

BEREA COLLEGE  
BLACK CULTURAL CENTER

STUDENT  
NEWSLETTER

# The Onyx

Volume 6 Number 2

Fall-Winter 2004-05



**The  
Semester  
in  
Pictures!**

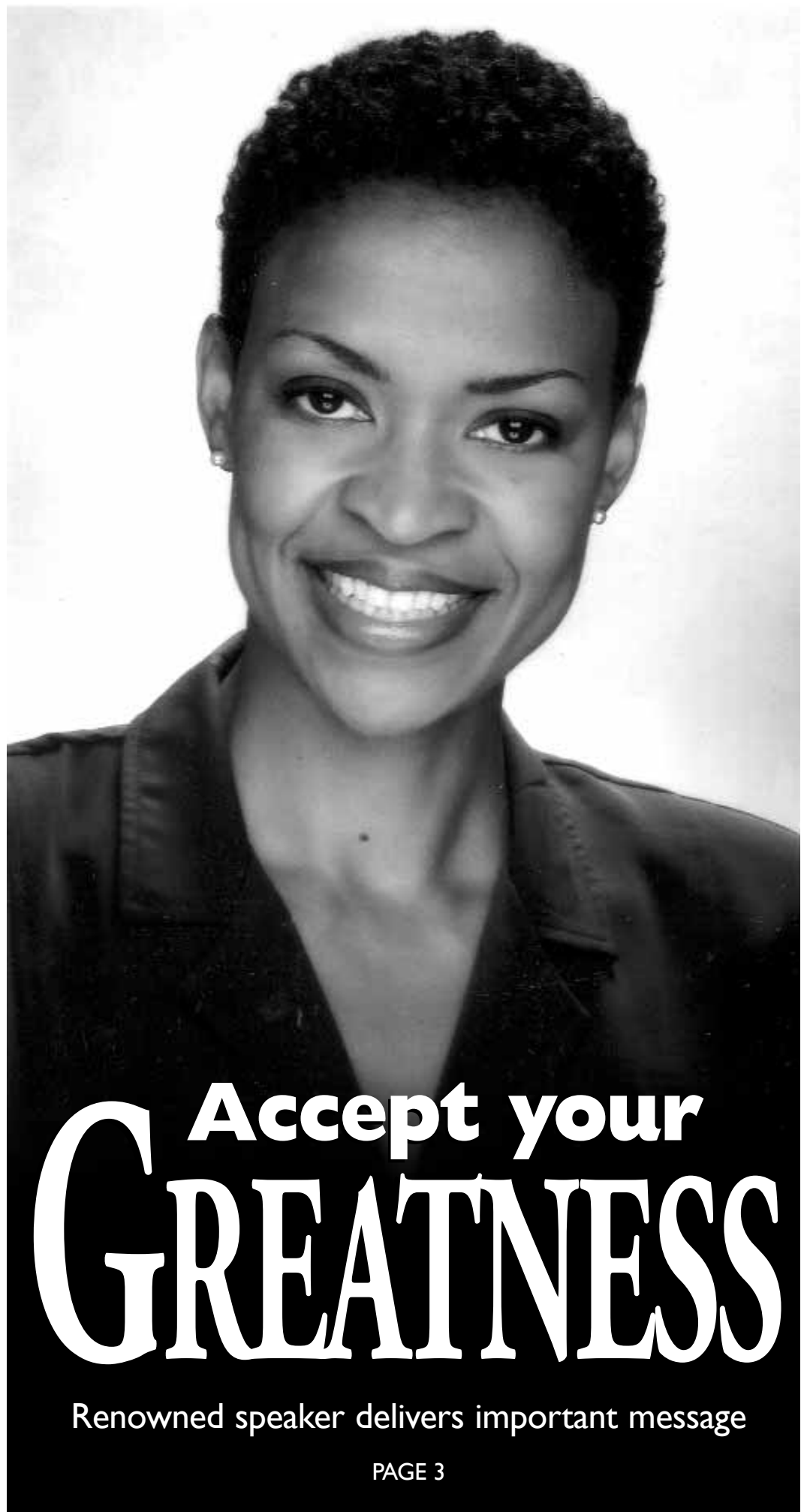
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**Reflection  
on BSU  
Pageant**



PAGE 6

**Plus...**  
**Poetry, News and  
more!**



Accept your  
**GREATNESS**

Renowned speaker delivers important message

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# The Onyx

**Volume 6 Number 2**  
**Fall-Winter 2004-05**

A Student Publication of the  
Black Cultural Center

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## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

### A Commitment to Change

Greetings!! To all students, colleagues and friends, allow me to formally introduce myself to some and reintroduce myself to others! I am Jonathan L. Johnson and this year's interim director of the Black Cultural Center. I am very excited about having the opportunity to contribute to the Center's mission of serving the Black and African American student community as well as supporting Berea College's commitment of interracial education.

