Clark Atlanta
MAGAZINE
Winter 2012  www.cau.edu

SIGHT
SOUND
& SOUL
CAU Sets an
American Perception
On Creating an American Perception

Clark Atlanta University claims a long heritage of intellectual and cultural excellence. For generations, our institution and alumni have consistently woven a brilliant tapestry, textured as much with critical thought as by passion and curiosity, adding rich hue and warmth to the American panorama. One cannot unfold a nation’s struggle for freedom, the cultural and intellectual emancipation of our people, the fight for social equality or the self-consciousness of those who labored for justice without acknowledging the venerable contributions made by sons and daughters of CAU. The continuous press for liberation by the men and women of CAU — students, faculty and staff — yielded voluminous intellectual discourse and pristine cultural expression gifted to us by individuals whose courage and tenacity was outstripped only by their mental acuity, spiritual fortitude and creative genius. You know their names: Lucy Craft Laney, James Weldon Johnson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ralph David Abernathy, Marva Collins, Kenny Leon and so many more.

These alumni and so many others like them cultivated fields of consciousness as they answered their individual and collective callings. With dignity and honesty, they informed our individual and communal self-perceptions. With determination and resolve, each took a piece of our history, wrapped it in their unique genius, and lifted America’s perceptions of who we are as a people and as Americans. Because their contributions have been so stellar, the world has had to consider America as a brilliant mosaic colored magnificently by their contributions.

In *The Life of Reason*, philosopher and poet George Santayana reminds us that “those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” This issue of *Clark Atlanta* magazine offers a glimpse of the many ways in which our university carries forward the work of those who set high the standard for social, cultural and intellectual excellence. In these pages, we offer a very contemporary snapshot of the sight, sound and soul of CAU.

We also look at another stellar group of individuals, who have made and continue to make unquestionably important contributions to the life and future of this institution, our donors. Without you, our quest to cultivate the next generation of global leadership would be nearly impossible. The perceptions of leadership and responsibility cast in your giving speak volumes about what it truly means to be a son or daughter of Clark Atlanta University, deeply committed and unwaveringly loyal to our mission.

Here’s to continued and even greater excellence.

*Carlton E. Brown,*
*President*
FEATURES

Cover Story: Sight, Sound and Soul

CAU Sets an American Perception
For more than a century, our alumni have shaped and informed American culture and tradition. These alumni offer a glimpse at how this legacy continues.

SIGHT
Andante Higgins – A versatile Newsman
CAU’s NewsBreak
One Woman’s War
Wilmore Takes the Stage at CAU

SOUND
The Jazz of the City
Cocheta Has Her Say in Hip-Hop

SOUL
Reclaiming a Legend of Black Thought
CAU Set to Take Up a CAUSE

Leadership Ledger

These four students are making an impact in their fields of endeavor.
Jamael Harris, School of Business Administration
Johnetta McSwain, Whitney M. Young Jr. School of Social Work
David Brown, School of Education
Tempeast McBride, School of Arts & Science

DEPARTMENTS

University News
Convocation
Faculty Forum
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Speaking Of…
Sports Update
Honor Roll of Donors

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Smart Technology Enhances Student Engagement & Learning

As college and university instructors increasingly integrate technology into their curriculum, 16 Clark Atlanta University professors spent last summer boning up on the latest smart technology and how podcasts, tutorials and response devices can be maximized in the classroom to enhance student learning.

The 2011 Summer Technology Enrichment Program (STEP) enabled faculty to learn how to better integrate technology in the classroom to increase student interaction, assess learning and achieve learning outcomes.

“This is not just about integrating technology into the classroom: it’s about integrating it into teaching and learning,” said Gwen Mitchell, Ph.D., director of the Center of Excellence for Faculty Development, which created and runs STEP. “For CAU instructors, technology is now both a teaching and a learning aid in the classroom.”

STEP is an intensive, four-day instructional training program consisting of a series of dynamic workshops to assist faculty members with enhancing student engagement and interaction in the classroom. The workshops focus on student-centered instruction and the desired outcome was for faculty to design a web-enhanced course for the fall semester.

The value of smart technology in enhancing learning was actually revealed when four CAU professors integrated technology into their classrooms during

Five High School Juniors Complete CAU Classes as Part of a New Partnership

Five high school juniors got a jump-start on college when they became the first participants in CAU’s Early College Partnership during the fall 2011 semester. The university’s Community Educational Network and Outreach Initiative designed the new program to support college-bound students.

The outreach initiative’s inaugural semester involved students from the Booker T. Washington Early College Academy who will be taking two courses per semester at Clark Atlanta while they complete high school. The partnership is designed to help prepare deserving young men and women in their pursuit of higher education.

Kaia Bailey, Angelina Barden, Antonio Rayton, Jamesia Tucker and Alexis White embarked on an experience that will enable them to accumulate 24 credit hours during their junior and senior years of high school. The credits can then be applied to a college program. Their first semester began with a student-parent orientation, after which they participated with CAU freshmen in the university’s annual freshman induction ceremony.

“The students were enrolled in Culture and Society and Fundamentals of Speech, for a total of six credit hours, and they are all succeeding academically,” said Ernita Hemmitt, CAU’s interim dean of Student Affairs.

Some of the extracurricular activities included attending Fall Convocation and the Miss CAU Coronation. The students also represented their school in Clark Atlanta’s 2011 Homecoming Parade.”

Hemmitt added that the university hopes that the future college freshman will consider CAU as their first choice.

The college-bound high school juniors will be the first members of their families to attend a higher education institution. According to Vanessa Nason, Ph.D., principal of the Booker T. Washington Early College Academy, giving high school students the opportunity to attend a nationally-known university will have a profound impact on their futures.

“This is a rare opportunity for our students to learn the necessary academic and leadership skills that will enable them to compete on a global scale,” she said. “They also will be introduced to the rich traditions of Clark Atlanta University that will instill in them a sense of pride and self-efficacy.”

Tuition and books are paid for by the Accel Program, designed for high school students who attend an accredited public or private high school in the state of Georgia and are taking college-level courses.
CAU Names Carl Jones Vice President For Enrollment Services and Student Affairs

CAU has named Carl Jones vice president for Enrollment Services and Student Affairs. Jones is responsible for the overall direction of a division that serves the enrollment and campus life for nearly 4,000 students.

CAU President Carlton E. Brown said, “We are excited to welcome home one of our alumni after a rigorous process that gained the interest of several very qualified professionals. With more than 20 years of experience in higher education, his definitive work both in student affairs and academic support make him uniquely suited for addressing the needs defined by the university’s strategic plan.”

Jones says he’s excited about establishing collaborative relationships across the campus and beyond to ensure that the university enrolls qualified students who will eventually become leaders on the local, state, national and international levels. He said, “CAU is a national treasure with international impact. We must ensure that our strengths are recognizable and areas where improvement is warranted are addressed strategically and progressively.”

Jones received a B.A. in psychology (with a minor in French) from South Carolina State University. He obtained a master’s in educational psychology and measurement and the doctor of philosophy degree in counseling and human development from Atlanta University, where he was named top graduate student in the Atlanta University Center by CenterPoint Magazine. He also was named outstanding student in both the Atlanta University School of Education and the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services.

the 2009-2010 academic year. Rosalind Arthur, Ph.D., Margaret Counts-Spriggs, Ph.D., Sandra J. Flowers, Ph.D., and Joyce Goosby, Ph.D., integrated a WebCT, Student Response System (clickers), podcasting and other instructional technologies into their pedagogy and used them to facilitate instruction. For example, they pose questions to students during lectures and the Student Response System allows students use their smart phones or laptops to “click” when they have the answer. The student responses help professors gauge learning, comprehension and progress.

“Students can take quizzes, surveys and exams and it gives me and other instructors an idea of how well they are doing in real time because we can see their responses immediately,” said Foster, an associate professor in the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work.

According to Counts-Spriggs, an associate professor in the School of Social Work, the immediacy of the information helps faculty address problems with student learning and comprehension more quickly and effectively.

“I have found that technology often increases student engagement and that engagement helps advance their critical thinking and analysis skills,” adds Arthur, an associate professor of foreign languages. “You can test knowledge at different levels and students often participate in class much more.”

All four professors agree that students are participating more during discussions, lectures and class activities. Moreover, they also believe technology use in teaching helps faculty to stay tech-savvy and gain new skills.

Metropolitan Community College Selects CAU as Its First HBCU New Transfer Agreement Partner

Missouri’s Metropolitan Community College (MCC) students who envision graduating from Clark Atlanta University now have a greater shot at achieving their dream. MCC and CAU signed an articulation agreement that will allow students’ MCC credits to transfer seamlessly to CAU. This is the first agreement of this type with an historically black college or university for the Kansas City-based institution.

The agreement will increase options for MCC students who want to earn a bachelor’s degree at an HBCU. Students who have completed at least 58 credit hours of approved courses at MCC and have maintained a minimum GPA of 2.5 will be provided “equal access to registration, class enrollment and financial aid as other students attending CAU,” according to the agreement.

“There are a significant number of students living in the Kansas City metropolitan area who dream of graduating from Clark Atlanta University,” said Dr. Joe Seabrooks, president of Metropolitan Community College-Penn Valley. “However, the gravity of the current economic realities for many has made the dream of attending Clark Atlanta University for four years unrealistic. Therefore, the relationship between our respective institutions is critical in helping students build successful bridges to make their academic dreams come true.”

The agreement, which began in the fall 2011 semester, applies to courses offered at any MCC campus with an equivalent course at CAU.
Bettye M. Clark Named Dean of Graduate Studies

Clark Atlanta University announced in August 2011 the appointment of Bettye M. Clark, Ph.D., as dean of Graduate Studies. She had served as interim dean for more than a year, having held faculty and administrative positions at CAU for the past 28 years.

President Carlton E. Brown said, “Dr. Clark has made such significant contributions to the university throughout her tenure. Her untiring and dedicated service has resulted in tremendous progress at CAU, including the opening of our Graduate Resource Center, the creation of a separate registration for graduate students and the improvement of the dissertation review process. Her wisdom, strategic thinking and expertise are sure to be key factors in the continued momentum and growth of our graduate programs.”

“I am honored to accept the position as dean of Graduate Studies. I am equally excited that the university’s administration and its board of trustees have made graduate education a top priority,” Clark said. “It is a great time to be at the helm of graduate education, since the state of the economy is forcing college graduates to retool themselves, in part because of a shifting and unsteady job market. Also, with online education becoming a real option at CAU, we anticipate that our graduate student population will increase over time.”

Clark served as coordinator of CAU’s Undergraduate Program in Mathematics from 2003 to 2008. She served as associate provost and executive director of Distance Learning from 1995 to 2003, and director of the Mathematics Resource and Technology Center from 1989 to 2003. She also served as professor of mathematics and chair of the Mathematics/Computer Science Department from 1985 to 1989.

Clark earned the bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Fort Valley State College in Fort Valley, Ga., in 1966 and a master’s degree in mathematics education from the University of Georgia in Athens, Ga., in 1971. In 1976, she was awarded a doctorate in mathematics education from the University of Houston in Houston, Texas.

She is the recipient of numerous honors and awards, including the Aldridge-McMillan Faculty Overall Achievement Award; Professor of the Year from the Department of Mathematical Sciences (2008) and Leadership Atlanta.

The new dean’s funded research projects add up to more than $9,000,000 in grants during her tenure at CAU.

CCRTD Signs Agreement With the National Football League Former Players Association

As the only known university center one-hundred-percent dedicated to research and education on prostate cancer in African Americans, CAU’s Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development (CCRTD) aggressively focuses groundbreaking research, community outreach and closing health disparities in minorities.

In keeping with this focus, CCRTD signed a memorandum of understanding in October 2011 with the Atlanta chapter of the National Football League Former Players Association (NFLFPA) to increase awareness of health disparities and promote community participation in prostate cancer health education.

“African American men are 65 percent more likely to get prostate cancer and are more than two times as likely to die from the disease,” said CCRTD executive director Shafiq A. Khan. “This partnership gives CCRTD another avenue to be involved in increasing awareness for prevention, early detection and treatment of cancers, especially those that disproportionately affect the African-American community.”

The agreement also includes implementing activities that prevent, reduce and eliminate prostate cancer, which supports CCRTD’s mission.

“This is an outstanding opportunity for Clark Atlanta University, CCRTD and the Department of Athletics to create awareness of health disparities, build stronger relationships in the community and reach former athletes with critical information that can make a difference in their health outlook,” said Tamica Jones, Ph.D., CAU director of athletics.
Ne-Yo’s Future CEO Academy Focuses on Future Entrepreneurs

With four Grammy Awards under his belt, the artist Ne-Yo is routinely sought out by one-name icons like Whitney, Celine and Beyoncé. The singer-songwriter, music producer and actor came to Clark Atlanta in July searching for America’s next great class of entrepreneurs.

The internationally renowned artist brought his Compound Foundation to the campus July 14-16, 2011, for his Future CEO Academy. As part of the elite academy, a select group of 50 students, aged 13 to 18, pre-selected by the Georgia Department of Human Services from the state’s foster care system and group homes, participated in an intense, three-day entrepreneurship “boot camp” led by a cohort of celebrities, successful entrepreneurs, faculty experts and local officials. Each of the students completed the program by presenting his or her own workable business plan.

