

VSU

M A G A Z I N E

New Multipurpose Center Represents 'A Symbol of Unity'



WINTER 2014

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome back! Of course I'm speaking about the "new" VSU Magazine. I hope you enjoy the new design, new feel and new type. We listened to our readers and have produced a publication that we know you'll enjoy reading and sharing.

This past year has presented VSU with a unique set of challenges, along with tremendous successes! I am pleased to thank each and every one of you for your support of Virginia State University. VSU continues to be recognized as a University of choice for students, faculty, staff and future employers of our graduates. We are renowned for outstanding teaching and research, exceptional academic programs, and globally competitive graduates. As a pre-eminent land grant institution, VSU enriches the lives of people in a local, regional and global scope of influence through our outreach, economic and human development programs while staying true to our historic commitment of "building a better world since 1882."

We remain steadfast in our commitment to providing students with a quality education in a uniquely enriched and supportive environment. Our dedicated faculty, staff and administrators take a personalized approach with each student to ensure that they receive the education and skills necessary to embark upon life's journey with the confidence and knowledge to succeed.

While we have experienced tremendous success for many years, this is a special time. Our pursuit of excellence is greater than ever. My commitment to our pursuit is firm.

We had a great year! We're proud to share some of the accomplishments of our amazing students, faculty and alumni. Some fine examples include:

- Breaking ground on our \$84 million Multipurpose Center, a beacon of cooperation and unity
- Reinvigorating our Billy Taylor Jazz Studies Program with the hiring of Grammy-nominated artist James "Saxsno" Gates
- Participation in the Caterpillar Study Abroad program, through which a group of our students spent a semester studying in China
- Research breakthroughs by two Extension scientists that will help promote the safety of our food, while increasing access to new food products
- The formal dedication of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business

These represent mere snapshots of the wonderful milestones that our campus community has achieved. I look forward to sharing many more in the future in the new-look VSU Magazine!

Dr. Keith T. Miller

President, Virginia State University



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Virginia State University

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CHINA TRIP teaches about life, along with language

As the lights of Beijing spread out before her, DeLydia Lawrence suddenly realized she was a long way from Carrsville, VA. Over the next four months, she came to understand that, despite the distance, people on the other side of the globe weren't that much different.

DeLydia and four other VSU students spent the equivalent of the Spring semester in China through a grant from the Caterpillar Foundation (see related story). Besides the extensive cultural immersion of a term spent living in a residence hall at a Chinese university, the students took five classes, including two learning the Mandarin Chinese language. The VSU students were part of a global contingent brought together to live and learn.

The China program is a joint effort between VSU's Reginald F. Lewis College of Business (RFLCB) and the University's International Studies Office. "These semesters are wonderful opportunities for students personally and professionally," says Merri Incitti, Executive Director for Assessment and Accreditation in the RFLCB. "The students who have studied in China return much wiser, more mature and more aware of diversity."

"The classes were all international students," DeLydia says. "In fact, the VSU students were usually the only Americans in our classes." Living among such a diverse group, she says, forged friendships and instilled an appreciation for other cultures.

Throughout the trip, students would prepare native meals to share with their new classmates. Securing the ingredients for home-cooking often meant using a little ingenuity and crossing both language and cultural barriers.

One of DeLydia's most eye-opening discoveries was the universal language of music. The group attended the Great

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7 ►



DeLydia Lawrence with friends atop the Great Wall of China

Douglas Fiore adds expertise to NBC's Education Nation



When Brian Williams' crew from NBC's Education Nation needs an expert to speak on the U.S. educational system, they often call on VSU's Dr. Douglas

Fiore. Dr. Fiore is obviously an excellent choice! Besides serving as Professor of Education and Assistant to the Provost for General and Continuing Education, Dr. Fiore recently served as one of 57 college and university senior faculty and administrators in the 2012-13 class of the American Council on Education Fellows Program.

Education Nation is utilized in almost all schools of education throughout the United States, in addition to being viewed by millions of other Americans. It began so that people would understand the big issues, in both policy and practice, facing the country's educational system.

Dr. Fiore's expertise and scholarship made its way to the network and he was approached by the show. "The producers contacted me, based on books I have written and consulting I have done on parent involvement in education," Dr. Fiore explains. "They wanted to launch a companion website for parents. The idea was that parents would visit the site, either after seeing the Education Nation programs or independently, to get sage advice on helping their children succeed in schools."

The information on the website, called the Parent Toolkit (www.parenttoolkit.com), is broken down by grade level so that parents can click on their child's grade and get ideas for helping them succeed in both Math and Language Arts.

While a few of the experts are parent leaders of PTAs, most are academics or teachers. The universities with the most involvement are Johns Hopkins and Harvard. Dr. Fiore is the only person from Virginia listed as an expert. The Parent Toolkit site contains many of his pieces of advice and counsel. Dr. Fiore says the show has approached him about appearing on the actual program.



Caterpillar Foundation Award Supports Study Abroad in China

Virginia State University has received a \$59,000 grant from the Caterpillar Foundation to support students studying abroad in China. The grant is part of a \$1 million pledge by the Caterpillar Foundation in support of the U.S. Department of State's "100,000 Strong Initiative" to increase the number of American college students studying abroad in China. This is the third consecutive year that VSU has received funding under this initiative from the Caterpillar Foundation.

The first award, in November 2011, led to the establishment of the *VSU Caterpillar Foundation Global Citizens Program*. Since then, 17 VSU students have spent either a semester or a summer in China, learning Chinese language and completing courses such as international business, international marketing, civil society in China, industrial ecology and environmental conservation. Their study abroad has included both classroom and field study experiences in conjunction with international programs hosted at Shanghai University, Shanghai University for Finance and Economics, Beijing Normal University, and the University of Yunnan. Study locations of students awarded for spring semester 2014 will include Sichuan University, in Chengdu, China, and other areas.

While creating opportunities for students with no previous international experience to travel to China to study Chinese language and culture, the funding has contributed to a dramatic increase in students pursuing global opportunities to make education abroad an integral part of their academic experience at the University. "The Caterpillar Foundation is proud to support U.S. college students studying abroad in China," said Michele Sullivan, Caterpillar Foundation President. "We hope this experience provides students with valuable insights on the global economy, the importance of China on the world stage and an unforgettable cultural experience. U.S. companies, including Caterpillar, have been rapidly expanding operations in China, and students with a firsthand knowledge of the country and culture will have a strategic advantage upon graduation."

VSU students who have participated in the program described their study abroad experience in China as empowering and said it provided confidence to believe that they can work anywhere. Several students reported a better appreciation of life in America.

Caterpillar supports the philanthropic efforts of the Caterpillar Foundation. Founded in 1952, the Caterpillar Foundation has contributed more than \$550 million to help make sustainable progress possible around the world by providing program support in the areas of environmental sustainability, access to education and basic human needs. To learn more about the global impact of the Caterpillar Foundation, please visit www.caterpillar.com/foundation.

VSU Breaks Ground on MULTIPURPOSE CENTER

Calling the new facility “a symbol of unity,” Virginia State University President Keith T. Miller led a delegation of state, local and University officials and construction partners in the official Groundbreaking on VSU’s long-anticipated, \$84 million Multipurpose Center.

Touted as the “new front door of the University,” the facility will feature a seating capacity of approximately 5,100 for sporting events, and 6,100 for stage events and concerts. The Multipurpose Center will include academic classrooms and labs; a wellness center for students and staff; practice facilities and locker rooms for men’s and women’s basketball, volleyball, and cheerleading; a banquet kitchen that can accommodate events up to 900; six VIP suites, the President’s Suite, Trojan Club and outdoor club terrace. This building will achieve LEED Silver rating, promoting not only scholastic and athletic excellence, but also an environmental awareness.

