

# VIRGINIA TECH CONDUCTOR

A GUIDE FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENCE, EQUITY AND EFFECTIVENESS

## A tribute to Dr. King, Jr.

by Takiyah Nur Amin © 2006

"If I Can Help, Then  
My Living Will  
Not Be In Vain..."  
...and it's like he never  
left us.  
Dreams become cliché  
and deferred while  
love eludes us and  
freedom can't be found



But,  
It's like he never left us...  
Reduced to postage stamp memories, moral  
simplicity and  
the Capitalist ring of "I Have a Dream" in  
McDonald's Commercials,  
But,  
It's like he never left us...  
Kindergarteners color cardboard cutouts while  
civil rights becomes a punch line  
But,  
It's like he never left us.  
...like earthly prophets who swing from thought  
trees in our presence-  
The pious eat fruit of it while fools ridicule it  
But,  
It's like he never left us...  
...like Satumites singing slang hymns in ghetto  
pulpits,  
Knowing cheap language is sin and  
It's like he never left us...  
Can you hear it?  
Morning's melancholy has become tomorrow's  
song and like an ancient blues riff we hear:  
We shall overcome...  
We shall overcome...  
We shall overcome...  
Someday?  
TODAY!  
...and fear tempts us to be still.  
Stasis is no oasis and motionless-ness breeds ill-  
will in the psyche.  
Memories fade,  
Leaving stolen moments as our inheritance,  
but today...taste it with open mouth and open  
heart.  
Run free—the future holds freedom's melody.  
We must dance a new dance and sing a new song-  
And the movement has to carry on because  
HE never left us...  
Montgomery was more than a boycott-  
HE never left us...  
The march covered more than Washington, DC-  
HE never left us...  
The poor people's campaign ain't over-  
HE never left us...  
THEY tried to take him but,  
HE never left us...  
THEY tried to kill HIM but,  
HE never left us  
HE never left us  
HE never left us  
HE never left us  
HE never left us-  
Martin is with us.  
Martin is us.

## Giovanni hits NY Times best-seller list

By Jean Elliott

*Rosa*, written by Virginia Tech's Nikki Giovanni, rocketed to number three in the NY Times Children's Book List in early February. *Rosa*, published by Henry Holt and Company and vibrantly illustrated by Bryan Collier, tells the story of Rosa Parks, a seamstress from Montgomery, Alabama, who refused to give up her seat on a bus. This action sparked protests and ignited the civil rights movement.



A University Distinguished Professor in the Department of English, Giovanni's book has been universally well received by the media, librarians, and parents. *Rosa* has won the Coretta Scott King award for best illustration and also earned a Caldecott Honor. A copy of the book was presented to the Rev. Jesse Jackson as a memento of his visit to Virginia Tech on Martin Luther King day.

### What they're saying about *Rosa*

The Time magazine bonus section in December proclaimed, "In light of Parks' death at age 92 in October, this book seems especially timely. But its message of quiet courage is timeless."

The February edition of Parents magazine also applauded the book, saying "In honor of Black history month, be sure to read *Rosa* to your family. It... is the perfect way to introduce little ones to the late, great civil-rights heroine."

"Purposeful in its telling, this is a handsome and thought-provoking introduction to these watershed acts of civil disobedience," noted Margaret Bush for the School Library Journal.

Hazel Rochman, of the American Library Association said in her review, "The history comes clear in the astonishing combination of the personal and the political."

### Notes from Nikki...

In an early December interview with NPR's Ed Gordon, Giovanni discussed how she wanted to portray Mrs. Parks, a woman she had known personally for 24 years. "I wanted to share the woman that I had the privilege of knowing with younger people. Mrs. Parks was an icon, and when you've become iconic, you're bigger than life. I wanted to show that she was an ordinary woman who did an extraordinary thing," said Giovanni.

"Who would have thought that a seamstress from Montgomery, Alabama, would be the first woman in the United States to lay in state," muses Giovanni. "Its so wonderful that she's the only non-violent person. Of the 30 people who have lain in state since the civil war, 29 have been presidents, military men or policemen – and Mrs. Parks."

