sun Kim, director of multicultural affairs, says.

Among the speakers will be Joseph Howell '64. His memoir, *Civil Rights Journey*, is about his experiences growing up white in the South during the civil rights movement and how he became involved with the movement during his time as a student at Davidson. Howell and his wife, Embry Martin Howell, will lead a book discussion on his memoir on Friday. Martin Howell is the daughter of Grier Martin, president of the college from 1958 to 1968.

Friday's program of events will also feature a Welcome Dinner, with keynote addresses by Nzengu and Brown who will reflect on their experiences at Davidson. "I

think the keynote speakers will give the audience a wake-up call," Kim says.

Kaneisha Gaston '13, president of the Black Student Coalition, will provide reflections from a current student.

"I think it is really important to learn about the school, and understand the layers of the community. The good, great, wonderful, and also some of its struggles and what it is in the process of overcoming," Marya Howell, director of alumni relations, says.

On Saturday, Kim and Sarbeth Fleming, director of multicultural admission, will talk about the changes in Davidson's population as well as the programs and initiatives that have been incorporated into the community.

"I want to talk about the progress we have made, the exciting new programs and innovations as well as some of the push-back we're getting, concerns about diversity on campus, and bust some of the myths," Kim says.

Following Kim and Fleming, professors Helen Cho and Hilton Kelly will give faculty perspectives on supporting new programs and diversity initiatives.

Also on Saturday, all students are invited to attend the ACE Investment: Preparing Your Passions for Post-Davidson Vocations. The ACE Investment was established for Homecoming Weekend 2011. This year will mark its second iteration. Justin Hua '11 and Renee Williams '07 established the program as an embodiment of the ACE Initiative, which aims to reconnect alumni of color to and encourage their involvement in the Davidson community, according to Hua.

At the ACE Investment event, students will have the opportunity to network and receive advice from alumni working in career

fields ranging from finance to health services. "It'll be a great opportunity for students to connect with alumni who care deeply about the Davidson family, and who have the experience of overcoming challenges in the professional world that current students may face one day," Hua says. "The whole thing is just awesome."

Although "Reflections on 50+ Years of Integration" will be held during Homecoming Weekend, all current students and community members are invited to attend the events. "I hope students come away with a sense of the pioneers that came before them, and that they will see that one person can make a difference. Each person has a role to play in change," Howell says.

According to Kim, in the 1960s, half of the school's community population did not believe diversity was in the best interest of the college.

Attitudes have changed in the last 50 years, and Kim hopes changes continue. "Most people on campus value diversity in the abstract but may not have as much experience actually living and learning with culturally and racially different people. There are real differences between people here such as values, life opportunities, privileges, religious beliefs, political views. So what we need to work on is more collaboration and cross-cultural understanding, talking about differences and discovering what we have in common."

For more information about "Reflections on 50+ Years of Integration," contact Marya Howell at mahowell@ davidson.edu.

For more information about ACE Investment, contact Justin Hua at juhua@ davidson.edu.

New club pursues world-wide empowerment of women

Half the Sky is determined to promote solutions for the many oppressed women in the world

Grace Hauser

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Women's empowerment is the main focus of the Half the Sky Movement, which aims to spread awareness and promote concrete solutions for oppressed women worldwide. Olivia Wilde, Meg Ryan, Desmond Tutu and Hilary Clinton are just a few names of celebrities and activists who endorse this mission and will be featured in the movement's documentary.

The Half the Sky movement developed from Pulitzer prize winning authors Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's book, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* which explores the pervasive exploitation of women's rights in the developing world. The movement focuses on five main issues: forced prostitution, education, economic empowerment, gender-based violence and maternal mortality. According to the mission statement on Half the Sky's webpage, the movement aims to "ignite the change needed to put an end to the oppression of women and girls worldwide, the defining issue of our time."

Emma Steinberg '15 and Madison Hunter '15 lead the Davidson College chapter of Half the Sky, which was established at the beginning of this year. Although the chapter is just beginning, they are already beginning projects on campus. They

have already actively promoted awareness on campus by showing the premier of the movement's upcoming documentary on this past Monday.

"First and foremost people need to know what's going on. Then, you can figure out how to make your own impact," Steinberg said, describing the mission of Davidson's Half the Sky Movement.

Currently, the Davidson Half the Sky chapter is selling bracelets to raise funds for an Afghan school. They decided upon this fundraising project, as they will for future fundraisers at their last meeting. Although they have only met a few times, Steinberg says that a typical meeting consists of members bringing in articles or videos which address the key issues upon which the movement focuses, and a discussion. Emma describes the chapter as focusing on "advocacy first and then pairing that with activism."

Preparation for the showing of the Half the Sky documentary in the Union has currently been the focus of the chapter. The film has two parts, the second of which will be shown at a later date yet to be determined. The documentary, filmed in ten countries, follows author Nicholas Kristof and celebrity activists as they campaign for women's empowerment.

The chapter is also eagerly anticipating a visit from Half the Sky author, Nicholas Kristof, who will be speaking at Davidson on December 3. Kristof will be discussing both his book and the documentary at the lecture. Emma is hoping to organize a meeting between the Davidson Half the

Sky chapter and the author who started the movement while he is on campus.

If you're interested in participating in the Half the Sky Movement, meetings are every other Tuesday at 9:00 p.m. Email

Emma (emsteinbergs@davidson.edu), or take a look at the Davidson Half the Sky Facebook page for more information on the movement at Davidson and how you can get involved.