“When you drive past the construction, and later, when the Multipurpose Center is complete, remember what it’s about – a unified community.”

VSU’s Multipurpose Center will serve as the anchor for the University’s and Chesterfield County’s partnership to revitalize the Ettrick area. A mixed-use residential and commercial corridor along Chesterfield Avenue will complement the new facility. The plans for growth are outlined in both VSU’s Master Plan and Chesterfield’s Comprehensive Plan. VSU anticipates the project taking 22 months to complete.

VSU’s Multipurpose Center will be the only facility of its type between Richmond and Raleigh, NC and serve as a cultural hub for a wide swath of Southside Virginia. Joining President Miller in the Groundbreaking ceremony was Virginia’s Secretary of Education and a VSU alumnus Javaid Siddiqi, who grew up in Ettrick. Also on hand was Steve Elswick, Vice Chairman of Chesterfield County’s Board of Supervisors; members of VSU’s Board of Visitors, Foundation and Real Estate Foundation; and representatives of Ballard Construction, the lead contractor; and project architects and engineers Clark-Nexsen.



President Miller praised the support of the University’s neighboring communities and said the MPC will serve as a hub for the region. “Look beside you,” he asked the standing-room-only crowd at the Groundbreaking. “Your neighbor may look differently; have different beliefs; but everyone here will benefit from this facility.”

“The Multipurpose Center holds promise to revitalize the village of Ettrick, and be a catalyst to transform it into a true college town,” said VSU President Keith T. Miller. “When you drive past the construction, and later, when the Multipurpose Center is complete, remember what it’s about – a unified community.”



ER





GOSPEL CHORALE LIVES A DREAM on *America's Got Talent*

BY MICHAEL RAINEY

The whirlwind journey of the VSU Gospel Chorale's climb through NBC's *America's Got Talent* (AGT) played out like a dream come true. After learning that AGT was seeking gospel choirs, I submitted a video from Verizon's How Sweet the Sound competition, around mid-January. In February, I received a call acknowledging our video had been well received and would be forwarded to producers. Then, I got the call that would change our lives! "Michael, this is Nigel Caaro with *America's Got Talent*. We reviewed your video and it was amazing...we were thoroughly impressed with the singing and dance moves. How would you like to do a live audition with the judges?"

The journey began in earnest when we traveled to New York and performed our rendition of Ricky Dillard's "Search Me Lord." We could barely believe our ears when Judge Mel B exclaimed "I want to join that group!"

Already walking on air, we could barely believe it when the judges said we were going to Las Vegas for the next round. The

emotion was so high that there were hugs, high-fives, and tears of joy. We had no idea how the judges would receive us, so learning we had the unanimous vote to go to Las Vegas for the next round, was like being a kid on Christmas! Then to get to Las Vegas and be deemed an automatic decision to advance to Radio City Music Hall (i.e., our initial audition was superior enough to send us straight through to the live rounds)...WOW!

Having the opportunity to appear on TV across the world was surreal. The wardrobing, styling, staging, lighting, all made for an unbelievable experience! Although we didn't advance past the quarterfinal round, we received the ultimate gift – the opportunity to bring a community together and to share our talent and ministry with the entire world.

That certainly counted as a win for The Virginia State University Gospel Chorale!

Ag Grants will expand food supply and keep it safer!

Two VSU Agricultural Researchers have been awarded more than \$620,000 in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants that will ultimately lead to an increase in our food supply, while ensuring the safety of what we eat.

Dr. Stephan Wildeus, small ruminant professor in Virginia State University's Agricultural Research Station, recently received a three-year \$299,305 USDA capacity-building grant which will enable him to intertwine research and extension efforts to help limited resource farmers increase their incomes by raising and selling grass-fed hair sheep as meat to direct and retail markets.

Initially, VSU will focus on production and growth performance. VSU is collaborating on the project with Georgia's Fort Valley State University, which will process the lamb into cuts for consumers to sample. VSU will then conduct test marketing at selected farmers' markets and specialty food retailers to determine the level of consumer acceptance.

Meanwhile, Dr. Yixang Xu, food processing/engineering assistant professor in Virginia State University's Agricultural Research Station, has been awarded two competitive grants totaling \$320,351. The first grant of \$291,000, also from the USDA, will focus on the use of nanotechnology in food packaging and develop antimicrobial, biodegradable-based food packaging films to address food safety, environmental and agricultural concerns associated with ready-to-eat food products and to extend the shelf life of perishable food products.

Xu's second project, under auspices of a two-year \$29,186 specialty crop block grant from the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, will enhance VSU's ongoing efforts to develop commercial chickpea varieties suitable for production in Virginia and to familiarize Virginia farmers with chickpeas. Determining chickpea seed composition for hummus production will help meet needs of food processors and bridge the gap between farmers and the food industry.



China trip teaches about life, along with language

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Wall Music Festival and "listened to everything," she says. "I really learned the value of music. There would be songs by American artists and even if no one knew English, everyone would be shouting lyrics."

When not studying, the students took advantage of the rich history of China. No visit would be complete without a tour of the Great Wall. For DeLydia and her group, the tour turned into a true adventure. "We didn't realize how far we had to hike," she says. "We ended up hiking six hours and didn't get to the Wall until dark. It was so late, we had to camp. We built a fire and dodged rats. It was quite an adventure!"

One of DeLydia's favorite trips was her visit to Hong Kong. Here, she came to understand the true meaning of "cosmopolitan." One of the friends she made in Hong Kong, "was a Korean from Hong Kong who spoke English with a British accent," she explains.

The trip also helped DeLydia dispel some stereotypes Americans typically ascribe to the Chinese People. "Americans think Chinese are cold and unfriendly," she explains. "Everywhere we went, people were so welcoming. A Chinese family bought a huge meal of crawfish, sushi and salmon – understand, that's very expensive – and invited us to eat with them."

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VSU dedicates **Reginald F. Lewis** College of Business

In announcing the first named-college in school history, Virginia State University President Keith T. Miller described Reginald F. Lewis, VSU Class of 1965, as “a shining example of giving back.” At the ceremony marking the official dedication of the Reginald F. Lewis College of Business (RFLCB), President Miller said Lewis’ gift to VSU will impact students for generations.

“Future students,” he said, “will be attending a college transformed by the generosity and vision of its namesake.”

Several members of Reginald Lewis’ family attended the dedication, including his wife, Mrs. Loida Lewis; mother, Ms. Carolyn Fugett; Beverly Cooper, aunt and Vice President of the Reginald F. Lewis Foundation; and brother, Anthony Lewis.

Reginald Lewis, his wife said, “was always accepting of new things. The new College of Business is what he was about.”

In January, 2010, The Reginald F. Lewis Foundation, Inc. committed a \$1.5 million grant to VSU, the largest private donation in school history. The gift supports student scholarships; student travel related to academic pursuits; faculty travel and supplemental sabbatical support; and a prize to be given to a student who, upon graduation, demonstrates the highest level of academic achievement from sophomore through senior year.

Reginald F. Lewis came to VSU on an athletic scholarship and was a quarterback on the football team, until an injury ended his athletic career. He was also a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. After graduation, he attended Harvard Law School.

Lewis took the business world by storm when he acquired McCall Pattern Company for \$22.5 million and sold it three years later for a \$50 million profit. Lewis’ most impressive business deal came in 1987, when he managed a billion-dollar, leveraged buyout of Beatrice International Foods, a global conglomerate. That deal, *Black Enterprise* magazine said, made Lewis the most successful black entrepreneur in the history of the United States.