"I was writing a poem for The New York Times on Mrs. Parks and the first line of it says, 'The sad thing about your death is you missed your funeral.' I think she would have loved seeing herself lying in the Rotunda."

"Its still easier to tell kids the truth than have them grow up in ignorance," Giovanni recently told the Roanoke Times. "Segregation was a national shame. It has to be dealt with."



Illustration by Bryan Collier

## Virginia Tech celebrates the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

by Ray Plaza

Sunday, January 15, 2006, marked the first university-wide celebration honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

The university honored the day by not scheduling classes, followed by an unprecedented week-long series of events brought together the university community and the surrounding community. With major speakers, service activities, teach-ins, cultural performances, and the diversity summit, the week had something for everyone.

The traditional honoring of Dr. King by the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity with a memorial service was just the beginning this year.



Reverend Jesse Jackson  
photo by Roger Link

The Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity (CEOD) convened a university and community group to coordinate and plan the first ever University MLK Celebration. The first planning meeting provided an overview of the history of MLK observations on the campus and around the country and began an extensive brainstorming process. It was decided that the celebration should be a week-long and provide an opportunity for the entire university and local community to come together. The theme that permeated the planning was community and the importance of service.

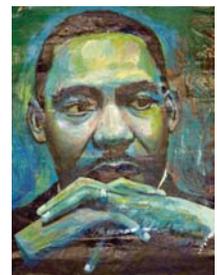
As the committee was looking for images for the commemorative poster to publicize the event, committee member Bob

Leonard suggested local artist Matheus de Oliveira. Upon viewing his portrait of Dr. King, the committee readily agreed it should represent the 2006 event and arranged permission to use the striking image that set the professional and emotive tone for the celebration.

The committee also decided to work within the local schools, as is done in other parts of the country. Superintendent of Schools in Montgomery County, Tiffany Anderson was very supportive of an essay and poster contest. The Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County Chapter of the NAACP agreed to fund the savings bond prizes. With only three weeks to prepare entries, there were 150 participants in the poster competition and 16 essays from Montgomery County and one from Henry County. Members of the NAACP and University officials served as judges. The winners recognized at the Community Breakfast were, K – 2nd Grade - Yang Fei, first place, Sophie Thompson, second place, Ellie Stilwell, third place; 3 – 4th Grade - Christopher Long, first place, Catherine Siegel, second place, Alder Bauer, third place; 5th Grade - Joseph McDonald, first place, Kevin Harley, Leyla Kiran, third place; 8th Grade - Ben Brightman, first place, Tylar Culver, second place, Jonathan Overton, third place. Essay winners are Erica Scales, first place, Rachel Cline, first place, Krystle Johnson, second place, and Benjamin Poff, third place.

Two home basketball games during the week provided an opportunity to promote the MLK celebration. The athletic department was interested in seeing if we could find something about Dr. King as an athlete. In a review of the literature, we

See MLK Celebration on page 2



Commemorative Poster  
by Matheus de Oliveira

## MLK Celebration...

*Continued from page 1*

discovered an article that highlighted Dr. King's role as an athlete as he was growing up and the influence that it played.

At the men's home basketball game against Virginia on Sunday night and the women's home basketball game against Virginia on Monday night, volunteers from the committee, students from the Presidential Campus Enrichment Grant, and athletic staff from promotions placed a folded flyer on every seat in Cassell Coliseum. The flyer



*Eleven of the sixteen winners from the 2006 MLK poster and essay competition*

had a copy of the full article on one side, and a full listing of the celebration calendar on the other side.

### Other activities

**Community Breakfast:** The committee noticed that a number of celebrations elsewhere include a prayer breakfast. The group changed the name to Community Breakfast to be more inclusive, and planned it as the first event of the MLK holiday. The committee decided that the breakfast should be free this year so that no one would be denied the opportunity

## MLK day began a week of service events

*by Michele James-Deramo*

The Martin Luther King Jr., holiday is linked with the National Service movement, which promotes the holiday as "a day on, not a day off." At Virginia Tech, the MLK Planning Committee worked with the Service-Learning Center to organize a series of community service opportunities that were conducted on campus, as well as throughout the New River Valley.