The Future CEO Academy served a three-fold purpose. First, the program sought to empower students who too often are labeled and subjugated as “powerless.” Second, students had to create, define and execute their dreams in a real-world context. Third, they were afforded rare access to a network of interested business professionals who shared their wisdom, expertise and tactical advice. Celebrity business leaders included: Carol’s Daughter CEO Lisa Price; Steve Janisse of Porche Cars, America; author and businesswoman Terrie Williams, founder of the Stay Strong Foundation; Brandi and Karli Harvey, co-founders of Young, Fit & Fly; Atlanta City Councilman Ivory Lee Young; Seth Bernstein, Empower Software Solutions; and Lucas Riggins and Magnus Greaves, co-founders of 100 Urban Entrepreneurs.

“I can think of nowhere more appropriate and no team more capable than the faculty at the Clark Atlanta University School of Business. They have the intellect, the expertise, the experience and the right access,” said Ne-Yo, who founded the Compound Foundation in 2007, of his desire to locate the program at CAU.

Clark Atlanta faculty instructors and participants included: Raphael Boyd, M.B.A., J.D.; Marcus Hilliard; Dennis Kimbro, Ph.D.; Charles Richardson, Ph.D.; and Lynn Patten, Ph.D. Clark Atlanta’s provost and vice president for Academic Affairs Joseph H. Silver, Sr., opened the program and CAU President Carlton E. Brown offered closing remarks. The university’s Student Government Association also participated in the program.

Following an elevator-pitch competition, each of the 50 students was awarded a Galaxy Tablet from Samsung Electronics, America. One student walked away with a winning business plan and $10,000 to start his own business.

“Programs like The Future CEO Academy are simply the right approach to educating youth who will have to compete in the 21st century global economy,” said President Brown. “More important, this program aligns perfectly with Clark Atlanta’s deep, overarching commitment and focus on entrepreneurship.”
Clark Atlanta University in August 2011 named Curtis Byrd assistant dean of Graduate Studies. In this role, he will help build and fortify the university’s graduate programming.

At his appointment, Bettye M. Clark, Ph.D., dean of Graduate Studies, said, “Mr. Byrd comes to CAU with a wealth of knowledge in the recruitment, marketing and retention of graduate students. For 15 years, he has helped create, implement and assess undergraduate and graduate outreach programs, and we are elated to have him join us to elevate the focus on Clark Atlanta’s graduate studies.”

Of his new role, Byrd said, “I am very excited to be a part of the Clark Atlanta University family. My efforts will concentrate on increasing graduate enrollment and assisting Dean Clark in bringing graduate education to the forefront of CAU and the Atlanta University Center, our region and the nation.”

Byrd served as the associate director of the McNair Scholars Program in the Office of Undergraduate Affairs at the University of Florida in Gainesville since 2009. From 2007 to 2009, he served as the director of the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program at Georgia State University in Atlanta. He also was executive director of the Peach State Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation at the University of Georgia-National Science Foundation in Athens, Ga., from 2006 to 2007. From 2000 to 2005, he served as director of Graduate Recruitment and Retention at the University of Georgia.

In 1992, Byrd received a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa. He earned the master’s degree in higher education/professional studies from Iowa State in 1996.

Clark Atlanta University Announces Major Financial Services Literacy Initiative

Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown announced in August that beginning this academic year the university would partner with Operation HOPE to launch the Initiative for Entrepreneurial Development and Empowerment through Financial Literacy, a program that aligns with the goals and purposes of the U.S. President’s Advisory Council on Financial Capability and supports President Barack Obama’s goal to achieve primary status worldwide in the production of college-educated individuals.

“Consumer protection is the government’s job. But consumer empowerment is the job of free enterprise,” said Operation HOPE founder, chairman and CEO John Hope Bryant. “We believe that students across all disciplines must become equipped to develop and operate innovative enterprises and small businesses and to employ themselves and others. It is essential to the growth of the American economy.”

The initiative, which will be supported through funding secured from public and private sources by Operation HOPE and the White House Initiative on HBCUs, comprises two tracks. The student empowerment track will fully integrate FDIC financial literacy materials into the university’s curriculum. In addition, it will assemble and train a team of students, the CAU/HOPE Corps for Disaster Preparedness, who will respond to emergent situations to help
individuals, businesses and communities recover from the impact of financial and economic disasters, including opportunities to enhance financial literacy in the process. In the second track, CAU/HOPE will offer resources for CAU alumni, including a free financial crisis hotline through the Mortgage HOPE Hotline and HOPE Consumer Credit lines (888-388-HOPE). This track also will offer such resources as the earned income tax credit to CAU employees.

“Clark Atlanta University’s students, alumni, employees and local residents cannot move more fully into the new economies, or play a larger role in the advancement of their own education and fortunes, without an intense and effective approach to increasing financial literacy, as well as expanding the available skills and dispositions toward invention and entrepreneurship,” President Brown said.

“This initiative, and our partnership with Operation HOPE and its founder John Hope Bryant, unfolds the possibility of this critical change.”

Meritor Inc. CFO Delivers Dean’s Lecture to School of Business

Jeffrey “Jay” Craig, chief financial officer of Meritor Inc., delivered on November 9, 2011, a keynote address as part of the Dean’s Executive Lecture Series in the School of Business.

“Mr. Craig’s considerable expertise and market savvy proved an invaluable teaching tool for our students. We were honored that he made the time to share his wealth of knowledge and global experience with our students,” said School of Business Dean Lydia McKinley-Floyd, Ph.D. “CAU’s relationship with Meritor is an important one, and we greatly appreciate the company’s financial gifts, which provide deserving opportunities for students.”

As Meritor’s chief financial officer, Craig is responsible for driving the company’s financial performance and providing financial direction and guidance. He is responsible for worldwide financial controls, financial systems, treasury and tax, financial planning and management reporting, accounting policies, and external reporting and financial support.

Before joining Meritor, Craig served as president and CEO of General Motors Acceptance Corp.’s (GMAC) Commercial Finance organization from 2001 to 2006. Prior to that, he served as president and CEO of GMAC’s Business Credit division from 1999 until 2001.

With headquarters in Troy, Mich., Meritor Inc. is a global supplier of a broad portfolio of axle, brake and suspension solutions to original equipment manufacturers and the aftermarket for the transportation and industrial sectors. The company serves commercial truck, trailer, bus and coach and off-highway machinery manufacturers, in addition to defense contractors.

New Tom Joyner Scholars Selected for 2011-2012

Clark Atlanta University’s number of Tom Joyner Scholarship recipients rose from 34 in 2010 to 46 in the fall 2011 semester, a strong indication that the eligibility requirements of academic performance, leadership and community service are being met by a growing number of students. The 2011-2012 Tom Joyner scholars are undergraduate and graduate students who will receive scholarships ranging from $500 to $2,500.

In October 2009, Clark Atlanta University was selected as the Tom Joyner Foundation School of the Month, an initiative that raised money to support outstanding students. The foundation was established by nationally syndicated radio personality Tom Joyner in 1998 to help students at historically black colleges and universities continue their educations.

“Our partnership with the Tom Joyner Foundation is helping CAU address a serious financial need among students as they pursue their educational endeavors,” said Nicole Blount, executive director of fund development and annual giving and coordinator of the scholarships.

The 2011-2012 Tom Joyner Scholars are:

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The Hank Aaron Chasing The Dream Foundation Establishes Endowed Scholarship at Clark Atlanta University

Clark Atlanta University this fall announced the establishment of a $100,000 endowed scholarship from the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Foundation. The scholarship will support CAU students pursuing careers in public service, education, social work, humanities, science and medicine.

“The generosity of Major League Hall of Famer Hank Aaron and his wife, Billye, speaks volumes about their commitment to charitable giving and to the future of our youth. We are grateful to have such friends of the university,” said CAU President Carlton E. Brown.

The scholarship supports, in perpetuity, one student per year at Clark Atlanta until more students can be supported through additional contributions or growth of the fund.

The first recipient of the Hank Aaron Chasing the Dream Scholarship is Elise Barnes, a senior early childhood education major from Naperville, Ill., who received a $4,000 award earlier in the academic year. Barnes holds a 3.47 grade point average and is working on her practicum at the neighboring Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School. After graduation in May, she plans to work for the Atlanta Public School System as an elementary school teacher for at least a year before pursuing graduate studies.

Barnes had an opportunity to thank the Aarons personally when she and President Brown attended a “4 for 4 Scholars” event last September at Turner Field, during the Atlanta Braves versus the New York Mets game.

Verizon Wireless Partners with CAU to Provide Students Telecommunications Work Experience

Verizon Wireless in October 2011 launched a new retail venture on the CAU campus, located in the main lobby of the Cornelius L. Henderson Student Center. This strategic partnership, operated by Advantage Communications Inc. (ACI), employs CAU students, offering them valuable business experience in the telecommunications industry, while simultaneously elevating Atlanta’s base of experienced knowledge-industry employees. Representatives from Verizon Wireless, ACI Telecom, CAU and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon on the new location Oct. 25, 2011.

The retail kiosk offers customers a hands-on experience with the latest and most innovative wireless products and services. The new site is open for business Monday through Friday, noon to 8 p.m., and offers a premier line of digital wireless phones and tablets in all price ranges, data services and accessories.

“This collaboration with such a prestigious university as Clark Atlanta gives us a wonderful opportunity to help train the businessmen and women of tomorrow who will soon be entering the corporate workforce. In addition, the new retail location offers students the convenience of on-campus shopping for their wireless needs and allows us to reach a very dynamic audience,” said Leroy Williams, vice president of marketing for Verizon Wireless, South Area.

“Through our continued expansion of retail locations such as this one, Verizon Wireless exemplifies its commitment to providing our customers throughout Georgia with a unique and engaging shopping experience.”

In honor of the partnership, Verizon Wireless also announced a $10,000 HopeLineSM grant to CAU’s “Call to True Beauty” campaign, the university’s annual advocacy, education and prevention campaign against dating and domestic violence. “We are very excited that Verizon Wireless will now have a daily, on-campus presence at our school,” said President Brown. “By committing to employ Clark Atlanta students, our young people get real business experience with a Fortune 10 company while completing their education. This, of course, will translate to better job opportunities later.”

The increased involvement of the university community, corporations and victims’ advocacy organizations demonstrated “The Call to True Beauty’s” growing prominence and recognition by city officials as a metro-area resource for dating and domestic violence awareness and prevention. Atlanta City Councilman C. T. Martin re-designated Clark Atlanta University as a community resource zone in the crusade during a university-sponsored press conference on Oct. 21, and the Atlanta City Council proclaimed it “The Call to True Beauty Day” in Atlanta.

The campaign began on Oct. 16 with a chapel service on the CAU campus and continued in earnest during a rally and memorial balloon lift the next day at Atlanta City Hall. During the rally and live remote broadcast by CAU’s The Jazz of the City — 91.9 FM WCLK, attendees released eco-friendly balloons to support victims and remember those who have been slain during dating and domestic violence incidents. The campaign included several dating violence awareness events.

“I am more convinced than ever that we have to do this, especially after “The [inaugural] Call to True Beauty” helped shine a light on the problem and convinced several of our young women to remove the veil of shame and seek help,” said Donna Brock, executive director of CAU’s Office of Strategic Communications.

The offices of the Provost and Strategic Communications and 91.9 FM WCLK joined forces to launch “The Call to True Beauty” in 2010, using contributions from Avon Products Company and Verizon Wireless, two nationally recognized corporate leaders in the crusade against dating and domestic violence. The two offices also pioneered the creation of a university committee composed of representatives from a number of divisions and departments. The committee’s work is spearheaded by the Provost’s Office and supported by the Office of Strategic Communications, Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Partnership Against Domestic Violence, Avon, Verizon Wireless and the City of Atlanta.

“Dating violence awareness is and will continue to be a priority outreach effort on the CAU campus,” said Joseph H. Silver, Sr., provost and vice president for Academic Affairs. “Although our campus is not overrun with incidences of dating and domestic violence, even one case is too many. We are also very concerned that Georgia now ranks sixth in the nation for violent crimes committed by men against women.”

During “The Call to True Beauty Week,” the university presented two honorees with awards. WCLK radio personality Fonda Kay Smith received the “Survivor of the Year” award and retired Avon Products, Inc., executive Harold Watkins received the “Advocate of the Year” award. Watkins was the driving force behind the development and establishment of the Avon Scholars and Ambassadors Program, CAU’s dating and domestic violence peer education and prevention program.

In April 2011, the Avon Scholars and Ambassadors Program was launched with a $20,000 contribution from Avon. Nine students were selected in a competitive process and received an annual $2,000 gap scholarship to participate in an intensive training program that began in September.

To date, university efforts are making notable progress in building a climate on campus committed to addressing and eradicating abusive relationships.
Clark Atlanta University Presents “The Life Tour”

The cast and crew of “The Life Tour” pose following their Oct. 5 performance in Davage Auditorium (from left to right): Jennifer (J. F.) Seary, Tahani Salah, Helenda D. Lewis, Suzen Baraka, QBR/Harlem Book Fair CEO Max Rodriguez, Seaton (Rain Maker), Mokegethi Thinane (Mega), Carlos M. Burgos, Jr. (Iro) and Jeremy (Kilusan) Bautista. Kneeling: Urbintel Inc. CEO Kayo Charles.

Imagine the surprise! You walk up to a Coca-Cola machine planning to purchase your favorite soft drink and a magic hand gives you a free prize. That’s what happened to scores of students during the Sept. 8 “Open Happiness” tour stop at Clark Atlanta. Nestled in a corner of the university’s Crogman Dining Hall, the machine dispensed refreshing Coke products in addition to an array of free prizes, from two-liter sodas to book bags. Here, CAU student Sean Perry receives a free cupholder after purchasing a Sprite®.
Clark Atlanta University held its Opening Convocation Sept. 29, 2011, in the Leonidas S. Epps Gymnasium with Milton J. Little, Jr., president of United Way of Atlanta, as convocation orator. This year’s program, “Living the Core Values,” focused on each of the university’s six cultural guideposts: student-centeredness, pursuit of excellence, innovation and discovery, integrity, social responsibility and respect. Little’s address highlighted the core value of social responsibility.

