

Unity First

Volume 16

Number 3

March 2010



UMASS Fine Arts presents
the Aspen Sante Fe Ballet

Photo by Lois Greenfield

Celebrating Women's History Month 2010

WESTERN NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE

LAW and BUSINESS

Center for Advancing Entrepreneurship

**“Leading a Business in Anxious Times”**

Presented by

KATHARINE G. BAKER, Ph.D.Principal, Family Therapy and Consulting Associates
Coauthor, *Leading a Business in Anxious Times***Thursday, April 15, 2010****Law School Commons****12:00 noon**FREE AND OPEN TO STUDENTS, ALUMNI,
THE COLLEGE COMMUNITY, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

Lunch will be provided.

KATHARINE G. BAKER, Ph.D. is the coauthor of *Leading a Business in Anxious Times* (Care Communications Press, 2009) and a Principal at Family Therapy and Consulting Associates in Northampton, MA.

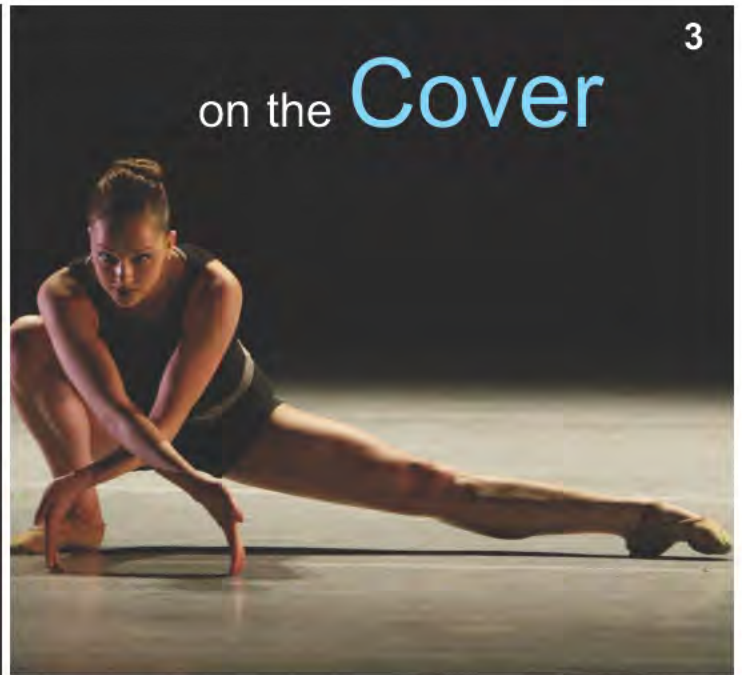
Dr. Baker is an experienced business consultant who has worked with family enterprises and closely held firms, providing executive and leadership coaching, strategic planning, organizational learning services, and time management seminars. She currently is an independent scholar and executive coach with a solo consultation practice. She has published additional book chapters and articles on a wide variety of business topics.

Dr. Baker will present an approach to understanding business leadership that is grounded in Bowen theory, a well-tested theory of human behavior. She will show how the patterns of behavior learned in the family can have a profound impact on every business' success. Through stories of successful business leaders, Dr. Baker will illustrate the power and effectiveness of this way of understanding leadership. She will also discuss executive coaching as an application of her approach.

**WESTERN
NEW ENGLAND
COLLEGE**Law and Business Center for
Advancing Entrepreneurshipwww.wnec.edu/lawandbusiness



Photo by Lois Greenfield

Rokia Traore

UMASS Fine Arts Center highlights new programs

This spring, enjoy the programs at the UMASS Fine Arts Center in Amherst, MA. Shown on the cover is a member of the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet. The company is slated to perform at the Center on April 30. Described by the *New York Times* as "a breath of fresh air," Aspen Santa Fe Ballet stands out as a model of what a small ballet company should be with its "musicality, athleticism, and technique-conscious delivery."

This innovative dance company, with a solid foundation in classical ballet, has made a lasting impression with ten versatile, energetic dancers performing a sophisticated repertoire featuring some of the world's foremost choreographers.

Also, this spring, the UMASS Fine Arts Center will present Rokia Traoré on Wednesday, April 14. Rokia is a Malian singer. The daughter of a diplomat who was posted to the U.S., Europe, and the

Middle East, her music represents a fascinating fusion of cultures. Rokia studied in Brussels and worked in a rap band, before deciding to go back to Mali to create the music she wanted, which was to be "not pop, not jazz, not classical but something contemporary with traditional instruments."

Along with her feather-light vocals, Rokia's music is infused with western pop rhythms and traditional African instruments, making for rare and beautiful music. The result is a beguiling sound that can claim to be "World Music" in the purest sense.



Photo by Lois Greenfield

Sante Fe Ballet

TRANSFORMING ANEW AND YAZU PRODUCTIONS INC.
PRESENTS:

4

Lest We Forget:

From the Boat to Obama

featuring Dance Like David



April 28, 2010

The Bushnell Center for the
Performance Arts, Hartford, CT

Lest We Forget: from the Boat to Obama is a musical play that highlights notable, historic moments in the African-American experience. The play begins with three generations of African Americans preparing to take the audience on a journey back to Africa. Using songs, dance, dramatic interpretations, poetry punctuated with a photographic slideshow, the performers will make chronological, historic "short stops" in various eras, which constitute the acts of the play: Nat Turner's Rebellion, Reconstruction Period, Moving West/Homestead Act, Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights Movement, and Black Power Movement ending with present-day history makers like Barack Obama.

For tickets, call the Bushnell at
(860) 987-5959 or go to:
www.bushnell.org





Janine & Tom Fondon

Next Issue: April 2010

DEADLINE

March 28, 2010

PUBLISHERS/FOUNDERS-
UNITY FIRST NEWS
JANINE AND TOM FONDON

CONTRIBUTORS

Special Section Editor/Another Voice
Editor - Tammy Sharif
Mable Lene Sharif, columnist

Special Section Consultant
Unity First News Boston - Patricia Spence

Unity First News

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 80837 Springfield, MA 01138

Street Address:
682 Sumner Avenue,
Springfield, MA 01108
Phone (413) 734-6444
FAX (413) 737-1458

Email: editors@unityfirst.com

Unity First News is published by UnityFirst Direct, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written consent is prohibited. News or editorial content do not necessarily reflect the views or perspectives of Unity First News.

UnityFirst.com, its publishers or advertisers. Letters, articles and comments appearing in the publication reflect the opinions of the contributor and do not constitute an endorsement by Unity First News or staff. Unity First News assumes no responsibility for photos, articles, letters, press release and unsolicited materials. Decision as to the editing and publishing of the materials are based on space availability and at the discretion of the publishers and editors.

Advertising is accepted at the discretion of the publisher. Acceptance does not imply endorsement. All information contained herein is believed to be factual. We will not be responsible for any unsolicited materials.



The MacDuffie School celebrates Black History Month. See page 27.

contents

Page 6	<i>Women History Month</i>
Page 7	<i>Are We There Yet?</i>
Page 8	<i>Reclaim Your Career Now</i>
Page 9	<i>Telling Our Stories</i>
Page 10 - 11	<i>Women on the Move</i>
Page 12 - 25	<i>Women Who Lead By Example</i>
Page 26	<i>First Health</i>
Page 27 - 28	<i>Education</i>
Page 29	<i>Another Voice</i>



Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham, P. 13



Dr. Carol A. Leary, P. 17



First Lady Michele Obama reads "The Cat in the Hat" to Arlington, Virginia and District of Columbia elementary school students. (Library of Congress Photo/ Abby Brack) See page 12.