On-campus community service opportunities were held in Squires Student Center Tuesday through Friday. These "drop-in" service events were designed to invite participants into deeper civic involvement and understanding by way of hands-on activities. A series of stations included information tables, slide shows, and photo exhibits in addition to the actual service project.

Tuesday's event, "Power of the Pen," engaged participants in writing letters to deployed soldiers, housebound elders, and children at homeless shelters. After writing letters, participants could then learn more about letter writing as a tool for affecting change and making their voice heard in the public realm. The event resulted in 30 letters being sent to the Letters From Home Project, which distributes them to soldiers serving abroad, and Scottie's Place, a wilderness camp for children that are homeless.

to attend. About 300 attended the breakfast, which was our initial limit. (See page 2 for article about the speaker, one of the Greensboro Four.)

**Service activities:** It was critical that we include some type of service activity. The King Center has a focus on community service with the motto "A Day On, not a Day Off." A meeting was held with Michele James-Deramo, the director of the Virginia Tech Service-Learning Center about the possibility of developing activities for the celebration. The response was tremendous and Service-Learning became an official partner (See page 4).

**Brown bag teach-in:** Lunch hour brown bag teach-ins were modeled after the successful teach-ins conducted by the students in the DROP Alliance in 2005, which were held on MLK Day as a way to protest the university having classes on that day. The Black Caucus agreed to coordinate this effort and Ed McPherson, president of the Black Caucus, handled the planning programs held Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from noon until 1 p.m. McPherson focused on "Ending American Apartheid: The Need for a New Majority - a closer look at the Voting Rights Act." The presentation provided a historical overview of what happened after the Civil War, what led to the first Voting Rights Acts, and the issues facing its current reauthorization battle.

**Clark Mack** – The students from the Virginia Tech chapter of the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) brought Carl Mack, NSBE executive director, back to the campus. He spoke in Haymarket Theatre to about 150 participants on the legacy of Dr. King, and the relevance of his words to what is happening in America today. Afterwards, students from NSBE and other university officials engaged in a dinner dialogue with Mack on a wide range of issues.

There was also a cultural performance (see page 3), a series of lunchtime speakers at the Multicultural Center, with Kings' own speeches and writings available for review, international program, a movie/documentary on Dr. King, a poster session on diversity research, and the ninth annual Diversity Summit.

Wednesday's event, "Welcoming Newcomers," provided arts and craft materials to make puppets, puzzles, and alphabet books for an early childhood program for refugee and immigrant children. In addition, participants could view a slide show about the Somali Bantu journey to the United States, and learn more about local efforts to welcome newcomer populations. The event generated interest among students in the Hypatia and Galileo Learning Community, and a sorority. Both groups have since taken steps to volunteer at the Maple Grove English as a Second Language Learning Center in Salem.

Thursday and Friday's "Memory Project" proved to be the most provocative event, engaging more than 40 students in making books for vulnerable children in Uganda. This event, co-sponsored by the English department, built on the efforts of a national initiative, The Memory Project ([www.thememoryproject.org](http://www.thememoryproject.org)) that educates people about international humanitarian issues through the use of art.

Throughout the two days, a steady stream of students and faculty worked together to write and illustrate 30 children's books. The film, "Invisible Children," which tells the story of the night commuters of Uganda—thousands of children that leave their homes at dusk to travel by foot to night shelters in the city in order to avoid abduction by rebel soldiers—ran continuously in the background throughout the event.

The project leveraged interest throughout the Creative Writing Program in the English department, with several faculty members now involving their classes in bookmaking as a semester project. The Service-Learning Center has since ordered 100 more blank books for the Creative Writing Program, as well as a Residential Leadership Community class and the IWin (International Women in Need) Student Organization.

