Welcome to the December issue of PFYI. This year’s final edition of PFYI is published in gratefulness for all the blessings of 2012. Through tornado warnings, floods, searing heat, and “from dangers seen and unseen,” Oakwood University has been protected and preserved. For these blessings of peace, protection, and preservation, we are grateful.

We are also grateful for building projects that will enhance student life on campus—the 5.8 million dollar creation of a one-stop shop for students in the New Cunningham Hall fires, the planned 3.5 million dollar renovation of Ford Hall, complete with a new television studio that will begin in January, and the coming 5.5 million dollar renovation of Carter Hall—a place where our freshmen princesses will reside. We have also leased 80 new student apartments called Huntsville Place on Wynn Drive to house our overflow of students in the coming school year of 2013-2014. Already, we are excited about what God will do on our Campus in 2013.

Finally, we are also grateful for the workforce at Oakwood University. Our team of dedicated servants offer the gift of service every day to every family who enters our doors. Oakwood University is a seamless K-18 learning community designed to transform the lives of young scholars. Thank you for making Oakwood your destination of preference and for your support of our mission. May you be richly blessed in the coming year!!!

“. . . and remember, TODAY is a great day to be alive!”

Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., MBA
President, Oakwood University
From July 30-August 15, 2012, the Chicago-based Marble Leadership Partners, led by co-founder and executive coach Mrs. Leslie Marquard, conducted an in-depth analysis of Oakwood’s operations. The purpose was to identify potential cost savings and to increase the efficiency of our business processes, by examining our policies and practices that sheltered hidden costs for our institution. Recommendations emerged that will reduce to the University’s operational costs. Then, from September 18-20, 60 leaders from Oakwood University—administrators, board members, civic leaders, faculty, staff and students—gathered for a three-day Strategic Actioning Session retreat at the Historic Huntsville Roundhouse.

To review our experience,
1. Visit www.marbleleadership.com;
2. Type in username “oakwood” and password “itistime”; and
3. Enjoy!

The Anchors of Truth Series conducted a 3ABN sermon series on the campus of Oakwood University, Huntsville, Alabama. This inspiring power packed live event featured five Spirit-filled speakers, who preached under the theme, “The Battle is the Lord’s!” At the conclusion of the week, the faith of all that attended was tremendously challenged.

The series began on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 and continued through Saturday, October 20, 2012. The chaplains of Oakwood at the Office of Spiritual Life, in conjunction with the President, calculatedly outlined a crescendo arrangement of inspirational speakers and sermon topics. Subjects such as, “Put Your War Clothes On” – Carlton Byrd, “When The End is Just The Beginning” – Debleaire Snell, “Keep On Going” – James Doggette, “How To Meet Your Giant” – Leslie Pollard, and “When The Battle Goes Bad” – Jessie Wilson. The Spirit of God was definitely with us each night and we felt a climatic power surge on Sabbath with Dr Pollard and Dr Wilson. These spirit-filled and biblically grounded sermons were certainly used by God to rejuvenate my soul and the souls of many others. Hundreds and hundreds of hearts were challenged, inspired, and encouraged. The students, staff, faculty, and community members commented on the moving of the spirit during that week.

Howard Weems, PhD
Special Assistant to the President
for Spiritual Life
President Leslie N. Pollard
Well, I’ll tell you that about five weeks ago, another ‘suitor’ (a university in California) came calling for Jason. We had to sit down with Dr. Dulan [Oakwood University VP for Academic Affairs] to discuss what it would take to keep Jason among us.

Wayne Bucknor was on the other line, so we triangulated. We said, ‘Let’s be honest. Let’s find out what this would take.’

I’ve been in a lot of negotiations, and this one was very interesting to me. The things that Jason asked for all had to do with the choir! He asked for nothing for himself. [Thunderous applause.]

I kept going down that list, waiting for ‘that one!’ Right, Dr. Dulan? You kept waiting too! One, two, three, four, five, down the list. OK—I’m still waiting! Those items all had to do with the things that would better the choir, to do what it does so beautifully, and to do it at a higher level.

So thank you so very much. And now, tell us what The World Choir Games experience was like!

Dr. Wayne Bucknor:
I’ll be brief. It was great! But the thing that impacted me the most was to see our students fraternizing with the competition. For example, one choir we saw was really impressive, and I saw our choir clapping exuberantly for them. Now I clapped too, but more slowly and more cautiously, because I didn’t want to influence the judges, of course!

In our last competition, the Spirituals category, as we were walking on the stage, I observed exuberant applause from the audience AND from the competing choirs—even before we ever sang our first note. I then said to myself, “Wow! The people that we applauded, (then) applauded us.” And this was a testament of our Christianity, even in a first-time international competition. And I learned from that.

