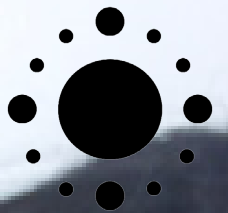


# BlackBoard



Volume 41 Issue No. 2  
Winter 2011

## Black & Purple

The Black NU: Why it's important to us and why it should be important to you.

also inside:

On the fringe

The cost of beauty

A tribute to Ms. Jackie

Editor-In-Chief  
Breajna Dawkins

Copy Editor  
Zahra Barnes

Staff Writers  
Iman Childs  
Baindu Kallon  
Jasmyne McDonald  
Jordan Minor  
Paris West

Contributing Writers  
Derrick Clifton  
Rachel Dory  
Paul Jackson  
Kamau Massey

Cover Photo by  
Breajna Dawkins

### Mission Statement

BlackBoard Magazine, Northwestern University's Black student magazine, serves as an open forum for student expression. Contributing writers of the magazine hope to challenge readers to think critically. E pluribus Unum, "out of one many," the slogan of the magazine acts as a symbol for a unified Black community. The first goal of the magazine is to fill the void in the Black community most publications cannot reach. BlackBoard will provide the campus and surrounding areas with a perspective of the Black community they would not normally see. The second goal is to inform readers with current news, thoughts and ideas in timely fashion, following a sound journalism code of ethics. Thirdly, BlackBoard will go beyond the boundaries of Northwestern's campus to find the voices of the community at large.

## on a longer note



I don't know about you, but it was a rough quarter for us here at BlackBoard. Between classes, the cold, and the fact that everybody was too busy to have fun, the only thing we could do was grind out paper after midterm after paper until Spring Break.

But while we were 'out here grinding,' we picked up on some conversations in Norris and the Black House and realized that even though there are so many interesting things happening in the world, there are a of pressing topics that need to be handled right here at home. So with your problems and questions in mind, we began to solve them the way any responsible journalist would: we investigated, then wrote about it.

In this newest issue of BlackBoard, our staff decided to center our focus on you, our readers, and concentrate on the Black community that you live and work in everyday. Our theme, "NU's Black Culture Revisited and Redefined," speaks to the world we exist in amongst each other here on campus while we operate in the larger community that is Northwestern. We covered every topic from the debate about on campus relationships to the way we sometimes feel when trying to connect to other communities. We even paid tribute to all of our favorite Foster-Walker Complex staff member Ms. Jackie.

So as you flip through these pages, think about those conversations that you had with your friends in the dining hall and in between classes. How does what we've written in BlackBoard relate? What is different? What is the same? Did we answer your questions?

Whatever the case, I hope that you can vibe with us as we reach out to some and relate to others. This is BlackBoard Magazine's Winter 2011 issue.

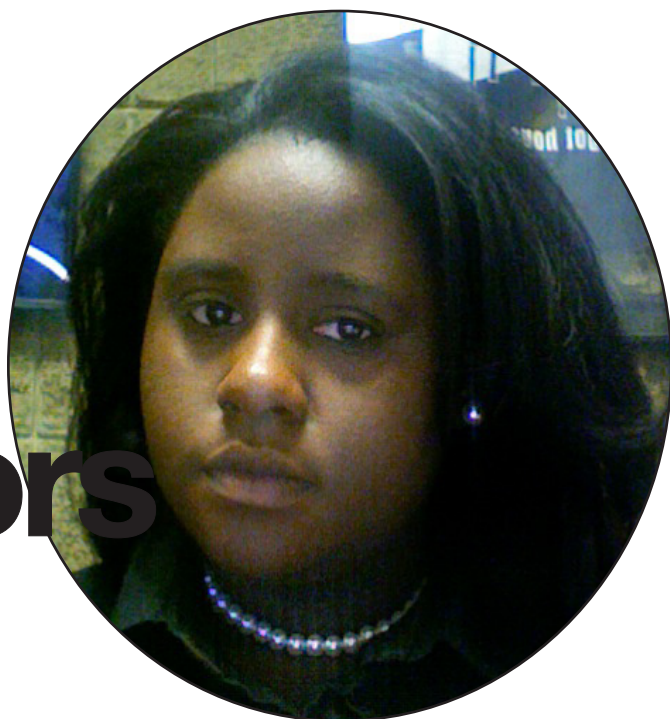
Thanks for reading.

-Breajna Dawkins

# contents

letter from the editor	2
coordinator's corner	4
my tribute to ms. jackie The Black community lost a very special person this quarter. Reflect with us.	5
the cost of beauty Young women all over the world are augmenting their bodies but some are learning that there is a high price to pay for the body they desire.	6
on the fringe A continuation of last spring's look at Black students that find themselves on the outskirts of other communities.	8
OWN vs. the black conscience Oprah is taking over television but some feel she could do more for the Black community along the way.	10
black and purple An in-depth look at if there really is a Black Northwestern and what that means for everyone at NU.	11
a woman's worth Our guest columnist Kamau Massey tries to shed some light on the "there are no wifey/husband types at NU" debate.	14
21 questions	15

## a word from **our sponsors**



Hello Family!

I hope that this winter quarter has treated you kindly and that as you begin spring quarter you do so with the same optimism and anticipation you had when you started this new year. By the time this winter issue of BlackBoard magazine comes out, there will be a new coordinator of For Members Only. I cannot help but offer this as my last farewell to FMO. So with sadness, I will use this as a platform to say goodbye to an organization and a family which has done so much for me in my four years at Northwestern.

