

# ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY

## Washington, DC Metropolitan Alumni Chapter

2012, Volume 2, Issue 1



### 2012-2013 Officers

#### President

Anetra Withers, '96

#### Vice-President

Karen Renea Epps, '82

#### Recording Secretary

Cynthia Smith, '83, '87

#### Corresponding Secretary

Jacqueline Jackson, '70

#### Treasurer

Leticia Drakeford, '97

#### Chaplain

Aaron Combs, '84

#### Immediate Past President

SanYvette Williams-Foy, DVM, '83

### Individual Highlights:

Scholarship Breakfast	2
Student Spotlight	3
Alabama Big 3 HBCUs	4
Alumni Spotlight	5
Farewell Message	6

## President's Greetings

Welcome to 2012 and what will undoubtedly be another successful year for the Alabama A&M University Washington, DC Metro Alumni Chapter. 2011 proved to be an outstanding year with some magnificent accomplishments. With the help of our Alumni, family, and friends we can continue the momentum.

Our Chapter's newly established Endowed Scholarship gives us the

opportunity, through our continued donations, to fund scholarships to deserving students for years to come. Our annual events such as the Scholarship and Service Recognition Award Breakfast, the Alabama Big 3 HBCU Scholarship Gala and Picnic, provide occasions for us to spread the mission of our Alma Mater throughout the community and share the educational gifts that AAMU has to offer.

**Alabama A&M needs you!** We invite you to join the local and national alumni associations and ask that you share your ideas, talents, time, and financial generosity to promote the legacy of William Hooper Council. With your support we are guaranteed to have another successful year. I look forward to seeing you in 2012!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anetra Withers".

## Chapter Exceeds Endowment Goal

Thomas Taylor, '84

In 2010, we kicked off the initiative to establish the AAMU Washington, DC Metropolitan Area Endowment. The goal of the endowment is to support the university and provide an ongoing method of financial support to area students who are attending AAMU.

When we approached the Vice President of AAMU Institutional Advancement, Allen Vital, to discuss establishing an endowment, we knew we had until July 2014 to fund the endowment with a

minimum of \$25,000. But Mr. Vital gave us a challenge; if we could fund the endowment by July 31, 2011, he would match it dollar for dollar. Some thought this was an impossible challenge, but you know how Bulldogs love a challenge!

We not only met the challenge, we **exceeded** it! Your generous support and the help of AAMU friends, enabled us to raise \$30,000 by July 31, 2011 and the University's Office of Institutional Advancement matched

our contributions for a total of **\$60,000!** Interest generated from the endowment will provide financial assistance to students beginning the Fall Semester of 2012.

Now that the endowment has been established we need to continue to contribute to it. This is an excellent way for all of us to make tax deductible contributions to the university.

*Story continued on p. 6*

## Annual Scholarship and Recognition Breakfast

*Leticia Drakeford, '97*

The Washington, DC Metro Alumni Chapter's Annual Scholarship and Service Recognition Award Breakfast was held at the Reid Temple A.M.E. Church on Saturday, March 10, 2012 at 9:00 am.

The Keynote Speaker, Dr. Leonard L. Haynes, III Senior Director, Institutional Service, Office of Postsecondary Education, with the US Department of Education delivered an inspiring message, reminding the audience of the importance of HBCUs.

Dr. Haynes also encouraged everyone to read Dr. Richard D. Morrison's autobiography "Walking in the Wilderness" which highlights his time as a student at Tuskegee University and as the fifth president of Alabama A&M. Dr. Morrison was also Dr. Haynes mentor.

In addition, we recognized our 2011 scholarship recipient, Kyle Majors, a sophomore civil engineering major from Largo, MD. Kyle is active in several campus organizations in addition to

volunteering his time in the Office of Alumni Affairs.

We were excited to have the opportunity to acknowledge local alumni and organizations for upholding the University's motto, "Service is Sovereignty." This year's honorees were **J. Gerrard Allen, '85; Thomas Taylor, '83** and Alfred Street Baptist Church of Alexandria, VA.

