PRESIDENT REED RECEIVES INVITATION TO INAUGURATION

Bethune-Cookman University President Dr. Trudie Kibbe Reed has been formally invited by Congressman John L. Mica (FL-7) to attend the Presidential Inaugural for our 44th president, Barack Obama, on Tuesday, January 20 in Washington, DC.

As a personal guest of Congressman Mica, Dr. Reed will attend both the swearing-in ceremony and one of the official Presidential Inaugural balls.

“IT IS AN HONOR AND A BLESSING TO HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF ATTENDING ONE OF THE MOST HISTORIC EVENTS IN OUR NATION’S HISTORY,” REED STATED. “IT WAS AN INCREDIBLY THOUGHTFUL GESTURE ON THE PART OF CONGRESSMAN MICA WHO HAS BEEN A TERRIFIC CHAMPION OF BETHUNE-COOKMAN UNIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS.”

Congressman Mica received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from then-Bethune-Cookman College in 2006.
On Feb. 1, the Super Bowl will be so much more than the country’s biggest match-up in football to B-CU’s own Marching Wildcats. The National Football League has invited the band to perform during the big game’s pre-game show at Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, FL.

Recognized as “the heartbeat of B-CU,” and one of the top collegiate bands in the country, the Marching Wildcats strive to bring the finest performances to viewing audiences. Under the direction of long-time band director Donovan Wells, this year’s edition of the Marching Wildcats boasts approximately 320 band members, along with auxiliary units the Sophisticat Flag Corps and the nationally known 14KT Gold Dancers.

A Super Bowl performance will be the latest of many high-profile events in the last decade, including:

- ABC Walt Disney World Christmas Special
- 2005 NASCAR Daytona 500 pre-race show

In addition to performing at live events, the Marching Wildcats have gained worldwide exposure in multi-media platforms ranging from the band’s featured appearance in the 20th Century Fox film “Drumline” to performances included on the soundtrack for EA Sports’ 2005 & 2006 NCAA Football and 2007 NCAA Basketball video games. In 2006, the Marching Wildcats were featured in a TV commercial for the Cadillac DTS.

For the past five years, the Marching Wildcats were selected to participate in the Honda Battle of the Bands Invitational Showcase at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. In 2008, the Marching Wildcats were voted favorite marching band out of the 10 HBCU bands that participated in this annual event. As a result, one B-CU band-member, Jared Brown, was selected as the first-ever winner of the Fox Music Experience internship, a program that took Brown to Los Angeles, Calif. where he met top Fox Music executives and gained first-hand experience in music production.

The buzz is back on the B-CU campus with the return of students for the Spring 2009 semester.

While many students registered on-line, others converged on the Center for Civic Engagement starting Jan. 6 to register for classes. Approximately 120 new freshman and transfer students also participated in Spring Orientation – a series of activities coordinated by the Admissions Office including meetings with academic advisors and deans as well as presentations by representatives from student affairs, SGA, and other campus groups.

B-CU staff representing a number of departments including student affairs, admissions, housing and freshman college were on hand at both registration and orientation to help students and their parents and answer any questions. Parents and students alike were very appreciative of the “Caring Community” approach, praising B-CU faculty and staff for their patience, persistence and kindness in helping students prepare for the next phase in their life.

Representatives of the B-CU Parents Association were also there to encourage new Wildcat mothers and fathers to join the group which helps parents stay connected with what’s going on at B-CU throughout the school year. Last semester, the Parents Association organized delivery of final exam study snack bags to students, with extra bags delivered to the local United Methodist Children’s Home.

For more information on the Spring 2009 new student orientation, contact the Office of Admissions at (386) 481-2612. For more information about the B-CU Parents Association, contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at (386) 481-2950.
Mary McLeod Bethune, adviser to presidents and founder of what is now Bethune-Cookman University, was fond of saying black people would not be satisfied “until they see some black faces in high places.”

How does president of the United States sound?

“Barack Obama is in the highest place,” said Robert Smith, a political science professor at San Francisco State University, who recalled Bethune’s favorite saying and her role in paving the way for the inauguration on Jan. 20 of the nation’s first black president.

