Give to Oakwood University

Like us on Facebook

Oakwoodites visit Purdue University
(L-R) Mrs. Patricia Stewart Daniel, Assistant Vice President for Service-Learning, Mrs. Veronica Leftridge, nursing faculty, and Dr. Maxine Garvey, allied health faculty, pose in front of a status of 1955 Purdue University graduate Neil Armstrong. They were at Purdue to attend an EPICS workshop, June 12-14, 2013.

EPICS (Engineering Projects in Community in Service) is a curricular approach in which multi-disciplinary design teams address needs within local and global communities. While EPICS was created at Purdue, it has been adopted at more than 20 colleges and universities, engaging students from their first year through senior year in capstone design courses.
The workshop was facilitated by the members of the EPICS team who are experienced developers of service-learning and design workshops. The workshop provided information and resources on topics, including course curriculum, institutional support, partnerships, evaluation, assessment, and research project development through service-learning. While EPICS grew out of the field of engineering, the multi-disciplinary approach to service-learning and its application to other disciplines was reiterated.

Dr. Garvey reflected on the experience: "I found the networking to be a wonderful experience. It was great to meet with other professors, chairs, Deans, and administrators from other large universities, such as Princeton, Clemson, University of California (at Merced and San Diego), Utah State, Morgan State, IEEE - India, Virginia Tech, among others. We had the opportunity to share and learn from each other about what everyone is doing on their campus. It was equally satisfying to introduce them to a university in Huntsville, Alabama, called Oakwood. As a result, we are considering two potential collaborative efforts with Purdue and Utah State. In a nutshell, the workshop was epic!"

---

**Chief Lewis Eakins: Making a Difference at Oakwood**

Lewis Eakins, Director of Public Safety at Oakwood University, is featured in the most recent issue of *For God & Country*, a journal for Seventh-day Adventist serving in uniform.

While a student at Oakwood, Eakins worked as a security officer. He went on to serve as the Assistant Chief of Police at Texas Southern University, and he established a private investigations and security firm. After being in the business for 22 years, Eakins returned to Oakwood
to fill a vacancy in the Public Safety Department.

"It's amazing to me to be back here at Oakwood where my interest in law enforcement first took hold. I understand the culture of Oakwood and this helps me as the chief of the department," says Eakins. "My officers are not here only to protect the students and faculty; they are here to make a difference in individual lives."

**Huntsville's Interfaith Mission Service recognizes Oakwood's Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations**

(L-R) Dr. Harold Lee, Elder James Melancon, President Leslie Pollard, Dr. Keith Burton, Mrs. Hyacinth Burton, and Dr. Finbar Benjamin at Sunday night's Interfaith Mission Service Celebration and Awards Dinner.
Award winners stand on the common ground of values held by the world's great faith traditions -- justice, mercy, equality, and help for those who most need it. The Rabbi Jeffrey L. Ballon Memorial Interfaith Award was presented to Dr. Keith Augustus Burton, Director of the Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations.

Reporter Kay Cambell (shown here with Dr. Burton) described the event in her column on al.com/The Huntsville Times.

NAD Educators Visit Campus

The BRIDGE (Building Resources for Instructional Delivery of GREAT Education) K-2 Multi-grade Committee from across the North American Division recently completed phase one of a project to create multi-grade units following the Kindergarten Stepping Stones curriculum in a multi-grade setting. This project is sponsored by the North American Division and the Southern Union Conference.

The committee was in Huntsville for approximately three weeks, concluding their work (for this summer) on June 27, 2013. They will resume their work in June, 2014, at a location to be decided later.

Coordinator Diane Ruff, Associate Director of Education in the Southern Union, is an alumna of Oakwood. She contacted the Provost's Office, and a tour for several members of the group was arranged on a balmy Thursday evening, June 20. The group is shown here during a photo opportunity in front of the McKee Business & Technology Complex.
TEAM PR'S THREE-PRONGED MISSION
TO CAPTURE AND TO CAPSULE "THE OAKWOOD EXPERIENCE," AND TO COMMUNICATE IT WITH SPEED, ACCURACY, CONSISTENCY AND PASSION, TO THOSE ORGANIZATIONS AND PUBLICS UPON WHICH OUR SUCCESS OR FAILURE DEPENDS! FOR YOUR FREE ONLINE SUBSCRIPTION TO OU? OH, YES! EMAIL US AT PR@OAKWOOD.EDU.
Huntsville's Interfaith Mission Service awards recognize barrier-breaching volunteers

When a Christian minister is recognized for his work in bridging Christian-Muslim understanding with an award named for a Jewish rabbi, you know you’re in the company of a visionary, barrier-breaching organization, said David Person as he presented an award during Monday, June 24, 2013’s, Interfaith Mission Service banquet.

