

# The School of Humanities and Social Sciences Newsletter



**Clafin University**

**Dr. Henry N. Tisdale, President**

**Fall 2009**  
**Volume 9 No. 1**

**The World Needs Visionaries**

**We develop the whole person**

## THE SCHOOL WINS

### The South Carolina Humanities Council Annual Governor's Award

By Dr. Peggy S. Ratliff, dean

Each year one of the goals of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences is to strive to do more in our pursuit of achieving excellence in all that we do. Therefore, there are several new faces this year in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences to assist us in achieving this goal. We were fortunate to be able to bring in several well-experienced, diverse and energetic faculty (see pages 3-8) and staff members who should make positive contributions to their departments, the school and Clafin University.

The school was honored this year as the recipient of the South Carolina Humanities Council Governor's Awards in the Humanities. This award highlighted and solidified the service given by our faculty, staff and students, in teaching, in research, leadership and most notably in producing a number of cultural and educational programs for the Clafin family and the Orangeburg and surrounding communities.

At the October 15, 2009, South Carolina Humanities Council Annual Luncheon of the Governor's Award in the Humanities, Dr. Peggy Stevenson Ratliff in her acceptance speech, on behalf of the school, expressed her ap-



**Gov. Mark Sanford presenting the award to  
Dr. Peggy S. Ratliff, dean**

preciation to President Henry N. and Mrs. Alice Carson Tisdale, Dr. George E. Miller, Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Zia Hasan, the Vice President for Planning, Assessment and Information Services, who was present at the luncheon and spoke on behalf of the University. She also praised the hard work, cooperation and support of the faculty and staff. Over 50 school faculty and staff members were in attendance at the function. Several other colleagues from Clafin and other local colleges and universities were also in attendance for this joyful occasion. Dr. Barbara Lekatsas (Fall 2008 Visiting Associate Professor from Hofstra University) was also recognized for nominating the school for the award, and Dr. Vermelle J. Johnson, former South Carolina Commissioner of

Higher Education, and former Vice President for Academic Affairs (Clafin University) for her support of the humanities was also noted.

Our students, faculty and staff continue to make us proud. Please read all sections of the newsletter to learn how we are striving to develop the whole person in every way, and produce agents of change and exemplary servant leaders for the twenty-first-century and beyond.



## Department of Art

### The School of Humanities and Social Sciences Newsletter

#### Dean

Dr. Peggy S. Ratliff

#### Compiler

Mandakini Hiremath

#### Editors

Linda R. Hill  
Mandakini Hiremath

#### Design and Layout

Mandakini Hiremath



Mr. Robinson

During the summer, Professor Terrance Robinson was engulfed in his creative endeavors. He worked energetically in various areas of artistic expression such as sketching, painting and mixed-media for upcoming events. As a result, Professor

Robinson applied to *the William H. Johnson Foundation for The Arts, Los Angeles, Carroll Harris Simms Black Arts Competition, in Dallas and the South Carolina State Fair*. Additionally, Professor Robinson had the good fortune of exhibiting twenty-eight works at the *Orangeburg Fine Arts Center, Orangeburg, SC*; plus, he attended the *Grants Writing Workshop for Community Cultural Projects at South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC*. Currently, Professor Robinson is involved in planning several art activities with the Boys and Girls of the Midlands, Ben Arnold, Columbia, SC and Robert E. Howard Middle School, Orangeburg, South Carolina.



One of the works presented at the exhibition

### Special Thanks to

**Dr. Peggy S. Ratliff**, dean of the school of Humanities and Social Sciences, for giving me the opportunity to produce the newsletter.

**Ms. Linda R. Hill**, assistant professor of English, for agreeing to work with me as an editor.

**Members of the School and Department Chairs** for their contributions.

**Dr. Henry N. Tisdale**, president, and **Dr. George E. Miller, III**, vice president for academic affairs, for encouragement.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate all the compliments from my administrators, co-workers, students, and friends on the previous issues of the newsletter and the columns that are printed in The Times and Democrat. These encouraging words are a source of motivation.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences publishes its newsletter periodically; therefore, please bring your stories to the compiler, Mrs. Hiremath. I am in the Writing Center, GTK, room # 228, ext. 5422. Your stories should be typed using Microsoft word.

You may e-mail attachments at [mhiremath@claflin.edu](mailto:mhiremath@claflin.edu).

### Other notes from Art Department

By Muhammad Hossain

- 1. Open house/Statewide Portfolio Day:** As a follow up to last year's success and to maintaining its standards and traditions, the Department of Art will be hosting an open house/statewide portfolio day on Nov 13, 2009. This event is aimed at recruiting more talented art majors into the art programs in coming years. Details of this event will be forthcoming.
- 2. The Good Shepherd:** Dr. Kod Igwe, Professor of Art, gifted his Sculpture "The Good Shepherd" to the Claflin Board of Trustees to honor their contributions to the university as guardian angels at the Annual Board of Trustees reception for the faculty and staff. The President and the Chairman of the Board of Trustees unveiled the sculpture. The chairman of the Board of Trustees accepted the work and thanked Dr. Igwe and the Department of Art members for their contributions to the University. A brochure has been designed by the graphic design team headed by Prof. Habibur Rahman and assisted by Mr. M. I. Hossain.
- 3. Digital Archive:** In order to restore and preserve old graphic works, Prof. Habibur Rahman with the assistance of Mr. M. I. Hossain undertook the project called "*Digital Restoration: A Flip Book Approach*", during the summer of 2009. This project was funded by the Center of Excellence, Claflin University. These graphic works will be available on the Claflin University website to capture a greater audience aiming to spread the legacy of this great Institution.



# Welcome new members

By Mandakini Hiremath

The beginning of each academic year is filled with new aspirations, promises and challenges. Each member of the Claflin family is expected to persevere and to meet expectations. As we welcome 474 new freshmen and transfer students, we also gladly welcome new faculty members who have joined the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. We look forward to working together to accomplish Claflin University's mission.

**Dr. Dorsey Mitchell Butler III** joins as an assistant professor and director of Jazz Studies in the Department of Music. His teaching experience includes beginning jazz, jazz big band, jazz orchestra. He has also substituted as the conductor for the jazz lab band at the University of Texas at Austin.



Dr. D. Butler

A native of Raleigh, North Carolina, Dr. Butler earned his Doctor of Music Arts from University of Texas at Austin, his master's and bachelor's degrees from East Carolina University. His achievements are many, and he has won numerous awards for his performances. Just to mention a couple, he was a finalist in the Pershing's Own U.S. Army Blues 3<sup>rd</sup> Trombone auditions in 2009. He won Artist and Educational Consultant for the *Diverse Arts Culture Works* award, a non-profit cultural development center aimed at the development of music and art in the African American historical district of Austin, TX. in 2008. In addition, Dr. Butler has a long list of prominent music festival performances. Recently he performed at The Texas Jazz Festival in Corpus Christie, Texas, in 2009 and at Essence Fest, New Orleans in 2008.