“To hear from such a distinguished alumnus of an historically black college, who has made his mark in service on the local and national level, puts our own focus on social responsibility in the appropriate context,” said President Carlton E. Brown. In fact, ‘Culture for Service’ is one of our university’s dual mottos, and we feel Mr. Little shares an important perspective based on his tremendous body of experience and proven record of service.”

In July 2007, Little assumed the role of president of United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta after serving as president and chief executive officer of United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley. A national and community leader, he has devoted many of his 20 years in the public and private sectors to creating workforce and education programs. Prior to joining the United Way system, he served as interim president and CEO of the National Urban League in New York. In this position, he launched innovative partnerships with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Labor and Commerce departments, as well as corporations such as Verizon, Enterprise Rent-a-Car and Prudential. Little came to the League from Lucent Technologies, which he joined while it was still part of AT&T. The philanthropic strategies he developed at Lucent and AT&T became the forerunners of many programs that today are reducing disparities in employment, income, education and health in communities nationwide.

A member of Phi Beta Kappa, Little graduated magna cum laude from Morehouse College with a bachelor’s degree in sociology. He earned a master’s degree in urban sociology and social policy from Columbia University and pursued additional postgraduate studies in public administration at New York University. He is a member of the Georgia State University Nonprofit Studies Advisory Board, 100 Black Men of Atlanta and the Rotary Club of Atlanta.

In a departure from previous convocations, the university’s Inspirational Choir, under the direction of Mr. Phillip Golden provided the music for the ceremony. In a rousing performance, the choir of only 50 — with just an electric piano to accompany them — had the 1000-plus audience members on their feet as they sang contemporary gospel. The Clark Atlanta University Band also provided its usual excellent accompaniment.

“I think what we’ve seen here today is not only the intellect and the compassion of Alma Mater, but we’ve opened up the soul of the university so others can share in that, as well,” University Chaplain Rev. Dr. Valerie Tate Everett noted.

During the program, the university also recognized members of the 2011 SIAC Championship Men’s Basketball Team, many of whom are consistently included on deans’ lists, along with myriad other student athlete-scholars.
J. Robert Adams, DMA, associate professor, Department of Music, will be touring in a production of “Porgy and Bess” with the New York Harlem Theatre in Naples, Italy, Jan. 10-15, 2012, at the Teatro di San Carlo. He is the only cast member from the world renowned Atlanta Opera Porgy and Bess Chorus chosen to participate in the production.

Mark Boozer, M.M., faculty pianist and associate professor, Department of Music, performed a full-length solo piano recital October 16 devoted exclusively to two of the most important works by classical composer Franz Liszt, followed by a command performance on October 24, 2011. Both performances were in the Park Street Music and Art Complex Sanctuary at Clark Atlanta University. Boozer’s recital, titled A Bicentennial Celebration of the Music of Franz Liszt (1811-1886), was the university’s contribution to Liszt bicentennial celebrations staged throughout the world during most of 2011. The 90-minute program was anchored by Liszt’s Sonata in B Minor, a 30-minute composition widely praised as one of the most significant piano works of all time and one of the “twin peaks” of the Romantic repertoire. Liszt is often cited as the one of the “twin peaks” of the Romantic century. The two selections performed by Boozer are considered among the most challenging for pianists.

On October 3, a radio broadcast of “The Atlanta Music Scene,” produced by WABE FM 90.1, featured performances by Boozer from recitals he gave in 2008 and 2010. The highlight of this hour-long broadcast was his performance of the other “twin peak” of the Romantic repertoire, Robert Schumann’s Fantasy in C Major.

Raphael O. Boyd, J.D., MBA, associate professor and chair of the Management and Marketing Departments in the School of Business, co-authored four journal article publications. “Pre-Dispute Mandatory Arbitration Agreements and Employment Contracts: Examining the Implications for Statutory Discrimination Claims,” with Allen J. Rubenfield, Mercer University, was accepted for publication in the Southern Law Journal, a publication of the Southern Academy of Legal Studies in Business. The article received the “2011 Best Paper Award” for the publication. “Integrating Corporate Social Responsibility with a Risk Management Methodology: A Strategic Approach,” with Lila L. Carden, University of Houston-Main, appeared in the Southern Journal of Business and Ethics, a publication of the Southern Academy of Legal Studies in Business. “Private Eyes Are Watching You: They See Your Every Move,” with Lila L. Carden, University of Houston-Main, was accepted for publication in the South East Case Research Journal, a publication of the Southeast Case Research Association.

Boyd earlier was selected as a “2011 SECRA Fellow” of the Southeast Case Research Association. His last article, “Workplace Bullying: Project Strategy,” with Lila L. Carden, University of Houston-Main, was accepted for publication in the Journal of Business and Educational Leadership, a publication of the American Society of Business and Behavioral Sciences.

Hadley Breckenridge, M.F.A., adjunct professor, Department of Art, was one of 12 artists chosen from the Fulton County Public Artist Registry for the juried show The Painted Photograph (September 2011) and participated with the Cultural Competitiveness Team associated with CAU’s Global Leadership Academy in fall 2011.

Her mural was featured in Atlanta’s Art on the Beltline in fall 2011 (http://www.beltline.org).

As advisor for CAU Art Club-Club Exposure, Breckenridge featured a student show in April 2011 titled “When the World is Black and White: Photograms and Pinhole Photography” in the Robert W. Woodruff Library, and featured student work in the Atlanta Celebrates Photography pin-up show in October. She will lead the effort to transition the art department’s darkroom into a digital light studio in spring 2012.

Sidmel K. Estes, adjunct professor, Department of Mass Media Arts, was honored at the 35th anniversary celebration of the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists on the occasion of her 20-year anniversary as the National Association of Black Journalists’ (NABJ) first female president. She also was a speaker at the 2011 University of Georgia NABJ Induction Ceremony. Estes has been asked to help strengthen the Atlanta Association of Black Journalists Student Consortium whose members include students from the Atlanta University Center, Georgia State University and other area colleges and universities.

Stephanie Y. Evans, Ph.D., chair, Department of History and joint associate professor of History and African American & Africana Women’s Studies, made a professional development presentation titled “The Publishing World” at the Southern Regional Education Board - Compact for Faculty Diversity Junior Faculty Professional Development Conference, Institute on Teaching and Mentoring in Atlanta.
Evans also served as conference panel chair of “Descendants of the Struggle: Discussions with the Descendants of W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, Madam C.J. Walker, and Dr. Charles Drew” and “Diary of a Harlem Schoolteacher: Research from the Jim Haskins Papers at the University of Florida,” for the Association for the Study of African American Life and History in Richmond, Virginia.

Evans was invited to attendee Harvard University Graduate School of Education’s Think Tank on Global Education and an invited conference panelist for “’My Passport Made Me Persona Non Grata: Insubordination, Quest and Voice in Black Women’s Study Abroad Memoirs” at Columbia University’s Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women Conference.

She recently secured a book contract with SUNY Press (State University Press of New York) for the manuscript Swag Diplomacy: Africana Memoirs as Guides to Youth Empowerment.

Evans is also organizer of the Department of History’s W.E.B. Du Bois 2012 Major Works Seminar Series, and she and CAU President Carlton E. Brown will be serving as the 2013 conference co-chairs. Seminar reading list and conference call for papers can be accessed online at http://www.cau.edu/Academics_History_Main.aspx. Additional information also can be found at www.professorevans.net.

Sandra Jean Foster, Ph.D., associate professor, Whitney M. Young, Jr., School of Social Work, mentored graduate student Sheva Cureton during the development of Cureton’s published article “Environmental victims: environmental injustice issues that threaten the health of children living in poverty,” in Reviews on Environmental Health. Volume 26, Issue 3, Pages 141–147, ISSN (Online) 2191-0308, ISSN (Print) 0048-7554, DOI: 10.1515/REVEH.2011.021, September 2011.

Christopher Hickey, M.F.A., professor, Department of Art, exhibited works in the following exhibitions: 30 Small Works, Gallery UP, Rock Hill, South Carolina (June 15-July 29, 2011) and Juror Barbara Schreiber selected 30 works from 152 entries from around the nation; Pressing Matters II, Atlanta Printmakers Studio Members Juried Exhibit, Hudgens Center for the Arts, Duluth, Georgia. (June 9-Sept. 3, 2011); and Atlanta Print Biennial International Exhibition, (Nov. 5- Dec. 3, 2011) at Barbara Archer Gallery in Atlanta. The inaugural Atlanta Print Biennial, organized by the Atlanta Printmakers Studio, is an international juried exhibit of hand-pulled prints and works on paper produced by renowned artists from around the world. The 70 selected prints were chosen from more than 750 entries from the United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan.

Cimona V. Hinton, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Biological Sciences and Center for Cancer Research and Therapeutic Development (CCRTD), published a manuscript titled “ROS enhances CXCR4-mediated functions through inactivation of PTEN in prostate cancer cells” in the journal Biochemical and Biophysical Research Communications. The manuscript was co-authored by Mahandranauth A. Chetram, a fourth-year Ph.D. student, and Ayesha S. Don-Salu-Hewage, a third-year Ph.D. student in the Department of Biological Sciences and the CCRTD.


Veda Jairrels, J.D., Ph.D., professor of Exceptional Education in the Curriculum Department, wrote a review of the book Why Race and Culture Matter in Schools: Changing the Achievement Gap in America’s Classrooms by Tyrone C. Howard, which was published in the Education Review in May 2011. The Education Review is a project of the National Education Policy Center.

Glenn S. Johnson, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice, had two articles published in 2011. The first was “Black Women’s Involvement in the Environmental Justice Movement: An Analysis of Three Communities in Atlanta, Georgia” in Race, Gender, & Class, Vol. 18, No. 1-2, (June): 189-214. It was co-authored by Antoinette M. Gomez, M.A., M.S.W., bilingual child and family therapist for Project PAVE in Denver, Colorado, and Fatemeh Shafiei, Ph.D., Spelman College Department of Political Science in Atlanta.

Johnson also published “Environmental Justice and Transportation: An Analysis of Public Involvement at Pennsylvania Department of Transportation” in Race, Gender & Class, Vol. 18, No. 3-4, pp. (September): 347-371, co-authored by Kimberly L. Stephenson Triplett, Ph.D., Tennessee State University, Urban Studies Program.

Phyllis Lawhorn, M.A., assistant professor, Department of English, has revised the composition-reader Ideas in African American Thought: Reading and Writing about Self and the World, which was used at CAU for the courses College Composition and Advanced Composition. New to the ninth edition of Ideas is the writ-
Ronald E. Mickens, Ph.D., Distinguished Fuller E. Callaway Professor, Department of Physics, attended nine conferences and workshops, and made 10 presentations on his research and scholarly activities. Three presentations of particular significance were: the seventh International Congress on Industrial and Applied Mathematics (Vancouver, Canada, July 20, 2011), where he delivered an invited talk on “The Role of Dynamic Consistency in the Construction of Disease Models”; the 1073rd Meeting of the American Mathematical Society (Wake Forest University, September 24) where he gave an invited presentation on “Influence of Birth/Death Rate Functional Forms on Predator-Prey Dynamics”; and the 78th Annual Meeting of the American Physical Society’s Southeastern Section at Virginia Tech (October 20), where he presented a technical paper on “An Approximation to the Periodic Solutions of a Differential Equation of Abel.” He was also the event’s banquet speaker and delivered remarks on “The Genesis of the Edward A. Bouchet Book.”

Mickens also published six abstracts that summarized the contents of scientific presentations given at various conferences on the topics of nonlinear oscillations, mathematical epidemiology, and general methodologies relating to modeling of physical systems. Five manuscripts were either published or accepted for publication in peer reviewed scientific/mathematics journals.


Mickens’ other activities include reviewing scientific- and mathematics-based manuscripts for 15 peer-reviewed journals; serving on the editorial boards of Journal of Difference Equations and Applications, International Journal of Evolution Equations, and Computing in Science and Engineering; councilor to the Section on Philosophy and History of Science for the Georgia Academy of Science; and serving as a member of the American Institute of Physics, Advisory Committee on History and Physics.


Noran L. Moffett, Ed.D., associate dean and director of Field Services in the School of Education, has been elected president of the Georgia Education Research Association (GERA). He will begin his peer-elected term in October 2012. GERA is the official local affiliate of the American Education Research Association. As president-elect, he is now a member of GERA’s board of directors.

Moffett and his graduate research assistant Melanie Frizzell co-wrote the article “ATTENTION! All Schools Need Highly Qualified and Highly Effective Teachers NOW,” which was published in the fall 2011 edition of Teachers of Color magazine.

Murdell McFarlin, Ed.S., CAU-TV station manager and Mass Media Arts instructor, was selected as a 2011 National Faculty Fellow by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. McFarlin is one of 20 faculty members selected from colleges and universities from across the nation who competed for the honor. For 24 years, the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences has sponsored the highly competitive process in which 20 college television faculty are selected to participate in its Television Arts & Sciences Foundation National Faculty Seminar. The NATAS National Faculty Seminar exposes fellows to Emmy-award winning producers and directors of the nation’s highest-rated television programs for one week at its Los Angeles headquarters. The 2011 NATAS Faculty Seminar took place Nov. 8-12.

Chuma Okere, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Biological Sciences, presented a temporal profile of phospho-ERK 1/2 immunoreactivity in a discrete mesolimbocortical stress-responsive circuit following acute restraint in male rats, and presented a spatio-temporal activation of nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate diaphorase system within distinct subregions of the rat dorsal raphe nucleus by acute restraint stress during the 41st Annual Society for Neuroscience Abstract in November. Okere’s graduate students, Inez Smith and India Nichols, served as co-authors of both presentations.

