

# THE VILLAGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AFRICAN  
& AFRICAN STUDIES ALUMNI COMMUNITY

AUGUST 2008

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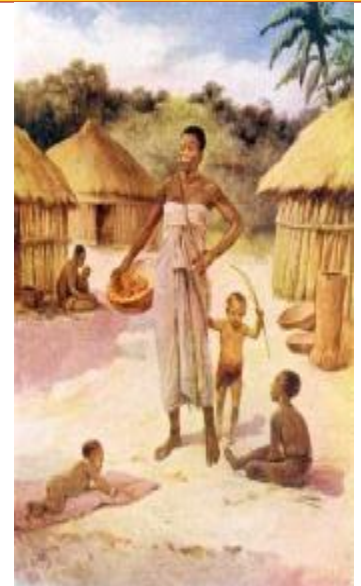
## STAYING CONNECTED

Welcome to the first edition of THE VILLAGE a new monthly online alumni newsletter designed to keep African American & African Studies Alumni current on the happenings of the department. THE VILLAGE will help the Department dramatically in engaging our ever growing alumni population across the globe. We hope THE VILLAGE will soon become the number one web destination for AA&AS alumni of the University of Minnesota. As you'll experience for yourself browsing through the pages of THE VILLAGE, The AA&AS

Department is alive with activity. Our students, faculty, staff and alumni play an integral role in building a stronger tomorrow, we are honored to share these experiences with you.

Scott Redd

Outreach Coordinator



## KEEP US POSTED!

If you have news about your professional activities, honors, or other items that you would like to share with fellow alumni in future issues of THE VILLAGE contact us at:

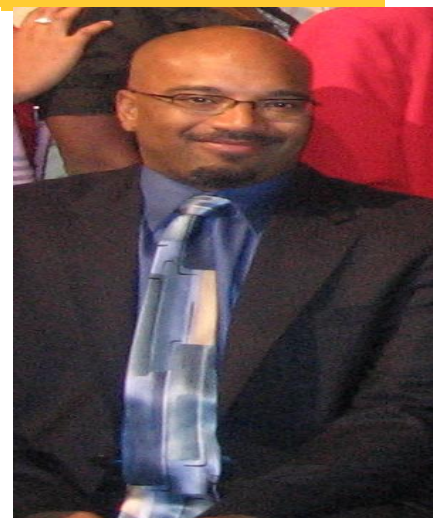
[red0002@umn.edu](mailto:red0002@umn.edu)

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

These days, networking/ connecting with people who care about the African Diaspora is more important than ever. It's about staying in touch. But just as importantly, networking is about staying current in your field. As AA&AS alumni, you have likely become leaders in your professional and personal communities. The Department

of AA&AS want to make sure you stay connected to the department. THE VILLAGE is an excellent tool to keep you up to date on Department news, alumni making a difference, faculty research and events that shape our great department. Your support for the department is deeply appreciated.

Walt Jacobs  
Chair



GET INVOLVED

The success of African American & African Studies Department is owed in large part to the volunteering and networking of our alumni. There are many ways for you, our proud alumni, to get involved. We hope one of the following fits within your interests. If not, please forward any ideas for alumni involvement to:

Scott Redd  
 Outreach Coordinator  
[redd0002@umn.edu](mailto:red0002@umn.edu)

**Career Day**—Career Day features panel presentations by alumni who are invited to share their “real world” career experiences. Panels will be followed by a lunch presentation by a guest speaker, and a Public Interest Career Fair to end the day.

**Community Open House**—The Department will host several community open houses. Each Open House will begin with short presentations cov-

ering admissions, financial aid, student support services, faculty research, and end with an alumni presentation.

**Mentoring Program**—The Department will match AA&AS undergraduate students with alumni who share similar career interests and goals. Along with one-on-one personal mentorship, the program provides social and cultural events for the matched pairs.



2007-2008 Members of the Black Student Union

FACULTY IN THE NEWS



The following is an excerpt from Mshale Newspaper, covered by reporter Edwin Okong'o.

Minnesota has indeed changed demographically since its founding 150 years ago, but the state still lags behind in the area of equality and social justice, according to University of Minnesota schol-

ars at a sesquicentennial celebration last Wednesday.

“It is a milestone that will be surrounded by public ceremonies and symbolism, but what might we make of it on the ground?” asked Rose M. Brewer, a professor of African American and African Studies. “Surely, it de-

mands our toughest scrutiny and coming to grips with our challenges ahead. We need to articulate in this state the clearest vision of what is possible.”

Minnesota is still less diverse than the nation, but state demographers say

its minority population is increasing at a rate higher than most states. In 2000, 9 percent of the state’s estimated 5 million people identified themselves as nonwhite. In 2005, it was projected that by 2010 Minnesota’s population will increase by 255,000

people, 38 percent of whom will be people of color. Minnesota has the largest Hmong, Somali and Liberian communities in the United States. As the face of Minnesota changes, immigrants and other people of color are having difficulties to fit in.