Director Ferdinand
There’s something that I teach my choirs every year, and this experience really showcased this. The quotation we always repeat is “True art is made noble and religious by the mind producing it. For those who feel it, nothing makes the soul so religious and pure than the endeavor to create something perfect. For God is perfection, and those who strive after perfection are striving after God.”

I don’t want to say too much, because it was very, very emotional. But you (OU Faculty and Staff) would have been very proud of all of our students. It was great to see our science majors, and theology majors and business majors come together and make wonderful music—and to make such great friends from Russia and China and South Africa, and to stand there and see the U.S. flag go up and hear the Star-Spangled Banner played for us. It was a very moving experience. So when you see those kids on campus, really thank them, because they did an awesome job!
For the first-time ever our Public Relations Office, dubbed “Team PR,” submitted various OU promotional materials for professional recognition awards. God blessed, and we won, namely:

Corporate Communications:
“Best Constituency Video:
President Pollard’s Welcome Message to the Evangelism Council” (Anthonye Perkins)

Corporate Communications:
“Best Promotional Materials for a Special Event:
Presidential Inaugural Weekend” (Jerry B. Ross)

Print:
“Best Student Newspaper:
The Spreading Oak”
(former editor, Stephanie Campbell)

Magazine:
“Best Magazine Cover Design:
Oakwood Magazine, Spring 2012” (Jerry B. Ross)

One-time Event Promotions:
“Invitation to Presidential Inaugural Weekend” (Jerry B. Ross)

Book Cover Design:
“Raise a Leader (Review & Herald Publishing Association) by Dr. Prudence Pollard”

OU’s “TEAM PR” Receives 7 SAC Awards in Albuquerque

Jerry B. Ross

“All Roads Lead to…”

Jerry Ross was born and reared in Chicago, IL, into an active SDA family where the Black-Adventist culture was very concentrated at home, school and church. Jerry is a product of Christian education, attending Shiloh Academy (Chicago, IL) and Andrews University (Berrien Springs, MI). He furthered his educational career at the renown Ray-Vogue College of Design in Chicago, where he was the recipient of numerous, blue ribbon awards for his work in graphic arts. Jerry has also studied and received advanced certificates in a number of concentrated areas including advertising design, photography, and printrunning.

Reflecting, Jerry states, “It was through the experience of being led into activities that gave purposeful exploration of talents, where I realized at an early age that God had annointed me with multiple gifts. He said, “I had no choice,” who first realized his singing ability in 1973 -when his sister would make him perform “Make Life a little easier,” a song made popular by child actor/singer Rodney Allen Rippy, to his girlfriends for pure entertainment. This led to his mother placing him in the leading role as “The Little drummer boy” for the Christmas program at church that same year. From then on, Jerry was in regular rotation at local churches for plays, special programs, evangelism crusades, you name it.

Simultaneously, Jerry was honing in on other talents. “It was the gift of an etch-a-sketch by my dad that sparked my interest in design,” says Jerry. At a 6-year-old, he first realized he wanted to be an architect. “I can honestly say, that was the catalyst or defining moment that gave me the drive to want to create and build.” Simultaneously, Jerry was honing in on other talents. “It was the gift of an etch-a-sketch by my dad that sparked my interest in design,” says Jerry. At a 6-year-old, he first realized he wanted to be an architect. “I can honestly say, that was the catalyst or defining moment that gave me the drive to want to create and build.”

Additional gifts would surface as Jerry went through his formal education. “All Roads Lead to…”

Jerry’s professional career has led him to utilize his gifts for The Chicago Cubs, The Wrigley Company, the historic Chicago Defender, Synovate (a global marketing company), and for celebrities and elected officials in Illinois (to name a few). Jerry even received kudos from then, newly-elected senator, Barack Obama, for depicting him on the cover of a Chicago Defender Special Issue.

Jerry often jokes about rejecting a scholarship from Oakland in 1987. Funny where the road will lead you…

Jerry is currently the creative services manager for Oakwood University, and resides in Huntsville, AL, with his lovely wife, Esther Ross and their four children: Jeremy and Maya (both students at Oakwood in 1987). Funny where the road will lead you…”

As a professional, a father and a husband, I learned strength and humility at the same time”

“Author and Finisher” of his faith and the “Originator” of all his creativity.
Welcome back home, Mrs. Monica Sudeall-Hawkins: An interview with our new Registrar

Where are you originally from?
My parents are from Jamaica, West Indies, but I was born in Wolverhampton, England. I entered the U.S. in 1977.

I understand that you are a newlywed. Is that right?
Yes. On September 9, 2012, I married Henry Charles Hawkins, an electrical engineer by trade, and he is originally from Munford, Ala.