Jamie Pleasant, Ph.D., assistant professor, Department of Marketing, published a peer-reviewed article titled “Brand Mistakes and Their Negative Impact on African American Consumers” in the Journal of Business and Economic Issues, October 2011. He also published another peer-reviewed article, co-authored by CAU professors Charles Moses, Ph.D., and Donald Vest and Charles Moore titled “Adapting the E.P.R.G Paradigm to Internationalizing Business Schools: A Conceptual Framework,” in the International Journal of Business and Social Science, October 2011.

He also has had the following papers accepted for conference presentations: “Establishment of HBCU Centers of Excellence – An Experiential Basis for a Future Educational Paradigm,” accepted by the American Association of Blacks in Higher Education Annual Conference in Atlanta; “Success Factors of Career Planning and Placement Centers: Provider/Supporter/Recipient Perspectives,” accepted at the World Business and Social Science Research Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, October 2011; and “A Cross Cultural Analysis of Consumer Identity Construct Prioritization,” (with Lydia McKinley-Floyd, Ph.D., dean School of Business Administration at Clark Atlanta University), accepted at the Allied Academies International Conference in Las Vegas in October 2011.

Sandra Rucker, Ph.D., associate professor and interim chair, Department of Mathematical Sciences, delivered the research presentation “A Detailed Analysis of the Duffing Harmonic Oscillator Equation” at the Sixth International Conference on Dynamic Systems and Applications, in Atlanta at Morehouse College, May 2011.

Rucker also was elected secretary of the Science Education Section of the Georgia Academy of Science for 2011-2013, a position she previously held from 2006-2007.

Rucker served as a panelist or reviewer for the National Science Foundation in June 2011 and was a reviewer for the National Science Foundation program in Arlington, Virginia, in June 2011.
Since the inception of Clark Atlanta University’s two parent institutions, Atlanta University (1865) and Clark College (1869), the school and its alumni have maintained an important dual role: creating and safeguarding the intricate, complex framework through which America sees African Americans — “Coloreds,” “Negroes,” and “Blacks” in previous generations — and, more important, the development of our own self-awareness. In essence, Clark Atlanta University is a window through which others can clearly see the struggle and progress of a people — today depicted with an increasingly broad stroke of cultural diversity — and a mirror through which we African Americans see ourselves. History also bears out that because of the many contributions of our alumni, CAU is responsible, at least in part, for how the world views America.

In the 1890s, alumnus James Weldon Johnson exhorted us to honor our past and stay the path toward freedom. In the 1920s, alumnus Fletcher Henderson gave America its swing. In the 1930s, during a second tour of duty at CAU, W.E.B. Du Bois informed the psyche of African Americans and the understanding of a nation with seminal works authored on these very grounds. In the 1960s, our students made history in their organized insistence upon equality, sparking the Atlanta Student Movement from the university’s Quadrangle and, subsequently, locating the Student Nonviolence Coordinating Committee’s headquarters not a mile away. In the 1970s, alumna Marva Collins proved to a nation that inner-city students previously tagged “learning disabled” had simply been “teacher disabled.” In the 1980s, alumna Pernessa C. Seele spread a balm of compassion underneath the global fight to end HIV/AIDS. In the 1990s, alumnus Bryan Barber proved that, even as “Outkasts,” we can enjoy cinematic success.

This tradition continues today. We invite you now to open the window and stand before the mirror for a glimpse at how Clark Atlanta University continues to set this dual perception. We invite you to experience the sight, sound and soul of CAU.
Sometimes a journalist has to be resourceful. As in, finding a way to film hundreds of people sans pants, riding the New York subway. Film crews, of course, aren’t supposed to board trains to film the annual “No Pants Subway Ride.” That would tip off unsuspecting commuters and ruin the joke. Digital journalist Andante Higgins (CAU ’02), covering the flash mob for NYPost.com, solved that problem by filming with his Blackberry.

“In this business you have to know when to play by the rules,” he says, laughing.

The San Francisco-born Higgins has been in the business since he was an undergraduate at Clark Atlanta, interning at CNN. His résumé includes stints traveling with Arizona Senator John McCain’s presidential campaign and with Katie Couric at CBS. His portfolio is wide-ranging — hence the subway ride story — but it also evidences a strong commitment to supporting the African-American community through journalism.

Higgins already had his eye on a TV news career when he transferred to Clark Atlanta from the City College of San Francisco in 1998. He’d taken a class in critical television viewing and it sparked a new dream. At the time he was working for the Breakthrough Foundation, which served youth at risk. He’d been appointed by the city to its Delinquency Prevention Commission, serving as the commission’s youngest president. But then he thought that journalism, with its ability to reach large audiences, might be the way he could make a difference. Higgins applied to and was accepted at Clark Atlanta, and declared mass communication as his major, with a focus on radio and TV production.

Today some of his strongest memories of undergraduate life are of sitting on the steps of the university’s news center wearing a shirt and tie, but jeans and Timberland boots, below camera level.

“I definitely had the TV news bug,” he says. “I was hanging out in the mass communications department. I learned how to edit, how to use cameras, how to write programs.”

His CNN internship led to his first broadcast story about the untimely death of R&B artist and actress Aaliyah. The piece featured “man-on-the-street” interviews, movie and other footage, plus Higgins’ stand-up narration. Was he nervous? Not so much, he says. He was

Digital journalist Andante Higgins has an impressive résumé and a commitment to helping the African-American community through his work.

By Jacqueline Conciatore
focused—and aware the segment was taped — so mistakes wouldn’t make it to air.

The CNN internship taught Higgins the ABCs of television news making — reporting, writing, editing and production. The student-produced cable news program aired at 4 a.m., and “we had the run of the place,” he says. He followed this positive experience with another at The Weather Channel, working primarily as a camera operator.

Upon graduation, Higgins returned to California to attend the University of California at Berkeley’s Graduate School of Journalism. There, he put into drive his desire to make a difference, and began covering stories with social justice angles.

**Straight Talk**

Sitting outside in bright sunshine, a young AIDS activist briefly gazes down in thought, looks up and tells Higgins, “I’m going to tell you what’s going on.” She gestures to the view in front of her. “Let’s say I walk down the street right now, into a group of 10 youngsters. She presses her finger to her temple. “Their whole mindset is, ‘That doesn’t apply to me. All the women that I mess with? Oh, she’s too fine, she’s too cute, she smells good. That doesn’t apply to me.’ That’s their whole thing.”

She’s sharing her frank opinion about why, compared to other groups, young African Americans are more likely to contract HIV/AIDS. Because she is so confident and animated, it’s the kind of video moment that really strengthens a story.

“This piece was great,” says Higgins, “because I traveled from the East coast to the West coast and spoke with people in the field who gave me the talk straight up. I went to Morehouse and spoke with students who were dealing with educating themselves. I spoke to people who were addressing women and HIV. I spoke to clergy and got why the church won’t address it. It was a great piece for its time — and it still stands out when I watch it today.”

Higgins generally isn’t generous in estimating his work. He says he doesn’t enjoy watching himself on tape.

“Most of the pieces that I’ve done? I’ve only given myself an ‘8.’ I’ve never given myself a ‘10’ and said ‘I really hit that one out of the park.’ But sometimes years later I look and think, ‘That was pretty good.’”

While at Berkeley, Higgins also produced a documentary series about the hot topic of gentrification, Bay View Hunter’s Point: San Francisco’s Last Black Neighborhood. This work and an internship with the CBS national news desk would eventually lead to a more permanent gig — which he holds to this day — as a CBS producer.

He worked for CBS Evening News with Katie Couric, producing daily newbreaks, cutting voice-overs, coordinating tape and writing headlines, as well as teasers for the broadcast. He also was embedded for nine months with Senator McCain on the campaign trail. Higgins’ duties ranged from reporting to producing, working the camera, doing interviews from the field for CBS radio and writing daily blog updates.

“I was on the road for a year, traveling from state to state to state to state, following every move John McCain made. I could recite his speeches in my sleep,” Higgins says.

He remembers the excitement of calling his news bosses from the road to say the up-til-then struggling campaign had taken a turn, suddenly the “house was packed” and things had clicked for McCain.

Today Higgins lives in a renovated brownstone in Harlem near the Apollo Theater. He juggles freelance assignments for CBS and other clients, often working 7-day weeks. He does some producing of corporate videos, and he joined BET News, where he helped launch the news show Weekly with Ed Gordon (currently on hiatus). One of his recent projects was a BET Christmas special, for which he served as floor producer.

**“We do more than that, don’t we?”**

In all of his network news assignments, Higgins says, he tries to advocate for accurate, representative coverage of the black community.

“It’s one of the reasons I got into the business. Back home in San Francisco, I knew when I watched the television news at night, whenever I saw black men, we were being dragged away in handcuffs. And we do more than that, don’t we?”

So despite warnings from some that for black men in network TV news there is a glass ceiling, Higgins pursued his goals.

“I felt they needed a black man in that newsroom to say, ‘Maybe we can do it another way,’” he says.

Black television journalists have to pick their battles, he adds, and offers one example. When comic and television actor Bernie Mac died, he and some of his colleagues had to lobby for a network’s airtime. The powers-that-be weren’t very familiar with Mac’s work, he says. The pro-Mac group had to point out that the late actor had starred in a network TV show and was in Charlie’s Angels and Ocean’s Eleven. But by the time the network OK’d it, it was too late.

“It’s unfortunate that we weren’t able to get an obituary package on the air for him,” Higgins laments.
On the Road with Kevin Tarr

“Opportunity does not knock, it presents itself when you beat down the door.” Translation: There are many opportunities in life that are missed because people aren’t persistent in their efforts to secure them. CAU senior Kevin Tarr, however, has done just the opposite in pursuit of life after college.

Tarr’s mother is from the West African country Liberia, but he was born and raised in Willingboro, N.J., and attended high school at the Burlington County Institute of Technology. He is one of three children and he and a sister are the only members of their family to pursue a post-secondary degree. Tarr’s love for creativity and film steered his ambition to become a full-length film director and editor, and his desire to gain knowledge from a prestigious mass media program and to be around other African Americans who were doing something positive led to his decision to attend Clark Atlanta.

Through this journey, Tarr, like many other college students, has had to endure bumps along the way. He has made significant detours in his life that have cultivated his road to success with the help of his mentor, Julian Dube, as the back seat driver. Those bumps have been the source of many life lessons that Tarr says he is “most grateful for because they’ve taught me how to be responsible for my actions, among other things.”

“Kevin has grown into a well-rounded student and a self-motivated young man who has what it takes to be productive in this society,” said Dube.

For his efforts, Tarr recently landed a semester-long internship with the most prominent sports media outlet, Entertainment and Sports Programming Network, commonly known as ESPN, as a highlight editor, which will begin this spring. Approximately 500,000 students sought the opportunity and he was one of four who was offered the esteemed internship.

“I feel amazingly blessed and humbled by this opportunity and I want to uphold CAU’s prestigious reputation at ESPN,” said Tarr. “I thank God for all that He is in my life and the purpose He birthed in me.”

Like many successful people, Tarr would like to one day open a hospital in his native country that would help cure sickle cell, HIV/AIDS and other diseases that are widespread among the people in Liberia and name it after his grandmother.

“That would bring me the greatest joy,” Tarr said.

Have things evolved since he started in network TV 10 years ago?

“I don’t know that it’s evolved,” Higgins says. “I still am angered when black people are not portrayed in the best light. I’m still angered when they’re missing from the news.”

Like so many successful people, Higgins is good at developing relationships. “I grab a mentor anywhere I can find one,” he says.

At Clark Atlanta, communications professor Reggie Mitchell “was just perfect in every way. He taught us everything,” he says.

History professor Vickie Crawford was also a mentor, as well as production manager Bryan Jenkins.

For young people considering TV news careers, Higgins has two pieces of advice. The first is: “Get your writing skills together. If you can write, you can do almost anything.”

In addition, he says, think, “multimedia.” Learn to shoot video and to edit. “This business is shrinking day by day,” he says. “Being versatile allows you to maintain employment and move yourself forward.” If you’re a one-person production shop, you’re more likely to get the enviable assignments.

He would know.

Jacqueline Conciatore is an editor at the National Science Foundation in Arlington, Virginia.
Classroom discussions about current events and news programming are essential, but as any student who hopes to make a living in the news business knows, actual broadcast studio experience is invaluable. At Clark Atlanta University, the students who serve as reporters and crew members for the daily television program NewsBreak are not only getting hands-on experience in what it truly means to gather and produce news, but also providing an irreplaceable service to the Atlanta community.

NewsBreak, which began in June 2008, currently airs weekdays at 4pm on CAU-TV, making its way into the homes of 1.2 million Atlanta viewers daily. Students who wish to be part of the team must have at least a 3.0 GPA and must submit a letter of recommendation from a faculty member. Applications are considered each semester.

CAU-TV Station Manager Murdell McFarlin is the driving force behind the broadcast, alongside coordinator Chaloea Hale, who helps train the student journalists and crew. McFarlin says that NewsBreak’s mission is “to give students real-life, hands-on, experience in electronic newsgathering for television and to equip our students to be competitive with any other professional news crew.”

The process of selecting what gets reported isn’t too difficult for the show’s producers. At NewsBreak, it’s more a matter of researching news that doesn’t get as much mainstream attention. McFarlin noted that they focus on stories that depict important campus activities, as well as happenings in Atlanta’s communities of color, especially stories that have regional and national impact and appeal.