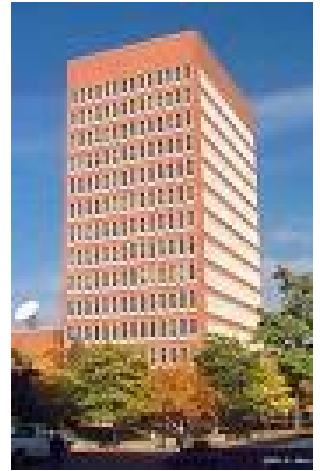
“Minnesota is still less diverse than the nation, but state demographers say its minority population is increasing at a rate higher than most states. “

FACULTY IN THE NEWS CONTINUE

Although the state is a destination for refugees, second only to California, government social services and educational agencies have been slow to adjust to the new wave of new residents, leaving Minnesota’s minority communities isolated in areas where economic growth is limited.

Institutions like the University of Minnesota, which is still far from making its campuses reflect the face of the state, are looking for ways to ensure that the institution admits students from minority communities. But Brewer said that while state and local governments had shown willing-

ness to find ways to make immigrants feel at home, they had ignored the African-American population. “We have given a lot of attention to our new citizens and non-citizens who have come to the state from the [African] continent, but we have given less attention to the descendants of African



Social Science Building, home of AA&AS Department

slaves, who continue to make up the majority of the population of African-Americans in the state,” said Brewer who is also the author of “The Color of Wealth,” a book about racial disparities in wealth. “This is not a competitive articulation, but it is to say that there is a debt owed. We need to think about a

population that in fact has been in the state for a very long time – over 200 years.”



In her new book, *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*, Brewer and her co authors examine race and wealth and how the govern-

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Community input is important to the Department; therefore the Department has created a Community Advisory Council (CAC). The CAC is designed to stimulate communication between community members and the University of Minnesota’s African American and African Studies department.

Council members serve in an advisory capacity to the department by providing input on local/national/global issues affecting African American and African communities. Members also provide input regarding the development of partnerships and programming and provide a source of

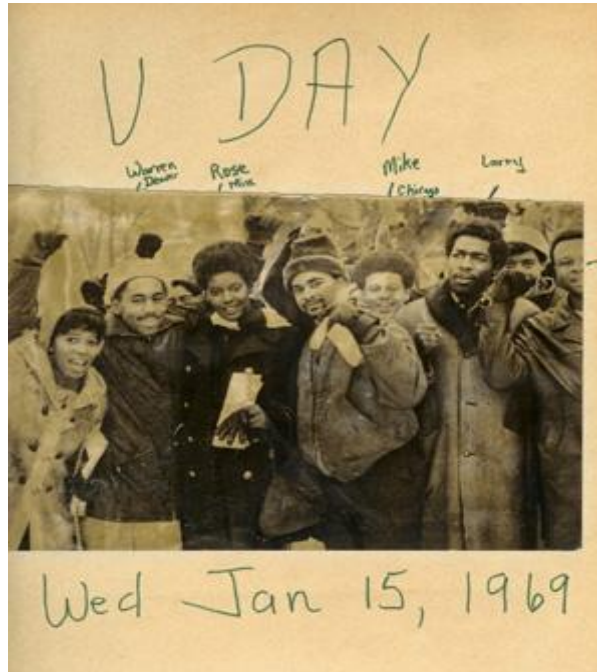
thoughts, ideas, and opinions from the community perspective. The Council meets the third Thursday of every month. If interested in joining the Council please contact:  
 Scott Redd  
[red0002@umn.edu](mailto:red0002@umn.edu)  
 (612)624-9847



## WE STILL HAVE A CHARGE TO KEEP

January 14, 2009 will mark the 40th Anniversary of the Morrill Hall Take-over. To commemorate this historic event the Morrill Hall 40th Anniversary Organizing and Planning Committee will host a series of events. With help from students and community members the Planning and Organizing Committee will conduct a two-day Symposium and Gala dinner as well as events in the community

through out the year. Watch for more information in the upcoming months.



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*I must see my understandings produce results in human experience. Productivity is my first value. I must make and mould and build life. As an artist, I must shape human relationships. To me, life itself is the greatest material. I would far rather form a man than form a book. My whole being is devoted to making my small area of existence a work of art.*

*I am building a world.*

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The Department of African American & African Studies plays an important role in the University's rich liberal arts tradition. The department's beginnings in the Morrill Hall takeover of 1969 by students demanding change demonstrate that the academy—and society—often move forward by challenging traditional boundaries and practices.

Today, the department offers students opportunities to explore American cultural diversity and the wide diversity of the African continent. An undergraduate major in African American & African Studies provides students with a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the cultural and historical experiences of African American & African peoples from a multidisciplinary perspective including history, political science, sociology, psychology, literature, music, and art. Courses and faculty are drawn from the department as well as from other units of the University.