B-CU is pleased to welcome one of the nation’s most renowned civil rights activists, the Rev. Al Sharpton, to the University’s 2011 commencement ceremony. Sharpton will speak to graduating students and receive an honorary Doctorate of Divinity degree.

“It is our great honor to welcome Rev. Sharpton back to B-CU as our commencement speaker. He has demonstrated excellence in leadership, education and service in his career that makes him a tremendous role model for our students,” notes President Trudie Kibbe Reed. “We look forward to hearing him provide words of wisdom and encouragement to our graduates.”

Rev. Al Sharpton

Rev. Al Sharpton is the founder and president of the National Action Network (NAN), a not-for-profit civil rights organization based in Harlem, N.Y. A former Democratic presidential candidate, Sharpton is a leader on issues related to education and the fight to ensure equity in the U.S. education system. Born on Oct. 3, 1954, Sharpton began his ministry at the tender age of four, preaching his first sermon in Brooklyn. At just 13, he was appointed by Revs. Jesse Jackson and William Jones as youth director of the NY SCLC Operation Breadbasket, an organization founded in 1971 by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Now, Sharpton stands at the forefront of issues promoting equal standards, human rights and decency. He and the NAN recently led 30,000 people in a “Reclaim the Dream” march in Washington, D.C., to honor Dr. King. He currently hosts the nationally syndicated radio talk show, “Keepin’ It Real with Al Sharpton.”

Additional Honorary Degree Recipients

Two other important University figures will receive honorary degrees at the commencement ceremony:

Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune (posthumously), B-CU founder. The Board of Trustees and administration will honor the B-CU founder with an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters degree for the legacy she has left behind to the University and for serving as University president for 20 years. Her son, Mr. Albert Bethune, will accept the degree on her behalf.

Dr. Jacob F. Bryan, business leader and B-CU trustee. Dr. Bryan will receive the Honorary Doctorate of Finance degree and be recognized for his 24 years of service to the B-CU Board of Trustees. A Jacksonville native, he was involved in the insurance industry for 30 years and spent 13 years as president of the Independent Insurance Group before the company was sold in 1996. He now serves as a community trustee working with a variety of civic and charitable organizations including LISC Jacksonville, the Reinhold Foundation, the Schultz Center for Teaching & Leadership, the James Madison Institute, Episcopal Children Services Foundation, Jacksonville Symphony Association, Ronald McDonald House Advisory Board, and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation. In partnership with the Community Foundation of Jacksonville, Bryan started the Bryan-Gooding Nursing Scholarship at B-CU.

B-CU commencement ceremonies will be held at 10 a.m. on Thursday, May 5 at the Ocean Center, 101 North Atlantic Avenue, Daytona Beach, Fla. This year, the Ocean Center has created new entrance policies for B-CU commencement. In order to avoid exceeding occupancy requirements set by the Center’s Fire Safety Policy, each guest that enters the event must have a ticket for a seat. For ticket information, please contact the B-CU Box Office at (386) 481-2926 or visit www.cookman.edu.

B-CU Mourns Passing Of Former Golf Coach Gary Freeman

Former B-CU Golf Head Coach Dr. Gary Freeman, who led the Wildcats to 12 national titles, passed away Tuesday morning. He was 78.

The PGA Professional with a Ph. D. in education administration guided the Wildcat women to eight National Minority College Golf Championships and the men’s team to four. He established a program that gained world-wide prominence, drawing numerous international golfers to attend B-CU.

“He was the architect of our golf program and a Godsend to us,” said B-CU Athletic Director Lynn W. Thompson. “His 12 years were great ones that left the strongest of foundations for our winning golf program. The B-CU athletics family offers its prayers and support to his family.”

Loritz Clark succeeded Dr. Freeman last season, but already had a long-standing relationship with his predecessor.

“I knew Gary for 25 years and he was a mentor to me and more,” Clark said. “When he started at B-CU, he was someone I looked up to because he was one of only a few African-American PGA professionals at the time. He was an inspiration for me to get my PGA membership. I used him as a sounding board and a tremendous resource during my first season.”

“He gave me an opportunity to play collegiate golf,” said Maria Garrido, currently a graduate assistant coach at B-CU. “I’m the person I am today because of him.”

Dr. Freeman was a 15-year member of the Professional Golfers Association of America. He was PGA head professional at Palm Harbor Golf Club.

“Whenever you think Bethune-Cookman University golf, you think of Dr. Freeman, who was synonymous with success and an inspiration to the young people he coached,” said Earnie Ellison, the PGA’s of America’s Director of Business and Community Relations. “Dr. Freeman represented PGA Professionals and The PGA of America so well at the collegiate level. He will be dearly missed.”

A member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Dr. Freeman was a graduate of Morgan State College and received his doctorate from Catholic University of America.