When asked why he chose Claflin and what he plans to accomplish, Dr. Butler answered, "I chose the university because there was a need in the department that seemed to fit my training and skill set. The University is close to my hometown in North Carolina. The University displayed an eagerness to move forward in many academic and musical areas. As well, Claflin University has received some national accolades that were quite attractive." He added, "I plan to help develop the jazz curriculum and enhance the low brass studio and establish the BA and BM in Jazz Studies, help establish a musical culture pervasive throughout the university and community, increase the renown for the Department of Music regionally, thereby attracting high quality music students,"

Dr. Butler's hobbies are golf, reading and fishing.

**Dr. León Chang Shik** joins as an assistant professor



Dr. Chang

of Spanish in the Department of English and Foreign Languages. His interest in the Spanish language and Spanish-American literature began at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. He obtained his Master of Arts degree in Spanish from

Marquette University where he truly enjoyed teaching basic Spanish language classes. This motivated him to continue his studies and to teach the classes he enjoyed, while attending Florida State University where he earned the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Spanish-American Literature with a concentration in Post-Colonial Theory.

Before coming to Claflin University, Dr. Chang taught at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. He was the department's Latin American specialist. Besides teaching a range of Spanish language classes, he frequently teaches classes in literature(s) and culture(s) of Latin American countries. In his Culture of the Americas class, students learn that Latin America is a group of nations comprised of many ethnic groups and cultures with unique linguistic variations. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, he developed and organized Hispanic Movie Nights and an international film festival – something he would really like to do at Claflin. His main purpose is to bring the student body together to create awareness and to discuss issues that are vital to the Hispanic population.

Talking about his special adventures, Dr. Chang commented on this past summer when he took a group of students to study abroad in Guadalajara, Mexico. The students enjoyed very much their time in Mexico and the different cultural locations they visited. Many stressed their time spent with their host family and their long and funny conversations before and after dinner.

Two of Dr. Chang's articles have been accepted for publication, first, *El espacio asiático concebido y vivido en las crónicas de José Juan Tablada* (Conceived and Lived Asian Spaces in the Chronicles of Jose Juan Tablada) in *Orientalismos* – a compilation of critical studies related to Asia and its influences in the Spanish-American Literature; second, *El espacio asiático mediatizado y las innovaciones del Modernismo Hispanoamericano en dos cuentos de Rubén Darío* (Mediating the Asian Space and the Innovations of the Spanish American Modernism

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in Two Short Stories of Ruben Dario) in *La Torre*, a journal from The University of Puerto Rico that specializes in Spanish American literature. Dr. Chang is presently exploring the portrayal of Chinese immigrants through the lens of the Mexican cinema. In addition, Dr. Chang is interested in the usage and concept of *AfroAsia* in Cuba and the Caribbean. As many black African slaves and Chinese coolies, especially males, were arriving and putting roots in Cuba during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they found discomfort, hatred and sometimes love. With those factors in mind, he wants to examine the dynamic that caused such unions and the socio-economic and political evolution of these two different cultures.

When asked why he chose Claflin and what he plans to accomplish, Dr. Chang responded, "I was most attracted to the university's theme, "The World Needs Visionaries." He added, "I want to inspire students to go out, use the language learned in the classroom and make a difference by assisting those in need or simply to enjoy a conversation with someone from a Hispanic Country. As an instructor of Spanish, my first goal is to make students aware of what learning a language entails. When students first enter my classroom, I explain to them that they are not just going to learn a language, but also gain valuable insight into a new and cultural rich lifestyle, as well as a new global and personal perspective." Dr. Chang wants his students to be able to speak the language and at the same time to understand the culture, customs and traditions of Hispanic people.

Dr. Chang likes to read and enjoys watching and playing tennis, fishing and watching his favorite college football team – Florida State University play. However, what he misses the most is spending time with his six year old child, his wife and his mother.

**Ms. Lisa Dilks** joins as an assistant professor of Sociology in the Department of History and Sociology. She has been a Ph.D. student for the last five years at the University of South Carolina in Columbia from where she has earned an M. A. in sociology and an M.I.S. in statistics, in 2008. She is expecting her Ph. D. in sociology by the end of 2009. Her doctoral portfolio is in Women and Gender Studies. Her Bachelor of Arts degree is in women's studies in sociology from the University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming in 2003.



**Ms. Lisa Dilks**

When asked why she chose Claflin and what she plans to accomplish, Ms. Dilks responded, "There are many reasons. First, it enabled me to have a job relatively close to USC so that I can finish my doctoral degree. Second, I like the focus on a liberal arts education, particularly at a small school like Claflin. Finally, working at Claflin has enabled me to stay in the South where I love the weather! I want to be a good researcher and teacher while here at Claflin. Because of the size of the department, I will have the opportunity to teach several different courses. I also hope to continue my research in social psychology and sociology of law and want to bring experimental social science to Claflin."

"Besides my Ph.D., I am most proud of my MIS degree in statistics. It was extremely difficult to achieve but well worth it. I also have two research articles under review at the American Journal of Sociology and Social Forces," added Ms. Dilks.

Talking about her hobbies and interests, Ms. Dilks said, "I have always been very athletic. I am an avid golfer and enjoy playing softball. I also enjoy independent films and music. I love traveling, especially to large cities like New York and Philadelphia."

**Dr. Megan R. Fogle** joins as a visiting assistant professor of Music Theory and Composition. She earned a Ph.D. in music theory in the Spring of 2009 from Florida State University, where she worked as a graduate assistant in all sections of theory and composition during her quest for her Ph.D. Dr. Fogle has an M. A. in music theory from Queens College, City University of New York and a B. M. in music theory and composition from Stetson University.



**Dr. Megan Fogle**

When asked why she chose Claflin and what she plans to accomplish, Dr. Fogle responded, "It offered me a great opportunity to help build a strong music theory curriculum, which is a vital element of any music student's academic career, and also to help start up a string program. I plan to help the continuing growth of the music department by fostering a strong music theory background for the students and to help start a string program, in addition, to continue to grow as an educator and continue research in my areas of specialty."

Dr. Fogle's special interests include electronic music (20<sup>th</sup> century music in general), symphonic and string quartet

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works, in addition to her other hobbies of swimming and baking.

A native of Puerto Rico, **Dr. Josefina Gonzalez** joins as an assistant professor of Spanish in the Department of English and Foreign Languages. She earned her Ph. D. in Spanish literature in 1990, M. Phil in 1987 and Master of Art in Spanish literature in 1985 from New York University. Dr. Gonzales has an MFA in Printmaking from Wayne State University and a Bachelor of Arts in humanities from the University



**Dr. J. Gonzalez**

of Puerto Rico.