As a Berea College graduate ('99) from Fairfield, Alabama, I identify with the importance of providing diverse student experiences that are conducive to living and learning. The Black Cultural Center has worked in collaboration with various departments and programs across campus, namely the Black Music Ensemble, Black Studies, Jubilee! of the Campus Christian Center, the International Center, Women's Students and CELTS. This year, the Center is also making a special alliance with Residence Life and Campus Life to better serve the interests and quality of life of our Black and African American student population.

As our campus transforms into an increasingly diverse composition, the commitments that sustain our unique community will be challenged as much as it is valued. I find this particularly significant considering the increased number of African American students from 17% (2003-2004) to the current enrollment of 19%. This percentage does not include our Black International students who have a strong sustained presence about campus. The face of Berea College is changing; and like you, I would like this to be the most constructive and effective change for all faces here at Berea. You maybe asking yourself, "How can I help in this change?" Well, I have come to understand that neither you nor I can do this alone. Yet, you must acknowledge that it is something from within that compels you to claim ownership of *your* responsibility in advancing interracial education at Berea College. It takes a collective effort from each of us to continue this necessary work. Ultimately, I pray that our individual efforts produce goals and strategies for us all to collectively own.

**JONATHAN L. JOHNSON, '99**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

**COVER**  
**STORY**

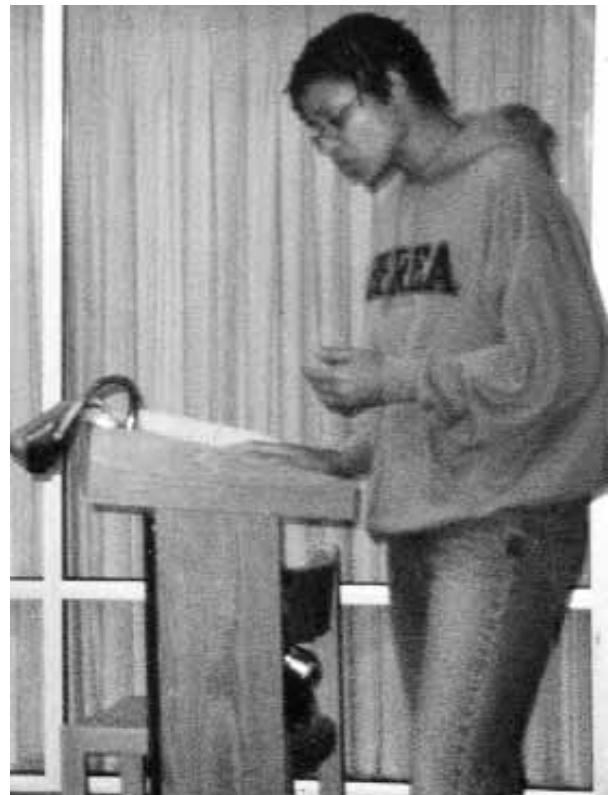
# Accepting your GREATNESS

## Walking in Your Authority

By **DeJUANA L. THOMPSON**

Rev. Paula McGee is a woman of physical stature and spiritual stature alike. Her voice and her demeanor demands attention. However, it is her inspiring message that continues to reverberate in my mind. Her message of *Accepting Your Greatness* can be used to uplift and redirect the focus of any individual. Accepting your greatness to me means knowing that you have a purpose that only you can do, then accepting that you must do it. So many times I think people become victims to depression, violence or even mediocre lives because they have settled to live and lead their lives to someone else's purpose or standards. This would leave an individual feeling hopeless. However, if everyone was to believe and know that God has a purpose and a design just for their life, that God has created them for a specific reason, I believe that would cause a person to rise up and walk in authority.