Person was presenting the Rabbi Jeffrey L. Ballon Memorial Interfaith Award to Dr. Keith Augustus Burton, who founded and directs the Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations on the Oakwood University campus.

During the evening that celebrates the volunteers and work of IMS, one of the South’s oldest interfaith organizations, Wendi Thomas, a columnist for Memphis’ Commercial Appeal, delivered a keynote address encouraging the group to continue with the work of bridging interfaith and cross-racial boundaries. Thomas founded Common Ground in Memphis in 2008. The non-profit organization looks for ways to help people come together in safe spaces to talk to each other about tough racial misunderstandings.

Thomas' witty talk shared her personal stories of how she came to understand racial relations, first as the bright child of African-American professors in Memphis and one of the few black children at the church her family attended, and later as a young reporter assigned to cover a rally of the Ku Klux Klan in Indianapolis.

“I remember looking at the people in the rally in the bedsheets and listening to them as they said what they had to say,” Thomas said during her talk that stirred frequent ripples of understanding chuckles from the audience of about 160 gathered at in the University Center at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. The UAH Office of Diversity was a co-sponsor for the banquet.

Wendi Thomas, metro columnist for The Commercial Appeal in Memphis and founder of Common Ground, a non-profit organization devoted to helping people bridge racial misunderstandings, delivers the keynote address for the June 24, 2013, awards banquet for Huntsville's Interfaith Mission Service. (Kay Campbell / KCampbell@al.com)

“And I wondered, ‘How do people get to be that? How do they come to those conclusions?’” Thomas said.

Eventually Thomas’ journalistic career returned her to Memphis, where she became the city’s first African-American Metro columnist in 2003.

“I made history, which was nice – I guess,” Thomas said. “On the other hand, in a city that is a majority African-American, why did it take until 2003 for someone to ‘make history’?”

In that post as city columnist, when she wrote about racial issues, she said she realized from the mountain of responses her columns stirred
that people really do want to talk about race issues -- but don’t know how.

“So I’d get letters that went, ‘I’m white, and I don’t understand why black people name their babies multi-syllabic names,’” Thomas said. “At the same time, I’d get letters that went something like, ‘I’m black, and I need you to tell white people …’”

Thomas’ response to either request is the same: Why don’t you ask your black / white friend about that?

Of course, she knows the answer: In racially and economically divided cities, people often do not know anyone who is truly from a different group than they are themselves. Her response to the problem was elegant and simple: Give people who want to talk about race a space and time to do it.

Thomas’ Common Ground organization, which has since become a model for others, including for the City of Huntsville’s Inclusive Communities Initiative, partners with the YWCA, the National Civil Rights Museum and Rhodes College. She has been amazed what a difference just that simple opportunity has made – and how such conversations have grown into practical applications that include partnering with a school, mentoring projects, and other connections between races and classes in Memphis.

“In hindsight, I was crazy to think I could do anything,” Thomas said. “But I had to be the change, as Gandhi put it, I wanted to see.”

The annual Interfaith Mission Service banquet celebrates the work of area leaders who are being that change.

The 2013 Awards, in addition to the Rabbi Ballon Award to Dr. Burton, include:

- Direct Service Award to Marilyn Evans, who is chairwoman of the board for the Greene Street Market, a groundbreaking non-profit farmer’s market sponsored by the Church of the Nativity, Episcopal, that emphasizes local food and raises money to feed hungry people in Huntsville.
- Marilyn Mabry Memorial Racial Harmony Award to Dr. Bobbi Bradley, the founder and CEO of Village of Promise, Huntsville’s ambitious network of faith-based resources for students in schools serving impoverished neighborhoods.
- Charles L. Ray Jr. Memorial Social Justice Award to Bhavani Kakani, president of AshaKiran, the regionally recognized multilingual resource center especially for people of South Asian origin, but also for anyone in Huntsville.
- IMS Exceptional Volunteer Service Awards to Sue Duthie, who has managed the IMS FoodLine hunger hotline in Huntsville since 1996 and to Kathy Emerson, a community volunteer for more than 40 years. Duthie used her acceptance time at the microphone to ask for more volunteers. “We helped more than 10,000 people last year find food,” Duthie said. “And we need more volunteers.”

For more information, including how to volunteer, contact the Interfaith Mission Service at 256-536-2401 or www.InterfaithMissionService.org.