Dr. Gonzalez's dissertation, titled, "La memoria disgregadora en Juan Benet: Volverás a Región, Una meditación y Un viaje de invierno" presents Spanish civil engineer Juan Benet as a writer that contrasts the creative process of geology with memory and literary expression. Her achievement and awards are numerous. To mention a couple of recent ones, she had a Faculty Development Grant, Agnes Scott College in 1996 and School of Criticism and Theory at Dartmouth College.

Dr. Gonzalez has about 25 years of teaching experience in public schools, colleges, and universities. Prior to coming to Claflin University, she taught at Gwinnett County Public Schools from 2002-2009. Her other experiences include Commercial Production Artist, JCPenney Corporate Packaging and Labeling Design Department, New York City, and other advertising and design studios from 1978-1989.

Dr. Gonzalez said, "I consider myself an artist/scholar and my research and publications explore the semiotic relationship between art and literature. I enjoy working in different universities as a way to experience different cultures in different states, but I particularly enjoy Claflin University because of the intense interest in education and personal accomplishment of the students in my classes. I find the history of the college interesting and hope to contribute greatly to its mission of social relevance."

"What I hope to accomplish is to make a difference with the students," added Dr. Gonzalez.

**Dr. Donna L. Gough** joins as professor and chair of the Department of Mass Communications. Dr. Gough earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in mass communications from the University of Oklahoma in 2002, the Master of Arts with a triple major in theatre, film and television from Regent University in 1988, and the Bachelor

of Arts degree in theatre arts at Texas A&M University in 1985.

Dr. Gough started her professional career by working



**Dr. Donna Gough**

for Mars Hill Productions in Houston, Texas. She served as the Production Coordinator for the film, *Without Reservation*. Also, Gough worked as a commercial producer for VPI Communications in Bryan, Texas. While working as a producer, Gough was invited to join the teaching faculty at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. She started teaching and has never looked back.

Dr. Gough was also responsible for overseeing the student produced newscasts for both radio and television, *ECU Tiger Football* for KTEN, *Assignment: Radio ECU* for KGOU, and a host of other commercials and special projects for that university. Dr. Gough was the Chair for the Board of Regents for Oklahoma Colleges & Universities Committee for Journalism and Mass Communications Curriculum. She served as the President for the Oklahoma Broadcast Education Association and as a board member of the Oklahoma Association of Broadcasters. She is the Vice President of the Oklahoma Speech Theatre Communication Association and is a member of the Small Colleges and Universities Division of the national Broadcast Education Association.

"I was looking for something new and different. When I came to campus for my interview, I saw the Claflin University motto that said, 'The world needs visionaries.' I thought that a more true statement had never been said and that I would like to be part of a place with that kind of perspective," said Dr. Gough.

**Dr. Lori Celeste Hicks** comes from Detroit, Michigan



**Dr. Lori Hicks**

as an assistant professor of Voice. Dr. Hicks earned her Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan, Masters of Music from Bowling Green State University and Bachelors of Music Education from Kentucky State University.

Prior to joining Claflin, she served as an adjunct professor of voice at the University of Dayton and Central State University in Ohio. Talking about her achievements and career highlights, Dr. Hicks said, "I have sung in operas and concerts internationally; sang the lead

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role of “Bess” in George Gershwin’s *Porgy and Bess* with the Opera Theater of Pittsburgh; won first place in competitions such as the National Association of Negro Musicians Young Artist Competition as well as the Young Composer’s Competition.”

When Dr. Hicks was asked why she chose Claflin and what she plans to accomplish here, she responded, “I was impressed with the facilities, the campus, the sense of family among administration and students. I knew it was a place I could grow and give back to the HBCU legacy. I plan to expose my students to all the opportunities available to them through a career in music and prepare them to compete at the highest level. I also plan to help to improve the program and do my part in bringing recognition and acclaim to Claflin’s music students and the university as a whole.”

Dr. Lori Hicks recently performed the solo for Verdi’s Requiem in Detroit, Michigan, and presented a workshop and a master class during the national convention of the National Association of Negro Musicians in Chicago.

**Ms. Yolanda McCutchen** joins us as an instructor of



**Ms. Yolanda McCutchen**

Broadcast. She earned the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Media Arts with a concentration in Broadcast Journalism from Hampton University, and the Master of Arts in communication and public affairs from American University, Washington, DC in 2009.

Prior to attending graduate school, she worked as a producer at NBC News. She produced stories for Dateline NBC, NBC Nightly News, Channel One News, Today and NBC Insider Reports.

When asked why she chose Claflin and what she plans to accomplish, Ms. McCutchen responded, “When I became interested in academia, I always envisioned myself teaching at an HBCU. Claflin is the top ranked among Black Colleges; I was extremely impressed with the growth of the Mass Communications Department in a decade. Accepting this position was an opportunity to live in South Carolina again.”

“My overall goal is to be an asset to my students, department and university. I would like to establish more contacts with industry professionals so that our students may benefit from their knowledge and form mentoring relationships which could then lead to internships and jobs.

One way I plan to accomplish this is through student involvement and/or developing student chapters of professional journalists and public relations associations. Connecting students with successful alumni in the field would also assist them with gaining entry into the communications industry,” added Ms. McCutchen.

Talking about career highlights, Ms. McCutchen mentioned, “This is my first teaching position. I was also the Director of Communications for the Ithemba Foundation. Ithemba funds educational programs in Cape Town, South Africa. I traveled to Cape Town to assess the programs while I held this position.”

During her tenure at American University her area of research focused on the portrayal of African Americans in the media and the ways in which blacks consume and use media. She presented her final research project while at American University “Where We Web,” a study of the use of online video on TheRoot.com, BET.com and Essence.com to executives of the Gannett Corporation (publishers of USA Today) in May, 2009.

In 2000, she was a fellow in the Radio in the American Sector/RTNDF Visiting American Journalist Fellowship program in Berlin, Germany 2000. For her work as a journalist, she has been recognized with the Edward R. Murrow Award for investigative journalism. Her work on the coverage of September 11<sup>th</sup> was also nominated for an Emmy. The Murrow and Emmy are two of the most prestigious awards in broadcast journalism.

Ms. McCutchen is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists, the Black Public Relations Society and Women in Film and Video. She loves traveling internationally. This summer, she visited Venice, Italy, Split, Croatia, Athens and Mykonos, Greece.

**Jelani Khamil Thomas** joins us as an assistant



**Mr. Jelani Thomas**

professor of Art. Mr. Thomas earned a Master of Fine Arts in illustration from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2002, and a Bachelor of Science in community health from Johnson C. Smith University in 1999.

Prior to joining us, Mr. Thomas taught for four years in the public school system as a Visual Arts Teacher. The first three years, he worked at the Charlotte Mecklenburg School System at Olympic High School, Charlotte, North Carolina 2004-

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**The World Needs Visionaries**



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2007. During his first year at Olympic, he received the Harris Teeter New Teacher of the Year Award for Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

His last year with the public school system was with Eastern Guilford High School in Gibsonville, N.C., Guilford County Schools 2007-2008.

