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SAMFORD

reflections

samford university diversity newsletter

NEW PUBLICATION SPOTLIGHTS MINORITIES



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features

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Minority Bridge Fund

The number one reason African-American students leave Samford University is because of financial hardship. Established in 2012 to provide financial assistance for tuition, room, board and books, The Minority Bridge Fund is used to bridge the gap between what students have and what they need financially to complete their Samford education.

Go to https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1575/gid2_alumni/index.aspx?sid=1575&gid=2&p-gid=455&cid=1198 and select Bridge Fund under the Additional University Option to secure the future of our students today.

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Samford Reflections is a biannual electronic newsletter spotlighting the university's commitment to cultural differences and diverse perspectives. It features Samford stories of minority students, employees, alumni and friends to celebrate and communicate their achievements. To subscribe or unsubscribe, email reflections@samford.edu



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President Cameron
Thomas plans to
work with Samford
administration to
increase domestic
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Stephen Chew, 2011
Professor of the Year,
advises minorities:
"be patient, be open,
and be part of the
change."



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Does the name
Stephen Knight ring a
bell? Learn more about
Samford's carillonneur.

From the President

On behalf of the Samford University community, I am honored to offer congratulations and best wishes to the *Samford Reflections* editors and contributors on this inaugural publication. This newsletter underscores the university's commitment to celebrating our cultural differences and diverse perspectives as we seek common ground to serve the common good. I look forward to learning the stories of Samford's minority students, employees, alumni and friends.

Together, as a united Samford community, we embrace the challenges of engaging our global community in all its splendor and difficulty. Together, we will find the ways that God will use us to make this broken world more beautiful.

Andrew Westmoreland
President

From the Provost



The things that we take for granted and live with daily all had a beginning. Though they are often assumed, sometimes ignored and frequently not appreciated, there was a time when they were not, and a time when they had a beginning. We pay special attention to a "first" when we indeed know and realize it is a beginning, that it is something new and previously nonexistent.

This original issue of *Samford Reflections* is a beginning, the first publication of its kind in the 172 years of our university's existence. In an initial but deliberate way, it is an effort to promote understanding and encourage the building of relationships throughout the campus and beyond, and to highlight the role that diversity and intercultural awareness play in a quality education.

I hope you enjoy this first issue of *Samford Reflections* and celebrate the efforts of our employees and students in building bridges to one another, the surrounding community and the world.

J. Bradley Creed
Provost and Executive Vice President

From the Director



Having been a part of the faculty since 2004, I've had my share of proud moments at Samford University. The publication of *Samford Reflections* is one of those moments. Samford has made

great strides in its history with this publication, which is the first of its kind here.

I believe diversity at Samford—and everywhere—is very important. There are lots of great things our minority students, faculty, staff, and alumni are doing, and now—thanks to this publication—you will know it, too.

I hope you enjoy this first issue, and I look forward to your feedback (reflections@samford.edu) as we work together to make Samford a reflection of all of us.

Denise J. Gregory, Ph.D.
Director of Diversity
and Intercultural Initiatives

Making History



Samford University Launches New Publication Spotlighting Minority Students and Employees

"We are like dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. We see more, and things that are more distant, than they did, not because our sight is superior or because we are taller than they, but because they raise us up, and by their great stature add to ours."—Bernard of Chartres

Samford University has done it again. *Samford Reflections* is the first publication in the university's history to focus on the achievements of minority students and employees, and the latest entry in a long line of notable achievements.

Fall 2013 is the perfect time to launch the publication since events are being held across the country in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Movement. During this season of honoring national giants, Samford University would be remiss if it didn't honor its own. Join us as we acknowledge the invaluable contributions of so many, including the following:

- **Audrey Lattimore Gaston**, the first African-American student to graduate from Cumberland School of Law

- **Erica Jewel Littleton**, founder of the Porter Scholarship for minority and African-American students

- **John T. Porter**, Samford's first African-American trustee

- **Elizabeth Sloan Ragland**, Samford's first African-American undergraduate

- **The 1969–70 basketball team**, which marked the first integrated team in Samford's history when Billy Williams, Sherman Hogan and Otha Mitchell joined the Bulldogs after being recruited from Coahoma Junior College in Clarksdale, Miss.

We also acknowledge the countless others who helped make sure Samford is a reflection of us all. In the pages that follow, meet a few modern-day giants who are making history in their own way on campus.

If we see more, it's because of you. For that, we say thank you.

Processing archivist Liz Wells contributed to this story.