Mable Lene Sharif, P. 29



Celebrating Women's History Month, 2010

President Obama issued a proclamation to acknowledge the celebration of Women's History Month 2010. Here is an excerpt from his remarks:

"Countless women have steered the course of our history, and their stories are ones of steadfast determination. From reaching for the ballot box to breaking barriers on athletic fields and battlefields, American women have stood resolute in the face of adversity and overcome obstacles to realize their full measure of success. Women's History Month is an opportunity for us to recognize the contributions women have made to our Nation, and to honor those who blazed trails for women's empowerment and equality.

"Women from all walks of life have improved their communities and our Nation. Sylvia Mendez and her family stood up for her right to an education and catalyzed the desegregation of our schools. Starting as a caseworker in city government, Dr. Dorothy Height has dedicated her life to building a more just society. One of our young heroes, Caroline Moore, contributed to advances in astronomy by discovering a supernova at age 14. When women like these reach

their potential, our country as a whole prospers. That is the duty of our Government -- not to guarantee success, but to ensure all Americans can achieve it.

"My Administration is working to fulfill this promise with initiatives like the White House Council on Women and Girls, which promotes the importance of taking women and girls into account in Federal policies and programs. This council is committed to ensuring our Government does all it can to give our daughters the chance to achieve their dreams. As we move forward, we must correct persisting inequalities.

Women comprise over 50 percent of our population but hold fewer than 17 percent of our congressional seats. More than half our college students are female, yet when they graduate, their male classmates still receive higher pay on average for the same work. Women also hold disproportionately fewer science and



Yasmeeen Hassan (right), Human rights lawyer and Equality Now Deputy Director of Programs speaks at the United Nations about progress made on revoking laws that discriminate against women.

engineering jobs. That is why my Administration launched our Educate to Innovate campaign, which will inspire young people from all backgrounds to drive America to the forefront of science, technology, engineering, and math.

"By increasing women's participation in these fields, we will foster a new generation of innovators to follow in the footsteps of the three American women selected as 2009 Nobel Laureates.

"Our Nation's commitment to women's rights must not end at our own borders, and my Administration is making global women's empowerment a core pillar of our foreign policy. My Administration created the first Office for Global Women's Issues and appointed an Ambassador at Large to head it.

"We are working with the United Nations and other international institutions to support women's equality and to curtail violence against women and girls, especially in situations of war and

conflict. We are partnering internationally to improve women's welfare through targeted investments in agriculture, nutrition, and health, as well as programs that empower women to contribute to economic and social progress in their communities. And we are following through on the commitments I made in Cairo to promote access to education, improve literacy, and expand employment opportunities for women and girls.

"This month, let us carry forth the legacy of our mothers and grandmothers. As we honor the women who have shaped our Nation, we must remember that we are tasked with writing the next chapter of women's history. Only if we teach our daughters that no obstacle is too great for them, that no ceiling can block their ascent, will we inspire them to reach for their highest aspirations and achieve true equality." ■

"We are working with the United Nations and other international institutions to support women's equality and to curtail violence against women and girls, especially in situations of war and

conflict. We are partnering internationally to improve women's welfare through targeted investments in agriculture, nutrition, and health, as well as programs that empower women to contribute to economic and social progress in their communities. And we are following through on the commitments I made in Cairo to promote access to education, improve literacy, and expand employment opportunities for women and girls.

Are we there yet?

It is 2010 and women are still climbing up the ladder.



Leading Business in Anxious Times

Katharine Gratwick Baker is the co-author of Leading a Business in Anxious Times, will speak at Western New England College Law and Business Center on April 15, 2010.

Dr. Baker will present an approach to understanding business leadership that is grounded in Bowen theory, a well-tested theory of human behavior. She will show how the patterns of behavior learned in the family can have a profound impact on every business's success.

Through stories of successful business leaders, Baker will illustrate the power and effectiveness of this way of understanding leadership. She will also discuss executive coaching as an application of her approach. ■



Ilene H. Lang

Women lag behind men in both job level and salary starting from their first position post-business school and do not catch up, according to Catalyst's Pipeline's Broken Promise, the latest report examining high potential graduates from top business schools around the world.

The study, reveals that the assertion that women advance in compensation and level at the same pace as men is overstated and, in many cases, completely wrong.

The report, part of a broad, ongoing study of thousands of women and men MBA alumni in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia, provides a global analysis of the pace of progress for these high potential employees. Even after taking into account experience, industry, and region, the report found women start at lower levels than men, make on average

\$4,600 less in their initial jobs, and continue to be outpaced by men in rank and salary growth. Only when women begin their post-MBA career at mid-management or above do they achieve parity in position with men. However, this accounts for only 10 percent of the women and 19 percent of the men surveyed.

"'Give it time,' has run its course," said Ilene H. Lang, President & Chief Executive Officer, Catalyst. "In a world where women comprise 40 percent of the global workforce and are earning advanced and professional degrees in record numbers—even surpassing men in many cases—gender inequity is a waste. Companies without parity for women at all levels are unsustainable. Smart leaders will act now or risk falling behind."

Men, the report showed, were twice as likely as women to hold CEO or senior executive positions and less likely to be at lower levels, where women were overrepresented. Parenthood and level of aspira-

tion did not explain the results. The findings held when considering women and men without children as well as those who aspired to senior leadership positions. Men, in general, were also found to be more satisfied with their careers overall than women. Thus, despite well-intentioned programs, companies around the globe have neglected to develop talented women and failed to build meritocracies.

CEOs and executives from major companies offered insights and suggestions on the study's findings throughout the report. Some of these include:

- ▶▶ Don't assume that the playing field has been leveled.
- ▶▶ Redesign systems to correct early inequities.
- ▶▶ Collect and review salary growth metrics.
- ▶▶ Build in checks and balances against unconscious bias.
- ▶▶ Make assignments based on qualifications, not presumptions. ■

Thus, despite well-intentioned programs, companies around the globe have neglected to develop talented women and failed to build meritocracies.

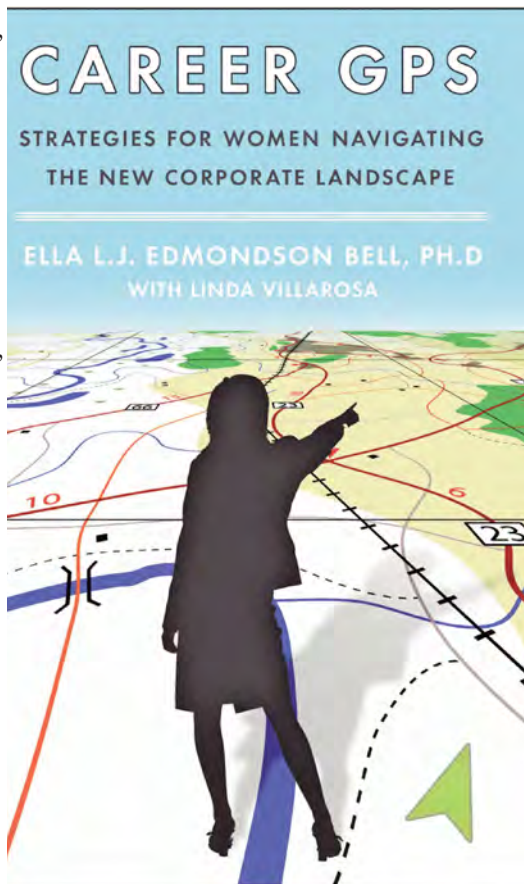
Career GPS:

Reclaim your career NOW

New book by Dr. Ella L.J. Edmondson Bell with Linda Villarosa offers insights

The workplace is constantly in flux, and with the uncertainty comes new opportunities for women. To take advantage of these possibilities, it's essential to know the current rules for corporate success. Remember, this isn't your father's or your mother's workplace anymore! Whether it's the CEO seat, an executive manager slot, or a more entrepreneurial position, women who follow Career GPS will have what it takes to gain their professional goals.