Dr. Freeman is survived by his wife of 56 years, Jean, and four daughters, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

A gathering of friends will meet to honor Dr. Freeman on Friday, April 22 from 3 to 5 p.m. followed by a memorial service at 5 p.m. in the Chapel at Lohman Funeral Home in Palm Coast, Fla.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Dr. Freeman’s name to the B-CU golf program. Call Coach Clark at (386) 481-2247 for more information.
SPOTLIGHTS

Students Mykal Tairu, John Mark McLeod, Ashanti Taylor, Lawrence Glover, Justin Bynum and Chris Bethune were inducted into the Theta Alpha Kappa (TAK) Religious Studies Honor Society. TAK was founded in 1976 to recognize the academic achievements of religion and theology students and has more than 200 members university chapters in the U.S., that range from large state universities to small private colleges. It is the only honor society dedicated to recognizing academic excellence in the field of religious studies.

Join Us

On April 28, B-CU invites you to the re-opening ceremony for the Mary McLeod Bethune Foundation, the former home of the University’s founder.

Constructed in 1915, the house that Dr. Bethune called “The Retreat” was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1974 by the U.S. Department of the Interior. It is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is recognized as a Heritage Landmark by The United Methodist Church.

The building has been restored and renovated to preserve its historic features. Following the opening, visitors will again be able to walk the halls that Dr. Bethune walked and view her personal belongings, papers, photographs, and the period furnishings she used when she entertained Eleanor Roosevelt and other guests.

The event will take place at 11 a.m. on the front lawn of the Foundation next to White Hall on Mary McLeod Bethune Blvd.

Women’s Conference - April 29

The Second Annual Mary McLeod Bethune Women’s Conference will be held April 29 in the B-CU Center for Civic Engagement. The conference theme is “Women Transforming Lives and Communities.”

“The purpose of the conference is to promote women as transformative leaders and to recognize the efforts and achievements of those women who have made a difference, especially in the Daytona Beach community,” said Dr. Winifred Johnson, chair of this year’s conference.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Jane Smith, executive director, Center for Leadership and Civic Engagement, Spelman College in Atlanta. Workshops planned will cover subjects such as women in leadership, social networking, Dr. Bethune’s legacy, domestic abuse and psychological transformations.

At a banquet following the workshops, awards for civic leadership and the Legacy Essay Contest will be presented and the late Dr. Cheryll Hardison-Dayton, the founder of the conference who passed away last November, will be honored.

Conference registration begins at 8:30 a.m., and the awards banquet begins at 6 p.m. Registration fee: $15; Conference and Lunch: $25; Conference and Banquet: $35; Conference/Lunch/Banquet: $55; Banquet tables (of eight): $250.

For more information on the conference, please contact Ms. Margaret Symonette at (386) 481-2122 or Dr. Winifred M. Johnson at johnsonw@cookman.edu or (386) 481-2479 at B-CU.

Funding for the conference was made possible by the Andrew Mellon/Jessie Ball DuPont Endowment.

JOIN THE ‘CATS OR WATCH THEM ON ESPNU

Reigning MEAC Champions, the B-CU baseball team, will be hitting the national stage on ESPNU in the near future, officials from the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference announced. The Wildcats will play a nationally televised game versus Coppin State on April 22 at 2 p.m. on ESPNU, live from Daytona Beach at Jackie Robinson Ballpark.

As part of the B-CU Pre-Law/Criminal Justice Month, State Attorney R.J. Larizza recently visited campus to speak to the pre-law students on the role of the state attorney in criminal investigations, from inception of the criminal case to disposition.

Dr. Steve Perry, CNN education contributor, speaker and author, visited campus for the final event of the semester’s Roc the Mic speaker series. Other speakers this year included Dr. Cornel West and author Marshawn Evans.

Additionally, the game will be B-CU’s Breast Cancer Awareness game. The Wildcats are looking to “Pack the Jack” for the TV game and to raise funds for breast cancer research.

Sitting on a MEAC championship streak of five years, the Wildcats are currently 6-0 in MEAC play and looking to extend the streak to six straight years. All-American Peter O’Brien leads the MEAC with 10 home runs and is ranked 12th nationally. As a team, B-CU is eighth in the nation in home runs with 36.

B-CU is currently in the midst of a 31-game winning streak against MEAC opponents.

Tickets can be purchased through the B-CU box office at the Mary McLeod Bethune Performing Arts Center, by phone at (386) 481-2465, or online at Ticketmaster.com.

The 2011 MEAC Baseball Championship is slated for May 18-21 at the Jackie Robinson Ballpark, 105 E. Orange Ave, in Daytona Beach. Only the top six teams in the conference will compete in the double elimination tournament.