I have always seen the role of FMO's executive board as a service organization and FMO as a student group which provides a climate of community for Black students. With all the programming that has occurred over the years, every single exec board meeting begins with efforts to understand how we can better serve the Black community. This year's executive board personified the goal of serving the Black community. Socially, we served the Black community with our Sunday dinners, spring concert, Black family reunion and the 90s party at the Black house. Intellectually, we served with the State of the Black Union Address and co-sponsored events where we exposed FMO constituents to many different facets of Black culture. Politically, we served by working with the Living Wage campaign and other multicultural student groups to address issues that pertain to minority enrollment, equal opportunity and racial profiling. As an exec board, we often found ourselves in the throes of heated discussion, making sure that every act and every decision could directly point to helping the Black community at NU. I have never seen a group of people so dedicated to getting the job done in all my years at NU. Once a job or task is made a goal, every exec board member was passionate about seeing it through to the end.

Moving into the future, I challenge the next executive board to approach every project, every event and every obstacle with a passion for serving the Black students on this campus. Like so many student groups on this campus, FMO exec members commit time, energy and money for the larger principles of enriching the Black community, which we all vow to uphold once we assume positions. None of us do it for the title or the accolades, because individually they do not amount to much. But as an exec, if at the end of the day you can say you have exhausted all options to ensure the growth and prospering of the Black community, you have succeeded.

I would like to thank each and every satellite and affiliate for participating in making this Black community thrive. Each organization is the blood that keeps the heart of the Black community pumping. I congratulate you all on a year of great programming and excellent organization. And I also want to thank you for continuing to maintain the bonds that FMO has with each group. The relationship between FMO and the satellites and affiliates is often a symbolic one. You cannot just make a list of things FMO gives to the groups and what the groups in turn give to FMO. To do that does a disservice to the years of history that FMO has with each satellite and affiliate. Each leader knew that remaining connected served the Black community better, because as a united network there is potential for each and every Black student to feel like they are a part of a loving and supportive Black community at Northwestern.

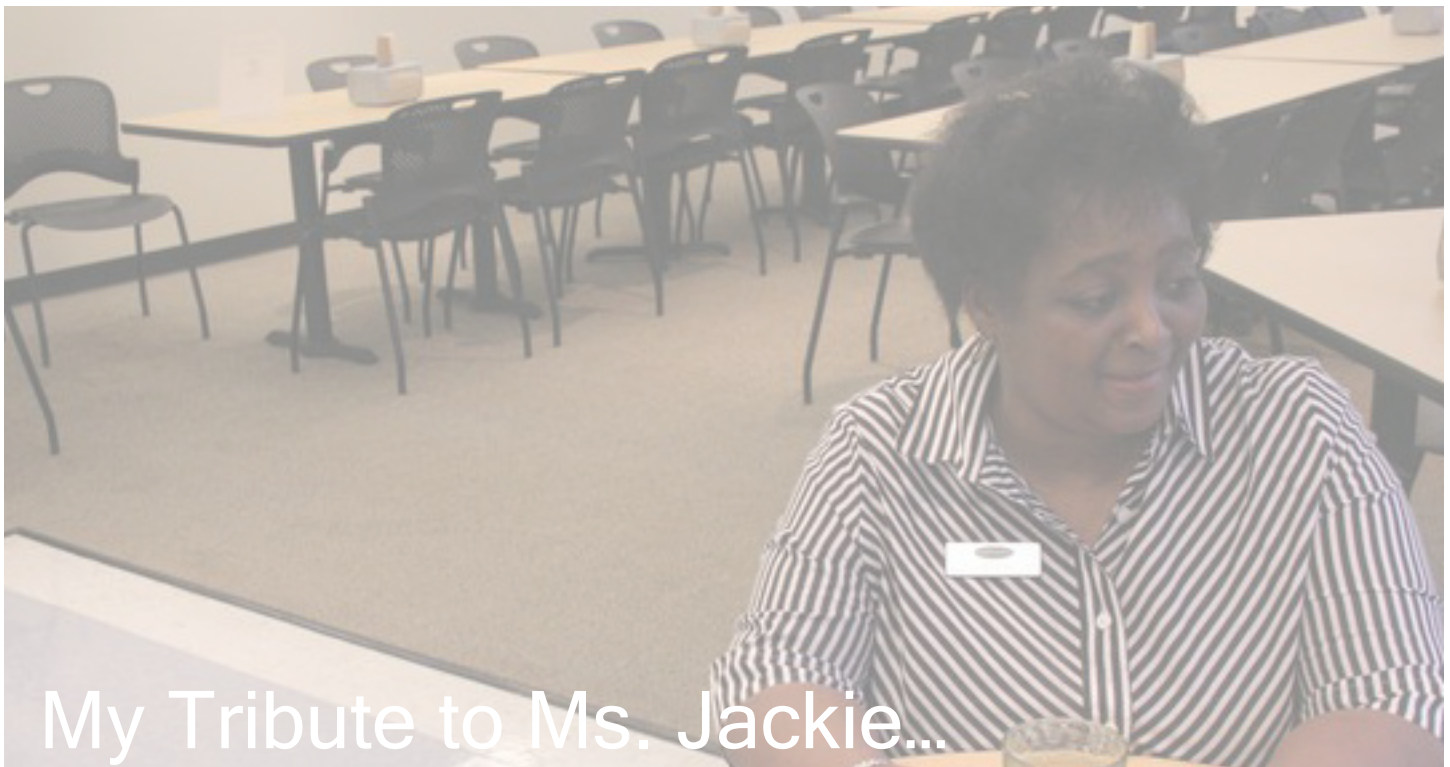
To all the freshmen, thank you for being some of the most involved freshmen I have seen since the class of 2011. And to all my seniors, I am so proud to be a member of this class and I cannot wait to cross the stage with all of you!