When asked why he chose Claflin and what he plans to accomplish, Mr. Thomas responded, “Art and teaching is my passion and I wanted to find the right institution to practice both disciplines. Claflin has a great reputation in both of the aforementioned areas. Therefore, it was a natural inclination to want to be a part of such a phenomenal institution and to add to its success.”

“I look forward to developing cutting edge art courses that will elevate our students to the forefront of the industry, assisting with the development of new art workshops for the university, and presenting other expressive art options for students to participate in,” he added.

Mr. Thomas designed the official Golden Bull Mascot logo in 2000 for his alma mater, Johnson C. Smith University. Recently, he illustrated a children’s book entitled, “My Hair Is Curly,” which is ready to be published. His work was featured in the African-America Atelier in Greensboro, N.C. In addition, he has produced hosts of other logos and artistic designs for the faith-based community in North Carolina.

His hobbies include reading, writing, exercising, motorcycle riding, crafting, and Capoeira (Afro-Brazilian Martial Art inclusive of Dance, Music, Singing, and Theatrics).

**Mr. Frederick Allen Tookes** joins us as an assistant professor of Art. He earned a Master of Science in computer graphics from Purdue University, and a Bachelor of Science in graphics communication & technological studies from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University. He comes from and still resides in Atlanta, Georgia. Prior to joining Claflin, he worked as an adjunct professor with the Art Department at Spelman College.



**Mr. F. A. Tookes**

When asked why he chose Claflin and what he plans to accomplish, Mr. Tookes responded, “Claflin University has a rich history as the first Art Department in the state of South Carolina. I chose this institution because the department made an innovative decision to develop a premiere Digital Design program. My appointment provides me with a tremendous opportunity to build a nationally recognized Digital Design program that will continue the legacy of this rich

university. I plan on building a curriculum based on: 3D modeling and visualization, animation, and input technology for 2.5D modeling. Additionally, I am interested in developing internships/cooperative education programs for undergraduate students within the gaming and film industries.”

Mr. Tookes mentioned, during his short tenure at Claflin University, he utilized grant funds to purchase hardware and software materials to assist in the construction of the digital design program. As the gaming, science, and film industries continue to make advancements in digital content, it is critical that an academic institution is equipped with the indispensable tools to prepare students for the new digital renaissance. “Therefore, I am confident that my decision will provide Claflin University with an opportunity to compete with major institutions and industries in the global arena of visualization,” he added.

He is passionate and committed to mentoring and educating under-represented youth, said Mr. Tookes. He enjoys weight lifting, reading, drawing, cooking and gaming (Halo and Gears of War).

**Dr. Katherine L. Turner** joins us from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Tx. as a visiting assistant professor of Music History and Ethnomusicology. Dr. Turner earned the Bachelor of Music Education from Baylor University, the Master of Music in musicology and her Ph.D. in musicology, both from The University of Texas.



**Dr. Katherine Turner**

When asked why she chose Claflin and what she plans to accomplish, Dr. Turner responded, “I’ve come to Claflin to get back to my east coast roots and to be a part of this growing program. I hope to teach a range of classes and hone my pedagogical skills. The classes I teach are by their very nature challenging, and music majors don’t always see the connections between academics and performance; part of my job is to help them understand that better informed equals better performers, better educators.”

Dr. Turner added, “I have both an historic and modern interest in the liberal arts education particularly when it is interdisciplinary. I am excited to be part of a tight-knit campus that focuses on helping students figure out not only what their strengths are, but also how those talents, in conjunction with the critical thinking and creative problem solving skills they obtain here at Claflin, can help them make a life-long commitment to bettering communities in South Carolina and

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## Drs. Adderley and Till return

By Mandakini Hiremath

We are glad to welcome back Dr. Meisha Adderley and Dr. Susan Till.

**Dr. Meisha Adderley** returns as assistant professor of piano. After working here for two academic years, she took a leave of absence during 2008 – 2009. She moved with her husband and two sons to the greater Philadelphia area, where her husband had been selected as an *ACE Fellow* for the American Council on Education. Dr. Cedric Adderley also took a one-year sabbatical from his position as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs at Claflin University, and was assigned as a fellow to Widener University where he shadowed the University's President, Dr. Jim Harris.

While on leave from Claflin University, Dr. Meisha Adderley served as a music specialist for the School District of Philadelphia. She taught general music to students at Thomas G. Morton Elementary School in southwest Philadelphia. Highly disadvantaged, one-hundred percent of Morton's students lived in poverty, receiving free breakfast and lunch meal assistance each school day. Thirty-percent of the students were Liberian refugees from the civil war in Africa whose families had taken residence in the southwest Philadelphia area.

During her tenure at Morton Elementary, Dr. Adderley was able to write and secure three grants for their music department, which had few music resources when she arrived. From a pool of 100 applicants, she won a grant for \$10,000 from the Hamels Foundation which provided for the purchase of musical instruments and supplies for the music department at Morton. Cole Hamels, the pitcher for the Phillies professional baseball team who helped bring them to their 2008 World Series win, and his wife Heidi Hamels, former *Survivor* contestant, administer the Hamels Foun-



**Dr. M. Adderley**

ation and were very pleased with Dr. Adderley's accomplishments in Morton's music department.

The additional \$2,500 grant she obtained through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts funded ten weeks of African drumming instruction with artist-in-residence Robert Kenyatta, professional percussionist who has performed with such artists as Wilson Pickett, the Intruders, the Stylistics, and the O'Jays.

Dr. Adderley secured a third grant through the *Donors Choose.org* for the purchase of recorder wind instruments, books, and accompanying CDs. By the end of the grant period, most of the students in grades 3-5 owned their own recorders, books, and CDs for home practice, and 100% of students in the grade levels received 45 minutes of weekly recorder instruction each semester.

Dr. Adderley says, "I am pleased to be back at Claflin where I plan to continue in my efforts to engage the underserved in the Orangeburg community through music while continuing to enhance the level and quality of effective music education for my students at Claflin."

**Dr. Susan Till** joined the Department English and Foreign Languages Claflin University as an assistant professor of English in the fall of 2007. After serving three academic semesters, Dr. Till took a leave of absence for one semester, spring of 2009, to have more time to pursue research and writing projects. Her research centers on a discourse analysis of language surrounding public education in Orangeburg. "During the time I was gone, I was able to complete several proposals and manuscripts," said Dr. Till. "However, teaching is my passion and I could not wait to get back in the classroom this fall to work with students again. My current research focuses on an exploration of cultural constructs of identity," she added. Again, welcome Dr. Adderley and Dr. Till.



**Dr. Susan Till**

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beyond. So far, I have greatly enjoyed getting to know talented students who are eager to learn."