This authority is not an authority over people, but an authority to speak to things resulting in change. It is an authority to look at the negative and see the positive. This authority allows you to know that greater is He that is in me, than he that is in the world. Rev. McGee reminded us that "to



**Rev. Paula McGee reading poetry during Accent on Christian Faith Week.**

Turn to **GREATNESS** • p. 12

## NEWS BITES

### Welcome All and Good Luck!

We here at the Black Cultural Center would like to welcome Tiffany Milliken, Residence Life/Collegium, Pa Jatta '04, Residence Life/Collegium and Dr. Jose Pimenta Bey, Director of Black Studies to our campus. We are also very honored to welcome bell hooks, our campus community's Distinguished Professor in Residence.

We wish that each of you enjoy your years here at Berea College. We would also like to welcome the new Interim Director of the Black Cultural Center, Jonathan L. Johnson.

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

Everyone has a gift that is given to them from God. Taking the stand to accept this greatness is something that many people find hard to do, because of obstacles that may be present in one's life. My advice to those who have yet to accept their greatness is don't give up on yourself. God is there waiting for you to uncover it and take advantage of it, no matter what *your* greatness may be.

**DANIELLE SAUNDERS**  
*Editor*

## POET'S CORNER

# Black Tears

Why is my soul crying?

It's because we are ignoring the naked truth.

The truth isn't told because no one speaks.

What is the truth? We are destroying our heritage.

We take our history for granted. We take what we have lightly.

Here's some advice: Wake up and receive my ray into your mind!

Brothers, why do you make our sisters cry?

You abandon them without teaching our future.

You label them as animals while instead they are our queens beside our throne. You poison yourselves with drugs and alcohol.

You treat our sisters as if they were the enemy.

Do you realize that education is the key to the power of our mind?

Wake UP!

Sisters, why put down our brothers when you should lift him?

You can be independent, but it takes two to better our future.

Don't complain when our brothers commit mistakes.

God didn't make anybody perfect.

To the ones who raise our future alone, continue to strive for the world of success.

Why is my soul crying?

Darkness is around us, and we cannot see.

But I will be the one to open your eyes with my sunshine.

What else do I have to say?

I will like to say good morning because it's a brand new day.

**MIDNIGHT SUN (Kerry Brackett)**

# The Semester *in pictures*



- A** Kwanzaa
- B** InterAct
- C** Da Truth
- D** ASA Show
- E** Roots Heritage Fest
- F** Roots Heritage Fest
- G** B&W Party



# Completing the Task

# The Dance Goes On

## A few words from 2004's Black Student Union Pageant coordinator

By **SARAH POOLE**

Coordinating the pageant seemed like a faroff idea, something that I definitely would not have imagined myself doing. But someone saw potential in me that I failed to recognize. When I was asked to take this position, I didn't know what I was getting into. It was hard work, yet so rewarding.

This year's theme was "African Pride: Reclaiming Our Heritage." The focus was on expressing African culture through African beats, attire, music, dance and more. We wanted the pageant to be an open door for members of the Black Student Union to connect with African students on Berea College campus as well as begin to embrace their own heritage. We want participants in the pageant to find it a culturally and socially enriching experience that challenges stereotypes and myths about other cultures. The purpose of the 2004 pageant was to take pride in who we are by discovering the roots from which we came—Africa. The pageant symbol was the Sankofa, a symbol of the importance of learning from the past. *Sankofa* is an Akan (southern Ghana) word that means, "We must go

back and reclaim our past so we can move forward; so we understand why and how we came to be who we are today."

"What sparked the theme," you ask? Walking into the cafeteria and seeing the separation between African American students and International students, especially my African brothers and sisters. I admit, I have a comfort zone that is sometimes difficult for me to break; this was my chance. Coordinating the pageant gave me an opportunity to challenge myself and discover what I have to reclaim in Africa. I realized that I have a lot to reclaim. Reclaiming my heritage does not mean necessarily changing my name or location, but it means learning about where I come from and how that has impacted my life. It also means celebrating who I am and the heritage from which I originate.