With Love and Well Wishes,

Janissia Orgill

2010-2011 Coordinator of For Members Only ☪





## My Tribute to Ms. Jackie...

by Jasmyne McDonald

**B**lack Women's Hands Can Rock the World" was the essay prompt for a scholarship I was applying to. Searching for the words to explain to this faceless committee of people what this phrase means to me, trying to personify unknown readers to get my persuasive juices flowing, the image of Ms. Jacqueline Triplett formed and remained constant in my mind throughout the writing process.

Ms. Jackie ranks among the Black women I consider major influencers in my life. I am not alone, as demonstrated by the For Members Only (FMO) organized memorial and tribute to the beloved Sodexo employee. Speaker after speaker approached the lectern to share stories of memories they had shared with her. Students and staff alike recalled the smile and "Hey there" she had for every student, acknowledging her never changing disposition no matter who walked through the door or what kind of mood they were in. There were stories of her patience and encouragement motivating students to go to class, spend more time studying, or talking to a professor.

In statuses dedicated to Ms. Jackie on Facebook and amongst students

supporting each other through their grief, students discussed times Ms. Jackie let them into the dining hall when they had no other way to eat or served as a mother figure away from home.

I, like everyone else, have stories of Ms. Jackie's impact on my life. She was the last person I spoke to on campus before I left for winter holiday, with her even meeting my family. The meeting was just a formal way of adding her to the village involved in raising me. She had been part of my family a long time prior to December 7, 2010.

Ms. Jackie gave me confidence and encouragement unknown to me outside of the immediate family. "I love you," "You're gonna be alright," and "Girl, I love the way you walk" were all statements providing the same assurance I received from my mother, aunt, and grandmother. They were statements I knew to be true because I trusted the wisdom of this Black woman whose life was proof that I could withstand. Not just withstand, but be positive and embrace others at the same time.

The testimonies shared by alumni, current students, co-workers and

others are a testament to how this Black woman's hands, speech, and spirit rocked the worlds of everyone she encountered. As a student at the tribute mentioned, the greatest lesson to learn from such a pure, loving spirit is seek to live out her legacy by paying it forward.

FMO's dedication of the staff appreciation award, which Ms. Jackie earned by landslides two consecutive years of the awards existence is one example of how to keep her legacy alive. Yet, Ms. Jackie's greatest legacy is the people whom she touched on campus and in her community at home. Through them, her family and friends, and us, her children here at Northwestern, she will never be forgotten.

Long-time friend of Ms. Jackie Andrea Armstrong said, "She would have been so surprised. It's wonderful that you all did this. She would have been so proud of this memorial service and all of you students." I agree and can only imagine how proud Ms. Jackie is to know the ways we in the Black community plan to manifest her lifestyle practices into ours and touch one person at a time; with a smile and an encouraging word. 🌟

# the cost of beauty

by Iman Childs and Baindu Kallon



Throughout history, the standards of beauty have seemed to evolve independently in every culture. Yet our world is more connected than ever and the lines of cultural distinction are beginning to blur. With access to the internet, television and radio, it takes minutes to “travel” and experience other cultures. Globalization is an advertiser’s dream, giving them the opportunity to influence an entire generation. The emphasis on beauty and perfection is highly visible, from billboards and commercials, to magazines and movies, all of which feature models and actresses who are often times airbrushed. Images of slender, tall White women with blue eyes and blonde hair have long dominated the media, particularly television, movies, magazines, and advertisements, causing many people around the world to see European beauty standards as the ideal. A number of women, young and old, would do anything to achieve this standard of perfection. The question is how far will women go to experience the ideal body?

The death of Claudia Aderotimi, a 20-year-old self-described model, due to a buttock enhancement surgery is a clear example of a woman taking the ultimate sacrifice for a perfect body. Aderotimi had Podge Victoria Windslowe, an aspiring singer who was unlicensed to perform the surgery, inject silicone into her posterior. It is believed that the silicone may have entered her vascular system, causing her heart to stop beating.

While mainstream beauty ideals affect people of all races, different ethnicities have unique beliefs about what is beautiful. In the Black community, having a large butt is usually seen as attractive. This is witnessed in numerous hip hop videos which feature dancers who have large backsides that are highlighted by the camera.

The success of Amber Rose and Nicki Minaj, who are regarded by many Black people as beautiful not only because of their facial features, but also because of the size of her backside, may cause many aspiring models, singers, and actresses to believe that posterior-size is the key to success. It is for this reason that many believe Aderotimi chose to risk

her life and have the dangerous surgery performed illegally. This highly unrealistic standard can cause many Black women to feel unhappy about their bodies and use plastic surgery to attain what they consider perfection.

Even at a prestigious university like Northwestern, many students feel the effects of the media’s view of what is beautiful on their own body image. “I’m okay with my body,” says Sydney Smith, a Weinberg freshman, “but I have more body issues than I should.”

When asked if the media contributes to what is considered beautiful, Smith answered with a firm “Yes! The images spread by media are dominated by images of small Caucasian or racially ambiguous women with long hair. Rappers talking about ‘red-boned’



women with long hair doesn’t help.”

While she is aware of the media’s role in body image, Smith also notes she still is “a consumer of media, and even though I’m conscious of the standard, surprisingly, being conscious doesn’t make me less susceptible. It still affects me.”

“I think the media defines body image, especially for women,”

says Karrie Snyder, a sociology professor at Northwestern. Snyder thinks that media, specifically advertisements, reinforce what we have learned about having the ideal body. “We’re always seeing the same type of people,” Snyder continues.