Reginald F. Lewis’ Mother, Ms. Carolyn Fugett (L) and Wife, Ms. Loida Lewis, join RFLCB Dean Dr. Mirta Martin at the unveiling of the official College portrait in Singleton Hall

Lewis died from brain cancer at the early age of 50. At the time of his death, *Forbes* magazine listed him among the 400 wealthiest Americans. He was also the first African American to build a billion dollar company.

Lewis’ mother, Carolyn Fugett said her son realized early the importance of philanthropy. “He understood that when you do for others, you get it in return in so many ways.”

After touring the RFLCB, including the College’s real-time Trading Center, and meeting with the College’s faculty and administration, Ms. Fugett said Reginald Lewis would be proud of the impact his gift has made. “He would be filled with joy to be supporting a college where people say what they mean and mean what they say,” she said.

For six consecutive years, the RFLCB has been accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), the premier global accrediting body for schools that offer undergraduate, master’s and doctoral degrees in business

and accounting. Fewer than 10 percent of the world’s business schools have achieved business and/or accounting accreditation from AACSB International.

In the past year, the RFLCB has received several state and national awards, including the Governor’s Technology Award for Innovation in Higher Education and the *RichTech* Technology Innovation Deployment Award. The RFLCB was also named the “Best Business Program at an HBCU” by The Center for HBCU Media Advocacy.

The RFLCB chapter of Beta Gamma Sigma international honor society has been honored as a Premier Chapter, with 100 percent of the students qualifying for membership at both undergraduate and graduate levels accepting the invitation to join this prestigious international honor society for collegiate Schools of Business.

VSU named to President's Community Service Honor Roll

The Corporation for National and Community Service has named Virginia State University to the 2013 U.S. President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The designation represents the highest honor a college or university can receive for its commitment to volunteering, service-learning and civic engagement. This is the first time VSU has been named to the Honor Roll.

"I am enormously proud of the faculty, students and staff of Virginia State University," said VSU President Keith T. Miller. "This honor demonstrates VSU's commitment to civic engagement. It reinforces our role as a leader in Central Virginia. At VSU, we are Building a Better World."

According to the Independent Sector, the authoritative voice on value of volunteerism and civic engagement, in 2011-12, the VSU campus community engaged in approximately 42,189 hours of community service and service-learning, with an estimated value of \$919,298 to the regional economy.

VSU recently hired Anne-Marie Turnage as Director of Service Learning and Civic Engagement. She said the University is

committed to being civically engaged. "I am honored to work with students and faculty who are so dedicated to serving others," she said. "Volunteering and service-learning allows students to develop better communication and problem solving skills; to be more informed and engaged citizens; and be prepared to perform in, as well as contribute to, our global society."

The President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll, launched in 2006, annually highlights the role colleges and universities play in solving community problems and placing more students on a lifelong path of civic engagement by recognizing institutions that achieve meaningful, measureable outcomes in the communities they serve.

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than five million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, the Social Innovation Fund and other programs, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.

VSU students give back through "Alternative" Spring Break

While many college students see Spring Break as a time of beaches, partying and socializing, two groups of Virginia State University students and staff spent their break building houses, clearing brush, building bridges and hacking weeds. The groups participated in VSU's Alternative Spring Break, volunteering from March 4-7 for Habitat for Humanity in Lucedale, MS and Shenandoah River State Park.



VSU students Kiera Riddick (front) and Darius Edwards help build a trail in Shenandoah National Park during VSU's 2013 Alternative Spring Break

Alternative Spring Break is a community service initiative where students spend much needed time off from studies helping others. During the VSU spring break week beginning March 4, eight students from Virginia State University's Honors Program, led by VSU's

Director of Service Learning and Civic Engagement Anne-Marie Turnage, spent the week rehabilitating a house for a local family. The group also spent a day working on another new Habitat construction project in the county. Coordinator of Campus and Community Outreach Billy Taylor led a group of 16 participants, who assisted Shenandoah River State Park staff with cleaning

trails, building bridges and other maintenance.

This Alternative Spring Break Service-Learning project was a first for both the University's Honors Program and Department of Student Activities. The projects embody VSU's increased commitment to civic engagement, as well as the University's mission to Building a Better World.

"I never thought one week could change my perspective on life, but Habitat for Humanity did just that," said student Morgan Pollard. I am so thankful for the experience of a lifetime that not only affected my life, but also affected the lives of the people I helped."

"The Alternative Spring Break embodies VSU's message of 'Building A Better World,'" said Director of Student Activities Menjiwe Martin. "Our students are building that world, starting right here in Virginia."



VSU students Briana Peebles (L) and Lillian Coffey assist with building a house for Habitat for Humanity in Lucedale, MS as part of VSU's 2013 Alternative Spring Break.

Building the Jazz Studies Program

A photograph of James 'Saxsmo' Gates, a Black man with a shaved head and a goatee, smiling broadly while playing a gold saxophone. He is wearing a colorful, patterned cardigan over a dark t-shirt. In the background, a music room is visible with a grand piano, a man sitting at a desk, and large windows with blinds. The lighting is bright and natural.

JAMES
"SAXSMO"
GATES

Whether sharing the stage with a bevy of musical legends or imparting a career's worth of knowledge to students in VSU's fledgling Billy Taylor Jazz Studies Program, James "Saxsmo" Gates approaches the task at hand with a passion that flows as rhythmically as notes through his alto sax.

To say Gates was born with a saxophone in his hand is not exactly true. He was first exposed even before his birth, when his father, James "Boo" Gates would play his horn into Mother Della Mae's pregnant belly. Music was an ever welcome guest

“When you have people who help you and have high expectations, it's inspiring ... ”

in the Gates household. Like his son, Boo Gates played saxophone and Della Mae danced at Harlem's Cotton Club in the legendary venue's 1940s heyday.

“When the gigs ended for the night, the party came to our house,” Saxsmo laughs. “I grew up with music playing every night. I definitely came by my music honestly.”

While growing up around music, in his youth, Saxsmo was equally enamored with sports, especially baseball. With his family now in Richmond, Saxsmo divided his time between baseball and music practice. While an accomplished ball player, his coach, Ethan Pitts, recognized a talent beyond the baseball diamond. “He let me practice before baseball,” Saxsmo says. “He had me play on the bus to games.”

It was Coach Pitts who steered Saxsmo to Virginia State University, where he arrived on a full music scholarship. “When you have people who help you and have high expectations, it's inspiring,” Saxsmo says.

Those expectations played out in near-constant practice that eventually led Saxsmo to the Berklee School of Music in Boston. One of the first fellow students he met was another saxophone prodigy. Little did Saxsmo know that the young, fellow saxman with the big smile and outstretched hand was a descendent of New Orleans jazz royalty. Today, Saxsmo and Branford Marsalis remain tight friends. Marsalis is artist-in-residence at North Carolina Central University (NCCU), where Saxsmo earned his master's degree. “I hope we can become a sister school to (NCCU),” he says.

The quality of the Jazz Studies Program at NCCU, and the artist-in-residence concept are efforts Saxsmo hopes to duplicate at VSU. With the full support of the Virginia State administration, Saxsmo is poised to lead the Billy Taylor Jazz Studies Program to excellence.

Before his passing in 2010, Billy Taylor, Virginia State Class of 1942, was known as The Distinguished Ambassador of Jazz to the World. Following his death, Taylor donated his musical collection to Virginia State University. This treasure trove of knowledge is helping establish VSU one of the top research centers on jazz in the United States. A stipulation in the donation was that his Alma Mater establish a jazz studies program.