Thanks to the support of alumni and friends, the chapter raised approximately \$2500.00 to use toward funding scholarships for DC area students.



## Service is Sovereignty

*Cynthia Smith, '83, '87*

When the DC Metropolitan Chapter solicited charities to support its annual holiday service project, **Cynthia Smith, '83**, an educator in the Howard County Public School System knew there were students and their families in need at her school.

After suffering the tragic loss of one of her sons, a single mother decided to relocate her family to ensure a brighter future for her other two sons, with the youngest son

attending the school where the Smith works. The mother had expressed to the principal the need for a computer since she and her older son were attending college, and the younger son also needing computer access.

Unpredictable transportation made it a challenge for the family to use computers at the local library. As a result, the AAMU Washington, DC Alumni Chapter purchased a laptop bundle

package for the family. The bundle package included a laptop, printer and case, which was presented to the family just in time for Christmas. A special thanks to chapter members for making this Christmas brighter for a mother and her two sons.



Chapter members SanYvette Williams-Foy and Cynthia Smith with school principal, Frank Eastham.

## 4.0 Soccer Player Named 2011 Scholarship Recipient



Kyle Majors, a sophomore from Largo, MD, was the 2011 recipient of the Washington, DC Metropolitan Alumni Chapter scholarship. Kyle, a 2010 graduate of Charles Herbert Flowers High School in Springdale, MD, learned about Alabama A&M University (AAMU) from an Admissions Recruiter.

A Civil Engineering major, Kyle played Soccer his freshman year while maintaining a 4.00 GPA. A strong believer in AAMU's motto "Service is Sovereignty", Kyle believes everyone should give back and help others in the world. He has demonstrated his belief by getting involved in extracurricular activities.

He volunteered for the 2011 AAMU Black Male Initiative and joined the M.A.N.U.P. (Men of America Nurturing and Ushering Program) and the Ward Model Troup. Kyle has developed new friendships and looks forward to many more great experiences on the Hill!!!

## Fall 2012 Graduation...YES!!

*Jeremy McBean, '12*



Approaching your final year can be exciting but scary. Exciting because I can say, "I'm graduating!" Although excited, I'm scared of what lies ahead. Finally making it to my last few semesters at AAMU, I was faced with how to pay for school. I had help from my fraternity, Phi Mu Alpha, but it wasn't enough. I was then directed to the admissions

office. They put me in contact with the DC Alumni Chapter, who responded quickly and surprisingly, were able to send a financial blessing my way. The funds provided by the DC Chapter allowed me to complete the 2011 fall semester which allowed me to focus more on graduating. I eventually was able to quit one of the

three jobs I had in order to pay my tuition, but the funds did more than just the obvious. I met and formed new relationships with people I never knew. With the aid of Ms. Tamika Williams, a graphics teacher, I landed a job with the Office of Public Relations and produced this year's 2012 Calendar.

## DC Chapter Members Meet with Area Students

Chapter members **Leticia Drakeford,'97** **Renea Epps, '82** and **Anetra Withers,'96** met with approximately seven DC area students currently attending AAMU during Homecoming 2011. Members and students acquainted themselves with one another and discussed life on the Hill and the importance of Alumni and students being connected. Members shared highlights of their respective professions

and advised students to view the Alumni Chapter as one resource available to them as they matriculate through AAMU.

Local area students at AAMU are: Joshua Ryan Brown, Alexandria, VA; Samjulien Carlisle, Washington, DC; Patrice Harrison, Washington, DC; August Lee, Washington, DC; Kyle Majors, Largo, MD; Jeremy McBean, Silver Spring, MD; Ross Parker,

Baltimore, MD; Samatra Spires, Forestville, MD; and Jasmine Winters, Prince Frederick, MD. Congratulations to graduating seniors Samjulien Carlisle, Jeremy McBean, Ross Parker and Jasmine Winters. If you are aware of other students from the DMV currently attending AAMU and not included on the list, please send an email with the student's name and contact information to [kreme88@comcast.net](mailto:kreme88@comcast.net).