Weinberg freshman Nadira Long echoes this statement: “[The media] definitely plays a role in negative body image. There are always two extremes shown—you have your really light-skinned models and the really dark ones. They have shining glimmering skin and are really tall, thin, have nice stomachs, and not a trace of hair anywhere. That’s not realistic, but you still think they look awesome and say ‘I want to look that good.’”

However, companies like the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty are fighting to challenge society’s view of body image and Snyder thinks that companies like Dove can make a difference. “Advertisements who target women can and should have a more diverse range of people,” says Snyder.

On the other hand, Long also points out that even the Dove campaign contains attractive women. While the women may portray a wide variety of sizes, a majority of the models are what many people would consider beautiful.

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, buttock implants have shown a slight increase from 799 in 2009 to 806 in 2010. With all the risk of plastic surgery, why do people continue to go under the knife? “I think I understand where people are coming from,” says Monique Brown, a sophomore in School of Education and Social Policy. “I think we all have things we would change about ourselves,” Brown continues. Yet Brown doesn’t feel a need to receive any plastic surgery in the near future. “I’m fine with the way God made me,” she says.

As the saying goes, “Beauty is the eye of the beholder” and having a positive image starts with the individual. In order to combat negative images of Black women, people must first become comfortable with themselves, inside and out. As Brown says, “Changing your appearance doesn’t change your insides and that’s what really matters. Right?”



# on the fringe

by Paris West

What is normal? One of the most subjective words people only seem to use it objectively causing those who do not adhere to it to feel ostracized, cast out by those who cannot accept who they are. Sometimes it's the adjectives a person may chose to identity with have the potential to conflict with each other thus making them not normal.

Many people here at Northwestern go against the grain and don't identify with what is considered "normal". Gay in a Christian setting. Black in a homogeneous Japanese society. These identifiers are out of the ordinary to the groups Weinberg juniors Derrick Clifton and Rachael Dory find themselves a part of. Yet it is their experience on the fringe that allows us to reevaluate our use of the word normal and truly consider its implications.

I'm almost used to it now – the staring, whispering, and every once in awhile, the outright gawking as soon as I step into Tokyo's public arena. You'd think that with such a large city there would be a higher population of foreigners and thus the Japanese I encounter would be used to seeing us board their trains, ride their buses, and sip coffee in their cafés. But no, this "gaijin" (Japanese slang literally meaning "outside person") is still an animal at the zoo.

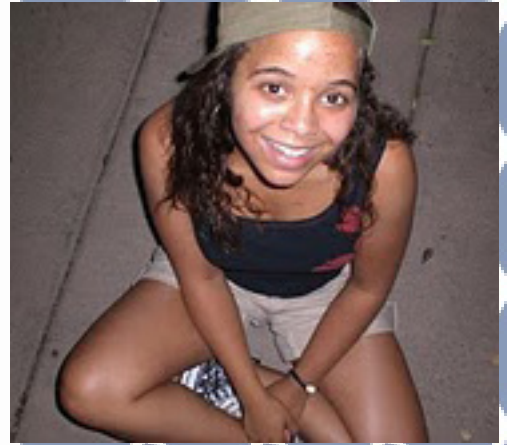
To give them credit, we foreigners are mainly concentrated in tourist areas – Harajuku, Shinjuku, Tokyo Disney, etc. While I do visit these places, I live with my host family in Michida, a more suburban area of Tokyo. I've only seen a few other foreigners where I live, and they've mostly been Caucasian. So even among foreigners, I'm somewhat out of place – I am darker skinned, have natural curly hair, and am shorter than the average Japanese woman. So much for a career as an undercover agent in Japan – put me in a line-up and I would be recognized immediately.

However, every once in awhile I still become almost bewildered by the homogeneity of the country. It makes me realize that I had taken advantage of the diversity of the United States (US) – it was almost second nature to feel unnoticed for my race, for my skin color, or for my hair. The only thing that sometimes amused people was my extremely short height. In

Japan, it is unnerving to glance around and see a huge wave of one relatively same race. Yet you can see some people struggling to rise above this uniformity through dyed hair (in any color of the rainbow – I've even seen the elderly with green hair), shirts with absurd and sometimes nonsensical English phrases, piercings, shoes, makeup...I am so desensitized to the bold fashions I've seen in Tokyo that I no longer notice something unless it is too outrageous to ignore.

But I love it, this bastardization of things from the West. Though these things have roots in the Western world, they have become uniquely Japanese. For example, the Kit Kat: while it's easy to find the original Kit Kat in Japan, it is also just as easy to find flavors ranging from dark chocolate, green tea, soy sauce, even wasabi. Everything that the Japanese incorporate into their culture becomes uniquely theirs in its own way.

But as "Westernized" as Japan has become over the years, of course there are many cultural differences, both subtle and concrete. One habit I've picked up while abroad is to frequently make comments when someone speaks. While in the States it is considered rude to do so, in Japan it is the exact opposite – people don't think that you are paying attention to the conversation unless you interject. That doesn't mean that you're supposed to constantly make



Rachael Dory is an Asian studies and Psychology major at Northwestern University.

comments during the conversation – it's just rude to stay completely silent and especially to stare at someone directly. While this mannerism shows someone you're being attentive in the States, it just makes a Japanese person uncomfortable because you're looking at her/him directly and perceived as not paying attention.

Sometimes I catch myself doing this, mistakenly saying "Excuse me" in Japanese to other foreigners when I had just heard them speaking English seconds earlier, or even staring at other foreigners with that uncomfortable gaze I am so accustomed to feeling myself. It has been an exasperating, entertaining, and sometimes exhausting six months in Japan, but I don't think it could be any different. I don't think I would want it to be any different.