The highlight of my experience has been working with the contestants. They were LaQualla Holland, Brandon Rayford, Monica Johnson, Nicholas Citizen, Jamar Brown, ElBonita Hawkins, LaTara Clayton, Marlon Perry and Alexis Rush. The contestants worked hard! Six hours a week were dedicated to rehearsal. That does not include the time they spent



**“Reclaiming my heritage does not mean necessarily changing my name or location, but it means learning about where I come from and how that has impacted my life.”**

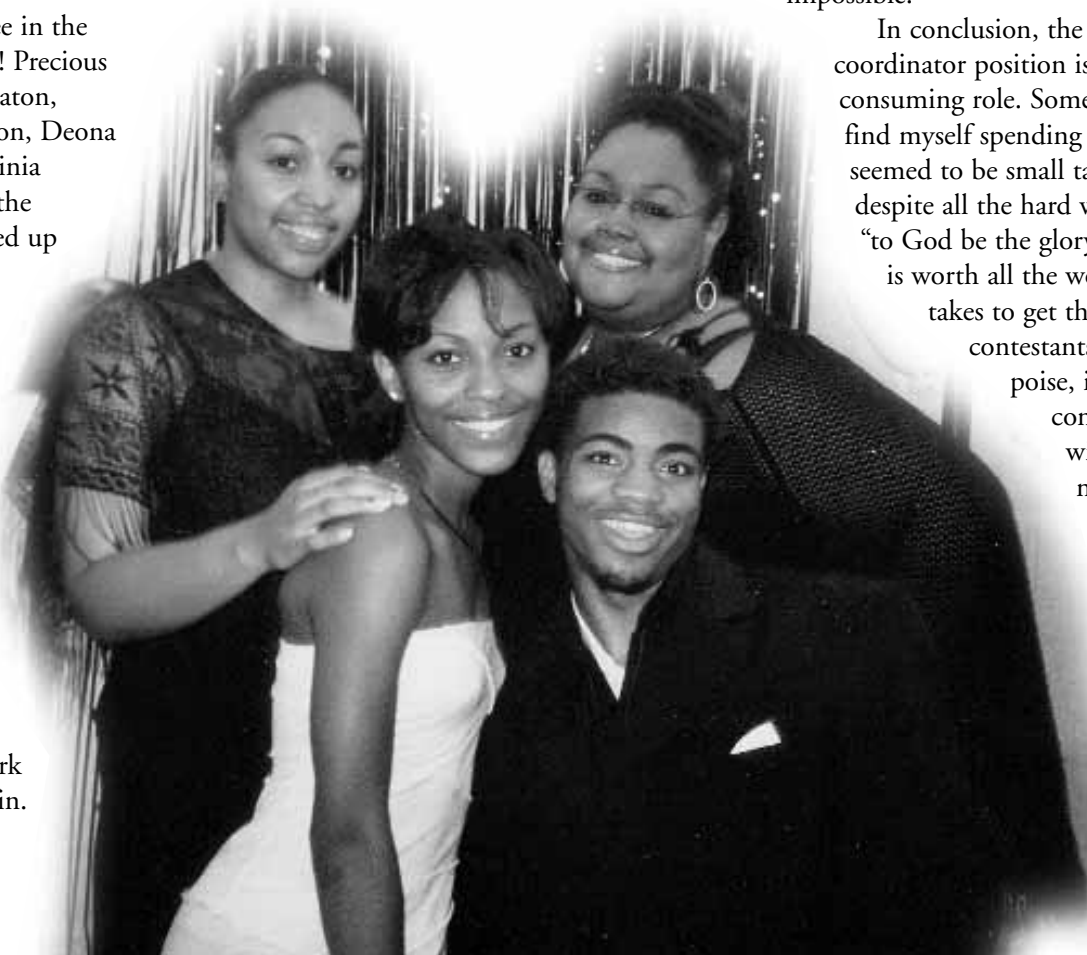
fundraising and doing their community service project. I can honestly say that every contestant stepped up to the plate to do their very best and provide assistance to me where needed. In fact, the contestants raised over \$1,600 in order to make this event possible. I feel blessed to have had an opportunity to get to know such talented and dedicated individuals. Sometimes I would come to rehearsal stressed about school work or pageant work and would find that after interacting with them that I somehow forgot about some of that pressure.