Enter Saxsmo Gates. VSU Provost W. Weldon Hill, himself an accomplished pianist, sought out Saxsmo because, he says, “James' passion for the great American art form called jazz is unsurpassed by anyone else in consideration. His passion for the students we serve and for VSU in general were equally compelling. Moreover, James is a consummate artist, having played with any number of nationally celebrated artists; and he has garnered a name of influence in, and of, himself.”

Under Saxsmo's leadership, Dr. Hill says the VSU Jazz Studies Program will bring increased recognition to the Music Department and University as a whole. “We would like to become a full-fledged Jazz Studies Major and to increase enrollment in the Music Department twofold over the next three to five years,” he says. “Also, this program has the potential to be the premier jazz studies program at any public school in the region because of the unique talents of the faculty and staff.”

Saxsmo's goal for the VSU program is nothing short of “making this program one of the best in the South.” To accomplish this lofty goal, he'll need to call upon his allies within and around the music world. “Branford (Marsalis) will be here,” he says. “Billy Kilson will be here. The Richmond Jazz Society has partnered with VSU. We have to have these people and groups behind us to be successful.”

But, Saxsmo has found, jazz has followers, and he has allies, in the most unlikely of places.

“The Ambassador of Romania visited campus last year and we heard she loved jazz,” he says. “I thought ‘where should I take her?’ I realized, ‘hey, we do it right here!’” The resultant jam session, complete with the Ambassador crooning “On A Clear Day” led to an invitation for Saxsmo and some VSU students to visit Romania and other European countries in Spring 2014. “Jazz,” he says, “is so well respected and received worldwide.”

International opportunities aside, Saxsmo's intends to teach his students music “from the top down.” To him, this means each member of the faculty actively participates in music. “We'll teach not by talking, but by playing,” he says. The playing, though, is only part of the performance – and the education. “We'll show students how to dress, hold a mic, about the history, why jazz is important.”

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Building the Jazz Studies Program

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VSU Jazz Studies graduates will be well-armed with equal parts musical talent and business savvy. “We want our students to understand contracts,” Saxsmo explains. “We want them to understand etiquette. It’s important for our students to understand that people will see them before they hear them. First impressions are so important in this business.”

Among the legends with whom Saxsmo has played, perhaps none other than the great Dizzy Gillespie provided the greatest inspiration. “Before every gig, Dizzy practiced,” Saxsmo recalls. “Before every rehearsal, Dizzy practiced. Now, before every class, I practice. If I can’t perform, how can I educate?”

In addition to imparting a work ethic best described as “the passionate search for perfection,” Dizzy asked of the “Young Lion” Gates, to remember his roots. “Dizzy, Walter Davis, Jr., they told me ‘Gates, keep this up.’” Saxsmo says.

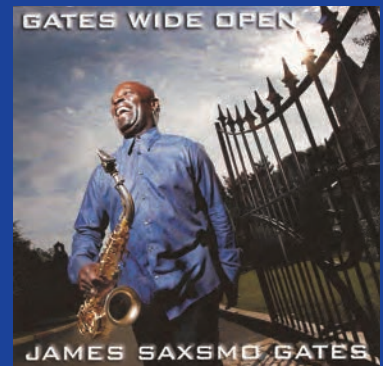
Promise asked. Promise accepted.

It’s time to go to work!



Gates’ “Spain” earns Grammy nominations

James “Saxsmo” Gates, Director of VSU’s Billy Taylor Jazz Studies Program, has received two Grammy, First Ballot Nominations. Gates was nominated for Best Jazz Improvisation Solo and Best Instrumental Arrangement for his blazing big band version of the Chick Corea classic “Spain.” On the arrangement, Gates is featured on Alto Sax; Fred Wesley, Trombone; and Walter Beasley, Alto Sax; along with selected graduate students and faculty from the NCCU Jazz program under Dr. Ira Wiggins. The arrangement



is featured on Gates most recent album Gates Wide Open, which features additional musicians from the 804jazz Allstars, including VSU Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. W. Weldon Hill and Music and Band Director James Holden, along with Bill McGee, Lance Dickerson, Brandon Lane, Kevin Davis, Billy Williams and Alan Parker.

The album was produced by Gates, Hannon Lane and Brandon Lane and recorded at In Your Ear Studios.

You can check out this video on YouTube:
<http://youtu.be/OtBF9vStNr0>

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hear from you!*



VSU is striving to tailor our information and outreach to our alumni. Please take a minute to complete this survey to let us know what you studied at VSU and how you feel your VSU education is helping you build your own personal better world.

Thank you!

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NANOTECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

exposes students to emerging A-STEM fields

Virginia State University (VSU) recently hosted 20 middle and high school students and six teachers from across Southside and Hampton Roads Virginia. The group explored the science of nanotechnology. Nanomaterials are extremely tiny – about the width of an average human hair – but they have an outsized technological impact on our everyday life, including transportation, medicine, national defense and food safety.

The VSU Center for Biophotonics and Biodevices (CBAB), a multidisciplinary research facility, coordinated the one week program, supported by funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and VSU's Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) School Laboratory. The program, which included a hands-on science field trip to the Science Museum of Virginia, brought together experts from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the DuPont Chemical Company, the U.S. Army Logistics University and Virginia Tech.

This year's program was the second funded through a two-year, \$150,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to CBAB to integrate nanotechnology into its undergraduate A-STEM (agriculture, science, technology, engineering and mathematics) curricula.

Participants learned the science and application of the emerging multidisciplinary field of nanotechnology. The program's focus was on "Connecting Agriculture-STEM (A-STEM)

Nanotechnology Research and Education to Virginia Standard of Learning (SOL) and Society." The goal of the CBAB integrated research and education enhancement activities was to spark students' interest in A-STEM fields, ultimately increasing the pipeline of students entering the A-STEM undergraduate academic programs while addressing the significant shortage of USA high tech work force, especially among minorities and women.

The A-STEM Summer Academy was guided by VSU CBAB faculty members Dr. Godwin O. Mbagwu, Program Director and SCHEV Distinguished Professor; Dr. Grace Ndip, education and outreach coordinator; Dr. Daniel Stoelting; Dr. Hua Shen; and VSU undergraduate chemistry majors Stephanie Ellis and Kathryn Day.

"Working with the students one-on-one and in their groups was a great part of this program. You could tell that they were comfortable with us," said Ms. Ellis who served as a mentor for the middle and high school students.

According to Bree Taylor, a VSU alumna and chemistry major, who had previously participated as a mentor, "this opportunity was a great experience to learn professionalism, planning skills, troubleshooting and the art of finding a balance between having fun and creating a positive learning environment for students."

The enrichment program gave students and their teachers the opportunity to engage in a broad range of hands-on laboratory and computer-based modeling and scientific visualization activities. Activities included the preparation and testing of synthetic polymers, the extraction of DNA (a nanomaterial) from strawberries and modeling X-ray diffraction patterns of DNA with lasers.

In one project, six teams of middle and high school students, and their teachers, designed original experiments and presented their projects to a highly interactive and engaged audience that included parents of the participating students. In this project, called "NanoCommunity," students were given the opportunity to learn about polymer-based nanocomposite materials by proposing practical and cost-effective approaches using the materials to solve specific, critical, real-world problems.