Student Spotlight



History Repeats Itself

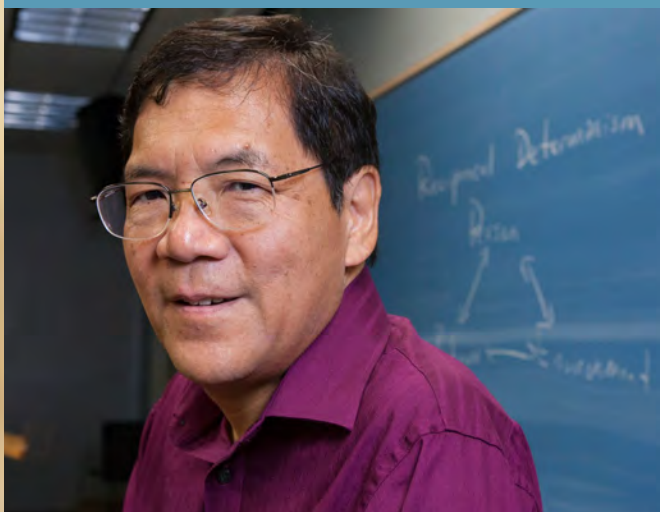
SGA President Cameron Thomas Returns to Finish What He Started

Cameron Thomas is a man with a plan—again. A senior religion major from Goodwater, Ala., Thomas was recently sworn in for his second term as president of Samford University's Student Government Association, and he is already hard at work implementing his MAC Plan 2.0, a continuation of the foundational principles he began during his first term. He is the first African American in Samford's history to serve two consecutive terms as president.

"During my second term . . . I hope to begin having discussions with administration to see how we can help recruit more domestic minority students," Thomas said. "What Samford has to offer is something you cannot get anywhere else, and I would love to see our domestic minority numbers increase."

Thomas, who is a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., was raised by his grandparents who instilled in him the importance of dressing well and being taken seriously. Eventually, he would like to teach at seminary and work at a local church.

"I hope I have allowed students to see anything is possible at Samford University," he said. "I am grateful to Samford for all the doors that have been opened for me here. And I am forever indebted to this great institution, not only for the opportunities it has provided me, but also for how it has shaped me to impact the world."



Poised for Greatness

Professor Stephen Chew Makes Strides in and Outside the Classroom

Dr. Stephen Chew sees great things ahead. Since arriving on Samford University's campus in 1993, Chew has helped not only to revitalize the psychology program, he also has worked to promote undergraduate research, founded the Faculty Shoptalk series, which allows faculty to meet and share ideas, and assisted with establishing the faculty diversity committee.

His work is far from over. "Samford isn't where it should be in terms of diversity, but many of us are aware of that and are trying to change that," Chew said.

Despite being named the 2011 Outstanding Master's Universities and Colleges U.S. Professor of the Year by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching,

and having close to 400,000 views of his video series, *How to Get the Most Out of Studying*, Chew is most proud of his students and what they do after leaving Samford.

"My students are really motivated to learn about psychology and to make a difference with what they learn," he said. "I'm proud to be a part of their development."

He is also proud of Samford's strides in diversity and urges others to help make a difference.

"My advice to students is pretty much the same as for minority faculty: Yes, you will suffer some indignities from the actions and language of some of the people here, but virtually all these actions come out of ignorance and are not intentional. Be patient, be open and be part of the change."

The Music Man

Samford's Carillonneur Shares Sweet Sounds



Staff Spotlight

At least twice a week, you can hear the melodious sounds of music serenading Samford University's campus and the surrounding Homewood community.

For more than a decade, the man behind the biweekly music has been Stephen Brooks Knight, Samford's carillonneur for the last 39 years. On the designated days, Knight climbs the 71 steps and spiral staircase of Davis Library tower where the Rushton Memorial Carillon is housed and shares his gift.

"I play mostly serious music, but every now and then, I play the Beatles or Elvis Presley," he said.

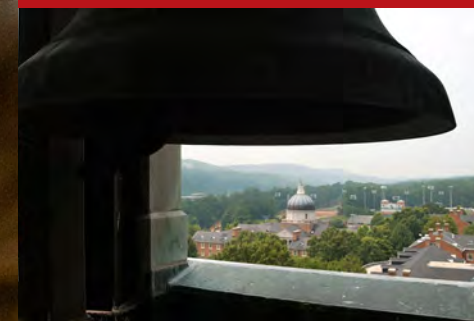
Knight, who was born with just enough vision to read large print, began taking music lessons at the age of 7. By the time he

was 10, he was legally blind, but that did not stop his love of music and learning. He holds two undergraduate degrees from the University of Alabama, and graduate degrees from Samford University, Schools Schola Cantorum in Paris and the University of Michigan. An award-winning composer, he began carillon lessons at the age of 23.

"Using Braille is a challenge because your fingers are occupied," he said. "It demands a lot of attention from my ear."

Knight takes great pride in his musical ability and the blessing it has been to Samford and beyond.