Dr. Ella L. J. Edmondson Bell, Ph.D., an authority on career development, has worked with women across a variety of fields and in different kinds of corpo-



Dr. Ella L.J. Edmondson Bell

rations, from Fortune 500s to start-ups. Here she offers guidelines to help women forge their own pathways to professional ascent, providing tips for maximizing a review, networking in a relevant way, and much more. According to Dr. Bell:

- Think working hard is enough to be recognized? It's not enough to assume your effort will speak for itself. You have to socialize with the decision-makers. It might not mean you have to pick up the golf clubs, but you do have to figure out what works in your own organization.

- Parlez-vous Francais? Learning Mandarin? If you work for a global company and aspire to an extreme job or higher, make it known that you would take an overseas assign-

ment to advance your career.

- Nowhere to go right now? Even in hard times there are options. Learn a lateral skill—such as accounting—so when the company is firing on all engines again, you will impress leaders with the breadth of your knowledge.

Drawing from her work as a consultant to some of the country's most prestigious Fortune 100 companies, Dr. Bell helps readers succeed at every level in a dynamic corporate marketplace. Career GPS combines Dr. Bell's academic knowledge and expertise with dozens of heartfelt first-person stories from smart women who rose through the ranks.

This is a book that will guide women of all cultures, ages, and levels of experience to their career goals. ■

Telling Our Stories

From Queens, New York to Montpelier, Vermont, Rita Williams-Garcia shares her stories



Rita Williams-Garcia

Author of four award winning novels, Rita Williams-Garcia continues to break new ground in young people's literature. Known for their realistic portrayal of teens of color, Williams-Garcia's works have been recognized by the Coretta Scott King Award Committee, PEN Norma Klein, American Library Association, and Parents' Choice, among others. She recently served on the National Book Award Committee for Young People's Literature and is currently on faculty at Vermont College MFA Writing for Children and Young People.

"I was born in Queens, N.Y.

on April 13, 1957. My mother, Miss Essie, named me 'NoMo' immediately after my birth. Although I was her last child, I took my time making my appearance. I like to believe I was dreaming up a good story and wouldn't budge until I was finished. Even now, my daughters call me 'Pokey Mom', because I slow poke around when they want to go-go-go.

"I learned to read early, and was aware of events going on as I grew up in the 60s. In the midst of real events, I daydreamed and wrote stories. Writing stories for young people is my passion and my mission. Teens will read. They hunger for stories that engage them and reflect their images and experiences."

New book - One Crazy Summer

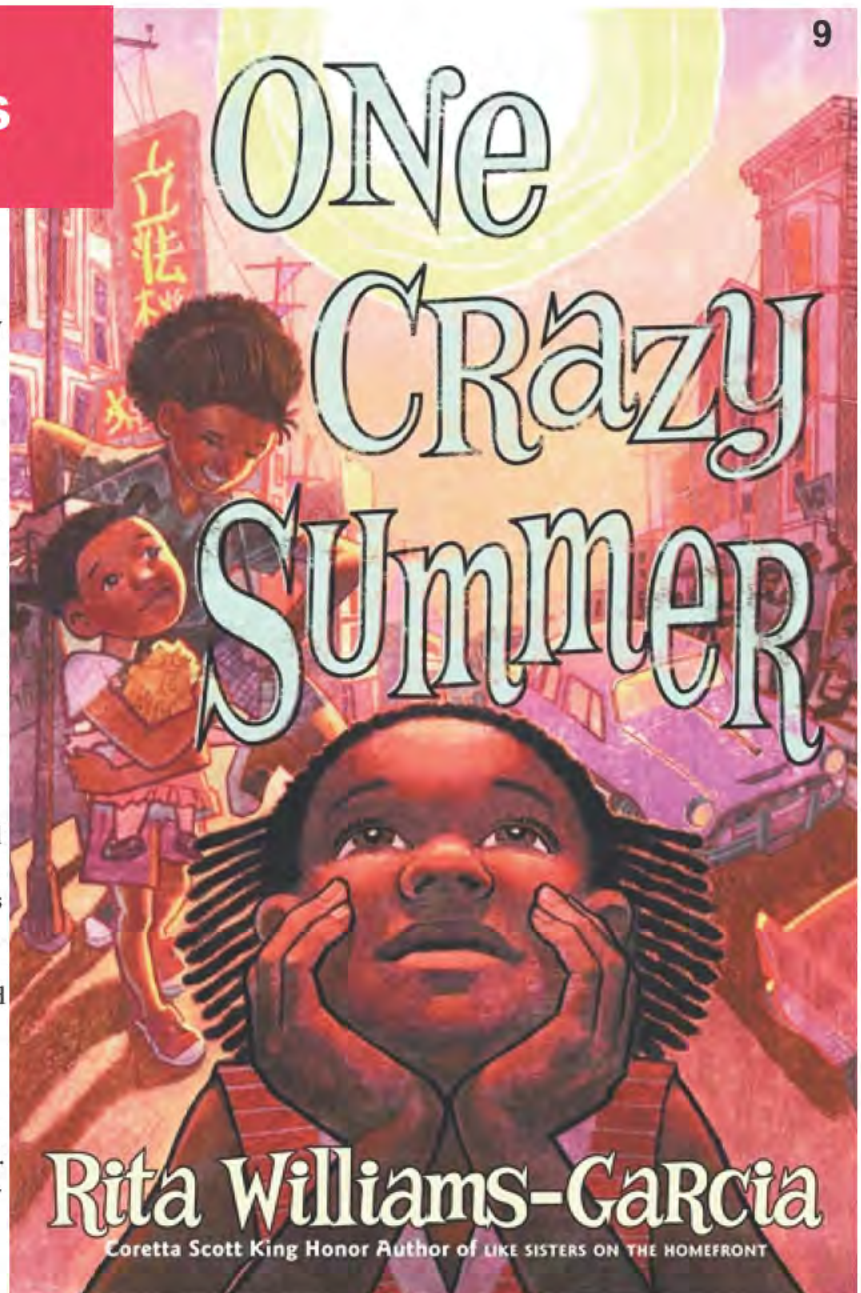
In her new book, *One Crazy Summer*, Williams-Garcia explores the social activism of 1960s. Eleven-year-old Delphine has it together. Even though her mother, Cecile, abandoned her and her younger sisters, Vonetta and Fern, seven years ago. Even though her father and Big Ma will send them from Brooklyn to

Oakland, California, to stay with Cecile for the summer. Even though Delphine will have to take care of her sisters, as usual, she will learn the truth about the missing pieces of the past.

When the girls arrive in Oakland in the summer of 1968, Cecile wants nothing to do with them. She makes them eat Chinese takeout dinners, forbids them to enter her kitchen, and never explains the strange visitors with afros and black berets who knock on her door. Rather than spend time

with them, Cecile sends Delphine, Vonetta, and Fern to a summer camp sponsored by a revolutionary group, the Black Panthers, where the girls get a radical new education.

