

To Whom Much is Given

Fall 2010

The Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board Newsletter

Vol. 1 Issue 4

Officer's Corner

This month's Officer's Corner comes to us from Vondell Coleman, MAAB Secretary.

September 20th saw our M4 brother Gene Giles pass away two months short of his thirty-sixth birthday. It was a devastating blow for many of us who knew and loved him. I want to extend a thank you on behalf of his family for all the love and prayers sent their way. His wife, son, parents, brothers, and sisters have expressed gratitude for the sympathy and the fond memories of Gene that have been shared with them. Our encouragement of them through this difficult time via visits, phone calls, Facebook, cards, and letters have been truly appreciated.

Gene's passing was a huge reminder to me to cherish each and every day spent with family and friends and to make the most out of my opportunities to impact the lives of others each day. No matter how many degrees or titles we achieve, if we aren't connecting with people and forming positive bonds with those we come in contact with, then we've missed the point. The simplest things we say can have the power to inspire someone to dream. When we show someone that we care it can do wonders to inspire them to start dreaming. When someone knows that we believe in them, it can be the source of energy to keep pushing when it seems like there's no strength left.

It's with these words in mind, and the holiday season upon us that I encourage each of you to look around you and see how you can be a source of inspiration and encouragement to someone. If you find that you're still looking, remember that we're starting up a mentoring program that will pair alumni with current students in the program and would love to have you be a part of it.

Stay connected...

Facebook: Meyerhoff Scholarship Alumni
LinkedIn: Meyerhoff Alumni, UMBC
Google Groups: Meyerhoff Alumni, UMBC
Website: www.umbc.edu/meyerhoff/alumni

Newsletter brought to you by the Communications Committee.

Editor – Stephanie Bates (M4)
Assistant Editor – Kamili Jackson (M4)
Staff - Tiffani Bright (M11) and Vondell Coleman (M4)

Questions, comments and corrections can be addressed to the staff at maabcomm@gmail.com.

NEXT ISSUE: Winter 2011

Program Message

This edition of the program message comes from LaMont Toliver

"To Whom Much is given . . ."

It is understood that you are leaders. As leaders, your families, your communities, and your country demands of you the courage to dream, the faith to believe, and the bravery to attempt what is deemed impossible. We need this generation of leaders to have the dignity, the character, and the integrity to generate behavior and action beyond what is convenient and political; beyond what is reasonable and safe.

We need all your efforts to be heroic. Not the kind of heroism that ends in either glory or recognition - but the kind that ends up being what is best for the community and for humanity. We need you to fight the urge to be average – for we know that average thoughts, average words, and average deeds are not going to be enough to move us forward.

The demands of this age are extraordinary and to meet them, extraordinary leaders are needed. I can neither offer motivation nor reward for you and others to lead and to make this age succeed. There is just your humanity and your commitment to the greater good - and the premise and obligation that says, "of those to whom much is given, much is required."

"Hold fast to dreams."



LaMont Toliver, Director Meyerhoff Scholars Program

2009-2010 Alumni Board Members

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Ray Onley, M4

Vice-President

Mawuli Dzirasa, M7

Secretary

Vondell Coleman, M4

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Torria Ellis-Dugar, M4

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Tanisha Hall, M6

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- M4 – Delayne Johnson
- M5 – Jason McCullers
- M6 – Jennifer Plummer
- M7 – Camelia Owens
- M8 – Alexandra Harryman
- M9 – Mileka Gilbert
- M10 – Lauren (Battle) Wills
- M11 – Tiffani Bright
- M12 – Richard Shoge
- M13 – Seth Miller
- M14 – Michael Aaron
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- M16 – Shayla Shorter
- M17 – Latey Jones
- M18 – **Vacant – Representative Needed!**
- Graduate Fellow – Joe Washington

Want to be a Mentor?

Attention Alumni! - The Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board is in the process of re-establishing the mentoring program and any interested alums should contact Ray Onley (ray.onley@gmail.com) for more information and to volunteer.

The Board is also working on getting graduating seniors in touch with Alumni that have attended the schools that they are interested in pursuing. Again, please contact Ray about this program.

Alumni News!

Catch up on the personal and professional lives of your fellow Meyerhoffs.