Teacher Nelson Cuffey of Petersburg's Peabody Middle School assists students at VSU's A-STEM Academy



Adopted “Son of VSU” encourages Fall graduates to Give Back



Citing his own family’s history, Judge Jerrauld C. Jones encouraged the 346 graduates of the 2013 Fall Commencement to give back, not only to Virginia State University, but to society.

Jones, whose parents met at Virginia State in the 1940s, said “if not for Virginia State, there would be no ‘me’. I am greatly in your debt.” The new graduates, he said, now have the opportunity to ensure VSU “has a future for their children and their children’s children.”

Judge Jones is one of the few persons in Virginia history to hold office in each branch of government. Besides currently serving on Norfolk’s Circuit Court, he has been Director of Virginia’s Department of Juvenile Justice and he was elected eight times as a Delegate to the Virginia General Assembly, where he served over 15 years.

Giving back, Jones said, is both an obligation and an expectation. What is given back, he said, is the true legacy by which people are measured. “Remember what Martin Luther King said, ‘what are you doing for others,’” he said. “No one remembers what kind of car Dr. King drove, or what kind of a house he lived in. Those things don’t matter. People remember what he gave back.”

He challenged the graduates “what will you do? Never forget or take for granted what others gave to get you here today.”



“Never forget or take for granted what others gave to get you here today.”



Jones asserted that giving can take many forms “you can give time and talent or give financially” he said, “but however you give, it begins here, today.”

At the top of the giving list, Jones said, should be VSU, “a special place to which you will return many times.” But more importantly, he said, graduates should give in a way to impact society. “I beg you today, help a child. If you give in a way that helps a child, you will change the world.”

VSU presented Judge Jones with an Honorary Doctor of Laws degree. The University also recognized the top two graduates, Valedictorian Alexandra Merritt of San Francisco, who earned a psychology degree with a 3.97 grade point average; and Salutatorian Cherise Andrews of Chesterfield, VA, who received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.





Nine Virginia State University greats inducted into 2013 Virginia State Athletic Hall of Fame



Nine Virginia State University greats were inducted into the Virginia State Athletic Hall of Fame in ceremonies on Oct. 20 at the Gateway Dining and Event Center on campus.

Dr. Keith T. Miller, president of the University, and Director of Athletics Peggy Davis, presented the inductees with a plaque honoring them for their contributions to the University. Each inductee made a short acceptance speech during the luncheon. The group was recognized at halftime of the Homecoming football game on Oct. 19.

The Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2013 includes: Herman M. Bell III (Class of '66) football, basketball and track, Dr. Cleo Davis ('66) track & field, Charles Taliaferro ('75) football, Randolph B. Long ('76) baseball, Linwood Hardy ('80) football, Gregory Clark ('94)

football, Remus J. James ('95) football, Darrell D. Jackson ('96) football and Kelvin Kinney Sr. ('09) football and basketball.

The purpose of the Virginia State Athletic Hall of Fame is to honor those who, by outstanding achievement or participation in athletics at the University, reflect honor and glory both at the institution and subsequent life.

This year marked the 12th induction ceremony and, in all, some 171 student-athletes, coaches, administrators, benefactors and others have been enshrined in the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Members of the Hall of Fame Committee include Lt. Col. (Retired) Jona McKee, Ellis Hargress, Deborah C. Mallory, Debera Bonner, Cortez Dial and Peggy Davis.

To nominate a person for the Athletic Hall of Fame, contact the Virginia State Department of Athletics at (804) 524-5030.

New coaches bring energy and success to Trojan programs



COACH CASSANDRA ARTIS-WILLIAMS

Coach **Cassandra Artis-Williams** is no stranger to Virginia State University. This recent May 2013 summa cum laude graduate received her bachelor's degree from

VSU in Mass Communications. Coach Cassandra, a Portsmouth, VA native, was a Woo Woo cheerleader from 2010-2012. She is currently pursuing her master's degree in Media Management from VSU.

“I am honored to be the coach of this great program as well as to be leading a group of young ladies who are determined to strive for success.”

In May 2013 Coach Cassandra became the Assistant Sports Information Director for the VSU Athletics Department. Later that summer in August 2013, she was named head coach of the world renowned VSU Woo Woo cheerleaders. “The Woo Woo’s have been around for 35+ years and

continues to live up to its high energy expectations. I am honored to be the coach of this great program as well as to be leading a group of young ladies who are determined to strive for success,” says Coach Cassandra.



COACH LONNIE BLOW

Head men's basketball coach **Lonnie Blow, Jr.** is a highly recognized high school and college coach. Before his coaching days,

Blow; a Portsmouth, VA native, received his bachelor's degree from Virginia Wesleyan College in Sociology and Criminal Justice. He continues to hold the single season record of 625 points in the 1980-1981 season. That same year, Blow was named the Dixie Conference Player-of-the-Year. His collegiate career led Blow to be named to the 2009 Virginia Wesleyan Hall of Fame induction.

He moved on to start his head coaching career at Granby High School in Norfolk, VA from 1995-2005. There, he led the team to several championships. Coach Blow finished his high school head coaching career with a record of 184-61.

Before becoming the head men's basketball coach at St. Augustine's College and currently Virginia State University, Coach Blow was assistant coach at several nationally ranked

colleges such as Hampton University, Norfolk State University and Old Dominion University.

Coach Blow was the head men's basketball coach at St. Augustine's College from 2008-2010 and again in 2012-2013. At St. Aug's, Blow was named CIAA and the Division II National Coach of the Year for the 2009-2010 season, in which the Falcons won the CIAA championship. Overall he finished his three years at St. Augustine's with a 63-27 record.

“I plan on making the VSU team the hottest ticket in town.”

In August 2013, VSU named Blow the 20th head men's basketball coach. “My goal is to make the Trojans' basketball team a highly spirited, community-oriented program,” Blow says. “I plan on making the VSU team the hottest ticket in town.”



COACH LATRELL SCOTT

Coach **Latrell Scott** has made a great name for himself in such a short period of time. Scott, a Richmond, VA native, received his bachelor's degree from Hampton University in Sports Management. A three-year starter at tight end during his playing days at HU, Coach Scott earned All-America honors during his senior season.

Scott started his coaching career not long after graduation. For his first two seasons, he was at Fork Union Military Academy. Before the University of Richmond hired him as head football coach in 2009, making him the youngest at a Division I institution, Scott was a wide receiving coach at Virginia Military Academy, University of Richmond, University of Tennessee and University of Virginia. He served as a tight end coach at James Madison University; assistant coach at Western Carolina University; and assistant head coach at University of Richmond.

“...we will have the success that we expect from the Virginia State Football program.”

In January 2013, Virginia State University named Scott the 23rd head football coach. “The alumni, faculty, staff, and administration of this University are second-to-none, and with their continued support, we will have the success that we expect from the Virginia State Football program.” Scott lived up to his promise and led the 2013 Trojan football team to a 9-1 record and the CIAA Northern Division Championship.