Set during one of the most tumultuous years in recent American history, one crazy summer is the heartbreaking, funny tale of three girls in search of the mother who abandoned them—an unforgettable story told by a distinguished author of books for children and teens, Rita Williams-Garcia. ■



Women on the move

Harvard Business School grad Tamara Nall wins top award in business

The National Minority Business Council, Inc.'s (NMBC) Outstanding Global Business Award was awarded to The Leading Niche™. The prestigious NMBC honor is awarded yearly to minority business



Tamara Nall

owners who demonstrate professional excellence, innovative business practices and who continually provide a positive example to others who aspire to similar working disciplines. In addition to the NMBC Global Outstanding Business Award, The Leading Niche™ President and CEO Tamara Nall, will receive the Brooklyn International Trade Development Center's 2010 International Women's Entrepreneurial Award.

With this award, Nall, who has worked across a range of industries in the management consulting sector, including telecommunications, healthcare, retail and government, is recognized for her ability to innovate and improve the global standards of management consultancy. The Leading Niche™ has propelled to the forefront of global consulting by providing not just reports and documents, but by providing sustainable and actionable recommendations delivered by a custom team of consultants who is best suited for its particular clients.

Nall, a graduate of Harvard Business School and former senior associate at Booz & Company, and her team of worldwide experts at The Leading Niche™ help clients develop strategies to remain sustainable and competitive in today's changing marketplace. "Our unique hybrid model brings together consultants from around the world to establish both an on-the-ground and virtual presence, thus allowing us to bring together the best talent to form custom teams for each client," says Nall. "We recognize that the world's boundaries are becoming increasingly seamless, and therefore the utilization of alternative methods can make consulting services far more efficient and effective."

If you would like more information about the NMBC please visit www.nmbc.org If you would like more information on The Leading Niche™ please visit www.theleadingniche.com, or email inquiries@theleadingniche.com. ■

Minister, motivator and artist creates new musical, "Lest We Forget: From the Boat to Obama"

"Lest We Forget: From the Boat to Obama", a new musical at The Bushnell

Mary Taylor



in Hartford, CT, will inspire children and adults to use their history and health to fuel their success, today and tomorrow. The performance, which includes 50+ area youth, will inspire our children to fight obesity through the performing arts and focus on literacy through the learning of history. With this performance, every ticket holder becomes a history maker in helping the children in our community to find inspiration as well as information about the perils of obesity. One recent estimate indicated that approximately 50% of Hartford's 11 year old children are "at risk", "obese", or "extremely obese".

Through inspiring points of history, the show authentically takes the audience from the African homeland to the White House with highlights from the Harlem Renaissance to the birth of Hip Hop to ultimately the historic election of President Barack Obama. This performance will be dedicated to the new legacy of President Obama and the one-year anniversary (April 28, 2009) of the Sojourner Truth statue in the U.S. Capitol. Sojourner Truth became the first African American woman to have a place of honor among the statues in the U.S. Capitol. With this performance, we will also remember, Sojourner Truth's Connecticut-born grandson Sammy Banks, who was her traveling companion over many years.

In their honor, the performance will remind us to celebrate history throughout the year. "Each month bears history worth acknowledging and celebrating," says Mary Taylor, a Hartford-based dancer, singer, minister and Life Coach who created the program and mobilized the 50+ youth performers and corps of parents as part of her organization, Transforming Anew in collaboration with Yazu Productions. "We must teach our kids history and encourage them to make new history and stay healthy," says Mary. Join us for this historic performance!! For tickets or see the ad on page 4. ■

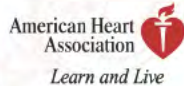


Go Red For Women Leading Ladies of Western Massachusetts, Peggy Melanson (left) and Lauren Healey (right), take a break to share their experiences at the 2010 Go Red For Women Education Forum presented by Yankee Candle.



Co-Chair of the 2010 Go Red For Women Education Forum and Luncheon, Beverly Beaulieu, Vice President of Florence Savings Bank, speaks to 300 area business-women, mothers, sisters and daughters on the importance of women's heart health. The luncheon was the inaugural event in western Mass to raise awareness of women's heart health and the risk for cardiovascular diseases. Some 460,000 women will die of heart disease this year in the United States. Go Red For Women is the American Heart Association's initiative to educate and inform women on the risks of heart disease. The event was also co-chaired by Rebecca Sears of Kindred Healthcare.

2010 GO RED LEADING LADIES OF WESTERN MA



Locally sponsored by



Photography & Design by Denise Smith Photography

HEART DISEASE IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN WOMEN. LIKE THESE WOMEN IN YOUR COMMUNITY, LOVE YOUR HEART AND TAKE A STAND AGAINST HEART DISEASE.

KNOW THE FACTS. GO TO WWW.GOREDFORWOMEN.ORG

Go Red for Women presentation of AHA. The Red Dress Campaign is a trademark of U.S. DHEW.

*Women's
History
Month
Salute
2010*

First Lady Michele Obama reads "The Cat in the Hat" to Arlington, Va., and District of Columbia elementary school students. (Library of Congress Photo/ Abby Brack). Kudos to First Lady Michelle Obama for her initiatives to inspire children to stay fit and fight obesity.



In honor of Women's History Month 2010, Unity First News salutes women who lead by example

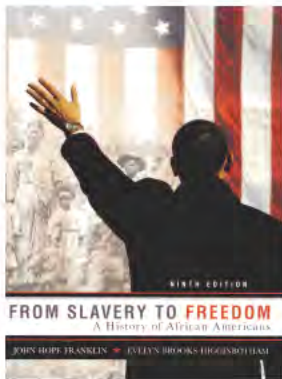


In honor of Women's History Month 2010, Unity First News shares this special salute to the "Visionary Women of Excellence" who truly lead by example. We salute this year's honorees in the spirit of the many great women – like our first lady Michelle Obama who inspire us on a daily basis. As publishers, we salute this year's "Visionary Women of Excellence" – your leadership is truly appreciated, not only by us, but by many of our readers and communities across the Commonwealth and beyond. Your stories will inspire others, including many young women, students and professionals to reach their full potential and achieve their goals. A special thanks to all women who are positive role models, not only for our Commonwealth, but the communities in which they live and work. We appreciate your work to advance our communities, corporations and businesses in the Commonwealth and beyond. Also, we invite you to share your stories with us... and let us know about other women who are leading by example. Let's highlight their successes in future issues.

*Respectfully,
Janine and Tom Fondon
Publishers, UnityFirst.com/Unity First News Online*

Leader by Example Alum

Congratulations to Harvard University's Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham on the new release of "From Slavery to Freedom" (Ninth Edition)



The documented history of African Americans was told in 1947 when a little-known U.S. historian named John Hope Franklin published "From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans". Thanks to the direction and detail provided by Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham, the book has been completely revised and updated to bring this foundational, classic work into the 21st



Shown (left to right) are William L. Strickland, University of Massachusetts - Amherst, Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham, Harvard University, and Maurice Hobson, W.E.B. Du Bois Center at the University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

century including the historic election of President Barack Obama.

Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, chair of the Department of African and African American Studies at Harvard University, was chosen by Dr. Franklin to be his co-author. He had known Dr. Higginbotham since her childhood and had served as a mentor to the young scholar. They collaborated on the latest edition, updating nearly 80 percent of the book's scholarship, until he died last year at the age of 94.

"Because of John Hope Franklin," said Dr. Higginbotham, "The story of Blacks' contributions to America – a record once denied, disregarded, and disrespected – no longer stands at the back door of scholarship."

The scholar-historian explained, "I viewed the process of revising From Slavery to Freedom as one of rejuvenation – of capturing what I call the 'present in history.' This edition carries the history of African Americans to 2009, drawing upon the latest historical scholarship and includes narrative, visual and interpretive qualities

that will appeal to today's readers."