Most of Dr. Turner's research interests lie in uncovering the musical lives of women, an interest which requires extensive archival research and interdisciplinary thinking. She says, "I have been fortunate to work in some of the world's leading libraries in the U.S. and in Italy; I spent this past summer at the Newberry Library in Chicago through an NEH

Summer Seminar Fellowship. I have begun work on a new research agenda focusing on the musical educations of women in early modern Italy."

Dr. Turner spends her free time with her spouse and her two dogs. Cooking, reading, traveling, playing golf and listening to music are her hobbies. "The four-legged members are mostly interested in the cooking and the road trips," added Dr. Turner with a smile.



# Growth is evidence of life

By Mandakini Hiremath

## Another success story



Ms. Vanessa Thomas

As we welcome the class of 2013 and start the new academic year, I can't help but miss dearly a few of the 2009 graduates who just said goodbye. Especially, some students have a knack of seeking, even at times demanding, special attention from their professors, advisers, mentors. With their own special ways, whims, attitudes, demeanor or even, at times, by annoyance,

they end up occupying a special place in their targeted audiences' hearts.

Ms. Vanessa Thomas was one among them. However, unlike many others who try to get my attention, she grabbed my attention inadvertently. During all these years, whenever she needed my help, she asked straightforwardly, and as soon as she received it, she thanked me and proceeded on with her work. Her no-nonsense attitude, dash in, say 'Hi,' while signing-in, and then occupy any available computer and stay for hours, if required to complete her assignments, and then dash out after a quick sign-out and a 'goodbye.' Not rude but her stubborn attitude towards getting her work done to her satisfaction made me pay a little more attention towards her.

Vanessa was accepted by two other elite universities; however, she thought Claflin would be the place she could fit in the best. Claflin's family-like atmosphere, caring, nurturing intimacy among students, faculty, and staff helped her choose Claflin. Because of the compact nature of the university, the professors are able to get to know their students' background, strengths or weaknesses in their work, and their life's dreams to help nurture them. She was sure that professors at Claflin would be able to foster her personal as well as professional growth.

"I felt honored to receive an invitation to be a member of the Alice Carson Tisdale Honors College; however, I wouldn't have been able to fulfill the rigid obligations. At that time, I was working on two jobs to independently provide for myself. "Besides," she defended, "my tuition is paid through Life Scholarship, S.C. Tuition Grant, and Pell Grant, for keeping my grades up."

Vanessa grew up in a family with her grandmother, Lauretta, a retired teacher, and grandfather, Alva O'Neal, a military veteran. Mr. and Mrs. O'Neal raised three children, two not their own, solely on savings and retirement, though

her grandfather passed away when Vanessa was a junior in high school. They tried to teach her the values, ethics, and beliefs on which the meaning of life is based, but Vanessa was eager to spread her wings and venture out on her own, when she left home for college. Vanessa said, "I ran into a phase where I made very bad decisions that have caused me to struggle a great deal. When I moved off campus at the end of my sophomore year, I had gained tremendous responsibilities I didn't know how to handle." She admits that at this point, she had forgotten everything her grandparents taught her about being an adult. She ran into constant financial situations as she tried to keep up with her peers who did not have the same responsibilities as she. During this period, she made numerous calls to her grandma to bail her out financially. And every time before grandma wrote her a check, Vanessa had to sit and endure her long lectures. "After a while, I grew tired of hearing grandma sing the same old song, and I began to straighten up my life. And finally, I got to the place financially where I needed to be," said Vanessa. Reflecting on grandma's lectures helped Vanessa understand that people were only with her when it was convenient for them. Her grandma's most important lecture of all was when it came to paying bills, there is no excuse. As she proudly stands today, an unwavering, confident, independent woman, she credits her success to her grandparents. "My struggles and my experiences have helped to mold me into the person I am today. Even though I didn't have much help along the way, I understand that it is not others' duty to take care of me, but my duty to take care of myself. And understanding this makes me humble, not bitter," says Vanessa. Reiterating, "My struggles didn't come from childhood misfortunes, but were derived from many of my bad decisions as an adult," Vanessa insists, "Nonetheless, I will not let people run over me, deceive me, or take advantage of me, because that's not the person I am or the person I want to be."

A May 2009 graduate, Vanessa Thomas, English major and Criminal Justice minor, currently works in Beaufort as the Housing Coordinator and Case Manger for Citizens Opposed to Domestic Violence. She works with women of different ages and ethnicities who have been abused physically, emotionally, verbally, or sexually. "I love what I do, and I get paid very well. I thought coming home would be the best place for me to work and save money until I go to law school in the fall of 2010 and make my grandma proud of me," said Vanessa. She wants to specialize in contracts

**Please see, MS. THOMAS, page 15**



# Department of English and Foreign Languages

By **Dr. Ronnie Hopkins**, Chair



**Dr. R. Hopkins**

For the 2009-2010 academic year, the Department of English and Foreign Languages will stay the course in achieving successful completion and implementation of the five (5) critical areas articulated in the 2008-2009 academic year that constitute new critical initiatives that will strategically place the Department

on the road to becoming a premiere Department of English and Foreign Languages, thus establishing regional, national, and international distinction. The faculty in the Department of English and Foreign Languages remain convinced that in order to become distinguished as a premiere department the primary focus must be the development and strengthening of the curriculum and program offerings. The faculty remains constant in the belief that a strong curriculum with competitive program offerings will generate unprecedented student interest and foster faculty-student engagement, thus assisting the Department in becoming the premiere entity that we seek. To that end, the critical areas identified by the English and Foreign Languages faculty include the following curriculum additions

and program enhancements: 1) the Master of Arts in English degree program, 2) Spanish major, 3) Gender Studies major, 4) Theater major, and 5) development of the Writing Center.

The aforementioned initiatives shall continue to be the focus of the Department of English and Foreign Languages faculty until each initiative has been adequately addressed, completely met or exceeded and opportunities for expansion are exhausted. The faculty in the Department of English and Foreign Languages is committed and delighted to pursue this course of action as we predict that development of the critical initiatives should provide a renewal and energy needed to continue yielding a productive department that promotes intellectualism throughout the entire campus and challenges and motivates all students while preparing them for graduate and professional studies and competitive work force placement as world Visionaries. Moreover, this course of action has implications for placing Claflin University at the top academic ranks with regional, national and international acclaim as a premiere Department of English and Foreign Languages.

## Study abroad notes

By **Dr. D. Gene Pace**, Director of Study Abroad.



**Dr. D. Gene Pace**

Claflin University students Vivian Alexander and Nicola Whitley are studying in foreign countries during the fall 2009 semester. Mr. Alexander is studying in Barcelona Spain. Shortly after arriving, he noted that he was “totally enjoying the experience so far” and noted that a Spanish language teacher had estimated that they would be gaining two years worth of typical foreign language instruction in just six weeks.

