

# The Davidsonian

◆ "THE SOUTH'S FOREMOST COLLEGE WEEKLY" ◆

DAVIDSON COLLEGE

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008

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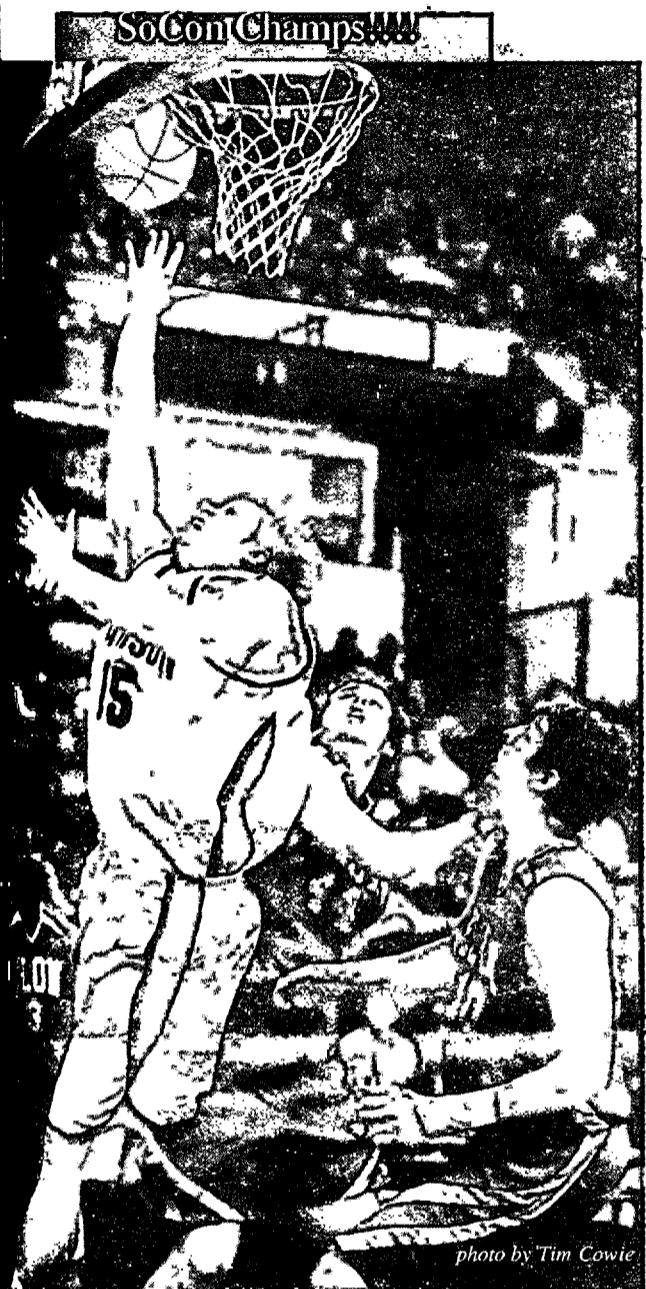
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Elon. Davidson won it's third straight SoCon Championship.

## Dialogue about race continues on campus with student rally

BY MICHELLE JESTER  
Managing Editor

"Every day is a great day to be a Wildcat. But today, March 13, is a NEW day to be a Wildcat."

This declaration, by David Dennis '08 opened Davidson's first "Rally for Change," an event designed to promote a more respectful and inclusive campus community through open discussions about diversity among community members. Dennis referred to the fact that March 13 would end an era of asking for respect of diversity and begin an era of demanding respect and acceptance.

Although the concept of diversity has always been a major issue at

Davidson, it has come to the fore in the past academic year due to several racist incidents, especially the one that occurred on Friday, Feb. 15 with Dennis and his friends.

That night, Dennis and 20 of his black, non-Davidson friends were heckled with racist comments, falsely accused of misbehavior and alienated by other students while trying to attend a fraternity party. Complaints were made by students that Dennis's friends were making them "uncomfortable." After being asked to leave the party, Dennis's friends left Davidson's campus feeling mistreated and misunderstood.

The incident sparked heated and passionate conversations across

campus about why differences incite discomfort. These discussions culminated in the planning for last Thursday's rally.

Although inspired by this specific racial incident, rally organizers wanted to emphasize that the issue of diversity encompasses not just race and ethnicity but an entire range of differences, including gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation and even physical size—all of which instill fears in others.

"Diversity is a term that has been beaten to the ground and is being misused," said SGA President Chris Burton '08. "It is not a black

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## Caribbean Nobel Laureate Walcott shares poetry, history

BY CLINT SMITH  
Staff Writer

Celebrated writer Derek Walcott visited Davidson's campus March 11 to give the annual Reynolds lecture.

Born in St. Lucia, part of the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean, Walcott is the 1992 Nobel Laureate in Literature and is renowned as one of the most gifted authors, poets and playwrights of our generation.

In introducing Walcott, Dr. Brenda Flanagan said Walcott embodies the rare and genuine love of literature that led her to become an English professor. With more than 15 collections of poetry, including "The Gulf," "The Fortunate Traveler" and "Omeros and Selected Poems," Walcott has established himself as a unique author worthy of the praise he has received.

From his chair in the middle of the stage, Walcott engaged the packed audience in the Duke Family Performance Hall with his charm, profundity and wit. His accent added a distinctive quality of colloquialism to the reading, while still maintaining a strong sense of intellectualism.

"I will now try to be warmer," the poet joked after a long silence, and after a brief introduction, he recited a section of his long poem "Omeros."

Before beginning his reading, Walcott told the audience that his poem is more than a narrative of fictional characters. Rather, it is a depiction of life as he saw it in his home island of St. Lucia in the West Indies.

Walcott explained that the over-

arching theme in much of his writing, as exhibited in "Omeros," is his characters' undeniable yearning to return to their homelands.

For Caribbeans and truly most inhabitants of North America, Walcott believes that "everyone must cross a meridian," if only in writing. "The return is not only necessary but also inevitable."

He said that this sense of longing is not some fictional sentiment that he has concocted to make his writ-

ing better. Instead, he thinks the desire to return home is a part of universal human nature.

Walcott's writing is marked by concise imagery and intricate attention to detail that is uniquely Caribbean. "Omeros" saw the juxtaposition of jukeboxes, barbecues, Christmas lights, tourists and domino games in its retelling of Homer's original epic poetry.

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### INSIDE THIS WEEK



#### Players' Ball date unin- vited

see YOWL, PAGE 5



#### '10,000 B.C.' better off extinct

see ARTS, PAGE 6



#### 'Cats to go to dancin' at NCAAs

see SPORTS, PAGE 12



Walcott reads from "Omeros" to an attentive Davidson audience