Now rewritten to incorporate important developments in African American history from the 21st century, the new book charts the journey of African Americans from their origins in the great civilizations of

Africa, through slavery in the Western Hemisphere to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the globalization of the hip hop movement, and the recent landmark election of the nation's first African American president.

Significant changes in the new edition include:

- Attention to the complexity of North American slave culture during the colonial period, treating not only the British Colonies, but also slave life in the Spanish, Dutch and French colonies.
- Increased coverage of women and women's history.
- The emergence of grassroots social movements in local communities across the U.S. in the mid-20th century.
- The important role of art and culture as a reflection of the events and ideas of their time periods, including discussion of individual writers, musicians and artists.



Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham

"The legacy of my father lives on through this collaboration with Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham," said John W. Franklin. "Since the presidential campaign and election of Barack Obama, there has been increased curiosity and discussion about the history and experiences of African Americans. I believe this revised and expanded publication, written with 21st century relevancy, will continue to serve as an excellent source of information and scholarship of African American history in households and classrooms both here and abroad."

The classic work, which has sold more than 3 million copies and has been translated into numerous languages, has had a timeless influence in shaping the direction and reception of African American history and continues to be used by professors and students across the country as an introduction to the field. ■

TJX[®]

THE TJX COMPANIES, INC.



Nancy Mendis
Vice President of
Planning and Allocation,
Marshalls

In honor of Women's History Month, The TJX Companies, Inc. salutes our very own **Nancy Mendis** and **Bonita Underhill** for their achievements in driving sales and delivering value to our customers.



Bonita Underhill
Divisional Vice President,
Merchandise Manager,
AJWright

TJX is the world's largest off-price value retailer operating in the United States, Canada and Europe. Visit us at www.tjx.com



A Company Of Choice

Breaking barriers in retail

Almost a decade ago, TJX made two terrific acquisitions when they hired Nancy Mendis and Bonita Underhill. Nancy, in her current role as Vice-President of Planning and Allocation, is in charge of driving sales and managing inventory flow for over 800 Marshalls Department stores.

Nancy has built her career in the field of retailing at a very early age. Extremely focused and determined, she always knew she wanted a career in retail. Upon graduating from Simmons College in Boston, Massachusetts where she received her degree in business, Nancy returned to school to pursue her MBA at Babson College in Wellesley, Massachusetts.

After completing her MBA she joined the retail buying office of a well-known national retailer where she spent nearly two decades mastering her craft and building her career. When the retail operation where Nancy was employed at that time closed its doors and went out of business, she found herself at yet another retail outfit where she led their Merchandise planning group. With further retail consolidation in the industry Nancy joined TJX in 2001.

Nancy proclaims, "A desire to work in a high energy environment, combined with a love for product stimulates my interest in the retail business."

She added, "Retail is a field which historically has not had many people of color in the corporate environments or the

C-suites. Never the less, I have spent much of my career as an 'only'. Nancy further stated, "One of the things I have learned from this life experience is that with a love and passion for what you do, you can rise above the challenges and build a very successful career."

As a mother, Nancy has

"One of the things I have learned from this life experience is that with a love and passion for what you do, you can rise above the challenges and build a very successful career."

Nancy Mendis



NANCY MENDIS
Vice-President of
Planning and Allocation,
The TJX Companies, Inc.

taught her kids this important and enduring value. One of Nancy's key internal business partnerships is with the Merchandise Buying Group, run by talented folks like Bonita Underhill.

(See article on next page)

Bonita Underhill

Setting the pace for success

Bonita Underhill, along with her team of Buyers, is responsible for merchandising the Home Décor and Housewares areas for over 150 AJ Wright stores.

In her role, Bonita is charged with the responsibility of developing strategies that will drive profitable sales while simultaneously training and developing her team. Having grown-up in Connecticut, Bonita was raised by her mater-

"When I was growing up with my grandparents, it was just Nana, Poppy and me and it wasn't until I was older that I came to appreciate fully the love and wisdom that surrounded me everyday."

Bonita Underhill

nal grandparents. Her grandparents worked hard to provide her and her brother with a good education. They instilled a sense of strong family ties, self-respect and overwhelming will to succeed.

Upon graduating from Fairfield University with a degree in Finance, Bonita began her retail career over 15 years ago at a thriving discount Regional Retailer in the New England Market. She later completed their executive training program and worked her way through the ranks and became a Buyer. In the late 90's the Regional Retail operation where she was employed filed chapter 11 and closed its doors. Bonita continued to grow and develop as a Buyer at other leading retailers.

In 2004 she joined TJX as a Buyer and was promoted to her current position as Divisional Vice President and Merchandise Manager in 2007.

Bonita states, "When I was growing up with my grandpar-

ents, it was just Nana, Poppy and me and it wasn't until I was older that I came to appreciate fully the love and wisdom that surrounded me everyday. My grandparents taught me the true meaning of family, Bonita added, "They would say, "As family, you don't have to always like each other but you must always love one another."

Nancy and Bonita both agree that no two days are ever the same in retailing. They both say, "We never get bored. Everyday presents a new challenge". Both of these talented ladies feel that the task of delivering exciting brands and fashion at a value to their customer everyday is very rewarding and to do so in partnership with each other is exceptional.

Nancy and Bonita both share a deep sense of family and their families have invested a lot in them. Therefore, they want to ensure their families get a solid return on their investment.



BONITA UNDERHILL
Divisional Vice President,
Merchandise Manager,
The TJX Companies, Inc.

TJX
THE TJX COMPANIES, INC.

Educating the next generation of leaders

Kathy Bourque Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Bay Path College shared a few thoughts about Dr. Carol Leary.

Dr. Carol A. Leary, President of Bay Path College, has served as President of Bay Path for fifteen years.

Her leadership has resulted in the transformation of this College. Today, Bay Path serves over 2,000 undergraduate and graduate students at our Longmeadow, MA campus and our satellite locations in Southbridge, MA and Burlington, MA.

During her tenure, the College's unique One-Day-A-Week Saturday program for adult women was launched, ten master's programs have been developed, and the Bay Path Women's Professional Development Conference has become the signature event for women in western Massachusetts. She also works tirelessly in the greater community on issues ranging from economic development, to health, to the arts.

Dr. Leary's energy is boundless. Determined and magnetic, she is the ultimate role model. Knowing virtually every student by name, she makes each feel important while personally conveying her faith and expectation in their individual promise.

For the majority of Bay Path



Dr. Carol A. Leary

Those of us who work with Dr. Leary are perpetually inspired by the time and energy she gives to the college and our students.

Kathy Bourque

students who, like Dr. Leary herself, are first-generation college students, this unbridled encouragement is critical to their confidence and success. While students are at the center of Bay Path, Dr. Leary's leadership fosters a community of faculty and staff that is equally inclusive. All voices are heard. She says that decision-making is like creating a mosaic: "the more details or voices you add, the more beautiful the design."

Those of us who work with Dr. Leary are perpetually inspired by the time and energy she gives to the college and our students. Every day with her is an adventure, filled with the promise of how we can advance the world through education.



Irene Smalls

Irene Smalls is an educator, who develops science-based, creative art solutions to everyday issues. Creator and developer of Literacise, Irene Smalls is the internationally-recognized and award-winning author of 15 books for children and three storytelling CDs. She is the mother of three children, Dawn, Jonathan and Kevin, and has twenty years experience working with children.

Smalls says she became an

author back in kindergarten when she was taught that reading was active and fun to do. Her kindergarten teacher, Miss Loretta Abbott, a professional dancer, choreographed the curriculum creating a series of games, dances and movements for reading.