Jamille Giles (M6) is the coordinator for the AVID program at Gwynn Park Middle School in Brandywine, MD. Part of the AVID program is to get students career and college minded. To that end, she needs public speakers to come and talk to the students. She can be reached by email at jamille.giles@ggcps.org

Letitia (Thompson) Dzirasa (M11) completed residency at Johns Hopkins in Pediatrics in June 2010 and started working as a general pediatrician at Johns Hopkins Community Physicians in Odenton, MD. She is accepting new patients and has early morning and evening hours.

Shawnielle Predeoux (M4) graduated from Georgetown University Law Center in May 2010.

Kiki Jenkins (M5) recently published *Profile and Influence of the Successful Fisher-Inventor of Marine Conservation Technology*. in *Conservation & Society*. The article can be found here: http://www.conservationandsociety.org/temp/ConservatSoc8144-4413878_121538.pdf

Darniet Jennings (M6) recently married Elaina Lene in a beautiful ceremony in Napa, CA in October.

Jerome Adams (M4) is an Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at Indiana University School of Medicine. He recently wrote a chapter on "Pharmacology Principles" for the recently published book, *Anesthesia Student Survival Guide*, (Springer New York, 2010)

Aliya Frederick (M13) won the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA) For Individual Predoctoral Fellowships (F31), Grant number 1F31DA029499-01 ("Molecular Maladaptations Following Developmental Loss of D1 Receptor Signaling") from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, April 2010

Grace-Ann Fasaye (M4) was very active with Inova Breast Cancer institute during Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Her role at the events was to educate the community about hereditary breast cancer and Inova's cancer genetic counseling program. She presented a paper, served as a panel member and manned a table. In addition she gave a radio interview which can be heard here: <http://www.inovabreastcare.org/resource-center/podcasts>



**We love hearing about your accomplishments.
Keep the good news coming!**

So Who Writes this Newsletter Anyway???

Well, this newsletter is brought to you by the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board Communications Committee. We are four members strong and we work on this newsletter in our spare time. For us it has definitely been a labor of love. Sometimes maybe a little more stress on the labor part!! But it has also been extremely rewarding seeing it all come together. This is a newsletter created by alumni and for alumni and we are so proud of it!

This inaugural year of the alumni newsletter has seen much success. It has received praise from the Program, from alumni and from other administrators on the UMBC campus. In fact, someone thought that it was an institutional publication because it was done so well!

As hard as we have worked, we couldn't have done it without you! We welcome all your comments, feedback and news items. We loving hearing about and sharing all the exciting things going on in your lives! No need to be shy...share it all! Send us pictures too – we really like those. And if you would like to join us, we would love that too!

Thanks for helping us with a great year!

Stephanie, Kamili, Tiffani and Von

We would like to take this time to wish you all a Happy Holiday and a Happy New Year!!



Cohort Giving and a New Treasurer

Holiday Greetings!

Let me take a moment to introduce myself. My name is Torria Ellis-Dugar, an M4 and the new Treasurer for the Meyerhoff Alumni Advisory Board. I am very excited to be taking on this role and look forward to working with everyone in the future.

I wanted to start out by giving everyone an update on our annual giving drive, the Cohort Challenge, for the year. As of December 2010, we have made double digit increases in both the number of individual pledges and the total number of dollars received this time last year. This is great progress for an organization that is less than 3 years old.

- We received 57 gifts/pledges, up 24% from last year's pledge count of 46 at this time last year.
- We raised \$4,210, up 43% from last year's total at this time of \$2,935.
- Meyerhoff alumni participation is at 8% compared to 6% last year at this time. The M17s are leading the way with a cohort giving percentage of 13%. Not far behind, M1s, M4s, M6s, M13s and M16s are in second place with 11%.

Here's a great tip. Look to see if your employer matches alumni contributions. If they do, that is a great way to contribute to the cohort challenge.

In conclusion, we are trending in the upward direction for all metrics related to the cohort giving challenge. In the new year, we challenge every Meyerhoff to find a buddy and work to engage them in the Meyerhoff Alumni Association. Let us encourage each other to give not only of our money but also our time. Both are invaluable resources as we work to build this organization.