Ms. Whitley wrote in September 2009: “Thus far I have had an enjoyable and insightful time in Mexico. My first days in Mexico were marked by a tour of the beautiful and enchanting port city of Veracruz. I visited the ruins of the fort of San Juan de Ulua, a fort that had great success in defending the town against pirates. My visit to Veracruz coincided with the Afrocaribe festival which was celebrated

via concerts and discussions about their contributions. I welcomed the hot weather which was reminiscent of the climate of Trinidad. After about three days touring the city we proceeded to the Xalapa, which is the capital of the state of Veracruz. Before ascending to the capital city, which is situated on a mountain, we visited la Casa de Cortez, which was constructed in the sixteenth century. It was an amazing sight as the trees surrounding the property began to reclaim it. The guide said that in 50 years it would cease to exist. On arriving at Xalapa I was taken aback at how such an amazing city was constructed on a mountain. Many of the streets are very steep, which takes some getting used to. The climate is also different from the port city of Veracruz because the weather varies from cold to hot. Xalapa is a very cultural city as at every turn there is some dance or traditional music to be heard and seen. What is more is that the city is preparing to celebrate its independence on the 16th of the month.”



# Department of History and Sociology

By Dr. Christopher Curtis, Chair



Dr. C. Curtis

As we settle into autumn and the change of season, it seems is an appropriate time to take stock of our recent accomplishments. Last spring, the department completed several substantial curriculum revisions, which resulted from a detailed internal self-study conducted two years ago. Most notably, the new degree program in **Politics**

**and Justice Studies** was approved and implemented in August. This program of study is designed to create an innovative new interdisciplinary major that better meets the educational needs of our students interested in careers or advanced education in law, politics, global affairs, public policy, and criminal justice. The program is already an enrollment success with more than 30 majors making it the third largest degree program within the college. Additionally, all of the departmental degree programs were standardized as thirty-six credit hour majors that include twelve hours of a departmental core and culminate with a capstone senior seminar and research paper requirement.

The department began the fall semester with more than three hundred students as declared majors, signifying a nearly thirty percent increase from last year. Within the

incoming freshman class alone, more than seventy students declared the department their academic home. The faculty responded tremendously to the challenges posed in teaching and advising so many students. Many faculty members have continued to carry on their research activities and to publish and present their work. Dr. Mackinem published another book, and I had an article appear in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. Ms. Bagasra presented a paper at the American Psychological Association meeting in August, the leading national organization in her field. Both Ms. Bagasra and Dr. Shuler passed their comprehensive exams and entered into their doctoral candidacy (it will be Dr. Shuler's second doctoral degree). Dr. Irogbe returned from sabbatical leave and is putting the finishing touches on his book manuscript on globalization. And I would be remiss if I failed to mention that Mr. Eikerenkoetter organized and hosted another triumphant success with his fifteenth annual Senior Citizens Appreciation and Awareness Day festivities.

In closing, on behalf of the entire department, I want to welcome Ms. Lisa Dilks to our faculty. Ms. Dilks is completing her dissertation in Sociology from the University of South Carolina and comes to us with the masters degrees in Statistics and Women's Studies. We are pleased to have her with us despite the fact she is a Phillies Phanatic.

By Mandakini Hiremath

## A little complaining is good



Mandakini Hiremath

We all have read and advised about the importance of positive thinking. However, my experience tells me that when it comes to working with students and trying to advance their academic success and retention, one size doesn't fit all. Each one is as different as his DNA, equipped with his own attitude when it comes to getting things done.

Teachers wear many different hats.

In addition to teaching, they are advisers, counselors, mentors. While performing in each role, they keep in mind that the higher their academic expectations of their students, the better their students learn and perform. The common denominator they use to boost their students' self-esteem is to encourage them and tell them that they can do everything they aim at if

they focus on and prepare to work hard and persevere.

A commonly used strategy to encourage students is to lead them to think positively. As far as life is concerned, everyone is not always going to get what he or she wants. Everything may not be as pleasant as expected; however, one must strive to progress with a positive attitude, without complaining, to get the required task done.

You know there are those who believe strongly in the value of positive thinking and see nothing to be gained from that which is negative. But I respectfully disagree. Complaining is human nature. If someone tells me to stop complaining, it would make me feel rather deprived.

By the by, "no complaints" reminds me of the segment that was broadcast on TV a while ago. The pastor of a Kansas City church asked his congregation to take a pledge of not com-

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## Claflin University's Eighth Annual Pedagogy Conference

By **Dr. Mitali Wong**



**Dr. Mitali Wong**

Claflin University's Eighth Language Arts Pedagogy Conference focused on culturally relevant teaching methods.

Claflin University's Annual Language Arts Pedagogy Conference has grown into a three-day event from its one-day beginning in 2002. The Department of English and Foreign Languages at Claflin University hosted its Eighth Conference on English and Language Arts Pedagogy in Secondary and Postsecondary Institutions on Wednesday, October 28, Thursday, October 29, and Friday, October 30, 2009 in Ministers Hall. This conference was designed to create a forum for educators and language arts teachers in the community to share research, ideas, and experiences in their profession. The conference is fully supported by the university in all aspects.

This year's workshop for educators and pre-service teachers on the theme of "Language, Literacy, and Culturally Diverse Pedagogy" was led by Dr. David Holmes, Professor of English and Blanche E. Seaver Professor in

Humanities, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA. The workshops were inspiring to both students and educators in realizing the importance of student-centered teaching. Most of the conference sessions included papers on teaching strategies that have worked well in college classrooms.



**Dr. David Holmes**

On Thursday evening, the conference program included dinner theatre with a production directed by Mr. Cedric Rembert and Mrs. Annette Grevious. The highlight of the dinner theatre was the discussion session with some of Claflin University's gifted student playwrights.

Next year's conference is planned for the last week of October 2010. The theme will be related to student-centered teaching. The conference director and co-director are Dr. Mitali Wong and Dr. Miriam Chitiga who are both members of the original committee that began this event. Please plan to attend next year.

### COMPLAINING – continued from page 11

plaining, criticizing, gossiping or using sarcasm for twenty-one days. People who joined in were issued little purple bracelets as a reminder of their pledge. If they caught themselves complaining, they were supposed to take off the bracelet, switch it to the opposite wrist and start counting the days from scratch. Pastor Bowen admitted that it took him 3-1/2 months to put together 21 complaint-free days, and that it has taken others up to seven months. In a nutshell, everyone complains.

Encouraging our students may be the common denominator; however, I believe teachers may have to apply various strategies to encourage each student. There is no such thing as one size fits all.

It was Tuesday. Ms. Capers walked into the Writing Center about 8:35 a.m. and while signing in, she sighed. As I looked at her, she didn't look very happy, so I asked her if she was OK. She mumbled, "Yeah! I had 8 o'clock class this morning and we are released already," she responded. "I had to get up early for no reason."

What a whiner! I thought.