## Out of Many, One: Alabama Big 3 Sets the Standard

For the past four years, the local alumni from Alabama A&M, Alabama State and Tuskegee Universities have come together for one goal: to provide educational opportunities for today's youth. The Alabama Big 3 HBCUs have made quite an impact on the Washington, DC area and have set the standard in joint HBCU events. In 2010, four Mississippi HBCUs came together for a joint picnic and in 2012 will have their first joint scholarship gala.

AAMU's honoree at the 2011 Alabama Big 3 HBCU gala held at the

Washington Navy Yard May 21, 2011, was the chapter's own **Marcus Price, '79**. Price was honored for his significant contributions to the chapter, the University and his hometown of Lanett, AL.

The parent event, the Big 3 Joint picnic was held on July 24<sup>th</sup> at Watkins Park in Upper Marlboro, MD. The high temperatures did not keep alumni away from the picnic, especially since the drawing for the chapter's endowment raffle took place that day! First prize of two roundtrip tickets on Delta Airlines

went to Khalil Williams. Tim McCannelly won the second prize, an Apple iPad. Third prize, \$200 cash went to Roderick "Cookie" Mack.

Stay tuned for forthcoming information on the 2012 Alabama Big 3 Joint Picnic scheduled August 18, 2012 as well as the Alabama Big 3 HBCU Scholarship Gala.



Alumnus Marcus Price accepts his award at the Alabama Big 3 HBCU Gala.

## That Good Old Bulldog Spirit

*Karen Renea Epps, '82*

Alumni reignited that good old bulldog spirit by staffing college fairs during 2011. AAMU was represented at approximately 13 events in the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Prince George's, Anne Arundel, and Saint Mary's Counties, MD.

DC area alumni from graduating classes spanning four decades shared that good old bulldog spirit by referring more than 300 high school students to AAMU. Representing the University at college fairs

is one way Alums can give back. Many high school students and their parents appreciate and enjoy hearing information about AAMU from those with first-hand experience.

**Chris Watkins, '00** who assisted at the TC Williams High School's College Fair in Alexandria, VA said, "It filled me with pride to be able to represent my alma mater. I also considered it to be a great responsibility to be able to possibly have a direct influence on students choosing MY University for their higher education matriculation."

AAMU's Admissions Office staff wants alumni to know that "our services to them through our recruitment efforts, is a succession of our commitment to continue to embrace, support and echo our belief in our proud legacy at AAMU that Service is Sovereignty."

Currently, plans include representing the University at approximately 11 college fairs, commencing on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup> and ending on Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. Alums interested in participating can contact **Karen Renea Epps** Student Recruitment and College Fairs Chair at [aamuwdcalumni@gmail.com](mailto:aamuwdcalumni@gmail.com).



Leticia Drakeford, Solomon Sahale and K. Renea Epps at Rep. Donna Edwards' college fair in Silver Spring



Alumnus Henry Gilford stands in front of the MLK National Memorial in Washington, DC. Photo Credit: Special/Birmingham News

## A Dream Revealed

Three days before beginning his freshman year at AAMU, **Henry Gilford, '68**, watched history being made as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Little did Gilford know, he would become an integral part of another great moment in history involving Dr. King—the construction of the MLK

National Memorial.

"I was watching the hundreds of thousands of people on the Mall and I was smart enough to know that history was being made, but I had no idea I would be a part of it all these years later," said Gilford.

Gilford earned a B.S. degree in construction engineering from AAMU and came to DC to work

for IBM before establishing the Gilford Corporation, a general construction firm located in Beltsville, MD. His company was selected as one of four companies to become a part of the design team that built the plaza on which the MLK Memorial sits.

*Source: Mary Orndorff, The Birmingham News*

## DC Chapter Members Make Impact at National Level



Karen Epps, National Alumni Association Scholarship Committee Chair.