I also feel I had the best pageant committee in the whole wide world! Precious Magaya, Jessica Slaton, Moriah Washington, Deona Albright and Virginia Senkomago were the people who showed up at rehearsals to assist with preparing the contestants for the dance and the overall performance. Stephanie Smith and Melvin Cowan helped the contestants with their “walk.” The decorations were the handiwork of Sharonda Griffin. Jason DeRamus, DeJuana Thompson,

Marcus Elston, Danielle Saunders, Lederrick Wesley and Te’Quia Thompkins also made themselves available to assist with pageant preparations. Emcees of the pageant were Stephanie Smith, Lamont Hill and Ebony Walker. Others, too many to be named, gave a helping hand. Sponsors of the pageant consisted of Blondie’s, Mario’s, Gloria Johnson, Virgil Burnside, Coalition for Community Building, Black Cultural Center and Wal-Mart. The bottom line is: Without the support of these people, the pageant would have been impossible.

In conclusion, the pageant coordinator position is a very time-consuming role. Sometimes I would find myself spending hours doing what seemed to be small tasks. Nevertheless, despite all the hard work, I must say, “to God be the glory.” The final result is worth all the work and pain it takes to get there. Watching the contestants improve their poise, increase their confidence and bond with each other is my reward.

*Sarah Poole is a Senior English major at Berea College and served as coordinator for the 2004 Black Student Union Pageant.*



## NEWS BITES

### Ebony Explorations Book Club

You are invited to actively participate in the Ebony Explorations Book Club. Ebony Explorations was created for Black Men and Black Women on Berea College's campus to come together and dialogue about critical social, political, cultural, spiritual and educational issues using books and other media.

There is no cost to participate. However, your time and commitment to voice your thoughts in dialogue is required. We are limited to 30 participants, so immediate confirmation of interest will give you priority.

The first books we will be reading are bell hooks' *We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity* and *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*.

For more information contact Jonathan Johnson at the Black Cultural Center at Ext. 3795 or [jonathan\\_johnson@berea.edu](mailto:jonathan_johnson@berea.edu).

### Con-Grad-ulations!

Good luck and congratulations to the Fall 2004 graduating class!

#### BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Kia Bedminster  
Sheena Brunson

#### CHILD & FAMILY STUDIES

Frances Watts

#### EDUCATION STUDIES

George Webb  
Nikkiah Williams

#### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Dwight Overstreet

#### SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Jeremy McShan

#### TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRIAL ARTS

Christopher Hamilton

## POET'S CORNER

### Frustration

All around me, I see misled souls, trying to get right  
 Trapped in a world of captivity without a sight  
 My vision is not bright so it must be night  
 Traveling with no light makes it hard to hike  
 Just being different awards you one strike  
 Although it's not right,  
 Never stop without a fight  
 When its time to speak out, don't keep your hands by your side  
 I know that sometime we are left in the presence of our pride,  
 But that gives us no reason to hide,  
 We must release our mind in order to survive  
 Knowledge brightens the imagination  
 Of our country becoming a better nation for the future of our youth,  
 Listen to the situation  
 It's amazing how we spend all day occupying our brain with things like  
 Playstation  
 While we should have our nose in books and newspapers gathering up  
 information,  
 So we can reinforce our mind to help lift our organization  
 While stupidity freezes the dedication of our participation  
 Which continues the elimination of our population,  
 It is slowly decreasing our motivation  
 My people, time is what we're wasting  
 You have any idea of the occupation we are facing  
 We must have more patience  
 Take advantage of the opportunity and receive this education  
 If we want to maintain in this competition we have to quit chasing  
 In order to compete we must run faster so stop pacing and start lacing  
 Our shoes tighter and win this race, there is no more tasting  
 We must swallow our pride in order to strengthen our foundation  
 Come on ya'll  
 Let's end this  
 Frustration

**GEORGE SLOAN**

# What is Copasetic?

By **ELBONITA HAWKINS**

Copasetic Poetry Nite is an opportunity when the mic is yours for an artistic and creative expression of self. On October 15th, 2004, Sylvester Little, Jr. (aka "Sly"), kicked off the night with original poems and monologues from his Inter Conflict Series. Sly is also a Berea College alumnus of the Theatre Department.

Copasetic means everything is everything (everything is okay or cool). It is a time for students to come out and express themselves through spoken word and song—open mic style. Oftentimes, we don't have chances to express ourselves as we openly desire due to fear, or shyness, or timing.