### A guide for our journey:

## Representations of Race to be explored

*By Kelly Belanger*

On Monday, April 24, the English department's Center for the Study of Rhetoric in Society is sponsoring "Representations of Race and the African American Community." This interactive event is designed to connect members of the campus and surrounding communities through a day-long series of conversations including a lunchtime poster session and opportunities for small group dialogue.

"Our initial goal is to examine the way that race is represented in our personal, academic, and civic lives," said Kelly Bellanger, director of the center. "By the end of the day, participants will be invited to explore possibilities for campus-community projects and partnerships aimed at improving the climate for racial relations and understanding."

The program features dialogue between distinguished scholars from across the nation. Keith Gilyard, distinguished professor of English at Penn State specializes in rhetorical aspects of African American expressive culture, and critical race studies. The award-winning editor and author was inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent in 2002.

Catherine Prendergast, associate professor of writing studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, focuses on the intertwining histories of literacy and race relations in the United States and is perhaps best known for her groundbreaking article "Race, the Absent Presence in Composition Studies."

Tracey Patton, assistant professor of communication and journalism at the University of Wyoming, is author of "They girl am I more than my hair?: African American women and their struggles with beauty, body image and hair" and "Reflections of a Black woman professor: Racism and sexism in academia." Patton's main interests involve how critical intercultural communication and interracial representation can impact the classroom, education, and the university campus.

These scholars will work with participants to frame the issues that emerge from initial conversations in broader public and scholarly discussions. Breakout sessions will focus on conceptualizing activist research projects that could be pursued collaboratively over the next year.

This free event will take place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Owens Banquet Hall. Lunch is provided for the first 150 people to sign up online at [www.multicultural.vt.edu/csrs](http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/csrs).

For more information, please contact Kelly Belanger at 231-8458 or by email, [krlbelang@vt.edu](mailto:krlbelang@vt.edu).

## About 'The Conductor'

*The Conductor* is produced by the Multicultural Fellows and is published by the Office of Multicultural Affairs.

All members of the university community are invited to contribute. Please submit articles to the editorial board at [rdlink@vt.edu](mailto:rdlink@vt.edu). Back issues are online at [www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor](http://www.multicultural.vt.edu/conductor)

### Editorial Board

Reza Barkhi, 231-5869, [reza@vt.edu](mailto:reza@vt.edu)  
Benjamin Dixon, 231-1820, [bdixon@vt.edu](mailto:bdixon@vt.edu)  
Jean Elliott, 231-5915, [elliottj@vt.edu](mailto:elliottj@vt.edu)  
Judith Snoko, 231-6963, [eslsnoko@vt.edu](mailto:eslsnoko@vt.edu)  
Ray Williams, Jr., 231-5023, [cwilliam@vt.edu](mailto:cwilliam@vt.edu)

### Production

Roxanna Link, 231-2610, [roxanna@vt.edu](mailto:roxanna@vt.edu)  
Bluefield Daily Telegraph, [www.bdtonline.com](http://www.bdtonline.com)

The Conductor's editorial board welcomes articles on upcoming multicultural events that are open to the university community. They should be under 350 words in length. Submit to Roxanna Link ([rdlink@vt.edu](mailto:rdlink@vt.edu)). As space is limited, the board reserves the right to edit all submissions. Deadline for the next article submission is March 31, 2006.

## 'Don't wait for the masses' says Franklin McCain

By Jim Ford and Jody Thompson, graduate students

Why do we remember the Greensboro Four? It wasn't the first time that sit-ins took place. During the 1950's, there were many sit-ins. Most of them did not take place in the deep south, but in bordering states, such as Oklahoma, Missouri, Illinois, and Tennessee.

Since many of the cities in these states had smaller black populations, the sit-ins were not taken seriously as in the deep south.

Freshmen Franklin McCain, Ezell Blair, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond defied the rule of "colored" not sitting at the lunch counter. The four students sat at the counter all day until the Woolworth's closed. The next day, 30 students came to the Woolworth's to sit at the counter. By the end of the week, hundreds of Black students from NC A&T and Bennett College had joined the protest and a handful of white students from neighboring Greensboro College also offered their support. The sit-ins in Greensboro were a catalyst for sit-ins in 40 other cities and two other stores across the country. Students from black colleges and white colleges alike participated in this movement. On July 26, 1960, Woolworth's desegregated all of its counters because of the efforts of college students.