NewsBreak also opens up a lot of doors for students when the opportunities afforded them are utilized properly. “Several students have found employment as a result of their work at
CAU-TV, which routinely gets published on YouTube,” McFarlin said. She added that the show has proved to be a springboard to Mass Media Arts majors honing their skills for positions in news writing and producing.

Junior Mass Media Arts major Lauren Fluker suggests that NewsBreak actually should be offered as a class. She also noted how beneficial the experience has been to her. “It’s a wonderful addition to my résumé,” Fluker said. “I got the opportunity to visit CNN and see how they run the studios, and some of the same fundamental skills we gained [at NewsBreak] were ones they used at CNN.”

While sharpening her craft and her leadership skills, Fluker also was the first student producer on NewsBreak, where her sports segment beat out 30 other college entries and won a national award from the Association of Higher Education Campus Television Administrators. It received the 2011 News/Sports Honorable Mention Award, beating out NYU, Notre Dame and UCLA.

The show also teaches how best to manage real-life situations. There are many times, for example, when viewers call into NewsBreak to complain because they don’t like what’s being reported. McFarlin recalled “one viewer was very upset about a program [that spotlighted a certain actor] and called us and really told me off about having him on the channel because she didn’t care for him.” On a lighter note, viewers sometimes will compliment a show on its production, which usually includes a request to have DVDs sent to them.

Currently, NewsBreak is in the process of producing a documentary on the Tuskegee Airmen and, of course, they’re planning for future CAU event coverage. The irony of being a part of the NewsBreak team is that, like the news, they rarely take one.
One Woman’s War on Negative Imagery of Black Women in the Media

By Matthew Scott
W
riter, director, producer and Clark Atlanta University instructor April Lundy believes there’s a war going on every time people go to the movies or turn on the TV or a computer screen, and many are unaware of the devastation that is being brought down upon them as they watch. It’s a war of images — negative images of black female sexuality and black people in general that she speaks so passionately against.

“[Black female sexuality] has been utilized throughout history to maintain, in my opinion, a political caste system that keeps us kind of oppressed,” says Lundy. “I think that carries into the way we are portrayed in media today — specifically in the way our sexuality is portrayed.”

Lundy feels black women today are either portrayed as over-sexed, as in music videos, or asexual, where characters are never allowed to explore true love relationships. This mirrors past stereotypes where black women either played hookers, jezebels, cooks, maids and mammys. There also is what Lundy calls the newer stereotype of “the angry black woman.”

“There is this new thing in reality shows where black women are portrayed as gold diggers and then they end up fighting each other over nothing,” Lundy says, noting that the trend took off following the appearance of the villainous Omarosa Manigault-Stallworth on NBC’s The Apprentice. Lundy fears that black women with bad attitudes have become a television staple — and more women are using bad behavior to attract attention and celebrity. “They have become bullies and that is their claim to fame,” she laments.

In essence, Lundy is trying to create an army of writers, directors and producers who will collectively produce enough positive content to offset negative stereotypes and upgrade the image of African-Americans overall.

Lundy, who is best known for her work as director of the reality TV series Being Bobby Brown and Keith Sweat’s Platinum House, has committed herself to teaching the next generation of black filmmakers how to combat these stereotypes and deal with some of the harsh realities of working in the television and film industries. She challenges students to critically analyze how blacks are portrayed in her African American Images in the Media course. In her Media Seminar course, she gives students the opportunity to create their own TV show or film and then teaches them how to package, pitch, market their ideas and create a business plan to get their projects picked up by a studio. In essence, Lundy is trying to create an army of writers, directors and producers who will collectively produce enough positive content to offset negative stereotypes and upgrade the image of African Americans overall.

During the 1990s, Lundy experienced first-hand the byproduct of much of the negative imagery she fights to eliminate today. After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in communications from Georgia State University, she followed in the footsteps of filmmakers before her, producing and directing music videos to practice her craft and gain notoriety. But Lundy found that black women were mostly relegated to roles as “video chicks” and not many had broken through to land director and producer roles — prime positions behind the scenes. Even though Lundy had done well partnering with others to start two video and film production companies during the 1990s, the industry’s culture of disregard and disrespect toward women stifled her development. Instead of getting opportunities to direct and produce, she kept getting offers to be a video chick and shake her own caboose.

“I turned down a lot of offers to be in music videos,” she recalls. “I was a producer and owner of a company, and for people to overlook that and try to coax me to be in a music video was insulting to me.”

Through the two companies she co-founded, the Film Noir Group and Strange Fruit Films, Lundy produced a number of video and film projects that she felt were more positive in nature but, she admits, “didn’t go over well with the audience. That’s why I moved totally away from music videos.”

Lundy also found that the male-dominated film business often assumes that women lack business acumen. However, her diligent work ethic and experience, gained from working with clients such as Black Entertainment Television, Laface Records, MTV Networks and Burrell Advertising, helped her get past that issue.
“I had to empower myself by learning every aspect of the production cycle and learning a lot of technical things about every department that works on a production,” Lundy says. “Knowledge became power. I learned the difference between what’s needed for a project and what’s not needed because they would try to take advantage.”

Lundy’s early success as a local video director caught the eye of noted CAU professor Herbert Eichelberger, who taught Academy Award-winning director and producer Spike Lee, and in 1995, he invited her to speak to his students. Lundy says she “caught the teaching bug” because of that experience and promised herself that she would teach film studies at some point in the future.

In 2000, Lundy started a company she operates by herself called Sunsum, a Yoruba term she says means “soul.” Instead of taking on multiple production projects for fees, she began “creating content that I own [totally] or own a piece of, as opposed to providing a production service.” Soon after, she returned to Georgia State University, earned a Master of Fine Arts in digital filmmaking and art in 2005 and began teaching at Clark Atlanta University. She chose CAU largely due to the positive influence of Eichelberger, with whom she enjoys working, and the fact that her mother is a Clark Atlanta alumna.

This past year, Lundy taught a course studying the films of Spike Lee, and she has taught classes on screenwriting, the history of film and directing reality television shows as well. She also is the Film Concentration Coordinator and Director of Internships for CAU’s Communication Arts department, giving her great input into the career paths of the students in the film program. She regularly invites visual arts professionals to visit the school as guest lecturers to enhance the messages she delivers in the classroom.

“There are some young black women who are doing some great things, and I try to connect with them and bring them to CAU to speak so the students can see an example of the possibilities,” Lundy says.

Some of the young producers and directors Lundy connects with who are coming up the ranks include Crystle ‘Clear’ Roberson, who is in final production of her first independent film, Echo at 11 Oak Drive; Sequoia Blodgett, who is producing music videos for the hottest pop talent, including Justin Bieber, Bobby Valentino, Jacob Latimore and Kandi Burrus; and CAU alum Jihad ‘JZ’ Ziyad, who has worked behind the scenes on the Monique Show and The Game and is now is a set production assistant on the new BET sitcom Reed Between the Lines.

Lundy has four points of advice for black women aspiring to break into the film or television business:

**Believe** — Lundy stresses that you have to be willing to blaze a trail with few people to help you, so believing that what you want to achieve is possible is paramount to your success. “When I started there was only Julie Dash, and a lot of people didn’t know about her,” she says, noting that black women producers and directors were not the industry norm. “I had to have a vision and believe it was possible — believe what I didn’t see.”

**Think business at all times** — Lundy says black women who want to direct, write and be creative in the industry must realize that everything is business. Protecting your interests requires a tough, bottom-line attitude. Lose sight of that and you will lose the respect of your peers and quite possibly the rights to your creative projects.

**Be versatile** — Now that the film and television industries are more interconnected than ever, Lundy says, “You have to know both industries and both formats and understand the business differences in both of those industries...you have to be versatile to access as many opportunities as possible.”

**Diversify your contacts** — Lundy says black female filmmakers should avoid limiting their business and social circles to only black people. “Reach out and make connections across cultures and be diverse when it comes to resources,” she says.

This last point is extremely important for Lundy, because she says she rarely received return correspondence when she reached out to other black women in the industry in the 1990s. “I try to be different when it comes to the younger black female filmmakers that I know about. I connect with them on Facebook, I create a relationship with them. I don’t want to repeat what happened to me.”

It is those connections, combined with the skills to create that she believes will be the key to winning the war on negative imagery. “I think there are a lot more [well-known] black females working in filmmaking behind the scenes, but I don’t think we unify,” Lundy says. “We are yet to be a force to be reckoned with but I think we need to unify to do that.”
A sk anyone in the entertainment industry about his or her quest for professional success and celebrity, and they’ll likely recount each rejection with a level of detail screenwriters envy. Ask an African American in the entertainment industry the same question, and the conversation will take a bit longer. Beyond the typical rejections and thankless side jobs, the black experience in front of and behind the camera is generally fraught with subtle inequalities, exclusionary politics, inside baseball, shameless stereotyping and, oh yes, good old-fashioned racism, not to mention the dearth of roles for African-American artists.

Navigating a career under the bright lights, whether on the big screen or the tube, is more than a notion. The game is different in show business, and it takes more than paying your dues and a big break…or two…or three…to learn the rules. The learning curve is steep and those who have mastered it understand that show business more often than not means you’d better show up ready to do business so that no one “gives you the business.”

Hollywood heavyweight Larry Wilmore knows this all too well. “If you want to know how strong a person you truly are,” Wilmore says, “move to Hollywood and tell people you want to be in the entertainment industry. If you can survive the initial put-downs, the ego-crushing guffaws, and the grueling run of side jobs to stave off starvation before you’re ‘discovered,’ you might have a shot.”

The acclaimed actor, writer and producer started his career as a stand-up comic after a cameo as a theater student at California Polytechnic University in Pomona. Along his learning curve, he played a policeman on The Facts of Life; wrote for comedy series Sister, Sister and In Living Color; and co-created and produced The PJs with Eddie Murphy and The Bernie Mac Show. For his work on The Bernie Mac Show, he won an Emmy Award for writing the pilot episode, as well as a Peabody Award and a 2003 Humanitas Prize. From 2005 to 2007, he was consulting producer for The Office, recurring as the diversity consultant, Mr. Brown. He was supervising producer of The Jamie Foxx Show and co-produced 24 episodes of The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air.

Since 2006, he’s appeared as the “senior black correspondent” on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, sharing observations on the black experience in America with humor and timing for which less experienced comedians would sell their souls. He also made appearances as a minister in the 2009 movie I Love You Man and the malevolent executive “Williams” in the 2010 hit Dinner for Schmucks. In 2009, he authored I’d Rather We Got Casinos and Other Black Thoughts, a book Barnes and Noble called “uproarious” and “sometimes disturbingly wise.” African-American readers might be more inclined to surmise that Wilmore is just “keeping it real.”

His next appearance brings him to a markedly different stage, the campus of Clark Atlanta University, where this semester he’ll share his expertise and insight on “making it” with a select group of 25 theater and mass media arts students. The working name of the course is appropriately titled, “Larry Wilmore’s Learning Curve.” Although his relentless bicoastal schedule persists, he’ll conduct monthly classroom seminars and dole out assignments just like died-in-the-wool professors of the Ivory Tower ilk.

“I want to share all of the things I wish I’d had someone tell me when I started out in the industry,” Wilmore says. “This is really exciting for me. It’s new ground because I’ve never taught in a formal classroom setting before, but I’m also expecting to learn a lot from the students. We’ll spend quality time talking about how to master the craft…and life.”
“Morris in the Morning” Baxter wakes Atlanta up at 6am weekdays with a positive outlook and hot jazz.
As groups like the Delphonics and the Chi-lites dotted the 1970s R&B landscape with harmonies syncopated to allow for precision choreography, music lovers on Clark Atlanta University’s campus (then Clark College) were singing another tune. In 1974, Jazz 91.9 WCLK became the first federally licensed African-American educational FM station in Georgia with just 54 watts, and from its inception, the music format was as American as you can get — jazz.

“The vision from day one was to leverage the art form, not just in response to a void in the local market, but more as keepers of a precious cultural icon,” says the station’s general manager Wendy Williams, who joined WCLK in 1994 when it boasted just 2,500 watts.

Today, the 6,000-watt station continues to offer classic and contemporary jazz, as well as gospel, Latin, reggae and blues music. As an affiliate of both National Public Radio and Public Radio International, the station also provides a broad platform of unbiased news and talk programming, from campus happenings to national perspectives, and includes respected journalists like John Hockenberry, Michel Martin and Tavis Smiley.

“We were always the town crier,” Williams recalls. “I remember a time when people would just show up with typewritten press releases and ask, ‘Can you run this on the air for us?’ And we would. It’s really cool that all these years later we’re still providing pretty much the same level of community access, although our scope now is definitely global.”

The Jazz of the City also serves as a learning laboratory for students in the university’s Mass Media Arts department. Under WCLK’s care, 98.1 WSTU-FM provides hands-on training for students aspiring to careers in radio, as well as those who simply want to fill the airwaves with their hip-hop and R&B playlists.

“We have a pretty loyal following throughout the AU Center,” says sophomore Bianca Chavez, part of the student station’s PR team.

Altogether, the station offers a veritable feast of music, public affairs and community information for its 123,000 weekly listeners, 75 percent of them male.

“Where else in one day could you join in morning meditations over a funky jazz groove, hear Nancy Wilson’s take on what’s hot in the industry, get health-care tips for the men in your life, and then dance the night away to the sounds of Big Band jazz? And that’s just on Wednesdays,” laughs on-air personality Morris Baxter, whose daily weekday morning show, Morris in the Morning, faithfully reminds listeners to “stay positive!”