Bethune, who lived from 1875 to 1955, held a high place in the federal government more than 70 years ago, one she used to organize other black leaders and push for racial progress.

She was appointed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to the National Youth Administration in 1936, when she was 61 years old. In that post she organized other highly placed black federal officials of the day into an informal group, one that historians have dubbed the Black Cabinet.

“They did have a collective presence,” Smith said. “They did gather from time to time and try to influence President Roosevelt.”

“The Black Cabinet was really not a cabinet,” Smith said. “An informal group of advisers, it was the first time any large number of African-Americans had responsible positions in federal government.”

Bethune and the Black Cabinet during FDR’s New Deal marked the beginning of Democrats reaching out to appoint black people to positions in government, he said. And although Bethune had advised presidents Hoover and Coolidge earlier, the Black Cabinet marked the first time a large number of black federal administrators came together to further the interests of black people.

“That did not occur again until the Nixon administration,” said Smith, an author who recently published “Conservatism and Racism and Why they are the Same Thing in America.”

“It has not occurred since Nixon,” he said. The Black Cabinet did not take any minutes, so it’s difficult for historians to pin down any accomplishments. Its effectiveness was largely achieved by pushing for racial justice within the members’ various agencies.

When it came to trying to influence President Roosevelt, those efforts were directed through Bethune, relying on her personal relationship with Roosevelt and, especially, her friendship with his wife, Eleanor Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt twice visited Bethune and the school Bethune founded in Daytona Beach, now known as Bethune-Cookman University.

“The Black Cabinet in Roosevelt’s administration had hardly any collective influence on the president,” Smith said. “They were able, through Mrs. Bethune, to have some influence on Mrs. Roosevelt and have her say some things to the president.”

Joyce Hanson, author of “Mary McLeod Bethune and Black Women’s Political Activism,” said Bethune had a strong influence with the Roosevelts.

“She had open access to the Roosevelts,” both Eleanor and Franklin, said Hanson, who also teaches history at California State University, San Bernardino. “Many ideas, she conveyed to them. When Franklin wanted to know what was going on in the black community, he would call on her.”

As the organizer of the Black Cabinet, Bethune helped lay the foundation for the black civil rights movement of the 1950s and ’60s, Hanson said.

“She brought together all the black advisers in the federal government and connected them with civil rights organizations,” she said. “What she did was set up a national network of civil rights administrators and black activists.”

Most historians give Bethune credit for pushing for equal opportunities, if not for integration.

“She understood her times,” Hanson said. “In her times, she knew she was not going to get integration.”

Part of the role of the Black Cabinet was political, namely getting out the vote for the Democrats in places where black people weren’t barred from voting by segregation.

“These are really important foundations for the election of Barack Obama,” Hanson said. “You can’t just have someone coming out of the blue. You have to see them moving up.”

Wendell Pritchett, a University of Pennsylvania law professor, wrote a book about one of the Black Cabinet’s members, “Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City: The Life of an Urban Reformer.”

Weaver became the first secretary of Housing and Urban Development and first black person appointed to the formal Cabinet.

Pritchett said the Black Cabinet members had titles that would seem out of time and place today. Bethune, for example, was promoted director of “Negro” affairs for the National Youth Administration in 1939.

“It’s striking how much has changed,” he said.

Pritchett, whose 11-year-old daughter is named Eleanor Mary Pritchett after Eleanor Roosevelt and Mary McLeod Bethune, agreed Bethune was the most effective member of the Black Cabinet. Weaver often felt frustrated, he said.

“It was necessary to have people like Mary McLeod Bethune and Robert Clifton Weaver during the New Deal,” Pritchett said. “Black people were not going to have any consideration without them.”

Now a black face will be in the nation’s highest place.


Mary McLeod Bethune was fond of saying black people would not be satisfied ‘until they see some black faces in high places.’
One month ago, as we prepared to celebrate Christmas and the New Year, the university family came together to open their hearts and wallets to needy families around the world. For the first time, B-CU faculty and staff organized and participated in a Christmas charity fundraising drive.