"It's always an honor to play here," he said.





Alumni Spotlight

Waymaker

Eric Motley Paves the Way for Other Minorities

As much as he values his quiet time, Dr. Eric Motley is no stranger to being in the spotlight.

In addition to being the first African-American Student Government Association president at Samford University, Motley '96 was the first to integrate the school's Greek system. After graduation, he went on to serve as special assistant to former President George W. Bush and associate director of the Office of Presidential Personnel, where he managed the appointment process for more than 1,200 part-time advisory board and commission positions. He holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, and currently serves as vice president and managing director of the Henry Crown Fellowship Program at The Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C.

"Most people think of me as being very social," he said. "In fact, I derive a lot of energy from my quiet time. It is more important to me than my people time."

A native of Montgomery, Ala., Motley was

the first in his family to attend college, a distinction he doesn't take lightly, and he received a presidential scholarship to Samford. "My grandparents taught me to use every opportunity to get as much as I can by learning and growing," he said.

He encourages other minority students to do the same.

"The injustices you may feel you are experiencing now can't be addressed without the tools you get through an education," he said, urging students to step outside their comfort zones.

"You might discover courses that are not extremely popular among some of your minority classmates. I took astronomy, and there were few blacks," he noted. "Don't see opportunities for academic and social involvement through a racial lens. See the world as ours."

Do you know someone who would make a great alumni spotlight? Please email reflections@samford.edu.



Samford Connection Spotlight

Victor M. Brown
Vice President of Minority
and Small Business
Birmingham Business Alliance



Looking Ahead

Trustee Victor Brown Sees Great Opportunities

Samford University trustee Victor M. Brown is excited about the future.

Brown, vice president of minority and small business for the Birmingham Business Alliance, joined the board of trustees in 2009 after catching the attention of President Andrew Westmoreland during a Business Outlook Conference, which Samford sponsored.

"Samford has enriched my life with balance and allowed me to increase my engagement with the world around me," Brown said.

He believes the same enrichment opportunities are available to minority students and employees.

"Regardless of how difficult the challenges might be, have the courage to remain steadfast. Know you are at Samford for a reason. At times when you may not feel at home, take comfort in knowing you aren't alone. Over time, you will realize your Samford experience may not be as unique and different as the experience of your majority counterparts."

Are you or someone you know a non-Samford student, alumni or employee who would like to be spotlighted as a Samford Connection? Email reflections@samford.edu.

Each One Teach One

Christina Shepard Norman Educates Alumni on Giving Back



Giving Spotlight

Christina Shepard Norman's Samford story is far from over. Since receiving her educational specialist degree in 2001, Norman continues to give back financially to Samford University.

"Taking a small financial burden off a person could mean the difference between a student graduating or not," said Norman, who works as a library media specialist at EPIC elementary school in Birmingham.

"The African-American population at Samford is so small, and we need to encourage them, help and support them stay at this wonderful place of higher learning," she said. "Private donors were there for me, helping reduce the cost of graduate school. I, in turn, would like to be there for someone else."

Norman, a member of Sixth Avenue Baptist Church, said her former pastor, Rev. John T. Porter, often spoke of Samford from the pulpit, and her current pastor, Rev. John L. Cantelow, is a Samford graduate. She shares their enthusiasm.

"Remember your days at Samford," she said. "A little help goes a long way. God has asked us to help those in need. Think about the impact you are having on the future leaders of tomorrow."

To make a financial contribution to Samford, go to www.samford.edu/giving to support minority scholarships at Samford, visit https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1575/gid2_alumni/index.aspx?sid=1575&gid=2&pgid=455&cid=1198 and select Bridge Fund or Porter Scholarship under the Additional University Option.



Organization Spotlight

Talking Greek

Delta Xi Phi Sets New Campus Milestone



On May 5, 2012, Delta Xi Phi, Samford University's first multicultural sorority, arrived on campus, thanks to the vision of founder Kaitlin DeFoor. Since then, the Omega associate chapter of Delta Xi Phi has inducted seven members, and it currently has three on campus who are eager to continue the work its founders began to increase multicultural awareness and the advancement of women through higher education with events on campus and community service.

"Diversity enriches everyone's education, and it's sad to see something we are so passionate about be disregarded by some students," said Nicole Poland, president of Samford's chapter of Delta Xi Phi.

The sorority wants to continue being visible on campus by piggybacking on the success of its screening of *Missrepresentation*, a film that discussed the way women are portrayed in media and how it affects their self-image. A discussion led by chapter adviser and faculty member Dr. Grace Anderson followed the event. This fall, they plan to work with the multicultural affairs committee to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and to promote their philanthropy, the American Cancer Society.

Would your organization liked to be featured in Samford Reflections? Please email reflections@samford.edu.