AAMU National Alumni Association President **Robert Crenshaw, '69** appointed DC chapter member **Karen Renea Epps, '82** as the Scholarship Committee Chair during the July 2011 Board Meeting. The Scholarship Committee has awarded \$6,000.00 to five current AAMU students under Epps' leadership. Plans are to award \$10,000.00 to two AAMU students

for the 2012-13 academic year by May 2012. The application deadline is March 31, 2012, and is posted at [www.aamu.edu](http://www.aamu.edu) under the Alumni tab. Epps currently serves as a Member-at-Large of the National Alumni Association. **SanYvette Williams-Foy, '83**, who currently serves as Region 6 Vice President, is also a member of the National Alumni Association Scholarship

Committee. She was also the recipient of the Alease S. Sims Leadership Award, presented at the Alumni and Pre-Alumni Awards Luncheon on October 7<sup>th</sup>. **Leticia Drakeford, '97** was also presented with the Association's William Hooper Councill Service Award for her dedication and service to the Washington, DC Metropolitan Chapter. Drakeford currently serves as the chapter treasurer.

## A Cup of Hope



Alumnus **Tony Cuscask, '70** traveled to Lilongwe, Malawi on October 8, 2011, his sixth mission trip as a member of the Reid Temple A.M.E. Church and VisionLead Ministry. Lilongwe served as the base camp for the group who traveled to slum areas and villages that the ministry supported and

served. The two-week journey provided support and help to those less fortunate in developing countries. The group assisted local Home Care Workers with HIV/AIDS patients in slum areas, daily medical screenings in rural villages, conducting leadership training and regular times

of worship, fellowship and relationship building. Although the food was scarce, the people were happy with even the smallest portions they received. The ministry could only provide a daily "Cup of Hope." Cuscask hopes to create a charity called the Cup of Hope Charity and Foundation.

## AAMU Washington, DC Metro Alumni Chapter

P.O. Box 1187  
Bowie, MD 20718-1187

E-MAIL:  
[aamuwdcalumni@gmail.com](mailto:aamuwdcalumni@gmail.com)

Dues Structure:

Active Members  
National: \$50.00  
Local: \$75.00

Associate Members  
National: \$20.00  
Local: \$45.00

Life Membership  
\$500.00  
(once paid, only local dues are  
assessed yearly)

We're on the Web!

See us at:  
[wdcaalumni.spruz.com](http://wdcaalumni.spruz.com)

**AAMU WASHINGTON, DC  
METRO ALUMNI CHAPTER**

P.O. Box 1187  
Bowie, MD 20718

## Message from Immediate Past President

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the officers and members for all the dedication and hard work that went into making the past four years a tremendous success. Some of the highlights include:

1. Establishment and fully funding of the WDC Metro Area Endowed Scholarship fund in less

### Endowment, (con't. from p.1)

You can contribute to the endowment by making your check payable to: **Alabama A&M University Foundation.** Donations and pledges should be mailed to: **P.O. Box 294, Normal, AL 35762.** In the memo

### *About Our Chapter...*

The purpose of the chapter is to provide a medium through which the alumni in the Washington, DC, Maryland and Virginia area may work to advance the growth and

than 17 months. 2. Joint ventures with the local alumni chapters of Alabama State and Tuskegee Universities through the Alabama Big 3 HBCUs Scholarship Galas and the Alabama Big 3 HBCUs Picnics. 3. Sponsoring a meal for two buses of AAMU students, faculty and staff attending the 2009 inauguration of

section of your check please indicate "**Account #570 WDC Metro Alumni Endowed Scholarship.**" According to Wendy Kobler, AAMU's Vice-President of Marketing, Communications and Advancement, there will

President Obama. 4. Receiving the 2009 Price, House, Gibbs Chapter Achievement Award from the AAMU National Alumni Association. Though these are only a few of the many activities and accomplishments of the chapter, President Anetra Withers and the rest of the officers are poised to take the chapter to another level!

soon be an option to make contributions to the endowment online through the University's website.

development of Alabama A&M University.

Monthly meetings are held at 12 pm on the third Saturday at 9111 Edmonston Road in Greenbelt, MD.