Heifer International, World Vision and Children’s Safe Drinking Water Fund were selected as the charitable organizations for this effort. Each organization emphasizes how even small contributions can make a tremendous difference in the lives of needy children and families.

For example, through Heifer International, which helps end poverty and hunger by supplying families with cows, chickens and other livestock, a contribution of $20 purchases a starter flock of chicks for a family in the developing world. Since a single hen can lay up to 200 eggs a year, this gift provides both food and income to the family throughout the year. A $10 contribution to World Vision helps provide refuge for families in need such as durable homes, repaired roofs, blankets, and climate-appropriate clothing. And, through the Children’s Safe Drinking Water Fund the contribution of a single dollar provides 50 days of clean drinking water to a community in the developing world.

Janice Walton, director of the B-CU Center for Civic Engagement, Dr. Dorcas McCoy, president of the B-CU Faculty Association and Anthony Owens, president of the B-CU Staff Association, introduced the charity programs at the 2008 Faculty-Staff Christmas party.

In keeping with the spirit of the season and the legacy of our founder, Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune, the effort raised a total of $1,315, with $355 designated to Heifer International, $570 to World Vision and $390 to Children’s Safe Drinking Water Fund. These gifts translate into sheep, pigs, chickens and ducks that families can raise to provide food and income; food, shelter, clothing and school supplies; and, almost 51 years – 18,600 days – of clean drinking water.

Thank you to all participating members of the B-CU family for your generosity and kindness. If anyone wishes to contribute to these worthy causes, please contact Janice Walton at (386) 481-2493. Each of the organizations accepts donations year-round.

According to the Jan. 1, 2009 edition of the Daytona Beach News-Journal, a B-CU alumna delivered our area’s very first baby of 2009. Shakita Williams (’07) and her husband Brian welcomed baby Brian Williams III on New Year’s Day at 12:35 a.m. The university family would like to congratulate Judy Welch. A recent addition to the B-CU faculty who began teaching last fall, she has recently earned her terminal degree as an English professor. Welch earned her Ed.D. in organizational leadership from Nova Southeastern University, after having also earned her master’s in English education from the same institution. She is currently working on a book of poetry to be published in 2009.
Already known on the Bethune-Cookman University campus as an inspiring speaker, Samuel R. Heath, president of B-CU’s Student Government Association, will share his words with a broader audience as keynote speaker at the 17th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Breakfast in DeLand, Florida. The 2009 breakfast begins at 7:45 a.m. Monday, Jan. 19, at Stetson University’s Rinker Field House in the Hollis Center, 600 N. Bert Fish Drive, DeLand.

The public is invited to attend the event, which this year helps commemorate King and his dream on the day before the inauguration of Barack Obama as the nation’s first African-American president.

The inauguration reflects a continuation of King’s dream, said the Rev. Troy Bradley, MLK commemorative committee chairman and pastor of Greater Union First Baptist Church in DeLand.

“It is imperative that we continue the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in order to keep the younger generation aware of the struggles and sacrifice he made to pave the way for all to enjoy today,” Bradley said. “Because of his efforts in the civil rights movement, we are now living his dream that states we should not be judged by our skin color but by the content of our character. Dr. King also taught us how to stand up for what’s right without violence.”

Reverend Bradley and the committee invited Heath, a 21-year old political science major, to speak at the event as part of a special effort to reach out and inspire young people.

“We have to get in the place of blessing where, much like President-elect Obama and the great Dr. Martin Luther King, we do not allow anything to blind or distract us from destiny,” Heath said. “It’s time we help our children understand that greatness is not given but born. In the words of Dr. King, we can be great if we learn to serve and if we learned to serve we all would be great.”

A Daytona Beach native and Mainland High School graduate, Heath became a licensed minister during his sophomore year in high school. At B-CU, he also has been president of the freshman class and the Religious Life Association. He is the recipient of the Take Stock Scholar Award and is a resident of the Zimmerman Scholarship House which requires students to meet the highest academic standards. He hopes to pursue law and seminary studies at Emory University after graduating from B-CU this year.

Tickets to the breakfast, which cost $5, are available from Bradley, (368) 804-7287, and from David Staples, coordinator of ticket sales, (386) 734-8327. Tickets also will be available at the door.