In addition to catering to its members, the station also offers artists an invaluable platform. To ensure the perpetuation of this music genre, WCLK affords local artists one of the only outlets in the area to showcase their music on the air. The station introduced vocalists Lizz Wright, Donnie, and Grammy award-winning songstress India Arie to the Atlanta market long before their first CDs were released. Arie credited Jazz 91.9 FM WCLK and its on-air personalities on her first CD. But the station has long enjoyed relationships with a diverse spectrum of artists, from Abbey Lincoln and Roy Ayers to Joshua Redman and Rachelle Ferrell.

“Jazz artists know that when they’re in Atlanta or simply on the radar, our doorway and our ears are open,” Williams says.

“I believe it’s exactly this openness that accounts for our success,” says Lisa K. Mosley, vice chair of the station’s board of directors. “Our strength is in our ability to hear what our members are saying to us. WCLK isn’t just about music or programming, we’re really a community — an informed, harmonious community. And with the continued and increased support of current and new members, our community will continue to grow and groove.”

For more on Jazz 91.9 FM programming and membership, visit www.wclk.com.
It’s a cold Thursday night and students spill into Woodruff Library’s Exhibition Hall bantering back and forth about the day’s events, class assignments and weekend plans. In the front of the room sits a diminutive woman whose pronounced calm speaks volumes. As the student public relations forum comes to order, she sits quietly awaiting her turn to speak. As she recounts her career journey, her pedigree is evident. With each word, it becomes easier to understand why Dee Dee Cocheta is a sought-after publicist, the founder of her own PR firm and an award-winning brand strategist.

Cocheta’s ABC Publicity is a public relations and marketing firm based in Atlanta and New York. The agency’s services include lifestyle, entertainment and multicultural marketing, with a special focus on clients who don’t consistently get the attention they deserve. But don’t be fooled by the firm’s altruistic aims. Its client files are impressive. Cocheta’s contact list could be mistaken for a who’s who among who’s hot at any given moment, from the Democratic National Committee to John Casablancas Agency Fashion Shows, to the Showtime Network’s The NEXT series and CAU’s own author célèbre Daniel Black.

But the grandmother — yes, grandmother — of three’s mark in the world of PR and marketing is outstripped only by her mark in another, the world of hip-hop.

As she talks to students — each now spellbound and hanging onto her every word — about professional PR standards and the ethics of management, names like KRS One and Killer Mike effortlessly dot her presentation. Students’ hands begin to rise as if choreographed, and the conversation takes a decided, albeit brief, turn to the latest news in rap. No one seems to mind. By now, Cocheta’s warmth, humor, passion and sincerity have won over the entire room, panel included.

“As a Native American growing up in Portland, Ore., I had a definite sense of who I was,” Cocheta says. “Music had always been a part of my family’s experience, from the drums at pow wows, to my father’s country music, my grandfather’s swing jazz and my mother’s diverse tastes in Elvis and Led Zeppelin. My mother also wanted me to be universal in my thinking,” she recalls. “She had me read all types of books, attend events, and listen to all types of music. By the time I first encountered rap in the early 1970s, as it was being birthed, it made sense to me as an amalgamation of all those types of music.”

Her roots in the genre are organic. She began break dancing and steeping herself in the fashion and style of hip-hop as it was forming in the 1980s.
“By the time I was in high school, I’d become known as a ‘Hip-Hoppa,’ promoting concerts and assisting artists with their marketing. Hip-hop became, as they say, ‘my first love.’

Married for 23 years and the mother of seven, Cocheta’s life has been filled with lots of loves since then. As a student at Portland Community College, she also fell in love with Clark Atlanta University.

“The recruiters made strong, lasting impressions when they would visit our school. They made me feel like a part of the university before I arrived on the campus. It never mattered that I wasn’t African American. I felt a deep connection to the university, a sense of being at home with family. I still do,” she says. “My professors and counselors always took the time to make sure I was on track and they educated us beyond what was in the books by providing real-world business insight. They also gave us a push when we needed it, like family.”

Cocheta graduated with a B.A. in marketing in 1996, a milestone in which she takes great pride.

“Growing up, even though my family was labeled ‘poor,’ I learned to take what was considered negative or weak and turn it into a strength. CAU’s motto inspired me to embrace that and use it as a career tool. The university motto, ‘I’ll find a way or make one,’ is pretty much my outlook on life,” she says, and her career path.

After years as a producer and marketing executive in the radio industry, Cocheta took a leap of faith and decided to go it alone. When she opened ABC in the late 1990s, it was the South’s first boutique agency focusing on music and entertainment, but her relationships and reputation among artists gave her credibility. Over the past decade, she’s worked with CHUCK D and his label Slam Jamz, KRS One, Professor Griff, Almighty Kay Gee, DJ Benny D, Kangol and Killer Mike.

“It is a man’s world in the entertainment industry and when I started, there were not many women role models or mentors,” she recalls. “Still, I always treated everyone the same, regardless of gender, because business is business.”

But Cocheta never allowed her gender to become a stumbling block. Today, she applies that same wisdom to her latest clients, Arrested Development and Isaac Hayes III, son of the late music icon Isaac Hayes. Having been a part of the hip-hop movement from the ground up, Cocheta says that the past decade has changed the landscape considerably, for better and for worse.

“From a business standpoint, ‘selling out’ was something we would never do in the beginning. Now, many new artists give in to the commercialized appeal of rap and dumb down their unique voices. Even worse, some sign their lives or companies away to make the quick buck, not considering the repercussions. On a positive note, however, the enduring culture and its broadening scope have allowed older and younger generations to connect, whether it’s through the music, the clothing, or dance,” she says. In addition, Cocheta adds, “Hip-hop today is universal. You can go to any country and connect with people through it, even if you can’t speak the native language.”

If time has impacted the genre, Cocheta says, technology has, too. Harkening back to its earliest days when people gathered on streets with boom boxes and rhymes, she says that the Internet and new media have become the virtual street, making the connections instant and global. Of course the “downside to this,” she adds, “is that all of the negative aspects of hip-hop can be spread with the same scope and speed.”

Today, you can see three generations come together living the hip-hop life because it’s been a part of each generation’s experiences.

“It bothers me, “ Cocheta admits, “that some people think hip-hop is all about thugs and living a criminal life. That’s not at all what the culture represents. It’s borne from giving voice to ideas and perspectives with homage to the real-world experiences that precipitate them. Just because artists choose to speak a certain way or wear certain clothing doesn’t make them any less of a person, nor does it make their ideas any less valuable than someone’s who wears a three-piece suit to work.”

Cocheta counsels artists that their’s is an industry that demands time, effort and excellence. She’s a testament that hard work pays off.

“No one is just handing out careers in PR or in the music industry, especially not in this economy,” she reminds the room full of young, budding PR executives, all now fully intrigued by Cocheta’s swagger and her smarts.

“You have to be committed to find a way…or make one,” she counsels.

Class dismissed.

Editor’s Note: Dee Dee Cocheta is currently working on her memoirs in Portland, Oregon. Her web site is www.ABCPublicity.com
When experts converge on the Clark Atlanta University campus in 2013 for a conference commemorating W.E.B. Du Bois, Ph.D., they will not only advance the academic understanding of one of the world’s great scholars, they also will help CAU capture the often overlooked legacy he left there.

“People do not associate Du Bois with Clark Atlanta University. We hear about his alma maters, Fisk and Harvard, and the NAACP, where he worked many years,” says Stephanie Evans, Ph.D., chair of CAU’s history department. “CAU is one of the hidden facts of his history.”

That happened despite Du Bois having spent 23 years — the bulk of his teaching career — on the faculty of what was then Atlanta University, from 1897 to 1910, and again from 1933 to 1943.

The commemoration is more than a conference. It is part of one of the more ambitious series of academic events ever held on campus. Leading up to 2013, Evans has organized a year-long series of monthly seminars on Du Bois’s major works. It began January 20, 2012, with Arthur McFarlane, Du Bois’s great-grandson, participating in a discussion titled “Descendants of the Struggle.” The activities culminate in February 2013, the 50th anniversary of Du Bois’s death, with “W.E.B. Du Bois and the Wings of Atlanta,” an event that promises to be one of the best conferences yet devoted to his scholarship.

The mission to reclaim Du Bois’s legacy as CAU’s own was clear — pre-destined even — as soon as Evans assumed the history department chairmanship in 2011. She had access to a treasure trove of information available to her in her undergraduate career at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, where Du Bois’s papers are archived. Her academic research, including the book *Black Women in the Ivory Tower*, focuses on some of the accomplished, African-American women scholars who traveled in Du Bois’s intellectual circle.

**A year of reflection and appreciation**

After recognizing that 2013 would be the 50th anniversary of Du Bois’s death, “I kind of panicked, but I had to get involved,” she says. Evans’ first order of business was to enlist CAU President Carlton E. Brown as conference co-chair. He gladly agreed. “You have to seriously steep yourself and study. Everything I have done up to this point has prepared me for this.”

The conference is no less important to one of its chief sponsors on campus, Joseph Silver, Ph.D., CAU’s provost.

“We have an obligation,” says Silver, “to make sure we not only own Du Bois’s legacy, but celebrate it and become the custodian of that legacy.”
The seminar series and conference will have more faculty participation than any single conference in recent memory — a testament to the enduring themes Du Bois addressed, as well as to the interdisciplinary nature of his work. Several alumni who teach at other institutions are participating as well.

Kurt Young, (M.A., ’94; Ph.D., ’02), an associate professor of political science at the University of Central Florida, argues that Du Bois’s broad scope of work demands as much time as possible.

“It’s difficult to limit yourself to one aspect of Du Bois’s career in serious academic study,” he says. “He spoke to the black experience and connected it to the broader experiences of all humanity. There’s no quick fix to understanding that it’s a process.”

The Soul of Black Scholarship

When Du Bois arrived at Atlanta University, it was the start of a productive period for the young scholar, during which he published *The Souls of Black Folk*, the seminal book on the black middle class that brought concepts such as “double-consciousness” and “the Talented Tenth” into the vernacular of the African-American struggle.

While at the university Du Bois famously quarreled with the other preeminent black educator of the day, Booker T. Washington, deriding the slow-progress approach to equality that Washington had championed in his famous Atlanta speech, “The Atlanta Compromise.”

Du Bois left the university in 1910 to launch and edit the country’s most enduring civil rights magazine, *The Crisis*, for the NAACP, which he co-founded. After his return in 1933, Du Bois launched *Phylon*, an Atlanta University Press journal of race and culture that published the top black scholars, poets and artists of the day. He also published his finest piece of historical scholarship, *Black Reconstruction*, a work that challenged conventional thinking on the successes and failures of the post Civil War era in the South.

Graduate education and research, parts of what make today’s Clark Atlanta University a key contributor to the Atlanta University Center (AUC), thrived with Du Bois on the faculty. Nurturing a community of professors and degree-seeking African-American graduate students was no small feat in the Deep South. But it created a tradition of scholarship that alumni have spread throughout academia.

“Even today, if you look at a lot of the historically black institutions in terms of faculty in the Southeast, a lot of the faculty have come through Atlanta University,” explains Silver. “And for the long time when society was not as open as it is today, Atlanta University was just about the only game in town.”

Du Bois founded the university’s School of Social Work while conducting research that would synthesize all angles of African-American life in the South.

“Du Bois made us the center of critical thought around politics, economics and sociology,” Silver adds.

Graduate Education and Research: the Past as Prelude

Du Bois established the level of scholarship that made CAU a natural choice to be the graduate school for the AUC. Reclaiming Du Bois and re-emphasizing graduate education in many ways go hand in hand.

“Clark Atlanta has to take its rightful place in the AUC as well as its status as a research institution,” Silver says. “One of the ways we can start doing that is by fully embracing our legacy.”

For Shirley Williams-Kirksey, Ph.D., dean of the CAU School of Arts and Sciences, reclaiming Du Bois’s legacy and giving more visibility to his work will in some small way start to bring back the sense of African-American scholarship that once existed not only at the collegiate level, but throughout the community.

When she was a schoolgirl, prior to integration, many African-American grade school teachers made sure students knew about the country’s leading black intellectuals.

“I understood the importance of these people because I grew up under segregation,” says Williams-Kirksey.

Decades later, as a professor who became dean in 2003, Williams-Kirksey not only had a chance to learn more, but to preserve: She was charged with keeping the university’s *Phylon* back catalog. The first three cherished volumes in her archive are editions edited by Du Bois himself, and they show how he made *Phylon* an outlet for his fellow faculty members to participate in the highest-level discussions of race and identity.

Now, Williams-Kirksey, along with Evans, Silver and many other CAU faculty, are looking at how *Phylon*, which ceased publication for financial reasons in 2001, can be resurrected, possibly as a byproduct of the 2013 conference.

Another great development to come out of the conference is that Du Bois will become a tangible presence at the institution he helped make great. Evans has organized an alumni class challenge which will enable the university to commission a bust of Du Bois that will be displayed on campus.

“This is the graduate school of the AUC, and Du Bois championed education,” she says. “Can’t you just envision a bust of him on campus? Something every doctoral student would visit immediately before going in to defend his or her dissertation?”
Metro Atlanta exudes so much African-American entertainment and athletic energy that its atmosphere crackles with potential. Thanks to Clark Atlanta University President Carlton E. Brown and School of Business Administration Dean Lydia McKinley Floyd, CAU is now harnessing that energy to illuminate new economic opportunities for students.

Brown and Floyd have launched the Clark Atlanta University Sports and Entertainment program (CAUSE) in the School of Business. This exciting new initiative has a two-fold mission. The first is to provide an academic on-ramp for future generations of agents, managers, financial advisors and lawyers to learn how to exploit marketing opportunities for their talented sports and entertainment clients.