Many students who participated in the movement were members of grassroots organizations that were already established. When four blacks students from Agricultural and Technical College decided to sit at a Woolworth's counter in Greensboro, NC, their actions would set off a chain of events.

Franklin McCain, the guest speaker for the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Breakfast at Virginia Tech, is one of the original four who took part in the Woolworth sit-ins. He was born in Union County, NC, and reared in Washington, D.C. He received his B.S. degree in chemistry and biology from North Carolina A&T State University in 1964. He is married and has three sons. In 1965, he joined the Celanese Corporation



Franklin McCain,  
photo by Roxanna Link

in Charlotte, NC as a chemist and is now retired. As a resident of Charlotte, McCain has been on many boards and has worked to bring about some changes in the educational, civic, spiritual, and political life of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day began for me, other members of the Virginia Tech family, and quite a few visitors from the local community in the Commonwealth Ballroom at Squires Student Center, listening to Franklin McCain. McCain revisited his part in initiating courageous sit-in activism that began February 1, 1960 in Greensboro, then delivered a timely, motivational message. He reminded us that we can't "wait on the masses" to make a difference in the lives we share; that "arm chair" activists accomplish nothing and, most importantly, that it only takes a "dedicated few" to fuel the fires of change. "Never ask permission to start a revolution!" said McCain.

He voiced the doubts and concerns he felt throughout



over 300 people attended the community breakfast

his sustained, day-in, day-out, civil disobedience at the Woolworth store lunch counter from February through July of 1960. Media attention fluctuated, focusing on days when lots of people showed up, noticeably absent when only he and a few friends were there. He wondered what an ancient looking white woman was going to say as she approached him and his friends that first day sitting in at the counter. He awaited the verbal attack; then heard her say, "I'm so proud of you boys. I wish you had done this 10 years ago."

"Lessons learned?" He said, "Don't stereotype anyone. You don't know them." Finally, he invited us to take a walk through the graveyard, noting dates of birth and death separated by a dash. He pointed out that our lives are not about dates but, "that dash is your life. You decide how to use it," he said, "whether or not to improve the human condition and this world of ours."

## Featured speaker: Rev Jesse Jackson

By Jim Ford, Graduate Student

More than 3,000 diverse, energetic people stood, applauded, and welcomed Reverend Jesse Jackson into Burruss Hall Auditorium. He began, sharing statistics to confirm his belief that Martin Luther King Jr. Day should not commemorate the "I Have a Dream" speech, but continually revisit Dr. King's underlying message of "The Broken Promise."



Rev Jesse Jackson takes questions after his speech.  
Photo by Roger Link

years, the disadvantaged sometimes get into universities to

face tuition "they can't afford to pay," and that the "most poor are young, white and female."

Rev Jackson went on stirring our conscience and calling us to action. He envisioned lines on voting day to match the crowds drawn to Hokie football games. He

encouraged involvement now by bringing along voting registration forms and asking audience members to "come on down" and register. His criterion for registering was "where an individual laid his or her head for more than two nights."

His disquieting message asked us to consider how Dr. King, who was so hated when alive, became so cherished as a memory. Dr. King, in his "I Have a Dream" speech, hoped that his "four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Near the end of his speech, Jackson echoed that emphasis saying, "beyond color and culture is character."

Was the good Reverend asking me personally to act as a person of good character? Do I somehow share the accountability for whether or not, "one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed?" What would happen if we each acted as if "all are created equal?" Could Dr. King's powerful memory become the embodiment of his living legacy and could we all be "Free at last?"

**"Beyond color and culture is character."**

## View from the street on MLK Week...

Compiled by Jean Elliott

A sampling of Diversity Summit participants were asked the following two questions:

**What was the highlight of MLK week?**

**How did it change your perspective?**



Nathan Howell – university studies undergraduate student  
The Diversity Summit

It confirmed an important issue that repeated in several other programs I participated during the fall semester of 2005: the issue of stereotypes, as well as pre-judging people.