As clichéd as it is, these months have each in their own way forced me to figure out myself, my national identity, and ethnic background better. Back in the US I felt unable to pinpoint exactly what it meant to be American, what it meant to be an African-American, or even what it meant to be me. I've learned that I like my own space, I like to sing aloud in public despite weird stares, I like being direct, and I like being me. Not molded-to-fit-this-environment or overly-cautious-so-as-not-to-offend-anyone me. Just me.

-Rachael Dory ☀



**B**lack, gay and Christian.

In one individual, there are many unique parts that constitute a cohesive whole. More often than not, it is hard to find spaces where all three of those parts of me, all of which I consider near and dear to my heart, are accepted, respected, appreciated and celebrated. And in my walk of life, I know I've never been alone in feeling that way.

It was for this reason that I founded In Technicolor, a social justice advocacy group here on-campus that seeks to create lasting social change and consciousness while celebrating and examining the intersectionality of identities facing societal oppression and discrimination. It's hard for students like me at Northwestern that identify with communities that often find themselves at odds with one another. For me, it's difficult to feel fully connected to the Black community if I only go to Rainbow Alliance events because I rarely see members of the Black community there – and vice versa. For me, it's like a three-way tug of war between my faith, my race and my LGBT identity.

In most spaces of the Black community, at Northwestern and at large, I have found it challenging to openly discuss being gay. More implicitly than not, discussions about my personal or family life are discouraged because people wish "not to have that lifestyle pushed in their faces."

It is not a "lifestyle choice" or a "perversion." LGBT people didn't wake up one morning and decide we wanted to be the targets of bullying, murder, no employment protections, no family rights, not to have our committed relationships legally recognized or be ostracized from our families. Many LGBT people have experienced all

of those in their lives, but I've been blessed to have the loving support of my family throughout my life, even after coming out. I only wish I could experience that harmony with the Black, Christian and LGBT communities.

In many ways, the LGBT and Black communities share highly similar experiences in their fight for civil rights. But, in no way would I go as far as some mainstream LGBT groups in saying "Gay is the new Black." I like to use the "job interview" example to drive the point home in everyday conversation. A gay White man could "tuck his tiara" during the interview and not face any bias out of the ordinary. If a gay Black man does the same, the interviewer will still see that he's Black and could have some hidden prejudice. You can "see" Black, but you can't always see someone being gay. Often times, this discussion drives a wedge between the Black and gay communities but, for those like me that identify with both, it feels like one side or the other is trying to make me choose and tell me that

I cannot be who I am. At the end of the day, I'm an individual with intersections of various identities.

The only way true healing can occur for people like me is

if the multicultural communities and the LGBT community work together more on campus. I urge the Black community to seek out more opportunities to do events collaboration and share dialogues with groups like In Technicolor and Rainbow Alliance so that we understand our common struggles against bias and discrimination in society and better unify in our love and appreciation for one another. I also encourage people to reach out to the Chaplain's Office, University Christian Ministry and/or Soulforce, an organization that seeks to change the minds of Christian leaders who are against homosexuality, if interested in learning about theologically based love and acceptance of LGBT people.

This is the way – and it is the only way – we can all be able to move closer to the day when all the colors of our lives and our identities reach a point of mutually inclusive respect, appreciation and strength.

-Derrick Clifton ●



Derrick Clifton studies Communication Studies, Political Science, and Gender Studies at Northwestern University.



# OWN vs. the black conscience

by Jordan Minor

Oprah Winfrey is one of the biggest names in the entertainment industry. A media giant with a career spanning nearly three decades, her various ventures (most notably her wildly popular tabloid talk show) have given her financial success and a level of influence previously unheard for an African-American woman. Though she has done amazing things, Oprah's latest endeavor, a television channel called the "Oprah Winfrey Network" or "OWN" does not seem to be the most promising of projects.

Winfrey's career started in radio, but she later found her true calling in television. Since it premiered in 1986, "The Oprah Winfrey Show" has become the highest-rated talk show in history and is the biggest reason why Winfrey is one of the world's only Black billionaires. In that respect, creating a new network seemed like the next logical step. The success of her magazine *O* and the popularity of her book club remain unchallenged. She has already experimented in film with varying degrees of accomplishment, including an Academy Award nomination for her role in *The Color Purple*. Even television network ownership is not a foreign concept to her. In 1998, Winfrey helped to form the Oxygen network. With this mind, the creation of OWN seemed inevitable.

Before January 1, 2011, what is now the OWN channel was the Discovery Health Channel. It remains part of the Discovery Networks and although Winfrey is chairperson of the channel, Discovery Communications still owns 50% of the network. Winfrey's multimedia company Harpo Productions holds the other 50%.

Because of this, several shows on the network's current lineup are holdovers from Discovery Health like "Deliver Me" and "Mystery Diagnosis". The channel's new content consists of shows hosted by people that regular viewers of Winfrey's

daily talk show would expect: Dr. Phil, Gayle King, Winfrey herself, and etc. Essentially, it is an episode of Winfrey's show stretched over a span of 24 hours with some movie reruns thrown in for good measure. This apparent laziness in the transition is but one of the criticisms that have arisen about the new network.

"I respect Oprah for her philanthropy and for how she's been able to pull herself up from adversity but think her show is still c\*\*p," said Charles Rollet, a freshman, former Medill student and current history major. "I'm not saying she's some kind of new age megalomaniac but she puts on the appearance that her show is more important than it is."

Trying to contact a representative via Winfrey's website proved to be a difficult but Robin Whitaker, who worked at a women's political conference in Chicago, of which Winfrey was a part during the 2008 Obama campaign does have an opinion.

"I am intrigued by Oprah. I view the network as an epitaph to Oprah's achievements throughout her career and I'm not sure if that is good or not. In other words, there is no other network that personifies the owner as much as OWN."