The second, and according to Brown, most important part of the curriculum, will be to embed in each CAUSE student an understanding of and appreciation for ethics and integrity as well as business acumen. The program’s alumni “will guide their clients to realize that they don’t have to go after every fast dollar, and will know how to create a process to maximize economic opportunities and build personal and community wealth,” said Brown.

Initial Courses
CAUSE is a multidisciplinary initiative that will award a certificate. While based in the business school, the program is open to all CAU students. In 2012, juniors and seniors can take the program’s initial courses as electives during the winter/spring semester.

The key class is Entrepreneurial Thinking, which focuses on developing a business plan, evaluating venture proposals, initiating projects and obtaining early financing. Students also will analyze how to acquire a management and equity position in a new or existing business.

The companion course, Sports and Entertainment Marketing, was designed to teach students how to apply marketing principles to sports and entertainment, and other events and activities. Emphasis is on branding, licensing, and nam-
ing rights; business foundations; concessions and on-site merchandising; economic foundations; promotion; safety and security and human relations. Over time, another half dozen CAUSE undergraduate and graduate courses in areas including management and law will be added.

**A Competitive Advantage**

Tee Foxx is representative of the critical mass of local experts who will serve as guest lecturers or adjunct professors. She is the CEO and founder of the Atlanta-based Foxx Entertainment Group, a 12-year-old branding, production and management agency that specializes in sports, entertainment and cause marketing.

Foxx, whose clients include every black quarterback in the National Football League, select NBA players and NFL stars such as the New Orleans Saints’ Mark Ingram, said students must learn to live by her watch words: integrity, loyalty and dependability. The objective, she said, is to help athletes and entertainers create and market their personal brand, and then protect it and themselves.

“Trust is the basis of my relationship with clients. So many get taken advantage of, but mine know that I will get them involved in the right type of promotion, deal or venture,” she said.

Atlanta, with its established professional sports and entertainment networks, is the right place for students to gain expertise during CAUSE-related internships and events. Last November, *The New York Times* reported in “Stars Flock to Atlanta, Reshaping a Center of Black Culture” that a lower cost of living has attracted nearly 250,000 African Americans to relocate in the metro area since 2005. Their ranks include many athletes and stage, screen and musical luminaries who live, work or invest in the bustling city.

Atlanta’s entertainment celebs include Cee Lo Green, Gladys Knight, Ludacris, OutKast, Usher and Jermaine Dupri. Turner Broadcasting and serial television show and filmmaker Tyler Perry’s headquarters and production facilities are located in what some call the Black Hollywood.

**Genesis**

When Brown became CAU president in 2008, he was ready to establish a sports and entertainment program. “It was obvious that we had connections in those areas, and I knew that there would be a positive response from students and our alumni,” he said.

There also was an understanding that when Atlanta’s pro athletes and entertainers met socially that the conversation inevitably turned to how they could create, maximize, multiply and sustain income streams beyond their years of greatest popularity.

Brown shared his ideas with CAU alumnus Chaka Zulu, who is Ludacris’s manager, hip-hop entrepreneur Russell Simmons, Hank Aaron, ex-Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young and others. But his vision gained form when Floyd became dean of the business school in 2010. The duo agreed that CAUSE would advance scholarship of popular culture as it impacts sports and entertainment, attract professionals and spur discussion on how those sectors could affect Atlanta’s economy.

Clark Atlanta also will draw upon its stellar current and former athlete and entertainer alumni ranks to tell and show students how the sports and entertainment industries really operate.

Currently, CAU’s most prominent entertainment alumnus is director Kenny Leon, who recently had two acclaimed plays, *Mountaintop* and *Stick Fly* on New York’s Broadway simultaneously. He also is the artistic director of Atlanta’s True Colors Theatre Company. Leon, who applauds the CAUSE program, suggested that its students “attend our shows and see professionals at work, and audition for our pre-professional show to get unparalleled on-the-job training.”

In sports, the CEO and founder of All Pro Sports & Entertainment, C. Lamont Smith, has been selected twice by *Sports Illustrated* magazine as one of the Top 100 Most Influential Minorities in Sports. He also was chairman of the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association, an organization with which CAUSE intends to establish a relationship.

Other alumni include Jody Mayfield, music composer; C. LeFoy Grant, television editor and producer and founder of HBCU Unit Network and Bryan Barber, director of *Idlewild*.

Optimism grounded in reality buoys Dean Floyd. She believes that CAU’s academic excellence and connection to the community; burgeoning student interest in sports and entertainment management and the competitive advantage of Atlanta’s cornucopia of local professionals is unbeatable.

“People in those fields are chomping at the bit to come and help CAUSE, and they will show [and teach] students how to succeed both inside and outside the classroom,” Floyd said.
Tens of thousands of young men and women will graduate from undergraduate and graduate programs in May, saddled with debt and no job prospects. It’s a pretty safe bet that Jamael Harris won’t be one of them. Jamael, who will earn an MBA, is not only a pioneer in Clark Atlanta University’s new graduate-level supply chain management program, he’s also getting hands-on experience at Home Depot, one of the nation’s largest and most profitable corporations.

Jamael has been able to take part this extraordinary experience in part because of CAU’s tradition of linking its students to top executives at Atlanta’s top corporations, through seminars, lectures, mock interviews and other partnerships, but what those students do with those opportunities is what matters most.

During the first year of his MBA program, Jamael met Chuck Kinnebrew, Home Depot’s senior director of indirect procurement, and a member of the program’s board of directors made up of industry executives.

“They’re responsible for providing strategic direction and guidance to ensure that students get opportunities in terms of internships and networking, and making sure the program is relevant in the marketplace,” Jamael explains.

After participating in a mock interview, Kinnebrew invited Jamael to keep in touch, which he did by sharing updates about his coursework and GPA and information about outside activities and bouncing ideas off of this valuable contact. He ultimately was invited to spend a week shadowing strategic sourcing managers, which he describes as an informal interview. When he was offered an internship, Jamael proactively explained the kinds of experiences that he hoped to have.

“The project they put me on gave me those types of intangibles — project management, leadership, and strategic and analytical thinking,” Jamael says. “I demonstrated that I had the aptitude and asked for an opportunity to do a co-op.”

His wish was granted, and Jamael works part-time during the semester and full time during breaks.

“I didn’t know what to expect at CAU, but the professors are markedly different, well-respected in the field, and actually care. The class size is such that it encourages and reinforces relationships with the professors. For me, it’s an ideal environment,” Jamael says.

He recalls that the first-year coursework was very challenging, forcing students to think outside of the box and also form strong bonds with each other. They’re in the “trenches together,” he said.

“I’m applying what I’m learning and it’s helping me succeed at Home Depot,” Jamael adds. “And I leveraged what I learned in year one into an internship and then the co-op. That speaks to the level of the program’s rigor and the confidence instilled in CAU MBA graduates.”
In many ways, Johnnetta McSwain is one of life’s miracles. She and her sister grew up in an extraordinarily dysfunctional home that was mired in emotional, sexual and physical abuse. It was so horrific that they would sometimes hide under their house to escape their tormentors. As a coping mechanism, Johnnetta would sometimes don a white sheet marked “WW” for Wonder Woman, spin around and fantasize about fending off their tormentors.

“I believed even at that young age that I only had two choices. Either I was going to ruin my life and die or I was going to fight back and survive as a victor,” recalls Johnnetta.

It’s that remarkable sense of hope and tenacity that enabled Johnnetta, who dropped out of high school and became a single mother, to repeatedly take the GED exam until she passed it at age 20, and then at 30, enroll in Kennesaw State University, where she earned an undergraduate degree in three years. She then went on to earn a master’s degree in social work with honors from Clark Atlanta, where she is now pursuing a Ph.D.

And even more remarkably, Johnnetta says she feels no resentment or bitterness for her abusers.

“I just believe that from the time I was conceived, that this was my life and my destiny to become who I am today,” she says. “Clark Atlanta, and the School of Social Work in particular, has opened a lot of doors for me that I couldn’t have opened on my own.”

In addition to being the published author of Rising Above the Stars (SCARS), that is going to be produced on stage and perhaps on film, she is the subject of a powerful, Emmy-award documentary titled The Road Beyond Abuse, and the founder of an organization called Breaking the Cycle, Beating the Odds, which works to enable women to find their way out of abusive and destructive situations. She also is a motivational speaker who has traveled all around the United States to empower other women and families through workshops and speeches.

Johnnetta says that the most important message that she tries to impart to women is that failure is not an option, education gives you options and pride and sets you apart.

“I love what I do. And anytime I can help a young girl or woman, save one life, or encourage one person, then I’ve done my job,” she says. “Everywhere I go is an opportunity to touch somebody’s life and I try to do that every day.”
In African-American communities across the United States, students, males in particular, are dropping out of high school at alarming rates. In addition to being a key contributing factor in the disproportionately high black unemployment rate, it also puts at risk the nation’s ability to be globally competitive in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields.

David Brown, an Atlanta native who will earn an undergraduate degree from Clark Atlanta’s School of Education this spring, is hoping to reverse that unfortunate trajectory. David applied to CAU with an eye toward teaching middle school students. But after spending a summer with working five- and six-year-olds in 2009, a whole new world opened up to him.

“I initially thought I wouldn’t like it. Everyone says they’re much harder to deal with because they don’t listen very well,” says David, who found himself having as much fun as the children when he took them to the playground, basketball court or swimming pool.

He believes that the key to student success is engaging them in the learning process as early as possible. In addition, there is a deep-seated need for more black male teachers and role models, which is a void he hopes to help fill. Equally important, he adds, is that teachers make kids feel like they truly care.

David’s vision for a modern education system includes providing programs, activities, and other opportunities through which teacher and students can interact on a more personal level so that the children feel at home in school, and as a result, feel more open to and engaged in the learning process.

“I’d like to implement a before or after school program where kids can come to talk freely to talk and that creates an environment in which we can learn more about who the kids really are,” David said. “Once you gain their trust it’s a lot easier for them to open up and learn.”

CAU’s education curriculum requires students to log in many hours in classrooms at Atlanta public schools. “The school prepares you for the classroom and wherever we end up, we’ll be just as prepared as anyone else,” David says.

He’s also already seeing his caring approach in action.

“I’m currently interning in a science lab class where one student was not very interested in science and didn’t put in much effort,” David says. “After spending time encouraging him, he now tries [to master the subject.] That’s so much of what you try to accomplish as a teacher.”

After graduation, David plans to spend a few years on the professional basketball circuit overseas. He came very close to signing with an agent last spring.

“It was tough to hold off going pro, but definitely worth it,” he says. His education — and that of his future students — was far more important.
Tempestt McBride is a bundle of enthusiasm and energy, who embodied Clark Atlanta’s theme of “making a way” long before she first stepped on campus. Tempestt began her undergraduate career at Tuskegee University, which had offered her a full scholarship, but was almost immediately dissatisfied because it didn’t offer many opportunities for her to participate in the artistic endeavors she loves so much.

“I realized that I wanted an institution that would allow me to do what I loved most, so I did some research and found out that Clark Atlanta had one of the nation’s best mass media arts programs,” says Tempestt, who graduated with a mass media arts degree in December.

Since coming to CAU, Tempestt has become the voice of the campus radio station, WSTU. As she recalls, one of her professors noted her energetic personality and encouraged her to join the station. It was a natural fit.

“My first day on air I realized how easy it was and it just felt like I was talking to a lot of people, which is what I like to do,” she says, adding that other students responded positively to her program, calling in to discuss the music she played.

She’s also worked as an intern at Jazz 91.9 FM, CAU’s public radio station, which she’s enjoyed because it offers a greater variety, including the opportunity to talk about the topics of the day.

But it wasn’t Tempestt’s first experience on the radio. After graduating from high school, she interned at a local station in her hometown of Augusta, Ga., where she did some editing, conducted research for the on-air personalities and created street teams and community outreach promotions. She also was given the opportunity to co-host some shows, which was unprecedented. Tempestt credits her clear passion for the news, music and community interaction for helping her win opportunities that others didn’t. That passion has extended to spreading the word about the value of a CAU education on recruitment trips with President Carlton Brown and the director of admissions.

Last summer Tempestt won a Tavis Smiley Group’s Sheryl Flowers scholarship and internship, which she describes as “an internship like no other” that enabled her to “do absolutely everything,” including editing, booking and scheduling, production, promotion. She also worked on the Poverty Tour that Smiley and Princeton professor Cornel West conducted last summer to highlight the nation’s economic inequality.

Her hard work was rewarded. In February Tempestt is scheduled to travel to Los Angeles to spend a week working for the Smiley Group.

“I’ll be assisting in every possible aspect,” she says “They’ll have me doing the things I learned here at WCLK.

In an ideal world, she will be taken on full-time or secure a job at BET. Tempestt says she also wants to continue her work recruiting students to CAU.
What you notice first is her infectious smile. The gentle lilt in her voice follows, cementing her Southern pedigree. But Giget Johnson is no wilting daisy. She's a Panther in every respect.

Thanks to exhortations from her mother and high school counselor, Rita Hector, the Covington, Ga., native applied for and received an Office of Naval Research Prism D scholarship, which made her dream of attending Clark Atlanta easier to realize. She graduated in 1995 with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in math.

“Dr. Abdulalim Shabazz, then chairman of the math department, inscribed on my brain that I could do anything with a degree in math. He was right,” Johnson says.

But her experience was based on much more than embracing all things numerical, and Johnson recalls her college years with swelling pride. “The opportunity to be among young, exceptionally bright students of color — all of us with unique aspirations to be our best — wasn’t something my classmates and I took lightly. That became our rallying cry. Today, I’m unapologetically proud to be a product of an HBCU and, to this day, the rewards from the relationships I made at Clark Atlanta are immeasurable.”