Laurica Yancey – complex director, Residential Programs  
Monday night with Rev. Jesse Jackson

First, it changed my perspective on Rev. Jesse Jackson himself. Before Monday night, I did not have a lot of admiration for Rev. Jackson. However, after Monday night, I gained a greater respect for Rev. Jackson as a civil rights leader. His speech enlightened me on a lot of historical perspectives I never considered. But above all, his speech challenged me.



Evelyn Wallington – associate director of Residence Life

Jesse Jackson's speech  
It made me realize (again) that one person can make a difference in helping to improve the life of another by simple actions. Don't wait for the masses to do what you believe in.

Carlos Evia – assistance professor of English

The Diversity Summit  
It reinforced my beliefs about diversity and showed me how the CEO's [Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity] work is seen outside the commission's regular meetings.



Joan Mulligan – environmental policy and planning undergraduate  
Keynote speaker Rev. Jesse Jackson

This was a new and interesting experience. It was a celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s actions. In the past, I've felt that MLK day was more about recognizing the tragic fact that this amazing man was murdered, usually brushing over what he's done for us today. The Rev. Jesse Jackson's speech made me think about how Dr. King's actions affect me today, and I'm thankful for it.

Edd Sewell – associate professor of communication  
Rev. Jackson  
Seeing how college students responded to him and his ideas.



March 3, 2006

## New 2006 Multicultural Fellows

During the fall of 2005 a call was made for the fourth class of Multicultural Fellows. As part of the application process individuals needed to indicate a specific project interest and explain what they could contribute to that particular effort. Eleven new fellows were selected from the group of applications. They join 15 other active fellows who, by intent, represent a broad spectrum of professional expertise and cultural backgrounds. The Fellows serve the University's diversity efforts by being a responsive body for their perspectives, advisements, and initiatives that promote multiculturalism on campus.

**Margaret L. Keeling**, assistant professor, CLAHS-Human Development

Recruiting/Admissions Support

I have a strong, enduring personal and research interest in multicultural issues. I believe the Multicultural Fellow role is an effective means for faculty and staff to work across disciplines to enhance the cultural climate at Virginia Tech, fostering diversity and promoting tolerance at every level of the university.

**Ed McPherson**, director of VT STARS, Learning Technology

P.R.O.A.C.T.

My interest in serving as a multicultural fellow is part of my personal commitment to make Virginia Tech more inclusive and pluralistic. I see multiculturalism as much more than a proxy for issues of race, ethnicity and gender. Within a global context of multicultural concerns, it is useful to think of 'Diversity' as an intellectual nexus of 'culture, language and identity' ... as well as the social, political and academic concerns that are measured empirically in terms of race, ethnicity and gender.



**Gresilda Tilley-Lubbs**, assistant professor, Second Language Education/ESL Teaching and Learning

Workshop/Program Presenters

Much of the work I do at Virginia Tech, in the community, and in the schools is related to diversity and multiculturalism, and I would welcome the opportunity to be part

of a group that identifies multiculturalism as being important to the Virginia Tech community. I would regard an appointment as a Multicultural Fellow to be a great honor, a means of serving Virginia Tech in a meaningful way.



**Elaine Humphrey**, associate director, Research and Assessment, Center for Academic Enrichment and Excellence

Diversity Certificate Program

A university has an obligation to its students and to itself to appreciate and celebrate diversity. To do so requires commitment from all community

members. While I strive to value and respect diversity in my day-to-day interactions and actions, I would like to also help our institution through this very important association. I also see this opportunity as a way to enhance my understanding and appreciation of diversity so that I can do an even better job of making this a welcoming place for everyone.



**Tamim Younos**, interim director, Water Resources Research Center Role with Undergraduate Research

I believe a great university should facilitate an intellectual environment that promotes true diversity of ideas and cultural experiences. I would like to encourage and strengthen multicultural

diversity at Virginia Tech by drawing from my own life experiences and knowledge of what's lacking at Virginia Tech.