There is also the issue that while simply being Black and successful is important and inspirational on its own, some feel Winfrey is not using her power to give back to the community and employ more Blacks in television, a field typically dominated by White people. "OWN lacks diversity," said Jackie Love, a retiree from Deptford, New Jersey, who watched Oprah on television before but is admittedly just becoming familiar with the network. "Oprah and Gayle King are the only people of color on the network." Meanwhile, Love noted how people were "thrilled to see Dr. Oz and Suzy Orman on OWN and Dr. Phil is a part of the OWN

line-up rather frequently." One reason for the lack of color could be that the line-up is mostly reality shows, not scripted entertainment that could potentially employ more Black creative and production talent.

However, some fans still manage to find quality programming on the channel. "Ask Oprah's All Stars" features experts like Dr. Oz, Dr. Phil and Suze giving out life advice, an appreciated part of the network.

Whitaker said that although soon enough she may no longer be interested in Oprah's lifetime triumphs, the network continues to entertain and inform her and she is optimistic about its future. The network's strong opening ratings suggest that OWN will have the chance to live long enough to reach its potential. "Considering the network is new, I suspect it too will grow in heart and diversity to keep me interested," says Whitaker. "The best of OWN is yet to come, I hope." ☀



# feature BLACK &purple

Is there a Black Northwestern?

by Paul Jackson


The Arch, Sheridan Road, Norris Center, Technological Institute, Ryan Field, The Lake, the Fraternity and Sorority Quads, and even Burger King are all things Northwestern University students consider to be its landmarks. "This is Northwestern," they say. But is it really?

Is this Northwestern for all of the students who walk up and down Sheridan Road, who struggle to swing the massive doors of Tech open, or who dance on the Lakefill every Dillo Day?

Like many other Black people in and around this campus, I have experienced a very different place than the brochures depicted, and than the admissions tours showed me. I live in a very different place than the majority of students here. The Black House, For Members Only Black Student Alliance (FMO) Sunday general meetings, CaribFest, Northwestern Community Ensemble (NCE) Winter Concert, forums cosponsored by the Department of African-American Studies, and Promenade Balls hosted by any one of the members of the NPHC chapter here at NU are among the things which define Northwestern for any individual who involves him or herself with the so-called Black Community.

Why is there this difference between my list and the first one mentioned? Apparently, it's because I'm Black. But is it this simple? Could it actually be that there is a Northwestern and there is also a Black Northwestern?

This "Black Community" is defined primarily by the extracurricular programs such as African-American Students Association (AASA) and physically by the central presence of The Black House. But it's just a community of individuals who self-identify as "Black" well after it was convenient to do so for the admissions process.



The Black Liberation Flag (consisting of the top red stipe, the black middle stripe, and the bottom green stripe) flew under the Northwestern University Flag at Norris during the month of February.



"Big deal, there is a Black community", says the critic. However, for a body of students at an elite post-secondary educational institution in the post-progressive era to have a different college experience is worthy of consideration. Does the stark contrast in experience for many Black students with the experience of the majority of Caucasian, and so-assimilated, students at Northwestern mean that there is a separate Northwestern? Is the question that there is a Black Northwestern warranted?

In search of an answer to this question, I approached one of the most visible presences of a Black community at Northwestern: "that Black table" in the dining hall. Among these at the table were some familiar faces around the small Black community. I spoke with performing musician Tarik Patterson; football player, Jovi Chokor; FMO Senator, Justin Clarke, Vice President of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity Incorporated, Adam Thompson-Harvey and his fraternity brothers Brandon Worthem and Opeyemi Kosuro. All of these sophomores and juniors made this conversation very interesting and provided a lot of insight in their own right; especially because of their separate experiences both in circles inside and out of the Black community.

I began the discussion by asking a two-part question, "Is there a Black Northwestern and if there is, why is it there". One by one, they took their turns answering the question and the conversation flowed into a useful realization about who we are on the Northwestern Campus as a community and who we actually can be.

Justin Clarke, a prominent member on Northwestern's campus as FMO's Senatorial Delegate, responded first, addressing the most obvious and most troubling reality about the Black population at Northwestern. "It doesn't exist on a large scale on campus [because] there simply aren't enough of us," says Clarke.

This presents us with our first shortcoming: the numbers. This fact is undeniable. Whether there aren't enough qualified African-American applicants to Northwestern or not enough of them want to come here, the reality stands that the amount of Black students at

Northwestern does not compare to the nationwide demographic statistics. Surely, this is a macro problem impacting a micro sample here at a school with 8,000 students. But, considering the elite status of this institution in a progressive era, one expects much better by from our institution than the norm. Justin was not saying that there isn't a Black Northwestern, as he himself represents the institutionalization of the Black community in the form of FMO. His point however highlights why a structure and network of support needed to be instituted at a school like Northwestern to make sure that the minorities are not drowned out and suffocated.

Weinberg sophomore and football

**"A Black Northwestern is in place primarily "for people to voice problems or concerns to the school body and administration," says Chokor.**

player, Jovi Chokor agrees that a Black Northwestern is in place primarily "for people to voice problems or concerns to the school body and administration." This provides ongoing foundational purpose for the institutions such as AASA and FMO which are rooted in the history of hardships for Blacks on Northwestern's Campus. But in the progressive era, where diversity and acceptance are a bare minimum in the academic arena, why is there still a divide? There is a divide, not only because of the statistical disparity between the majority and the minority, but because regardless of how safe the Northwestern bubble makes us feel from day-to-day, we live in America. In America, in Illinois, in Evanston where there is Black and there is White, because we (as a nation) chose for it to be that way and we still choose for it to be that way. We live in a nation comprised of cultures, good, bad, and neutral

depending on beliefs.