Johnson isn’t caught in a web of her own memories, though. Since 2010, she’s been an active “Stand Up for CAU!” volunteer, serving as vice chair of the campaign committee. “It’s important to me to pass on what I got at CAU to others. I’m not as concerned about giving back as I am about giving forward.”

Those who’ve known Johnson aren’t at all surprised by that kind of forward thinking. As a teenager, she sat for three months observing her father’s strength while he endured a federal trial in the city’s Richard B. Russell Building. By the time her father prevailed in his case, she realized that her calling was to the law. After graduating from Mercer University’s Walter F. George School of Law in December 2001, Johnson assumed the law practice of her father’s former attorney, Victoria D. Little, establishing the Law Offices of Giget C. Johnson, LLC, a boutique firm in downtown Decatur, Ga. Today, she handles her own criminal and civil cases before the bench in the Richard B. Russell Building.

“I’m concretely rooted in the idea that every client should leave my presence better off than they were when they arrived,” Johnson says. She is well equipped to support her professional convictions. Admitted to the State Bar of Georgia, she practices in state and federal courts, at both trial and appellate levels. She is admitted to practice before the Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia, the Supreme Court of the State of Georgia, the U.S. District Court in the Northern and Middle Districts of Georgia, as well as the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh and Sixth Circuits.

“Whatever it takes to solve a client’s equation, that’s what we’re going to do,” Johnson says.

Her passion for the community, especially children, is no less committed. “Recently, God opened the door for me to serve as guardian ad litem in juvenile court,” she explained. Now she devotes countless hours to representing deprived children, advocating for their best interests. In a system in which the Department of Family and Child Services is strapped for cash, and caseworkers are overworked and underpaid, willing professionals are needed to fill critical voids. Giget unselfishly goes beyond the call of duty, often going against the grain to ensure a child’s needs are met and that the necessary services are in place, ideally to safely reunite and reconcile families.

“I do this because of how much I care about my own son, Jaison Taylor,” she says. “I advocate for and treat the children who are placed in my care as if they were my own. The community owes this to these children and we are the community.”

People like Giget Johnson don’t spend time calculating their own lots. “I do all of this because it all adds up to a better future,” she says.
Randy Gunter was all set to attend Atlanta University’s School of Social Work in 1973, until he found that there were no university funds available to defray his expenses. He’d earned the B.A. in sociology from Central College in Pella, Iowa, and wanted to follow in the footsteps of giants like W. E. B. Du Bois and Whitney M. Young Jr. So, he instead accepted a full scholarship and graduate assistantship from the University of Georgia, where he earned a master’s in social work degree in 1977.

“Needless to say I was crushed because it was my dream to be a part of Atlanta University’s legacy and its tradition of preparing social change agents,” he remembers. “For me, it was a dream deferred. But, if at first you don’t succeed…,” he chuckles underneath his trademark smile.

Life has a circuitous way of creating humor that’s only funny long, long after the fact.

After a successful 17-year career at Georgia Southern College (now University), Gunter still hadn’t let go of his dream of attending CAU and decided to apply for the doctoral program in 1994. He was accepted again and, this time, received funding. Using loans and savings, he completed the program in 1999.

“This was important to me, personally and professionally,” Gunter said. “When I finished I felt equipped, ready for a mission of some sort.” In 2003, Gunter continued his career, serving as vice president for student affairs at Savannah State University until December 2008 when he retired. But the mission hadn’t even begun.

“I was two months into retirement when I got the call,” his smile grows. “I was settling into retirement and the voice at the other end of the phone was a jolt I wasn’t expecting.” That voice belonged to then newly appointed CAU President Carlton E. Brown who was calling his colleague out of retirement to serve as interim vice president for the Division of Enrollment Services and Student Affairs. And so Gunter returned to CAU in February 2009, going about his duties for the next seven months as if he’d never retired.

“Sure it was hard to come out of retirement, but I really enjoyed being back on campus,” Gunter admitted. “Because of my history with the university, I had a vantage point that allowed me to see lots of positive changes.” As a doctoral student, Gunter said he didn’t have time to mingle among the university community outside of the School of Social Work. He spent most of his day in Woodruff Library or in meetings with doctoral advisors and cohorts. He says he did, however, enjoy the occasional guest lecture and cultural events.

“Today, I feel that there is a greater sense of community at the university, a greater desire for people to work together beyond departmental lines and across disciplines,” he mused. “In my viewpoint, Clark Atlanta is a young institution with an historical narrative buoyed by fine examples of alumni achievement, faculty scholars and so many legendary figures. Still, I think that the university’s best days are ahead.”

Gunter didn’t realize that, while enjoying a second turn at retirement in September 2010, his were, too.

“I got that call again,” he laughs out loud now. “I didn’t even have to ask. I knew who it was on the line.” As a former vice president moved to another opportunity, Gunter was called back to CAU in
October 2010 to take up the interim role he had held the year before.

“If you watch Randy Gunter with students you know that there is a standard in place you can trust. There are high expectations and a depth of compassion that’s woven into a persona that simply draws students. He connects with our young men and women in a way that helps them grow, personally, academically and spiritually,” Brown said of Gunter.

When Gunter returned for a second turn as interim vice president for Enrollment Services and Student Affairs, he brought his trademarks along with him: his red-stringed key card, his baseball caps and that smile. Often, he could be heard telling students and staff alike, “I appreciate you.” And there has been much to appreciate.

“I believe that we promoted a style of leadership within the division that is consistent with the university’s overall strategic direction. Student leaders and staff members unselfishly went above and beyond the call of duty in reaching out to each other and the greater Atlanta community. It was a humbling experience for me to take an active role in the transformation of the university in terms of process improvements, resource and professional development, training and facility upgrades,” he added. “It was especially significant given the increasing demands by external agencies, and governmental entities for universities to become more accountable, innovative, and responsive to student needs. In addition, the uncertainties that many of our students and their families face in their efforts to fund their education were, and continue to be, seriously impacted by the economic downturn and politically charged climate facing us.”

For all of the smiles and laughter, Gunter’s commitment to students and his high expectations of them are no joke. In September 2011, he created a $5,000 book scholarship in the name of his former doctoral professor, Associate Dean Richard Lyle, for students in the School of Social Work. Recipients must have a cumulative GPA of 4.0.

“I encourage students to live life to the fullest and to not settle for mediocrity,” he exhorts. The challenges that our graduates face as they prepare for the global stage of employment, development and engagement will be many. However, I am confident that the university can prepare them to succeed in their endeavors.”

Of his days at CAU, Gunter said, “I am hopeful that my enthusiasm, positive attitude, and commitment to serving others found residence in the hearts and minds of the students with whom I worked. I hope, too, that students embrace the wisdom of the phrase first spoken by the late Honorable Shirley Chisholm, former congresswoman from New York: ‘service is the price we pay for the privilege of living on this earth.’”

Gunter, who returned to retirement Dec. 9, 2011, says he plans to catch up on his reading and hopes to teach at the graduate level in his hometown, Statesboro, Ga. He and his wife, Anne, also hope to get back on track with their original retirement plans, traveling the world.

“I’m pretty sure this portion of the mission is complete now…really complete,” he says.

We appreciate you, too, Dr. Gunter. So long…until we meet again.”
Bridge Builders or Stranded Travelers?

I failed my first software programming class and miserably so. In fact, I swore I’d never, ever engage in the discipline again. Ever. Set on becoming an electrical engineer, I had followed in the footsteps of my uncle, Clark College alumnus Alvin J. Frazier (’72) and in 1995 began my freshman year in CAU’s now-defunct School of Engineering. Why on earth would I need software programming?

So that I could embark on what has been an extremely fulfilling career as, you guessed it, a successful software engineer. Following a stint in 1999 as an engineering cooperative education student with BellSouth Telecom, I began a career track that has enabled me to work at some of the nation’s hottest companies, from Sony Online Entertainment and Broadcom to my present employer, Disney Interactive Media Group.

AT CAU, I learned that HBCUs offer a richly unique cultural learning experience in an academically challenging, highly competitive environment. However, in the 21st century, CAU can ill afford to rely simply on legacy and tradition, operating solely as a consumer of technology. This is a modern-day path to obsolescence.

From the dawn of time until the present, information has been withheld from certain populations as a means to elevate the history and social agendas of others. Too often, for example, one group’s story becomes buried under the revisionist spin of another’s, which is why so few know Jan Matzeliger or Otis Boykin. As HBCUs struggle to maintain and globalize our missions, documenting and actively telling our stories is more important now than ever. We must keep and set the pace by strategically applying technologies to tell our own stories, share our own discoveries and elevate our own discourse, rather than depending on others to do it for us.

The advent of open source technology provides a level playing field that empowers us to do this. In the simplest terms, “open source,” which typically applies to the software licensing arena, suggests two ideas, end-user collaboration and free, unrestricted distribution. Digital content is developed and used by people who could have no connection to one another, except for their interests in a particular project or body of work.

Technologically speaking, it is the “great equalizer” that puts HBCUs like CAU on a level playing field with titans like Sony, Broadcom, Disney, Google, Facebook, MIT and so many others. The key is access.

Now, as a lead senior software build engineer, my own contemplations of open source technology always bring me back to the Promenade. What if CAU amassed its content, knowledge, discoveries and stories and customized them into applications for students, alumni, faculty colleagues, prospective students, parents, businesses, foundation, research partners and friends around the globe? Imagine the new ideas, the new conversations, the new relationships, the outreach, the intake! Imagine the cost savings to the university!

Our ability to effectively compete in this new global economy will hinge squarely upon our ability to leverage these technologies to help sustain the vitality of our storied institution. Disparities in our application, access to and consumption of this technology is a microcosm of what exists globally in the ever widening gap for education and opportunity among minorities. We consume, yet rarely apply it. There is a distinction.

One of my favorite CAU professors, Dr. Musa Danjaji, always challenged us, saying, “Math is no different at CAU than it is at Georgia Tech. The difference exists only in your motivation and ability to apply it.” It was his belief in a naïve freshman trying to ‘find a way or make one,’ that propelled me onto my career path. I now believe that by adopting an open source framework, CAU can propel itself to new heights.

Depending on the perspective and how it is applied, technology can be an equalizer and a divider. The question we have to collectively ask ourselves is: Which are we going to be, bridge builders or stranded travelers? The time to reinvest in our student and alumni resource network in order to introduce Clark Atlanta University into the global classroom is now. Never has the notion of “believing can achieve” rung truer than it does today.

Let’s do our part as a university community to help write our own story, before history writes it for us. It’s an “open source” of opportunity for CAU.

Cory A Wynn is the president of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Clark Atlanta University Alumni Association.
FALL 2011 RECAP

WOMEN’S CROSS-COUNTRY CHAMPIONS
The start of the 2011-2012 athletic season began like the 2010-2011 season ended, with another Clark Atlanta University championship as the Lady Panthers cross-country team blew past the competition to capture its second conference title in three years.

The Lady Panthers ran a total time of 1:46:00.48 and an average time of 21:12.10 at the conference championship which was just enough to hold off defending champion Albany State University, who finished second with a time of 1:46:20.96. Clark Atlanta had four of the top 10 finishers in the meet.

For the regular season, Clark Atlanta swept the East Division honors with the runner of the year in Brittany Robinson, Team of the Year and Head Coach Pamela Page receiving Coach of the Year honors.

“We worked hard all season and ran each race as if it was our last, and I did not want this one to be our last,” added Robinson.

The Lady Panthers also finished 15th, at the NCAA Division II South Regional Meet held in Tampa, Florida.

FOOTBALL
After winning their first two conference games, the Panthers reeled off seven consecutive losses to finish the season 2-8. CAU’s defense garnered the NCAA Division II No. 2 ranking in tackles for losses and No. 12 in scoring defense.

VOLLEYBALL
In conference tournament play, CAU gave a valiant effort, but came up short in its quest to win a championship. The Lady Panthers finished the season 14-18 overall and 9-7 in the conference.

WINTER OUTLOOK
After a championship season in 2010, the Panthers are poised for another run at the conference title and their third consecutive trip to the region tournament under the direction of first-year head coach Dale Brown.

With seven returners including the 2011 All-Region honoree and SIAC Freshman of the Year, Conisha Hicks, the women’s basketball team was off to an exciting start to its season with a 1-1 conference record before the semester break.

SPRING PREVIEW
A women’s tennis back-to-back tennis championship is on the radar for the Lady Panthers who lost one player from last year’s team led by seniors Keva Palmer and Munashe Makuni. The duo had an impressive 21-1 record last season and Makuni won 22 consecutive matches in singles play.

With the return of Kelvin Tanner, the 2011 SIAC Freshman of the Year, along with other notable players like Robert Brown and Manuel Gasper, third-year Head Baseball Coach Derwin McNealy is looking to rebound after a four-game win season.

The Lady Panthers softball team, that set a single-season record last year with 32 wins, has its eye on the prize going into this year’s play. The squad is returning all but two players including All-Conference pitcher Ashley Brooks and has added a few new additions at key positions.

As they revamp for the upcoming season, the men’s and women’s track and field teams will look to improve on their seventh and fifth place finishes, respectively in the conference championships.
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Join Us in Celebrating a Great American Tradition,
Clark Atlanta University.
Founders Day is March 13, 2012.
Celebrate the CAU Spirit of Greatness at the Founders Day Convocation, Tuesday, March 13, 2012, at 10:30 a.m. in the Vivian Henderson Center on the campus of Clark Atlanta University.
Things To Do Today:

Buy tickets to see "Hitville: The Show" at the 2012 CAU Spirit of Greatness Gala before they're sold out!
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