To make an online gift, go to <http://retrievernet.umbc.edu/mhoffgiving>

If you wish to mail in a payment, please send to:

UMBC Office of Institutional Advancement
Attn: Donna Garland
1000 Hilltop Circle
Baltimore, MD 21250

Checks should be made payable to the "UMBC Foundation" with the designation of your choice written in the memo line. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Earnestine Baker at 410-455-3786 or erbaker@umbc.edu

FEATURED Alum: Dr. Nwokedi Idika



Dr. Nwokedi Idika, M13

Education:

BS Computer Science, 2005
MS Computer Science, 2007
Purdue University
PhD Computer Science, 2010

Current Positions:

- Director of Applied Research at Software Theoretic Corporation
- Consultant at Purdue University

Dissertation Research:

[CHARACTERIZING AND AGGREGATING ATTACK GRAPH-BASED SECURITY METRICS](#)

On the Web:

Founder and Contributor to:
<http://www.opensourcephds.com>
<http://lifedefacto.com/>
www.aaphdcs.org
<http://how2livelife.blogspot.com/>
<http://twitter.com/nwokedi>

And of course he's on Facebook.

When the graduation announcer called Nwokedi Idika to figure out how to appropriately pronounce his name for graduation the announcer said in his announcer voice "Congratulations Dr. Idika." It was at that point that Nwokedi realized he was a Doctor forever and that "begin with the end in mind" had been realized, at least for that goal.

Before even meeting or talking to Dr. Idika, you get the feeling that this is a tech savvy young man who is very comfortable with a life lived in the flesh and in cyberspace simultaneously. Having just recently been the first black to earn a PhD in computer science from Purdue University, it is understandable that Nwokedi has a strong internet presence. What you might not guess is how he puts it to use.

With no less than five different places on the internet, it is interesting to see the thoughts and views of Nwokedi. Perhaps the most relevant to us is opensourcephds.com. This website is a wealth of information about the unwritten rules of earning a PhD. Those of us who have this experience will be nodding their heads wishing we had this website when we were in graduate school. For instance one quote from a thread entitled "How to Ensure Graduating" is "But the key to graduating is your advisor, so choose wisely." Absolutely so true! While hard work is certainly key, the advisor can make or break you. The front page of the site has this general statement: "Every year, PhD candidates successfully complete PhD programs with 20/20 vision of what they've embarked on and what they've been through. However, this clairvoyance is rarely passed down to the junior PhD students. For this reason, PhD students frequently end up making the same mistakes their predecessors made." So while Dr. Idika states that he currently is not involved in any service, it is clear that his site is a conduit for knowledge being passed on to the next group of students.

If you can't relate to opensourcephds.com, wander on over to lifedefacto.com and take a look at "The Key to Breaking Procrastination's Back". The promise at the start is to "juice you" to ending procrastination. Who among us has not procrastinated and then been upset with yourself when there was clearly enough time for everything. Nwokedi encourages us to thinking of all the things we "have" to do a little differently: "You see, when I'm procrastinating I am in some way saying "I have to do...", ... Newsflash... You don't have to do anything.... all this stuff that you're procrastinating on, saying that you "have to do," are all things you *want* to do. The minute you come to the realization that you're telling yourself this lie, immediately set the record straight with the truth: you WANT to do x." While this may or may not change your view on procrastination, a perusal of this blog will give you something to think about.

If all that isn't technical enough for you, you can also read Dr. Idika's [dissertation](#) on research on measuring security at the enterprise level and providing optimal countermeasure selection strategies in its entirety from the Purdue website.

Asked for a last word to his Meyerhoff brothers and sisters, the newly minted Dr. Idika responds: "While STEM is awesome, our impact will be exponentially increased with economic empowerment. Mr. Meyerhoff (an MIT engineer) is a great example. From a technical background, he took an entrepreneurial route that ultimately put him in an economic position that allowed him to seed the Meyerhoff Scholarship program. How different would all our lives be if he chose an alternative path."

Above article based on an interview of Dr. Idika by Kamili Jackson (M4).

The Meyerhoff family lost M4 brother, Gene Giles, in September. In Gene's memory, an education fund has been established for Gene's young son, Pierce. Contributions may be made in the name of Pierce Giles and mailed to:

Pierce Giles
P.O. Box 151928
Alexandria, VA 22315