

Davidson celebrates Black History Month

BY LAURA MCCANDLISH
Staff Writer

Several events have been planned for the entire Davidson community this February to celebrate Black History Month. As Sakeitha Crowder '00, the Black Student Coalition (BSC) Special Events Committee chairperson, explained, "Black History Month should not be overlooked by non-African Americans simply because of their ethnicity. This month is not just for the purpose of education blacks of their own history; it is for everyone. Black history permeates through out the core of American history."

The Assistant Dean of Students and Director of Minority Student Affairs, Ernest Jeffries, sees a new focus towards black history at Davidson this year. "This year, we have taken on a new approach," he explained. "Not just in February, but through out the rest of the year, we have Black History events planned through the Cultural Arts Series."

The theme of the month is "Experiencing

Black Culture." Black History Month's celebration at Davidson kicked off with the February 5th performance of "The Contract," a play by Nathan R. Freeman. The event, sponsored by the Dean of Students Office was held in Hodson Hall. On February 10, UNC-C professor of dance Karen Hubbard presented multimedia African American

dance at the BSC House. Also on February 10 and 11, the BSC sponsored Union screenings of the movie, "Eve's Bayou," in celebration of Black History Month. Dr. Michael A. Gomez, a history professor at the University of Georgia, gave a lecture in the Union entitled "From Slave Ships to Cotton Fields: The Forging of an African American Identity" on Thursday. Gomez is the author of the book, *Exchanging Our Country's Marks*. His presentation was sponsored by the Ethnic Studies Program and coordinated by Dr. Nancy Fairley.

On February 12, a Juke Joint/Basement Party was held at the BSC House. The party celebrated African-American dance styles and fashion from the earlier part of this century. On February 14,

Professor Michael Eric Dyson, a Senior Research Scholar at Columbia University's Institute for Research in African-American Studies, spoke in Love Auditorium to kick off the Union's Solidarity Week. Dyson spoke about his latest book, *Race Rules: Navigating the Color Line*. This Saturday February 20, local artist Pamela Ferguson will give a visual presentation at 12:00 p.m. in the 900 Room of the Union. She will be speaking on "Celebrating African-American in Visual Art." Also, this month, a multi-media photo exhibit on "The Images of Nigeria" is being showcased in the Union.

The Dean of Students Office is currently planning events for later in the semester, even after Black History Month is over. On March 11th, Dr. Wande Abimbola will give a lecture on the "Evolution of Traditional Religion in Africa and the African Diaspora." An African Women's Drumming Circle, "Ase," will also be performing on April 16th. Jeffries said, "I hope these events can serve as tools of enlightenment to help people understand contributions African Americans made in all walks of life, like in the arts and their intellectual achievements. We

hope to highlight African-Americans in many different venues."

The president of the BSC, Ainsley Natta '99, said most of the Black History Month events have been well attended so far. "I hope that people who attend these events get a better understanding of African-American contributions to the American lifestyle, like through the showcase on African-American influence on dance in America and then Saturday's program with Pamela Ferguson speaking on visual arts. They will promote a better knowledge of our influence in American culture," he said.

Black History Month should not be overlooked by non-African Americans simply because of their ethnicity.

Crowder would encourage students to realize "America is the grand nation it is today because of the hard work and contributions of African-Americans. Experience Black Culture and its implications on mainstream American culture this month with the BSC, Dean of Students Office, Ethnic Studies, Union Board Films and Speakers Committee, Solidarity Committee, Committee of Minority Affairs (COMA), and numerous others. Branch out of your comfort zone, become enlightened, and have fun."

Steiner defines the importance of pornography

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Showing examples of the art on the screen, she said that many of these works of art were placed in the exhibit simply because the people who had painted or owned them were unacceptable to the Nazis. Some of them were Jewish while others were singled out for different reasons. Picasso's work was included in the exhibit because he chose to portray people as distorted and strange.