With a Master's degree in Behavioral Science from N.Y.U. and an Arts and Sciences degree from Cornell University, Smalls replicated those early lessons raising her own children. She made up games and movements teaching her children to love reading. Jonathan and His Mommy was the love song/story Smalls created for her young son to guide him into healthy physical activities that reinforced learning. Irene Smalls will visit Springfield on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 for a book event. (See next page)

It's About Time!

ONE-DAY-A-WEEK SATURDAY COLLEGE

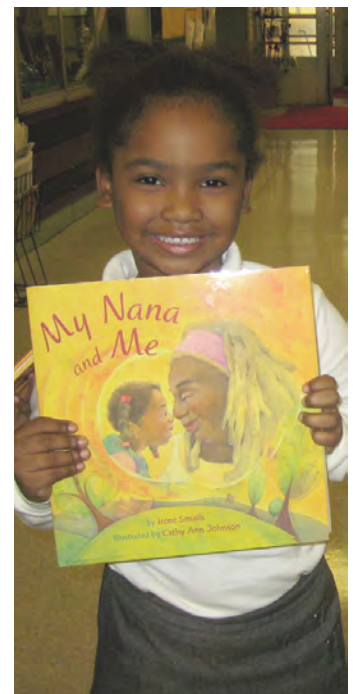
ACCELERATED DEGREE PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN

- ▶ Earn your bachelor's degree in 1 to 3 ½ years
- ▶ Saturday classes only - attend all day or half day
- ▶ Guaranteed class schedule from start to finish
- ▶ Ask how your college credits will transfer

Celebrating 10 Years...1,100 Success Stories!
Visit: www.baypath.edu/stories

Bay Path College

Three Campuses:
Longmeadow, MA
Burlington, MA
Sturbridge/Charlton, MA



Visit our Web site: www.baypath.edu/oneday E-mail: oneday@baypath.edu



*You are Cordially invited
to Square One's Tea Event of the year*

Join our celebrity pourers along with our special guest Irene Smalls,
the internationally-recognized and award-winning children's author,

for the annual Square One Tea Party

Wednesday, May 12, 2010 • 2:00pm - 4:00pm

at the Colony Club in downtown Springfield.

\$50.00

To order advance tickets to this fundraising event, please call Laurie-Beth Thivierge at 413-858-3111.

Tickets may also be purchased on our website at www.startatsquareone.org.



947 Main Street • Springfield, MA 01103 • (413) 732-5183 • www.startatsquareone.org

Gail Price

The gift of inspiring our children

"I have been at Square One, formerly Springfield Day Nursery, for 34 years and have loved every second of it!" says

Gail Price, Square One's Center Director at the Main Street Children's Center.

"I feel so very blessed to know that I

have touched the lives of so many children and their parents. I have made a very real difference. I know I have



Children at Square One



Gail Price

made a difference. When I put my head on my pillow each night I know that I have helped, in some respect, every one of the children I see every day. This to me, is what makes my position anything but a job, it is a gift."

Gail Price has three adult children and six grandchildren. Gail is a life-long resident of Springfield and resides in the Sixteen Acres neighborhood of Springfield with her husband, Ludlow.



Gail Price



Congratulations to Gail Price... a leader by example. We honor your 34-year commitment to the children at Square One. Thank you... from your family at Square One.

Vanessa L. Hall Peyton

Vanessa L. Hall Peyton -- in a class of her own as she celebrates fifteen years of excellence

Vanessa L. Hall Peyton is the Educator-owner and master stylist of Beauté Within Salon and Day Spa in Springfield, MA.

Vanessa, with style and grace, has grown her business to achieve status as the pacesetter for salons in the area. She has not only offered top-line hair services, but now offers a competitive make-up line.

In addition, she has made significant contributions to organizations around the community to help youth, support scholarships as well as the arts and health initiatives.

Most of all, over the years, she has helped her clients find the beauty they searched for,

the image they longed for and the style that works best for them.

"This year, I celebrate 20 years as a professional cosmetologist and the blessing God has given me," says Vanessa. "At this time, I cannot express into words how thankful I am for those blessings. In celebrating 15 years in business and moving forward to complete a dream, I would like to thank Unity First and the many people who have supported me over the years.

"Also, I want to thank my salon team for their excellence on a daily basis."

Beauté Within, Inc. is a multi-cultural full-service salon

and day spa dedicated to consistently providing high client satisfaction by rendering excellent service and quality products in all phases of hair, nail and skin care. The salon dedicates professional skills to the enhancement of the image of all clients according to their personal needs.

Beauté Within gives the highest quality of service through constant attention to the care and grooming of hair, skin, nails and any other advancement in professional cosmetology services. We use only the highest quality products for all of our services.

"I invite you to come to the salon and meet us, or simply



Vanessa L. Hall Peyton

call and connect with us -- whether you have a need or not."

Congrats to Vanessa for her years of service. She is truly adding a little more beauty, style and grace to our community and beyond.

BEAUTE  WITHIN
SALON & DAY SPA

Celebrating our 15 years of excellence
and service to the community.

Vanessa Hall Peyton

CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT
413.736.5747
WALK-INS WELCOME

COME VISIT US AT
546 SUMNER AVE., SPRINGFIELD, MA
WWW.BEAUTEWITHIN.COM

Kim Dukes-Rivers

Turning passion into practice

Kim Dukes-Rivers, is principal and owner of Diversity Staffing Pros, LLC, a full-service staffing agency, and one of Boston's premier woman-and-minority-owned businesses specializing in diversity placement.

She was motivated to launch her company when she saw that there was a prevailing need for a company skilled in matching professional diverse candidates with companies who value building diverse and inclusive workforces.

Dukes-Rivers has more than 21 years of experience in business development and operations management, and more than 15 years recruiting, hiring, and training diverse and non-diverse candidates to proven success.

Previously, Dukes-Rivers served as Contract Division Manager at Boston Networking Group where she was responsible for creating and growing their temporary/contract divi-

sion. She served in the capacity of Branch Manager and Business Development Manager, at ProStaff Personnel Services.

Dukes-Rivers, who enjoys a number of professional affiliations including: the Society for Human Resources Management; the New England Human Resources Association; is a founding member of the Women's Leadership Committee with City Year, and a connector with Boston World Partnerships. She attended Clemson University in South Carolina, and brought Cornell University's Diversity Management Program to Boston for the first time this past fall.

Finally, Dukes-Rivers is someone whose own personal story and success provides proof that one of the most important ways to successfully manage your career is to not overlook your dreams!



Kim Dukes-Rivers



DIVERSITY
STAFFING PROS, LLC

4 Copley Place Suite 145, Boston, MA 02116, 617.267.0047

Congratulations to the 2010 Visionary Women of Excellence. We share a passion, practice and vision for success.

Kim Dukes Rivers

www.DiversityStaffingPros.com

Sharon Reilly

Inspiring women to find success

Sharon Reilly became Executive Director of the Women's Lunch Place in July, 2007. The organization has been serving women who are poor and homeless in Boston for 27 years. Located in Boston's Back Bay, the Women's Lunch Place is a caring community that provides a nutritious breakfast and lunch, as well as social, wellness, and advocacy services. Sharon believes that her journey to the Women's Lunch Place was not an accident.