Copasetic not only relieves stress for the guest artist, but perhaps encourages the listener. If you get the urge, feel free to *discreetly* express yourself during frequent "Shout-Out" segments. It tends to be a bit humorous with the Shout-Outs. Sometimes it's good to change up the atmosphere from love to a different level...if you know what I mean. So, if there is a special someone in the room you want to talk to, admire, diss or call out, write it out on a Shout-Out anonymously.

Not only can students speak and describe what they feel, but in between artists' breaks of creative expression, they can also chill and listen to a little jazz, rhythm and blues or neo-soul music while sipping on a refreshing drink. Copasetic is not just for the black community nor is it just for the white community, but for the campus community. Skills or no skills—We don't discriminate.

So, to all my brothers and sisters out there, whether you are black, white, yellow, brown—please no green—come out to the next Copasetic and express yourself or just relax because Everything is Everything...Copasetic!!

*ElBonita Hawkins is a Senior Child Development and Family Studies major at Berea College.*

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**So, when is  
the next  
Copasetic?**

Friday Nights  
Baird Lounge

**February 5**  
**March 5**  
**April 2**

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**Tina Hamilton, Moriah Washington, Sylvester Little, Jonathan Johnson, E.B. Hawkins and Brooke Leeth participating in Copasetic Poetry Nite.**

POET'S  
CORNER

## Preservation of the Soul

Someone once asked me the question, “How can I preserve My Soul?”, as I sat and thought I replied and said, “Your soul is like a field rebuilding and rebirthing day after day. If you give your spirit away it’s just giving the devil on other reason to come in and play. Because you see my God’s been talked about and misunderstood.”

They sat there and say “if he’s the almighty why can’t I see him or hear him” and wonder how can this be?

They begin to say if he’s all I want and all I’m supposed to want to be, why can’t I touch him or feel him, but yet you say he’s all around me.

Hello, Hello where did he go? I thought you said he was right behind me or that he would always be on my side?

You told me that I’m supposed to trust him and love him, but yet I can’t even talk to him. Then people tell me that my soul is supposed to belong to him but how can it when I don’t even know him?

And you dare sit there and blaspheme against my God and dare ask the question how you can preserve your soul. See, your souls have become so enflamed and engulfed with pain and sorrow that ignorance, ill-mannered people and adultery have overturned our world.

We have become sheep following each other in a herd of ignorance, searching for something or even someone to rescue us from our enslaved society that man has created.

The media has turned our world into chaos—all we hear on the news is this brother over robbed a bank and this sister over killed her baby.

They’ve turned us into, no wait, they have *labeled* us as crack fiends, drug-dealers and prostitutes.

And we sit and wonder in a pool of our own tears why we can’t preserve our souls.

Can you hear me, is anybody listening? I’m just searching for my soul. It’s small, perspiring with blood on one side and yearning for love on the other.

I can tell by the way you are looking that you want the answer to your question. But see, you have been searching for something that was right there in the open but your eyes were too blind to see and your mind was too ignorant to perceive it.

Because see, you must first consume your mind, body and soul in the almighty. Live your life in 360 degrees of righteousness and not 250. Be deeply rooted, rooted like a tree to the ground. Be like an empty vessel just yearning to be filled. Live your life as a light illuminating everything that comes into sight. Be all in Christ like he is in me, then the preservation of your soul will be complete.

**NIKKI WILLIAMS**

# Moment of Truth

By **ERIC "Royalty" JACKSON**

It was a beautiful Saturday morning, September 18th 2004, when the Black Cultural Center took a trip to Louisville. A Greyhound-size bus full of eager students awaited the late arrival of their peers, whose names I will not disclose. We left from the side of Boone Tavern around 10:30 in the morning and we were on our way to Louisville for the "Moment of Truth," which was presented by Forest Baptist Church. After about a two-hour drive we arrived at a beautiful park which included hamburgers and hot dogs, potato chips, and baked beans. The food was the most beautiful part of the park.

While we waited to eat, members of Black Music Ensemble began to sing—I guess we thought our robes were on and we were at our Spring concert, I don't know—but we received great applause from the people there and were asked to sing again. Soon after, hunger was upon us and the most beautiful part was ready: the food! At the park, ponies were available for people to ride. Chris Awosika and I took advantage of this opportunity and rode until the break of dawn! The church also provided clothes free of charge and students took advantage of this opportunity.