SPRING 2014



SPORTS SCHEDULES

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
4/3-5	Florida Relays	Gainesville, FL
4/11-12	Mason Spring Invitational	Fairfax, VA
4/18-19	CIAA Championships	Ettrick, VA
4/25-27	Penn Relays	Philadelphia, PA
5/4	Duke Twilight	Durham, NC
5/9-10	Virginia Challenge	Charlottesville, VA
5/11	Aggie Last Chance	Greensboro, NC
5/22-24	NCAA Division II Outdoor Championship	Allendale, MI

GOLF

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
2/24-25	Elizabeth City State University Tournament	Elizabeth City, NC
3/10-11	Southern CIAA Classic	Charlotte, NC
3/17-18	Northern CIAA Classic	Petersburg, VA
3/20-21	St. James Plantation Tournament	Southport, NC
4/5	VSU One- Day	Petersburg, VA
4/15-17	CIAA Championships	Petersburg, VA

BOWLING

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION
1/17-19	Frederick E. Underwood Lady Bulldog Classic	Laurel, MD
1/24-26	CIAA Event II	Petersburg, VA
2/7-9	CIAA North/ South Round-Up	Charlotte, NC
3/14-16	CIAA Event III	Kill Devil Hills, NC
3/21-23	CIAA Championship	Durham, NC

WOMEN'S TENNIS

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
2/14	Winston-Salem State University	Winston-Salem, NC	9:00AM
2/15	Johnson C. Smith University	Winston-Salem, NC	2:00PM
2/16	Livingstone College	Winston-Salem, NC	9:00AM
2/21	Ferrum College	Ferrum, VA	3:00PM
2/23	Virginia Union University	Ettrick, VA	11:00AM
3/3	Bowie State University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
3/6	Chowan University	Murfreesboro, NC	3:00PM
3/9	Randolph College	Ettrick, VA	12:00PM
3/12	Southern Virginia University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
3/14	Shaw University	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/15	Fayetteville State University	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/23	Virginia Union University	Richmond, VA	12:00PM
3/25	Longwood University	Farmville, VA	2:00PM
3/31	Elizabeth City State University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
4/3	Bowie State University	Bowie, MD	3:00PM
4/4	Stevenson University	Stevenson, MD	2:00PM
4/8	Binghamton University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
4/10	Chowan University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
4/12	Elizabeth City State University	Elizabeth City, NC	12:00PM
4/24-26	Spring Championships	Winston-Salem, NC	TBA

MEN'S TENNIS

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
2/14	Winston-Salem State University	Winston-Salem, NC	9:00AM
2/14	Winston-Salem State University	Winston-Salem, NC	2:00PM
2/15	Johnson C. Smith University	Winston-Salem, NC	2:00PM
2/16	Johnson C. Smith University	Winston-Salem, NC	2:00PM
2/21	Ferrum College	Ferrum, VA	3:00PM
2/23	Virginia Union University	Ettrick, VA	11:00AM
3/6	Chowan University	Murfreesboro, NC	3:00PM
3/9	Randolph College	Ettrick, VA	12:00PM
3/12	Southern Virginia University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
3/14	Shaw University	Ettrick, VA	9:00AM
3/14	Shaw University	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/23	Virginia Union University	Richmond, VA	12:00PM
3/25	Longwood University	Farmville, VA	2:00PM
4/4	Stevenson University	Stevenson, MD	2:00PM
4/10	Chowan University	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
4/12	North Carolina Central	Ettrick, VA	11:00AM
4/24-26	Spring Championships	Ettrick, VA	TBA

BASEBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
2/8	Morehouse University (DH)	Atlanta, GA	1:00PM
2/9	Clark Atlanta University (DH)	Atlanta, GA	1:00PM
2/14	Gannon University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
2/15	Gannon University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
2/16	Kutztown University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
2/22	UVA Wise University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
2/23	UVA Wise University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/1	Elizabeth City State University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/2	Elizabeth City State University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/6	Ohio Valley University	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/8	Winston-Salem State University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/9	Winston-Salem State University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/15	Chowan University (DH)	Murfreesboro, NC	1:00PM
3/16	Chowan University (DH)	Murfreesboro, NC	1:00PM
3/22	Lincoln University (DH)	Lincoln, PA	1:00PM
3/23	Lincoln University (DH)	Lincoln, PA	1:00PM
3/26	Benedict College (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/29	St. Augustine's University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/30	St. Augustine's University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
4/2	NC Central University (DH)	Durham, NC	4:00PM
4/4	Newport News Apprentice	Newport News, VA	2:00PM
4/5	Bluefield State College (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
4/6	Bluefield State College (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
4/9	Mount Olive College	Mount Olive, NC	5:00PM
4/11	Newport News Apprentice	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
4/17-19	CIAA Championships	Ettrick, VA	TBA
4/23	Norfolk State University	Norfolk, VA	TBA

SOFTBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
2/6	Felician College (DH)	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
2/15	CIAA Roundup- Winston-Salem State University (DH)	Charlotte, NC	11:00AM
2/15	CIAA Roundup- Livingstone College (DH)	Charlotte, NC	3:00PM
2/16	CIAA Roundup- Johnson C. Smith University (DH)	Charlotte, NC	11:00AM
2/17	CIAA Rain-date	Charlotte, NC	TBA
2/21	Shippensburg University (DH)	Raleigh, NC	3:00PM
2/21	University of South Carolina Aiken (DH)	Raleigh, NC	7:00PM
2/22	West Virginia State University (DH)	Raleigh, NC	12:00PM
2/22	Barton College (DH)	Raleigh, NC	4:00PM
2/23	Seton Hill University (DH)	Raleigh, NC	1:00PM
2/28	New York Institute of Technology	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/5	Elizabeth City State University (DH)	Elizabeth City, NC	2:00PM
3/6	Bluefield State College (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/8	CIAA Roundup- Fayetteville State University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/8	CIAA Roundup- Shaw University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	4:00PM
3/9	CIAA Roundup- St. Augustine's University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/10	CIAA Rain-date	Ettrick, VA	TBA
3/11	Seton Hill (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/15	Virginia Union University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	12:00PM
3/21	Millersville University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
3/23	Barton College (DH)	Ettrick, VA	1:00PM
3/26	Virginia University of Lynchburg (DH)	Ettrick, VA	3:00PM
3/29	Bowie State University (DH)	Bowie, MD	TBA
3/30	Lincoln University (DH)	Lincoln, PA	TBA
4/5	Chowan University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
4/6	Elizabeth City State University (DH)	Ettrick, VA	2:00PM
4/12	Virginia University of Lynchburg (DH)	Lynchburg, VA	1:00PM
4/15-17	Spring Championships	Ettrick, VA	TBA

Jerry Jones '65, '73, has written *Go and Come Again*, a book that details the public school experiences of generations of Jones' ancestors, from his great-grandfather (a former slave) to his own ordeal being bused about 60 miles daily for high school. After teaching for more than four decades, Jones is well qualified to comment on education and its importance to communities. His experiences as a student, as well as those of his ancestors and community members, provide a realistic snapshot of the challenges African-Americans faced trying to educate themselves as well as their successes. For more information, visit www.goandcomeagain.com.

Dr. Al Roberts M.Ed. '76, Provost of the John H. Daniel campus of Southside Virginia Community College (SVCC), was chosen as a Darden Fellow by the Darden College of Education at Old Dominion University. Darden College of Education chooses one alumna or alumnus each year for the honor. Dr. Roberts joined SVCC in 1995 and has led several successful programs to increase the number of African-American male students at the school and improving retention rates.

Southampton County (VA) Public Schools has named **Ricky Blunt '78** as Director of Auxiliary Services. He previously was Transportation Administrator for Franklin City Public Schools.

Governor Bob McDonnell recently appointed **Anthony Bailey '81** to the Commonwealth Board of Juvenile Justice. Bailey is Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney for Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. He has worked for the local prosecutor's office for nine years.

Michael A. Dantley '82 received his MBA from Strayer University in December 2011. He is a life member of the VSU Alumni Association, NOVA chapter and Life Member #3050 of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. He is currently employed by Verizon Communications in its Federal Services division.

Lieutenant Colonel Timothy U. Phillips '90 recently assumed command of the U.S. Army's 6th Battalion, 353rd Regiment. He had served as Professor of Military Science at West Virginia State University and also served two combat tours in Iraq.