"It's what you expect. We as Black people attempt to maintain our culture. It's not negative or positive. I know who I am and where I came from," says Weinberg sophomore and member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated, Brandon Worthem. "But I don't necessarily need a Black community for that. You'll get out of it what you put in." This is the nature of cultural communities everywhere; they just are. It isn't a matter of good or bad. Culture just is and it should come as no surprise that groups align according to culture.

But when is this negative? Is there a segregation going on of which we are hardly aware? Are we marginalizing ourselves?

Opeyemi Kosuro, more commonly known as Ope, volunteered his opinion as someone who doesn't necessarily identify with the Black community. When I asked him how he felt about the Black community he responded, "How do I feel about the Black community? I mean.... they do what they do."

His fraternity brother Adam Thompson-Harvey provided a further explanation of Kosuro's expression of disenfranchisement. "He feels that as a Black greek, I think a Black Northwestern is important, but some people take a 'Black' experience too seriously," Thompson-Harvey says. "Sometimes there can be feeling of a negative exclusivity. A few work for inclusivity, but not enough of us."

This exclusivity which Thompson-Harvey brought up does exist in the Black community, but it could also be said that it exists perhaps in all cultural groups as types of people identify with one unifying classification essentially highlight that which sets them apart. This exclusivity sometimes works against the group. After all, Black Northwestern exists in a state of invisibility to so many outside of it on this campus. But the reality is that the Black House, AASA, and FMO maintain an undeniable visibility on campus. For many, the Black House is "our house in the middle of the street", literally. The Black House is large and arresting with an open door during the day, and is in fact, not Black (in color) at all. Why wouldn't someone feel welcomed?

Is it misconceptions? Many overshadow the Black community at Northwestern, especially about said exclusivity and what actually embodies the Black community and the groups it consists of. "But it's For Members Only... It's for Black people... I wouldn't be welcomed." This indicates the failure of majority students all around to ask the very simple questions, like: What's FMO all about? What does that name mean? Where does it come from? Asking these simple questions would reveal that the name For Members Only comes from the sign that used to be on the Evanston Golf Club which prohibited Black entry and was taken after the 1969 Bursars Takeover and put over the door of the now Black House in triumph. Such knowledge of the basic foundations of Black cultural and social organizations on campus, rooted in the protest struggle on our own campus, sheds valuable light on their ongoing purposes and institutions.

In fact, any sentiment of exclusivity has not inhibited FMO executive board members such as Zoe Goodman and Sam Lozoff from not only participating, but heading up operations in The Black Student alliance. Are Zoe and Sam Black? No. Do they care about issues that don't just affect them? Yes. Thus proving that the Black House is not invisible, but that the majority on this campus is

actually blind to the concerns of a non-majority group. Which is why "a Black Northwestern must exist: to spread awareness about and excel while living out a culture which we call our own," says Clarke.

Prominent professor in the African-American Studies Department, Richard Iton, was able to clear up a lot of the misconception. He began by simply explaining he doesn't teach some "Black curriculum", rather his focus as an academic is on "crucial race" and racism in America. He very strictly distinguishes the Department of African-American Studies from some sort of social or cultural entity. "AfAm is an academic department," says Iton. "The Department of African-American Studies serves all students." He stressed the point that the Department of AfAm Studies covers a broad range of academic topics as a discipline including political theory, sociology, and history, among many others.

And still, in spite of the very tense and serious beginnings of a Black Northwestern on this campus, there is a very vibrant, positive, lively, and even casual expression of the Black community on campus. "Any community should be a place where I can be myself and be understood. I can have certain conversations that don't garner judgment," says Tarik Patterson, a known musician around campus speaking to the casual element

of the Black community. "These people are from the same America I'm from, Black or White. You don't even have to have shared experiences, just be able to relate and be understanding."

Definitively, a community is a body of people with shared interests. This Black community is that body of people who are interested in the minority issues on Northwestern's campus. In institutions and at dining hall tables, the Black Northwestern and the Black community, exist together, interrelated and interdependent.

You want to know where the Black community is? Now that you know that it exists and what it is, you should know it is all around. If you didn't know that it was or where it was, then you probably aren't being very observant. But maybe you're the exception? I'll cut you slack and say that if you've been looking and haven't seen it, then maybe we in the Black community need to be louder with our actions as opposed to make our presence known. Because, born of struggle the Black community has been prone to struggle and we continue to struggle just to survive. Perhaps, I will admit that we need to do less surviving and more thriving, but how nice it would be for all of Northwestern to help make that so. ☀



The crowd at FMO's Harambee Celebration. An event that ushers in Black History month and its events.

# a woman's worth

An introspective look at dating in Northwestern's Black community  
by Kamau Massey

An introspective look at dating in Northwestern's Black community

My name is Kamau Massey. If you don't know me, I am one of the eleven non-athlete Black males expected to graduate from Northwestern University in 2012. When it comes to dating and relationships I truly believe that compatibility between partners is the most important element. I pass no judgment on those who find mates outside of their own race, social status, religion, etc. In fact, I commend those who are able to look past the social restrictions set upon us and love someone for the person that they are. That being said, we all have our personal preferences.

As a child I was taught that Black is beautiful. In my opinion, there is nothing more beautiful, more empowering, more precious, or more necessary than a union between a Black man and a Black woman. It's a rare and impressive occasion in today's society when a Black man transcends the social challenges that America's hegemonic institutions exert on him, without the support of a strong Black woman.