To Steiner, even what we would call indecent today still depends on our interpretation of the work of art itself. She said that opponents of her point of view argued that "what a painting represents is what it is," and she felt that this concept was false. As contemporary artists represent new ideas in their art forms, many people who criticize them for being indecent reveal how our society defines the obscene. Steiner's first example of how interpretation can alter the way people define pornographic material was a photograph called "Piss Christ" that caused controversy. A crucified Jesus submerged in urine; the photo elicited a strong reaction from religious groups and others who thought that the artist was attempting to debase the Christian religion. The artist, however, argued that his true intent had been to capture religious symbols that had become commercialized in ways that made them look beautiful once more. Steiner pointed out that looking at the picture, the viewer would not have been able to tell that the liquid that surrounded Jesus was urine unless someone had indicated the origin



◆ Wendy Steiner

Anna Judy

of the amber color around the crucifix.

Steiner's second example of the importance of interpretation involved a series of works that were recently taken to trial because they were

charged with pandering and public obscenity. The photographs in this collection that were singled out as being obscene included pictures of naked children and several pictures of men in compromising positions. The prosecution in the case relied on the assumption that the works of art spoke for themselves, simply presenting the photographs to the courtroom as evidence and not arguing why they were pornographic. The defense, however, called one art critic after another to the stand, all of them testifying that the viewer could interpret these works in ways that proved it not to be pornographic. The charges against the artist in the case were dropped. "Works of art are not meanings that are there," Steiner said. "No work of art speaks for itself."

To conclude her speech, Steiner denounced the idea of censoring pornography. She felt that the act of censorship was presumptuous. To her, it was an act done by "some group in power" who felt that it could see the questionable image and "not be degenerated by it," but who still felt the need to protect some other group of people from it. She said that to censor or attack pornography would be "an attack on art itself." To support her claim, she said, "the whole point of having art in a culture is to try it out," and define "our values in terms of other people." Steiner continued by saying that in questioning pornography, "the set of conventions that we use to understand art are the very sets of conventions that are being challenged." After Steiner's speech, the audience was al-

lowed to ask questions. Many of the students challenged what Steiner had said, resulting in a debate about whether or not pornography can encompass certain values and whether or not those values would affect the public at large.

Alumnus...

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by the time of the class reunion."

"It is my wish that this award will encourage all students to improve their degree of excellence, making themselves eligible as a W. Thomas Smith scholar," commented Smith when asked about his advise to future graduating classes.

Vagt said, "this scholarship is an eloquent expression of Tom Smith's response to his own Davidson education as well as his vision of the perfect reward for high achievement for graduation seniors."

Prospective applicants are encouraged to explore options with the Careers Services Office. They are also encouraged to build their competitive credentials and talk to seniors who have experience in applying for high level scholarships as well as to the members of the Graduate Scholarships Committee.

College Quiz Bowl

BY CARRIE ARTHUR
News Editor

From February 10 until 12, Davidson's Quiz Bowl was held in Phi and Eu halls. Fifteen student teams, each consisting of four members plus alternates, competed in twenty-nine games of double elimination. The winning team, named Team Will White or Team Stroh's, played in the loser's bracket after losing its second game but then came back to beat the winner's bracket champion Eumenean Society.

Andrew Marvin '99, coordinator of the event, said that the competition was close between Team Will White, whose members are Will White '00,

Josh Bennett '00, Chad Diamond '01, Scott Lafranchi '00, and Andy Rhodes '01; and the Eumenean Society Team, whose members included Marvin, Andrew Campbell '00, Adam Soltys '00, Emily Lampp '00, and Susan Schultz '00. Marvin said that it was a "good tournament."

Team Will White will represent Davidson at the Regional Quiz Bowl at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, VA, next weekend. Davidson competes in Region Five of the National College Bowl system's fifteen regions. This division encompasses the twenty-one schools within Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and its members include large universities as well as small liberal arts colleges. The

winner of the regional tournament will compete in the National Quiz Bowl at the University of Delaware.

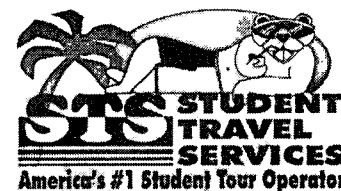
Team Will White member Josh Bennett '00

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Bungalo	\$589		

All prices are based on Feb. 27 Boston departures and do not include departure taxes and fees of \$57-\$59 and \$9.00 handling charge.



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