Free parking for the Stetson Rinker Field House is available in the Rinker Parking Lot, corner of Bert Fish Drive and East Pennsylvania Ave., and in the grassy lot at the corner of Woodland Blvd. (U.S. 17-92) and East Pennsylvania Ave.

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SGA President Samuel Heath to Headline DeLand Martin Luther King Day Breakfast
B-CU Student to Deliver Keynote Address at Community Event

The Carl S. Swisher Library, located centrally on campus, is open each night until midnight during the school year. After midnight, however, students can still get their questions answered by a librarian. Whether it’s a B-CU librarian or one from another institution, the “Ask a Librarian” program is an incredible resource.

The email service is available all day, every day and there are certain hours of each day when a student or faculty member in need of assistance can even chat live with a librarian online. Using the email service, students are guaranteed a response from their own on-duty B-CU librarian. Visit the library’s web pages from www.cookman.edu homepage to learn more.

In addition to this resource, thousands of journals and periodicals and a plethora of books and publications, students and faculty may also take advantage of the library’s special programs. They will be hosting a series of seminars for both faculty and staff beginning Jan. 28 in the library:

**Citations MLA and APA**
January 28, 2009 10:30 am -11:15 am
RSVP: Tereese Cook, cookt@cookman.edu, (386) 481-2416

**Evaluating Websites**
February 12, 2009 10:30 am -11:15 am
RSVP: Laura Quatrella, lauraq@cookman.edu, (386) 481-2118
When alumna Camille Burge ('08) set off to attend Vanderbilt University on a full scholarship last fall, she never imagined the challenges she would face and how her education at Bethune-Cookman University would help her succeed.

Burge is studying in the Political Science Masters/Ph.D. program on the Vanderbilt campus in Nashville, with her sights set on graduating in 2013.

“I have to keep it in perspective by breaking it down,” Burge laughs. “It’s a five-year program, but in just nine semesters I’ll have my Ph.D.!”

Laughing comes easily now that her first semester is over, but it took the generally upbeat Burge some time to find humor amongst the difficulties she was facing at her new school.

Transitioning from undergraduate to graduate work was the greatest feat for her. Altering her mindset from what she calls being a “consumer of knowledge” as an undergrad to a “producer of knowledge” as a graduate student was a big step. In her graduate school classrooms she is tasked with analyzing published work and theories and developing her own ideas about them, a step beyond what she had to do to earn her bachelor’s degree.

And the amount of coursework? She had no idea.

“I thought Dr. Smart gave us a lot of work, with homework every night from him,” Burge said. “But now, I think, ‘A whole book in by next week?! But that’s 300 pages!’ ”

It is precisely the workload her B-CU political science advisor Smart Uhakheme, Ph.D. (known on campus as “Dr. Smart”) gave Burge that prepared her for the level of responsibility she now has in each of her classes. Being in a small program with just 38 students with no more than 10 people to a class, she said she is highly accountable for completing her assignments.

She obviously stayed on task because Burge finished her semester with an impressive 3.53 grade point average.

“I’ve found Vanderbilt faculty to be a lot like those at Cookman,” she said. “They really want you to do well here and they really care about you, just like they did at Cookman.”

Looking back, it’s the communal atmosphere at B-CU Burge misses most.

“Cookman just has a whole familial vibe going on campus, and you don’t really realize how much you appreciate that until you don’t have it,” she said. “Just the simple act of acknowledging someone else is walking past you on the sidewalk – I miss that the most.”

She also appreciates the professionalism she learned on campus. When she first started going to classes at Vanderbilt last fall in her business attire, other students gave her a second look. Because of the doubt those looks instilled in her, for a short while she quit wearing professional clothing to feel more comfortable. With a new sense of confidence, though, going into her second semester she is back to wearing those button-down shirts and slacks to class, in spite of the sideways glances.

“I need to be comfortable in who I am; I’ve done well to get where I am, and have learned not to conform to other people’s lifestyle,” she said. “I told myself, ‘You’re supposed to be here, do what you’ve been doing to get you here’ because that was what worked for me at Cookman.”