Torian Lee '93 is the new Director of the Center for Inter-cultural and International Programs at Xavier University. He had been on the faculty in the departments of criminal justice and history at Elizabeth City State University.



Petersburg Public Schools has named **Lawrence Bolar '96, '99**, Principal of Blandford Academy. He previously worked in Hopewell Public Schools as a health and Physical Education teacher, then worked as a counselor in the Department of Corrections educational facility, later moving as an administrator to Weldon Middle School in Weldon, N.C., before coming to Petersburg as director of the alternative program and later an assistant principal at Petersburg High School.

Dr. Jame'l Hodges '97 has been named Staff Associate for the Office for Access and the Advancement of Public Black Universities. Hodges was director of multicultural affairs at Lehigh University.



Petersburg Public Schools has named **William Lawson, III '97**, Athletic Director for city Public Schools. He previously worked as athletic specialist with the City of Petersburg Parks and Leisure Services; program coordinator, Petersburg Parks and Leisure Services; teacher at Vernon Johns Junior High School (then Middle School); and head basketball coach at Petersburg High School.

Shaunta Taylor '01 was honored as the Central Learning Zone and Shamrock Teacher-of-the-Year and also the Charlotte Post Foundation's Wells Fargo Educator of the Year. She has been a fourth grade teacher at Shamrock Gardens Elementary School in Charlotte, NC for the past four years.



Petersburg Public Schools has named **LaVerne Vines M.Ed. '02** Director of Career and Technical Education. She previously taught business information technology for 16 years in the Richmond City Public Schools, assistant principal of a high school, and back into the classroom at the middle school level. She was the business information technology Teacher-of-the-Year for the state while teaching at Elkhardt Middle School in Richmond in 2010.



Sindy Benavides '03, Director of Civic Engagement and Community Mobilization, League of United Latin American Citizens, Washington, DC is one of 32 women selected by The Research Center for Leadership in Action at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service to participate in the inaugural IGNITE Fellowship for Women of Color in the Social Sector. This nine-month program enables participants to strengthen their leadership and management skills. Offered with support from the American Express Foundation, IGNITE offers a diverse group of mid-career women directing nonprofit programs and organizations across the United States exposure to best practices, processes for building personal and organizational leadership, and opportunities to build and strengthen core management capacities.



Petersburg Public Schools has named **Dr. Ronnie Watson M.Ed. '03, Ed.D. '09**, Principal of Vernon Johns Junior High School. Watson has served as an Army Ranger, supervisor at United Parcel Service, Assistant Principal at Peabody Middle School, Assistant Principal at Vernon Johns Junior High School (then middle school,) and six years as a teacher at Vernon Johns Junior High School.

Governor Bob McDonnell appointed **Javaid Siddiqi M.Ed. '04** as Secretary for Education. Before joining the McDonnell administration, Siddiqi spent 12 years with Chesterfield County Public Schools as a high school teacher, middle school assistant principal and high school assistant principal. Most recently he

served as the principal of Robious Middle School, where he led the implementation of Expeditionary Learning, a nationally recognized school reform model. He is a native of Chesterfield and is a graduate of Virginia public schools. He is married and has two children.

Kim Wynne '05 has joined CBS Affiliate KGAN as a General Assignment Reporter. She previously worked at the ABC Affiliate in Waco KXXV.

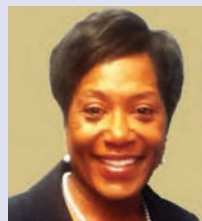
Andrea Nicole Shannon '07 of Newport News has been awarded the 2012 International Clinic Programs scholarship at Life University in Marietta, GA. Shannon, a member of the Peninsula District Chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Southeast Community Day Planning Committee, is one of two students named this year for the scholarship, which awards 50 percent tuition while attending clinic abroad. Shannon will spend the next three months in Zigong, China, participating in the International Clinic Program.

Javon Smith '11 was hired as a Staff Accountant for Granger & Company.

Devin Praylow '12 was hired as a Financial Systems Analyst Associate at Alion in Fairfax.

Mervin Whea '12 has been accepted to Marymount University's MBA program and will begin in Spring 2014.

Tiera Taylor '13 joined Michelin Tire as an Information System Analyst at its corporate facilities in Greenville, SC.



The National Association of Black Accountants, Inc. (NABA/Association) appointed **Angela L. Avant, CPA**, as President and Chief Executive Officer. NABA is the leading professional association focused on the recruitment, retention and advancement of minorities in accounting, finance and business-related professions. The Association has 50 professional and 150 student chapters, representing over 20,000 members across the United States. It has awarded more than \$8 million in scholarships to college students interested in business professions.

Chesterfield County Public Schools has appointed **David Ellena M.Ed.** as Principal of Tomahawk Creek Middle School. He started his public education career in Prince George, VA in 1985. He began teaching in Chesterfield County in 1988 and has also held several administrative positions.

Dr. Ida J. Hill M.S. has been elected to the International Altrusa Foundation Board. Dr. Hill will be responsible for assisting in the management of funds and projects for a three-year period. Altrusa International Foundation is a non-profit corporation dedicated to improving the economic well-being and quality of life through a commitment to community services and literacy. Dr. Hill is a retired educator who worked in several Richmond-area school districts and the Virginia Department of Education.

Norfolk Botanical Garden will feature the work of **Hubert Jackson**. Jackson taught art and photography in the Washington, DC area for 34 years. After retiring, he moved to Colonial Beach, VA, where he maintains his studio. Jackson's work can be seen in the Baker Hall Visitor Center at Norfolk Botanical Garden from February 1-28, 2012, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity has named **Bucky Miller** to its Board of Directors. Miller, a Lexington native, has been employed by the Lexington Police Department since 1985 and has served the department as patrol officer, investigator, sergeant, lieutenant and was recently promoted to Captain. He is active in many community activities and civic organizations.



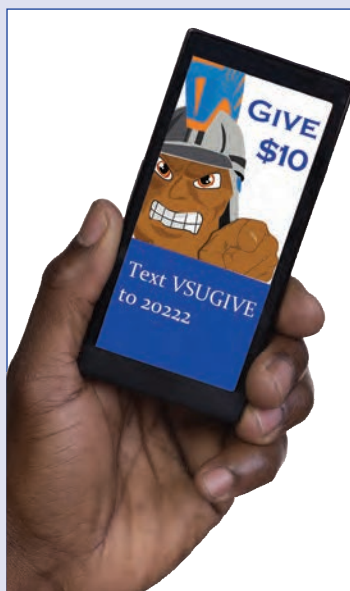
Judith Scott has been named to the 2011 *Virginia Business* Legal Elite, a listing of Virginia attorneys selected as outstanding representatives of their profession. Ms. Scott is executive vice president and general counsel of Portfolio Recovery Associates (PRA). She founded PRA's Office of General Counsel in 1998 and has since expanded the office to encompass a team of 11 attorneys and five professional staff responsible for general business law, corporate governance, corporate finance, securities regulation, mergers and acquisitions, government relations and litigation.



Dr. Jack Thomas M.Ed. was inaugurated as Western Illinois University's 11th President. He joined WIU four years ago as provost and academic vice president.

Curtis Walker is serving an internship with the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Championship and Alliances Department. He is a former CIAA intern.

If you have news you'd like to share with your fellow Trojan alumni, please e-mail university_relations@vsu.edu or mail your news to Alumni Notes; VSU Magazine; PO Box 9085; Virginia State University, VA 23806.