Da' T.R.U.T.H., a Christian rap artist on Cross Movement Records, came out a got the crowd hyped! Starting with "Scent," which encouraged God's people to "Get It! Get It!", he also performed "All We Owe," "After Your Heart," and "My Story". Chris Awosika, invited on stage by Da' T.R.U.T.H., did the chorus to "My Story". T.R.U.T.H. not only performed, he ministered to all of us.

Finally, prizes were given out and Tamika Reed won a 25 inch TV, and someone won the "Passion of the Christ" DVD. (Like I am just going to sit down with my boys and watch that). All in all, this was an awesome experience and anyone that missed out....*missed out!*

*Eric D. Jackson, Jr. is a Sophomore Business Administration major at Berea College.*



**Eric Jackson (right) pictured with Da' T.R.U.T.H. himself.**

## THE WORD

**Question:** What do you think about the 2004 Presidential election? Do you feel that African Americans played an important role in this election?



"I would like to thank all Americans, especially the African Americans, which voted during the 2004 election. If you think you didn't make a difference in the national election, you made a difference in the local election and voting records everywhere."

**Melissa Buchanan**  
Junior  
Political Science/  
Speech Communication



"I believe that the right man is in office. If not, God would not have allowed it. Besides, all my trust is in Him who created man, not in man."

**Eric D. Jackson, Jr.**  
Sophomore  
Business Administration



"I think if they voted, then, they played a role because no matter who won your voice was heard."

**Beatrice Stallings**  
Freshman  
Biology

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Black Cultural Center first opened its doors in July 1983. The Center was established and based on the premise that true integration and equality cannot be achieved without a general awareness and understanding of black culture. The Black Cultural Center provides programs and services that foster cross-cultural exchanges and intentional social intercourse.

The mission of the Black Cultural Center is to:

- assist Berea College in maintaining an environment that acknowledges, respects, and enhances diversity and promotes multicultural educational opportunities;
- assist the College in its effort to recruit, retain, and graduate students of color;
- assist students of color in developing a greater understanding of his/her own culture and heritage
- provide support services, programs, and activities that promote the intellectual, career, social, moral, and personal development of students of color and assist them in achieving their highest educational potential; and
- assist Berea College in recruiting and retaining faculty of color.

## ANCESTOR HIGHLIGHT

### Daisy Bates

From her own experience with racism, Daisy Bates was determined to change a society which allowed segregation to exist. She and her husband owned the Arkansas State Press, a weekly newspaper which spoke out against racial discrimination, police brutality and other injustices. As president of the Arkansas NAACP, she organized and protected the "Little Rock Nine," African American students who desegregated the city's Central High School in 1957. Bates endured constant harassment—a rock was thrown through her window with the words, "Stone this



**Bates**

time. Dynamite next" scribbled on a piece of paper; later that year, her home was bombed. She and the students received the Spingran Medal, the highest NAACP award, for their courage in the [Little Rock] crisis, but because of her involvement, her newspaper suffered economically and was forced to close. In 1985, the Arkansas State Press was revived, and Bates resumed her role as publisher.—Civil Rights Movement Cards

## Greatness

Continued from p. 3

whom much is given, much is required". This means, now that we know we have a purpose, a plan, a prophesied destiny, it behooves us to act or react to life and life's

**"To whom  
much is  
given,  
much is  
required"**

**Rev. Paula  
McGee**

Bible quotation used in  
her address to Berea  
students

situations in a positive and profound way. God always blesses us, to help us bless others. It is not only our place to walk into our greatness, but to help others walk into theirs. We can do this by simply encouraging people and living our lives as acceptable to God as possible. For without God, nothing is possible.

It is truly a blessing to know that God has taken the time to craft and mold each of us into something that will become beautiful, something that will become mighty in his hands and something that *will* become great. If that is not enough for a person to stand and walk on, we can all forget the streets of gold.

My fellow students and other alike, I encourage you today to walk in your greatness and your authority, because God has a plan and a will for your life and that's greatness in itself.

*DeJuana L. Thompson is a Senior Communications major at Berea College.*