Would you tell us a little about your educational background?
Sure. I earned the Bachelor of Science degree in Organizational Management from Oakwood College in 2001, and an MBA from Kaplan University in 2008. I am currently working on the E.D.D. in Higher Education Leadership from Nova Southeastern University, with a minor in Curriculum Development. My dissertation topic is: “Evaluating the Retention Strategies for African-American Students at a Four-Year University.”

How long did you hold the position of Registrar and Director of Admissions at Drake State Technical College?
I held the positions of Registrar/Director of Admissions/Director of International Student Affairs for six and a half years.

What skills and experience are you bringing with you from Drake State?
I bring with me strong organizational skills and best practices in student record retention and retrieval. I am also working on implementing the latest technology for the storage and retrieval of student records, transcript delivery, student self-service, and streamlining the registration process so that it can be more student-friendly. I am passionate about the work that I do, and about our students. My desire for them is that they matriculate and complete what they started here at Oakwood. And, as such, I am committed to giving 100% to ensure that students receive the highest level of customer service and accurate information whenever they visit the Registrar’s Office.

What legacy would you like to leave behind as Registrar for the University?
I am results-oriented, and I would like to think that I have made sound decisions that will impact the University positively for years to come. It is important to me that I, along with my team, build a solid foundation for the next generation to improve upon. I want to know that what I have built will last for years to come.

Do you have a vision yet for the Registrar’s Office? If so, would you mind sharing that vision?
My vision for the Registrar’s Office is to see a paperless work environment, whereby every piece of paper can be translated into an electronic document. I would like to see everyone in the office utilizing the available technologies to enhance the efficiency of the work process. There are awesome technology tools available to us, and if we take advantage of what technology has to offer, we can take the office to a whole other level. I would like to see the Registrar’s Office at Oakwood University become a model of efficiency, not only in Huntsville, Alabama, but nationwide.

What are your ideas for making the registration process more efficient for students, faculty, and staff?
I don’t believe it is necessary for there to be three separate registration periods within the academic year. I envision the registration process being done only once per year during the fall semester with no Skating Rink or Gymnasium set-up. I believe it can be streamlined to the point where everything is done online, from start to finish, i.e., all the registration steps can be completed online and accessed via mobile devices, including housing, meal plans, dropladd, financial clearance, etc.

Do you plan to continue implementing incentives to encourage students to register early?
Most definitely! I think that’s important. I not only want to provide incentives for students, but for faculty, staff, and departments. When you offer incentives, it helps to motivate, improve morale, and bring people together as a cohesive group. I liked the response and excitement that I saw when we gave away that first iPod, and I think that if we can keep that momentum going, it will be a win-win for all of us.

What would you like to say to Oakwood University’s students?
I am honored to have the opportunity to say something to Oakwood University students, and what I wish someone had said to me when I came to Oakwood in 1983, kicking and screaming: “Oakwood’s most precious students, you are not here by accident. Your appointment here at Oakwood University was a part of God’s divine plan, long before you were conceived. He has brought you here at such a time as this to fulfill His plan and His purpose for your life. I hope you realize how abundantly blessed you are, and how special you are to your Heavenly Father. When you have completed your journey here at Oakwood and depart to serve His people, may you come to realize that it was good for you to have been here and to have been trained at this institution that He has established.”

Do you offer incentives to encourage students to register early?
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Every fall, the officers of the Southern Union (SU) convene with departmental leaders from across the union, to give financial and administrative updates, develop missionary and evangelistic strategies, and develop future initiatives.

During November 12-15, Oakwood was represented by Drs. Leslie and Prudence Pollard (President and First Lady, respectively), Fred Pullins, Director of Planned Giving and Trust Services, and Tim Allston, Director of Public Relations.

In his four-part devotional message, entitled “Visions of Victory,” Dr. Pollard said: “If you wake me in the middle of the night, and ask me, ‘What is the theme of Revelation?’, I will always say “three”.

1) Christ is victorious;
2) Satan is a defeated foe; each time he appeared in Revelation, it is in the context of defeat; and
3) No question raised is left unanswered.

According to Ms. Kisha Norris, Executive Director for Advancement & Development, November’s Phone-a-thon campaign collected $63,205 in pledges from Oakwood supporters, compared to last year’s $32,000 in pledges.

Several factors contributed to its success, namely:

1. “Soft-asking” prospective donors, by mailing out of Save-the-Date, pre-phone call cards; and
2. Utilizing 23 student callers, vs. 15 callers in 2011.

But most importantly, “More people are believing and seeing the progress occurring here at Oakwood,” explained Norris.

“They’re liking it and wish to invest in it.”

Donors and pledgers are encouraged to fulfill their pledged commitments by December 31, “so that we can break another record – of funds received!”