However, the very next day, when Ms. Capers walked in, instead of a smile, she frowned at me. As I asked her the reason, "Since you saw me yesterday, I haven't slept at all," she responded. After her classes for the day were over, she had to go to work and after she returned from work, she had to work on her homework to get ready for the next day's 8 and 10 o'clock classes.

Being concerned about how efficiently she could work on her assignment without sleep and with all that anxiety and tiredness, I asked her to try hard to get a few hours of sleep before or after work so that she would be able to study alertly. "I'm trying my best," she responded.

Thus, I could understand the reason behind her previous day's whining. And again, I noticed each time she complained she cringed. Understanding her situation a little better, I told her that she could complain all she wanted to me so that she would do her work more efficiently. Since then, as soon as she enters the Writing Center, no matter what, Ashley has a genuine smile for me. Since that "positive

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# Department of Mass Communications

By Dr. Donna Gough, Chair

The student newspaper, *The Panther*, has published its first edition for the school year, under the leadership of Lee Harter. *The Panther* staff is headed by Editor Ja'Nel Johnson, Assistant Editor Rhonda Chandler and Photographer Desmond Moore. In addition to the print version, *The Panther* will be put online within the next few weeks. *The Panther* leadership and other Mass Communications students recently participated in a "boot camp" for student journalists focusing on skills for print and online platforms. The event in Columbia was sponsored by the South Carolina Press Association.

The campus radio station, **WCUR**, has started its fall lineup with a host of new radio programs, including the *Breakfast Morning Show*, *Claflin Class Show*, *The CU Showdown*, *Discuss the Fuss*, and *Music Vault*. Under the direction of Ameen Hall, WCUR is headed by Station Manager Antonio Shands and Program Director Asa Gillyard.

The campus television station, **WCUT**, has begun the fall season. Under the direction of Michael Fairwell, the television station will air *WCUT Live*, *CM360*, *CU Tonight*, and *JS 801*. WCUT is headed by Station Manager Kalen Robinson and Program Director Karen Bennett.

On September 15, mass communications public relations students, Zuri Norman, Brittney Carter and Elizabeth Washington, attended a gubernatorial campaign launch event for South Carolina State Education Secretary Jim Rex. The students critiqued Rex's presentation and communications strategy for an assignment in their Public Relations Cam-

paigns course. Washington interviewed Rex's campaign aide, Zeke Stokes, to learn more about the campaign's communication strategy. As a group the students are also preparing a strategic plan which will be submitted to the Rex campaign and to the university. There will be more information about this project in the weeks to come.

Mass Communications faculty and staff have begun work on a grant for the Ethics & Excellence in Journalism Foundation. The grant team consists of Dr. Julian Williams, Ms. Yolanda McCutchen, Mr. Mike Fairwell, Mr. Lee Harter, Dr. Preston Blakely, and Ms. Delawese Fulton. The principal investigator for the grant is Dr. Donna Gough. The grant will support a summer project designed to assist area high school media teachers with new digital media and convergence issues.

Dr. Donna Gough recently participated in two panels for the Oklahoma Speech Theatre Communication Association (OSTCA). The first panel was entitled, "Giving Voice to Muted Groups in the Classroom." Gough discussed work-related problems encountered by women in broadcast production courses and within the media industries. The second panel was about on-line courses and Gough presented, "Maximizing the Value of Chat Rooms and Discussion Posts." This panel entry is part of a larger research project concerning mass communication students and meaning-making. Gough became the Vice President of OSTCA and will be responsible for planning the Fall 2010 OSTCA Convention.

## COMPLAINING – continued from page 12

only" yoke was removed, she told me, "For the most part, Mrs. Hiremath, I am a very positive person. I try hard to keep my head up and not take any wooden nickels. However, complaining keeps me sane to a certain extent. I know that complaining keeps me abreast of what I have on my "To Do" List. — LOL"

Ms. Ashley Capers, a senior professional English major at Claflin, commutes from Bowman every morning. Although the trip is only 25 minutes, trying to avoid the buses en route to the elementary and high schools is "tricky" and can cause a 45-minute drive. She pleads. "Carrying 18 semester hours, working two jobs, and completing an internship are really wearing me out! Nevertheless, I keep my head leveled and focused reminding myself, 'This too

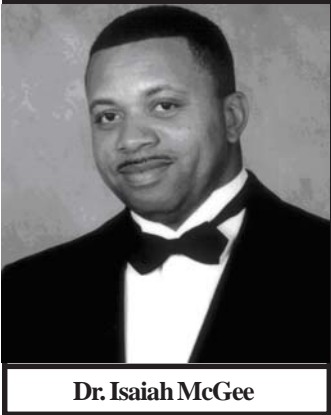
shall pass. It may be long, but it is not as long as it has been,' " Ashley defends.

The one thing we can agree on is there's too much complaining. Some gripe mainly about trivial things, such as the weather, a news item watched on the TV, heard on the radio or read in the newspaper, if a computer didn't function as efficiently as expected, or a printer or copier printed somebody else's document, using their paper when the printing paper is scarce. It's not easy to end the day without relapses. However, as long as the complaining is used as a recreational source, I don't consider it harmful. If one wants to use complaining as an outlet to what is bothering him or her and be free to start working productively, a little complaining does a lot of good.



# Music Department

By **Dr. Isaiah McGee**, Chair



**Dr. Isaiah McGee**

**Record accomplishments:** The **Clafin University Concert Choir** completed a cross-country tour to California this past summer May 10 – May 23, 2009. The choir visited cities such as: Atlanta, Dallas, Van Horn, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, Salt Lake City, Denver, St. Louis, Nashville, Knoxville, and

Kingsport. During the tour, the students not only performed great but also recruited students for the University. One of the highlights of the trip was the Sunday morning service at the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California. The students were fortunate to meet a Hollywood musical director that arranged the music for movies like “Dancing with Wolves” and “Spider Man”. He commended the choir on their beautiful sound saying that they sounded like angels that descended from heaven. He wanted to stay in touch for future collaborations.

**Dr. Isaiah McGee** was awarded the South Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities Excellence in Teaching Award on April 21, 2009. He was also recognized by House majority whip Jim Clyburn by having this accomplishment listed in the congressional record.

**Student Achievements:** **Quahnkatiere Marshall** is a recent music department graduate and has been accepted to The Florida State University College of Music pursuing a Master of Music in Jazz Performance.

**Faculty Achievements:** **Dr. Isaiah McGee**, director of Choral Studies and assistant professor of music was recently appointed as the Chair of the Music Department for the 2009-2010 academic year. **Dr. Richard House**,

associate professor of music, participated in the International Trumpet Guild Convention from May 26-30, 2009 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He attended ten world-class brass performances, six trumpet clinics, and participated in the “Festival of Trumpets” concerts with a trumpet ensemble that performed selections from Carl Orff’s *Carmina Burana* in the Pennsylvania State Capitol Rotunda. **Dr. Meisha Adderley** performed solo piano works for a Lyceum Series Concert at Indiana University, South Bend, to rave reviews in *The Preface* newspaper: “[Bach] was played with calm and restraint...the second work she performed, ‘Troubled Water’, by Margaret Bonds, which is based on the African-American spiritual, ‘Wade in the Water’, consisted of rich harmonies punctuated by syncopated rhythms. Adderley performed the work with a ‘jazziness’ that brought the work to life.”