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Valerie Poarch-Harding Receives Professional Achievement-Government Award at Women of Color STEM Conference

Valerie Poarch-Harding, Supervisory Computer Scientist, U.S. Army CECOM, received Women of Color Magazine's Professional Achievement-Government at the 18th Annual Women of Color Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Conference, which took place October 17-19 at the Hilton Anatole in Dallas, Texas.

The Professional Achievement-Government award is presented to a highly experienced, mid-career professional who has made significant achievements in a science, engineering, or technology title in industry or government. Here, the specific degree earned is less relevant than the significance of the work and the nominee's achievements as a role model and leader for other minorities in the field.

For over 23 years, Poarch-Harding has been employed at the Fort Lee Army Base. She joined the Software Engineering Center Lee as a computer specialist intern for a salary of \$15,000. She continued to work hard and progressed in her career and enrolled with the ACTED or Army Civilian Training, Education and Development System. She received funding for joining this program and also received the Management Information Systems Baccalaureate degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1996. In 2000, she completed her Master of Administration degree from the Central Michigan University and did a course at the Nova Southern University in Florida before completing the required Calculus course to be eligible to work as a computer scientist in SEC LEE.

The Women of Color STEM conference is a multicultural event for women in scientific and technical careers. This year's conference featured several key speakers who addressed the underrepresentation of women in STEM disciplines. The conference also hosted training seminars that will highlight important topics such as leadership and professional skills, diversity and inclusion, technical leadership and innovation and career outlook.



“These women are outstanding achievers in very competitive fields where women do not always get a fair shot at leadership positions”

Tyrone D. Taborn, CEO of Career Communications Group, called the awards a long-deserved recognition for talented women. “These women are outstanding achievers in very competitive fields where women do not always get a fair shot at leadership positions,” he said.

“Women make up more than half of the population of this country and are receiving more than half of the college degrees, yet too many women in today's work force are trapped in low-paying and low-grade-level jobs,” Taborn added. “Given the growing diversity of the current work

force, employers must commit not only to leveling the playing field but also to addressing those inequalities that limit women from achieving their full career potential.”

General Dennis L. Via Honored With Thurgood Marshall College Fund Alumni Leadership Award

TMCF RECOGNIZES DISTINGUISHED HBCU ALUMNI FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) presented its 2013 Alumni Leadership Award to U.S. Army General Dennis L. Via, VSU Class of 1980.

For the past 12 years, TMCF has hosted its annual Leadership Institute, where 500 of the best and brightest students attending publicly-supported, Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) participate in a professional development conference and recruitment fair. This year marks the first time the Institute was held in Washington, DC.

“The TMCF Leadership Institute gives talented future leaders a one-of-a-kind intensive professional and career development experience,” says TMCF President & CEO Johnny Taylor, Jr. “This is also a great opportunity for these hand-picked students to network and interview with some of the nation’s top executives and elite graduate school recruiters.”



Aug. 7, 2012. AMC is the Army’s premier provider of materiel readiness to ensure dominant land force capability for the U.S. warfighter and our allies. The magnitude of this assignment is reflected in the facts that the AMC is responsible for one out of every six contracting dollars in the Department of Defense and has approximately 68,000 employees and a presence in all 50 states and 144 countries.

“General Via is a perfect example of an HBCU graduate who has demonstrated supreme leadership throughout his career and we are proud to honor him with this award in the presence of all the students,” said Taylor.

General Via told students attending the Leadership Institute that academic readiness and character are the keys to success. “Pursue academic excellence,” he said, noting there is no substitution for academic preparation. “Develop and nurture your character,” he added. One can easily judge the character of a man by how he treats those who can do nothing for him.”

Via also advised attendees to maintain their moral and ethical compass – the ability to judge right from wrong, even when no one is watching.

“With leadership comes great responsibility and accountability,” Via said. “To be a successful leader, you must take accountability for your actions, and your decisions, good and bad.”



General Via was honored for his exemplary military record and lifetime achievements. In addition to earning his bachelor’s degree from VSU as a Distinguished Military Graduate Gen. Via also holds a Master’s Degree from

Boston University, is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College (class of 1991), and the U.S. Army War College (class of 1999).

General Via had numerous assignments during his career and received many awards for his distinguished service to this country. He is the first-ever signal officer in the history of the Army to be promoted to a four-star general, a rank held by only 13 other Army officials, and is the Seventh African-American to be promoted to this rank. He assumed duties as the 18th Commander of the U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC)

Affinity groups share expertise on fundraising strategies, successes



VSU hosted its inaugural Affinity Group Luncheon on Oct. 17, 2013. This event brought together representatives from over 15 different social and professional organizations, VSU Alumni Chapters, Fraternities, Sororities, and National Black MBA, with the goal of sharing best practice as it pertains to fundraising by local Affinity Groups. Success stories and strategies were shared through informal conversations over lunch and presentations by a distinguished panel that included Dr. Robert Bracey (VSUAA Hanover Chapter), Mrs. Ann Taylor (Petersburg Links Inc.) and Mr. Clarence F. Nelson, Jr. (Kappa Alpha Psi, Inc.). Ms. Adrienne Whitaker, Interim Associate VP of Institutional Advancement served as the moderator the panel discussion and facilitated discussion among the attendees.

In addition, to the sharing session, President Keith T. Miller provided a University update. The event also showcased our students! SGA President Jahliel Thurman expressed his gratitude for the support given from the Affinity Groups' fundraising efforts. VSU's Sankofa Dance Theatre entertained with a wonderful performance. This inaugural event served as a way for VSU to both express gratitude for the work of our Affinity Groups and to energize the loyal supporters who are key to our development plan.





The Tidewater Chapter of the VSUAA hosted a Viewing Party for the VSU Gospel Chorale's live appearance on America's Got Talent.

Get VSU's app, *VSU Mobile!*

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UPDATE: We have released version 2.0! This allows you to connect to Banner or donate to the University in one-click!

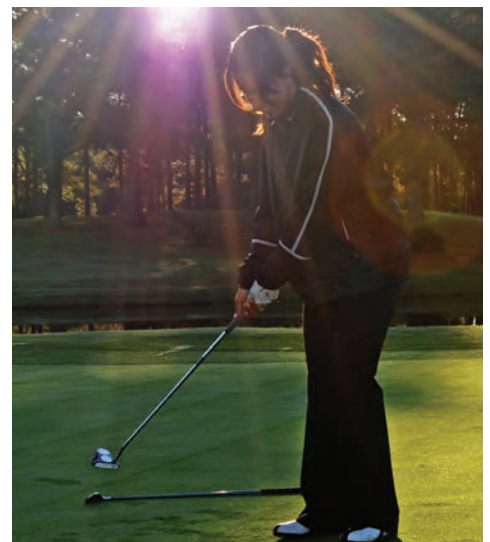
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VSU Hosts 19th Annual Presidential Scholars Golf Tournament



19th Annual Presidential Scholars Golf Tournament

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 Sun Daze, StarBucks




Nine new members are inducted to The Virginia State University Powell Society



The Virginia State University Powell Society induction was held on January 31, 2013.

Nine inductee's collectively bequested over 300k. The Powell Society recognizes individuals who have made provisions for Virginia State University with a will, life insurance policy, or other planned gift arrangements.

New members are:

Flora Crittenden '45	Irene Logan '75
Evelyn Edwards '65	Erenest Miller '70
Brenda Stith-Finch '71	James Tate '63
Charles K. Johnson '71	Anita Coleman Wynn
Mildred Johnson '56	

The Powell Society recognizes individuals who have made provisions for Virginia State University with a will, life insurance policy, or other planned gift arrangements





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