She poignantly recalls the trip that she made with her Dad to attend Rust College in Holly Springs, Mississippi. As he was driving her to college, he looked over at her and said, "I hope you know that your Mom and I are not scrapping together this money to send you

to college to come back home to make us ashamed of who we are. We are poor people, he said, Sharon, make a difference in the lives of poor people." Sharon's work crossed every sector from higher education to Fortune 500 but it was not until she found her way to the Women's Lunch Place did she fully understand her Father's words to her.

Under Sharon's leadership last year, the Women's Lunch Place served more than 50,000 meals and the number of children served increased by 100 per cent, both the most in the history of the organization. Amazingly, Sharon's tenure includes the organization's celebration of its 25th anniversary with a signature dinner that yielded the most money in the organization's history, more than a half million dollars.

In addition to developing and implementing a multi-level expense reduction plan, which was widely recognized as a model, Sharon also led the organization's strategic planning process, developing a three year plan which highlights program evaluation, board and staff development, strengthening its volunteer program, and raising its profile among target



Sharon Reilly

constituencies.

As a participant of the movement for civil rights, Sharon has a passion for social justice issues. She grew up on a sharecropper's farm during the 1950s and 1960s and understands the plight of poor women and the devastating effects of poverty. She has used this background to offer insights into shaping the direction of the Women's Lunch Place.

A graduate of Rust College and the University of Mississippi, Sharon graduated with honors from both institutions. She is also a graduate of the Commonwealth Seminar, a member of The Commonwealth Institute's Executive Directors' Forum, a graduate student at Boston

College currently enrolled in the institution's flagship leadership program: Leadership for Change. She is also a member of the College Club of Boston, the oldest women's college club in America.

Sharon was the 2009 recipient of the Back Bay Association's "Heavy Lifting" Award and a February 2010 recipient of the Boston Celtic's "Heroes Among Us" Award.

In her spare time, Sharon enjoys travelling and has a special interest in Africa where she has visited Ethiopia, Morocco, Benin, and Ghana. She supports educating young girls in Benin and is the god-grandmother for two adopted children from Ethiopia. She is planning a 10 day South African safari for 2012.

continued on next page

Sharon grew up on a sharecropper's farm during the 1950s and 1960s and understands the plight of poor women and the devastating effects of poverty.

Sharon Reilly

(continued from previous page)

Sharon says West Africa, especially Benin, holds a special place in her heart because of its strong cultural and spiritual traditions. Sharon has many role models but none more important than her parents, her mother, Octavia now in her 80s and her father Johnnie deceased, both shaped her core which is the foundation for any further development she has experienced.

She has special admiration for African American teachers who guided her through school integration and exposed her to music and student leadership: Melvin Jackson, Henrene Pitts, Louise Crouther, Clara Luvenia Long were all at the forefront of making sure that African American students were not physically and emotionally bruised from Mississippi's struggles toward equality in education.

A seasoned public speaker, Sharon will join a panel of women in April as part of U.S. Women Connect for the Massachusetts Women's Summit at Pine Manor College, Chestnut Hills, MA. US Connects is an organization focused on linking U.S. women and girls to the global women's agenda.

Sharon, a widow, has three children: Christopher, a school teacher and coach in Mississippi; Corey, a retail manager in Colorado and Anna an import coordinator in Tennessee.



Sharon is shown in Benin, West Africa, at the compound of the Minister of Cultural and Spiritual Affairs



The Board of Directors, staff and guests of the Women's Lunch Place would like to congratulate Sharon Reilly as a Visionary Woman of Excellence.

This Mother's Day, honor the woman you love with a gift to a woman in need, with a card from the Women's Lunch Place.

WWW.WOMENSLUNCHPLACE.ORG

Dr. Earlene Avalon

Jahmeelah O. Bai
MSW Candidate, 2010
MPH Candidate, 2011

Dr. Earlene Avalon provides countless students and professionals with an archetypical path for us to follow to success.

Dr. Avalon has pioneered for equity in various areas, including education and health disparities. In order to create the educational and professional opportunities that would enable for the decrease and end of these disparities, Dr. Avalon has flourished in positions at Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Latin American Health Institute, Partners Healthcare, and Health Careers Academy, where she worked diligently to secure over \$1.5 million dollars for programming designed to create educational and professional opportunities for low-income and first-generation college students of color. In her current position at Children's Hospital Boston, Dr. Avalon oversees a workforce diversity initiative designed to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of its nursing staff by targeting incumbent workers.

In addition to her professional endeavors, Dr. Avalon also finds the time to serve as a mentor to many, including myself, as I navigated my potential career choices. Dr. Avalon's advice and example as a compassionate, ambitious, and committed individual has led to my pursuit of a dual masters in social work and public health.

Mentoring the next generation of success

Words of congratulations are shared by the people she has inspired.



Dr. Earlene Avalon, MPH, Ph.D.

“Determined, inspirational, and dedicated: all words of a woman who is “Leading By Example.”

Jahmeelah O. Bai
MSW Candidate, 2010
MPH Candidate, 2011

Kim Taylor - Nurse Recruitment Representative Children's Hospital Boston

Dr. Avalón's motivation to ignite change started within the community: she was employed by the MA Department of Food and Agriculture and worked with Vietnamese, Cape Verdean, African-American and Hispanic communities. This experience was pivotal, as she experienced the correlation between post-secondary education, workforce diversity and health disparities. She committed her professional career to advocating for equal access to educational and professional opportunities for people of color. She pursued a Doctorate degree in Health Professions Education from Simmons College - while raising two toddlers, no less. Dr. Avalón is currently the Director of Nursing Diversity Initiatives at Children's Hospital, Boston and oversees a workforce program designed to increase the racial/ethnic diversity of our nursing staff.

What makes Dr. Avalón so extraordinary is her ability to connect with our CHB community and motivate through action. She provides the resources necessary to help people turn their dream of nursing into an attainable reality. There is no greater gift. She illustrates what it takes to succeed - and, notably, still maintains a strong sense of where she came from.

Change can be slow and requires patience; Dr. Avalón is a catalyst for change and is leading by demonstrating the powerful combination of desire and education.

Natacha L. G. Hyacinthe
Program Coordinator II -
Melanoma Center
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

I met Dr. Earlene Avalón a few years ago while attending a gala for The United Minority Professionals and NSBE. One would easily be smitten by her poise, charm and contagious personality. At the time that we met, Earlene was pursuing her doctoral degree in Health Professions Education, working full time as the Health Engagement Coordinator at Boston Public School while tending to her two beautiful young children. She also spends her time volunteering monthly at their school, is active on the school's PTO and scholastic activities.

Dr. Avalón always found the time in her busy schedule to help motivate people such as myself and other women of color to further their education and advance in life. It took me almost 18 years and the acquaintance of this phenomenal personage to take that first step back in the academic world. Highly intelligent and an extremely self-motivated individual, she always tries to stay positive and gives back to the community in the way of networking with other professional women of color. In addition to being the Director of Nursing Diversity Initiatives at Children's Hospital Boston, she also serves on the Board of Directors of YOFES, a Haitian organization whose mission is to build strong families with healthy children in the face of poverty and social inequity.

First Health

Elevated maternal death rates for women of color

African-American women are four times more likely than white women to die from childbirth-related complications.

A new report from Amnesty International reveals that African-American women are nearly four times more likely to die of pregnancy-related complications than white women. In high-risk pregnancies, the disparities are even greater; African-American women are five and a half times more likely to die than white women.

The report, *Deadly Delivery: the Maternal Health Care Crisis in the USA*, faults discrimination, a lack of nationally enforced standards and barriers to adequate maternal care as contributing to the high death rate among women of color giving birth. Women

living in poverty and those who speak little or no English face additional barriers to quality maternal care, resulting in missed opportunities to save women's lives and reduce complications.