The Department of Music welcomes **Dr. Lori Hicks**, **Dr. Katherine Turner**, **Dr. Megan Fogle**, and **Dr. Dorsey Mitchell Butler III**. Read about their achievement and career highlights in the “Welcome new members” column. **Projections for the next period:** Dr. Isaiah McGee will be presenting at the South Carolina Music Educator Association In-Service Conference in Charleston. Also, the Clafin University Concert Choir has been requested to perform as one of the major performing ensembles for the conference.

The Music Department is currently preparing for reaffirmation of accreditation through the National Association of Schools of Music. The site visit is scheduled for March 28-30, 2010.

The Clafin web site will include many new additions from the music department including a current performance schedule, ensemble photos, and downloadable sound files from recent choir and band concerts.

Concert dates and locations will soon be found on the [clafin.edu](http://clafin.edu) web site.



**Dr. L. B. Pollans**

## Saying thank you

I would like to extend a note of gratitude to **Dr. Louise B. Pollans**, French professor, for agreeing to work with me on such short notice as co-editor for this edition of the newsletter.

**Ms. Linda R. Hill**, asst. professor of English, is on leave this semester.



# Philosophy and Religion Department

By **Dr. Daniel Hembree**, Chair



**Dr. D. Hembree**

The Department of Philosophy and Religion remains committed to the views, values and guiding principles of Claflin University by insuring that their graduates are equipped with the necessary tools and skills needed to navigate through the world. Three of our students graduated in May and are now graduate students in religious and theological studies and law.

Timothy Pelzer is a first year law student at the Charlotte School of Law while Alex Barr and Darius Graves are enrolled in Duke Divinity School and the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. They join the list of recent alumni from our program who are currently pursuing graduate degrees in theology and law.

We begin the 2009-2010 academic year with both excitement and anticipation of meeting new students enrolled in the philosophy and religious program. We have accepted five new students into our program this fall with majors and minors in the areas of Philosophy and Religion. We are continually assessing our current curriculum to insure that our courses are relevant and competitive with similar programs throughout the nation.

As we approached the mid-point of the semester, we were happy to receive a visit from Rev. Diane Bogues-Hill of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary. Rev. Bogues-Hill discussed vocational opportunities in both lay and ordained ministry with our students who have interest in pursuing graduate theological studies. She concluded her visit by taking the students and faculty to lunch at Ruby Tuesday. In November, Beth Ludlam will visit us from Wesley Theological Seminary located in Washington DC. Beth will also talk with our students about religious and theological studies at Wesley. Wesley Theological Seminary is a United Methodist affiliated seminary and is the institution where Lakisha Lockhart '08 is currently pursuing the M.Div. degree in Pastoral Care and Counseling and where Kevin Walls '06 just earned his M.Div. degree. Ms. Aundreta Conner, a '08 graduate and recipient of the Fulbright Award for the 2008-2009 academic year has decided to remain in Konya, Turkey where she is conducting research for a program to introduce African American Culture to Turkish students. She has a wonderful blog in which to discuss her research and experiences.

## MS. THOMAS - continued from page 9


law, criminal law, family law, civil rights and criminal litigation. Eventually, she aspires to be small claims court judge and dreams of being the future Judge Joe Brown, Judge Mathis, or Judge Judy.

Vanessa's advice to incoming freshmen is, "However hard it is, focus on doing your work and studying for classes, even if the people around you are always going out, having fun, and partying. Remember, those are the ones repeating their class or dropping out of school. There is always going to be a party, but there is not always going to be a chance to turn in late work after you have slacked off. So make sure that you've finished your school work as per your professors' expectations before you go out partying."

The reason I chose to profile Ms. Thomas is that she is an example of authentic life, she stands to inspire the incoming generation. The message here is focus on your goal, choose your friends wisely, and learn from Vanessa's experience so that you'll be able avoid a whole lot of heartache, yours and your guardians'. Devoid of a chance of

being a product of parental indulgence, the circumstance she was placed in gave her the incentive to study, work hard and persevere. She positively loved her guardians and trusted that her professors and administrators would meet her expectations to prepare her to be a role model, a one among them who will lead future generations to be some of the "nation's best."

We wish Ms. Vanessa Thomas all the best in her future endeavors.



**Let us count our blessings and be thankful for every little perk we receive from the Lord Almighty. Above all, let us be thankful for the majestic gift of life.**

**May our Thanksgiving be happy and healthy and filled with peace and plenty.**



## Expressions of gratitude

By Mandakini Hiremath

It is hard for me to end this edition of the Humanities and Social Sciences Newsletter without expressing our gratitude to the members of the Board of Trustees for the elaborate reception they held for the Claflin Family.

The inception of this annual tradition started with, President Tisdale's expression of his concern at a faculty meeting that the faculty become acquainted with the Board of Trustees. Dr. Tisdale presented his concern to the Board members, and they honored his request; since then the reception has become an annual event.

The presence of these dedicated board members on campus is itself a cause for celebration; their reception for the Claflin Family is "icing on the cake." This occasion is always filled with liveliness and cheer. Even if my day has turned out to be long and stressful, as soon as I enter this atmosphere, I am cheered. I always wonder, though, how the members stay so pleasant, chatting with the invitees after a long day of serious discussions and difficult decisions.

Each year I look forward to attending this event. However, this year's occasion was charged with unprecedented positive energy. Minister's Hall was crowded. Before the



After the unveiling of the sculpture "The Good Shepherd" with Dr. Igwe, the President and the Members of the Board

program started, we all filled our plates from the tempting variety offered and happily mingled.

When the program began, Dr. Tisdale graciously celebrated the winning of The South Carolina Humanities Council Governor's Award in the Humanities by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Then the unveiling of the sculpture, "The Good Shepherd", dedicated to the Board members, took place. Sculptor Dr. Kod Igwe explained the symbolic meaning of his sculpture. "The Good Shepherd" stands with a lamb cuddled in his arms in a pure and humble embrace. The members of the Board of Trustees care as affectionately for the Claflin family as the shepherd his sheep. "There is a prevalence of peace and tranquility which indicates the absence of a frozen spirit," added Dr. Igwe.

The trustees proudly acknowledged Dr. Igwe's gift honoring them for their service to the university. The atmosphere was filled with grace and gratitude. Overall, it was an occasion to recognize excellence, relish the rewards of each other's hard work and express appreciation. We thank the Board of Trustees and President Henry N. Tisdale for this pleasant evening.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences at the S.C. Humanities Council Annual Governor's Award in the Humanities at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, Columbia, South Carolina