However, that doesn't mean that there can't be a supportive woman of any race at a man's side. I don't discredit the value that a partnership with any special woman can bring to a man's life; I only seek to emphasize the importance of understanding between partners. Black women are more likely to be mentally in sync with the unique and incomparable struggle of the Black man, and therefore, more compatible with him as a partner. That is why I look for Black women first when

seeking a mate. While I know that many of my peers share my opinions regarding dating, the lack of healthy relationships in our community is painstakingly obvious. So why is it that Black people don't date at Northwestern?

Although the answer to the question is complex, it can be simply conceptualized in this



way. The expectations that women have of men and vice versa in this community are unrealistic and destructive. It always boggles my mind when I hear somebody say "the n\*\*\*as here aint shit". In reality, there couldn't be a higher achieving group of Black men that communicate with women in a respectful manner. As men in college, we are inclined to

experiment sexually, just as women in college should. Sexual encounters are common place for college students around the country but are often scrutinized when they take place in this small community. Honestly, I can count on one hand the number of players, dogs, or pimps I have met at Northwestern. Although it takes outside real-world experience to realize it, these men are the top of their class. If you can find one that you vibe with, don't cheat yourself from actually getting to know him because of your fabricated preconceptions based off of petty talk you hear or because he doesn't live up to a Tyler Perry image of what a noble Black man should be. That being said, it goes both ways.

Often times, men on campus have standards of who can be their "wifey" that are fairly unattainable. We want a girl that who's a freak but not a ho, who can cook us meals, help us with our homework, and chill with our friends. We too develop preconceptions of women based on what they wear, and who they choose to leave with. When these preconceptions are created, they unconsciously lead to expectations that influence the way in which we interact with each other. In a sense, perceptions create reality.

Being in such a small community it's impossible not to hear gossip about one another. Therefore, it's going to take a conscious effort on all of our parts to step outside the bullsh\*t and actually get to know each other. Once we do that, it'll be clear that for some of us, there's a match made in heaven. For everyone else, there's Match.com. ☼



# NU's Black Culture Revisited and Redefined

BlackBoard is a proud satellite of FMO, printed once a quarter during the regular academic year. All rights reserved. Cover and content may not be reproduced in whole or part without prior or written permission of BlackBoard Magazine. Contributed articles reflect the writers' opinions and not necessarily those of BlackBoard Magazine. This is an SAF funded publication. Please direct all comments and questions regarding the magazine to [BrajnaDawkins2012@u.northwestern.edu](mailto:BrajnaDawkins2012@u.northwestern.edu).

## 21 questions

1. How many people actually went skating at Norris?
2. But why is it still called the Brothel Law?
3. If LeBron took his talents to South Beach why can't they win?
4. How great was 6 Feet Under?
5. Four snow days in 160 years or Thundersnow which sounds more ridiculous?
6. Who went to go to the Lauren Hill concert and why didn't you take us?
7. Speaking of music, has anyone listened to Chet Haze's mixtape yet?
8. Will you ever?
9. But wasn't it tight that Tom and Rita were at ODB though?
10. And wasn't Paul was the best part of the whole show?
11. Egypt, Lybia, Japan...were the Mayans right?
12. Was this year the first time FMO had a team in DM?
13. Does this mean we are bringing the Black House party back?
14. How about Kirk Franklin again next year okay?
15. Why are we even still watching The Game?
16. What was ASG's excuse for trying to take away all of those senators again?
17. Is anyone really worth \$170?
18. Why were NU students the only ones not appalled by the "f\*cksaw incident"?
19. Are we the only ones that still really miss Ms. Jackie?
20. Does anyone else still avoid the eastside of plex?
21. So why haven't we been invited to be an affiliate of the Daily yet?



INVITES YOU AND A GUEST TO A SPECIAL ADVANCE SCREENING OF

THE TAYLORS ARE  
**DOWNTOWN**

THE WATSONS ARE  
**UPTOWN**

ANGELA BASSETT   PAULA PATTON   LAZ ALONSO   LORETTA DEVINE   AND MIKE EPPS

# JUMPING THE BROOM

SOMETIMES THE ONLY WAY TO GET PAST FAMILY DRAMA...  
IS TO JUMP RIGHT OVER IT.

TRISTAR PICTURES PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH STAGE 6 FILMS A T.D. JAKES/OUR STORIES FILMS PRODUCTION 'JUMPING THE BROOM'

MEAGAN GOOD TASHA SMITH JULIE BOWEN ROMEO MILLER DERAY DAVIS VALARIE PETTIFORD MUSIC BY EDWARD SHEARMUR

PRODUCED BY T.D. JAKES TRACEY E. EDMONDS CURTIS WALLACE ELIZABETH HUNTER GLENDON PALMER STORY BY ELIZABETH HUNTER

SCREENPLAY BY ELIZABETH HUNTER AND ARLENE GIBBS DIRECTED BY SALIM AKIL

THIS FILM IS NOT YET RATED.  
FOR FUTURE INFO GO TO FILM.RATINGS.COM

JumpingTheBroom-Movie.com

SONY make.believe

STAGE 6

TRISTAR PICTURES

**IN THEATERS MAY 6**

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WEDDING FILM AND WHY?

EMAIL YOUR ANSWER, ALONG WITH YOUR FULL NAME, AGE AND ADDRESS TO  
[JUMPINGTHEBROOMCHICAGO@GMAIL.COM](mailto:JUMPINGTHEBROOMCHICAGO@GMAIL.COM)  
FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A PASS FOR TWO TO AN ADVANCE SCREENING.  
PLEASE PUT BLACK BOARD IN THE SUBJECT LINE.

One entry per person. Duplicate entries will be disqualified. Winners will be drawn at random and notified by mail. Please arrive early as seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis and limited by theater capacity.

**IN THEATERS MAY 6**