Two to three women die every day in the United States from pregnancy-related complications, according to the Centers for Disease Control, and half of these deaths are preventable. More than 34,000 women nearly die each year due to flaws and shocking disparities in maternal health care. These severe pregnancy-related complications that nearly cause death have increased by 25 percent since 1998. Authorities concede that haphazard reporting means maternal death statistics could be twice as high as officially reported.

"This country's extraordi-

nary record of medical advancement makes its haphazard approach to maternal care all the more scandalous and disgraceful," said Larry Cox, executive director of Amnesty International USA. "Women should not die in the richest country on earth from preventable complications and emergencies."

The report findings include data showing that women of color account for 32 percent of all women in the United States but more than half (51 percent) of uninsured women; this means they are more likely to go into pregnancy with less than optimum health or untreated medical problems. (State data available.)

Caesarian sections make up nearly one-third of all deliveries in the United States—twice as



One storyInamarie Stith-Rouse, 33, who was African-American, died in a Boston hospital after delivering a healthy baby girl following an emergency c-section. Her husband Andre said he tried telling staff that his wife was in distress and struggling to breathe after surgery, but he said he was told it was "no big deal" and the couple was "too emotional." Hours went by before appropriate tests showed she was hemorrhaging. It was too late. Inamarie went into a coma and died four days later. Andre Rouse felt race played a part in the hospital staff's immediate lack of response.

high as recommended by the World Health Organization. African American women have the highest c-section rate of any group. The risk of death following c-sections is more than three times higher than for vaginal births. For the full report, go to aiusa.org.

Early detection saves lives.

It's a tragic fact that has touched thousands of lives: African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than women of any other race.

In part, this is because breast cancer among African Americans is often diagnosed later, at a stage when it is more difficult to treat and cure.

So talk with a doctor about your risk factors and make breast self-exams, regular doctor visits, and annual mammograms after age 40 an important part of your healthy lifestyle.



MASSACHUSETTS



Taina Polanco

The MacDuffie School celebrates Black history Month



Kathryn Gibson, Springfield Mayor's Office Chief of Staff and event speaker Denise Jordan, Pan African Historical Museum's Lujanna Hood, and MacDuffie students, Davaunia Wilson, Mallory Kakley, Dominique Walker. Shown (rear) are the guest speaker Alex Nichols and MacDuffie parents, Karen Kakley and Janine Fondon.

Springfield Rep. Ben Swan recently presented a Black History Proclamation to MacDuffie Head of School Kathryn Gibson in honor of MacDuffie's 120th Anniversary as well as the school's appreciation for and celebration of diversity.

Mallory Kakley '10, one of the student organizers, said: "One of the greatest aspects of the MacDuffie School is our great appreciation for diversity. In our presentation of the celebration of black history, students from many different cultural backgrounds collaborated to embrace the multifaceted accomplishments of African Americans in the United States.

"Our theme embraced the term, "I Believe." In doing so, we wanted to express that we believe that the past can only create a brighter future with the words, actions, and cooperation of our generation."

The assembly included a performance of the Black national anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," as well as poet-

ry from students reflecting on major African American contributions. Guest speaker Alex Nickels grew up in southern Mississippi on a sharecropping farm and moved to Springfield, MA, as a child. Nickels, a bass player who has toured with Natalie Cole, joined the students in the closing song, "People Get Ready" by the Impressions.

The MacDuffie School, located at One Ames Hill Drive in Springfield, is a rigorous college preparatory school whose mission is to foster in all students the intellectual habits of mind, high ethical standards and respect for diversity required for becoming morally responsible and effective individuals in their personal lives, careers and in their communities and beyond.

For more information, please call (413) 734-4971.



Springfield Rep. Ben Swan presents Black History Proclamation to the MacDuffie School. The Proclamation Given in Honor of MacDuffie's 120th Anniversary.



Invest in your child's future at
The MacDuffie School



Open House

Sunday, March 28 at 1:00 p.m.

Campus Tours and Information Session
 Meet faculty, current students and families
 for information and reservations, contact Admissions
admissions@macduffie.org or 413-734-4971

Coed Grades 6 - 12

www.macduffie.org One Ames Hill Drive Springfield, MA

EARL'S AFFORDABLE AIRPORT CAR SERVICE



413.739.7293

800.739.7293

www.earlslimo.com



Learn more at www.rivier.edu

YOUR FUTURE STARTS AT

Rivier College

Nashua, NH 1-800-447-4843

- ▶ You'll get a quality education at one of the most affordable private colleges in the region: we award more than \$6 million in financial aid each year.
- ▶ Choose from more than 60 degree programs.
- ▶ Enjoy programs that promote diversity and engage the campus in conversations about social justice, presented by Rivier's Office of Multicultural Affairs and Multicultural Student Organization.

Check
 us out
 online!



Day, evening, graduate and doctoral programs, small classes, and a convenient location—Rivier College has everything you need to meet your personal and professional goals.

Parent to Parent

Empowering parents to help prevent their children from drugs or substance misuse.

Mothers you are your children first teacher. Children begin to learn from their mothers while in the womb. So mothers it is very important that you keep in mind that you have the greatest influence over your children. By example, make sure you are the person that you would like your children to duplicate.

Children really like to please their parents, so praise your children sometime to let them know that you care about them. Let your children know that you are aware of what they are doing. Get involved with your children's activities outside of the home. Attend programs that they might be performing in to give moral support.

For those mothers who do not live with your children, do everything within your power to make sure your children feel that they have a home with you. Knowing that they have a home with you as well as with their father or another person your children might live with, will take some of the pressure off the children as to feeling where they belong.

Children today are growing up in a society that can at times seem filled with helplessness, disappointments and other frightening situations. Parent separation or divorce has reached an astounding high rate. Children often feel or



Mable Lene Sharif

think they are at fault for their parents' separation. One of the worst behaviors a mother can demonstrate to their children is to use the children to get back at the father by communicating through the children. Or even worst, preventing your children from seeing their father. This type of behavior place too much pressure on any child. It is very important that those separated parents make every effort to work together in order to keep their children as stress free as possible.

Mothers make every effort to spend quality time with your children. Some mothers make sure they spend quality time with their daughters, but do not feel that it is important to spend time with their sons. Sons need their mothers as role models so he will grow up knowing the type of woman he deserves. Keep in mind that statistics show that sons tend to seek out women who behave in the same manner as their mothers or, treat women in the way his mother allows herself to be treated.

Encourage your children to be the best in what ever they are engaged in and let them know that you expect nothing less. Keep in mind that you might be the key to your children staying drug free or using drugs as a means of escaping pain.

Mable Lene Sharif

Robinson Park Elementary School Fourth Graders Hold Coin Drive for Haiti



Robinson Park Elementary fourth grade student representatives and their teacher present a donation for Haiti Relief to American Red Cross Deputy Director, Paige N. Thayer.

Fourth grade students at Robinson Park Elementary School in Agawam felt genuine concern for the people of Haiti after the January 12 earthquake. The earthquake sparked serious discussion at Robinson Park about the situation in Haiti and prompted students to take action. Robinson Park student representatives organized a school-wide coin drive.

Students and faculty presented American Red Cross Deputy Director of Chapter Support, Paige Thayer, with \$723.51 towards Haiti Relief on Wednesday, March 3.

"It's wonderful to see students getting involved," said Thayer. "The people of Haiti need support now more than ever."

You can help the victims of countless crises around the world each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross International Response Fund, which will provide immediate relief and long-term support through supplies, technical assistance and other support to help those in need.