**Joyce Moser**, fiscal technician, Sociology Diversity Certificate Program

When the word "diversity" was used, my first thought WAS of "straight or gay." When "multicultural" was said, my thought WAS "the races." As a direct result of being in Ben Dixon's Ethics & Diversity Capstone course, I learned that these two powerful words mean so much more! I believe that most people living in southwest Virginia "hear" the same connotations, and I'd like to educate others to the broader definitions and values of diversity and multiculturalism.

**C. Ray Williams Jr.**, assistant director, MAOP The Virginia Tech Conductor

For the entirety of my association with higher education, either as student or administrator, I have been involved in the process of diversity. My experiences in minority student recruitment along with student organization advising have provided a view of diversity that extends beyond the "armchair" assumptions about these issues. My personal commitment to understanding cultures encourages me to stay attentive to issues of this nature.



**Tonya L. Smith-Jackson**, associate professor, Industrial and Systems Engineering P.R.O.A.C.T.

The Multicultural Fellow

Experience is an effective way to gain needed skills to support organizational diversity that I cannot attain through other means. I am very interested in learning how to promote diversity within a large organization, such as Virginia Tech. Interactions and opportunities to learn from others make this opportunity very exciting.



**Ross Edmonds**, web support specialist, University Libraries Resource Development for Diversity Website

While being so involved not only gives me the opportunity to voice my opinions but express my concerns, I feel that serving as a Multicultural Fellow is a good next step in my providing valuable input and insight to the University.

**Takiyah Nur Amin**, adjunct faculty (Dept. of History) and outreach coordinator for the Race & Social Policy Research Institute, Dept. of History/ Race & Social Policy Research Institute

Workshop/Program Presenters

I am interested in serving as a Multicultural Fellow in order to support the university's work toward creating an inclusive, sensitive and diverse community. Additionally, I desire the chance to work with other faculty members in concentrated efforts toward reaching these goals.



**Shelli Fowler**, director, Graduate Education Development Institute Workshop/Program Presenters

It is very important that institutions of higher education engage their students, staff, faculty, and administrators in the complexities of 21st-century multiculturalism. I think it is great that Virginia Tech has a structure already in place that supports efforts that work toward systemic change within our institution (as well as, I imagine, the local communities). I would like to become an active participant and share in the efforts to make Virginia Tech a welcoming and inclusive community.

## 'Open the Window' a cultural performance

by Jim Ford, graduate assistant

"Enrichment Through the Arts," lead by Ann Kilkelly, enhanced the Third Annual Mid-Atlantic Conference on the Scholarship of Diversity. Kilkelly, professor of theater arts and women's studies, casts a wide artistic net that encompasses inclusion and diversity as a lively, creative process. The wonderfully diverse talents of Elise Witt and Mick Kinney from Georgia and Carlton and Maurice Turner from Mississippi joined local artist.

All during the week of January 30th these visiting artists, along with Kilkelly and her crew, "rocked the boat" on campus. It was a solid, deliberate rocking motion that exemplified how fresh perspectives and generative ideas come to life in conferences and classrooms, during informal conversations, in story telling roundtables, and both formal and informal performances.

The Lyric Theater in Blacksburg was filled with harmonic voices entering, surrounding, and slowly enticing the



Witt, M. Turner, Kinney, C. Turner, Carol Burch-Brown

audience to become part of the singing. The audience never disengaged from that initial connection and interaction.

The next day at the conference some of the same artists led a round table discussion about community based arts and how these artists had become an extended family celebrating one another's gifts. Turner and others talked about the "Alternate ROOTS" organization ([www.alternateroots.org](http://www.alternateroots.org)) that turns 30 years old this year

and its work with communities through the arts. Witt talked about the arts and especially, "music as a medium of experience for learning." And, Kilkelly reminded us in closing that, "The arts are not an end in themselves, but the means to an end." "When the arts collaborate with, versus perform for," they act as a catalyst that lights the candle of community.



Footnotes with Kilkelly