UMES celebrated its 123rd birthday recently with a Founder’s Day convocation that marked the graduation of fifteen students from the University’s physical therapy doctoral program and featured a keynote address from a celebrated alumnus.

In her remarks at the event, President Thelma Thompson described her birthday message as “one of gratitude.” While President Thompson was grateful for the proud history of the institution and its continued accomplishments, the featured speaker was more specific in his gratitude. Thomas LaVeist, who earned his bachelor’s degree in sociology at UMES in 1984, thanked members of the English faculty by name for the role they played in his success.

Dr. LaVeist is a world renowned professor in health policy and director of the Hopkins Center for Health Disparities. Despite his advanced degrees and his noteworthy success in the field of medical sociology, Dr. LaVeist said he was unusually nervous about speaking at his alma mater. He explained to the assembly that he had a dream that his public speaking instructor, English faculty member Della Dameron-Johnson, was in the audience with a red pen. Dr. Dameron-Johnson was in the audience—not to grade her former student but to enjoy his success. She joked with him following the event that he still needed to work on his eye contact.

Dr. Dameron-Johnson was not the only English faculty member Dr. LaVeist singled out for praise during his remarks. He also credited the late Mary Fair Burks, a longtime member of the English faculty, for teaching him how important it was to be able to communicate through writing.

“I learned that I had the ability to achieve,” he said. “We remain faithful that education can change lives.”

Senior English major Jessica Chapman was featured in a recent article in the Salisbury area’s local newspaper, The Daily Times. Ms. Chapman was one of six students, from UMES and nearby Salisbury University, interviewed about her unique learning experience during the previous summer. She earned academic credit through the UMES English department’s internship program while she taught English at a day-camp for middle school students in Hong Kong.

Ms. Chapman told reporter Candice Evans that while her students were generally very respectful, if they became unruly she would conduct her lesson in Spanish. "They could see how it feels when they speak in languages that I don't understand,” she said.

The Howard County, Maryland native has decided to pursue a master’s degree in education. "I found out that I really enjoy teaching," she said.
ALL MUSIC ALL THE TIME

Recent Title
III funded upgrades have dramatically increased the
on-air schedule of HawkRadio, the English department’s student-managed
Internet radio station.

Automation software now permits the station to operate twenty-four hours a day,
seven days a week, even when live disc jockeys are unavailable. The
improvements also permit listeners to make music requests online which will
automatically enter the pre-programmed playlist.

“There isn’t another radio station on the Internet that is commercial-free and
allows users to make automatic online requests,” said Eric Hammond, the
department staff member responsible for the technical upgrades at the station.

REHEARSALS UNDERWAY

The Drama Society’s presentation of August Wilson’s Fences will be performed
October 29-31 in the Ella Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center.

Cast and crew are busy rehearsing under the direction of English faculty member
Della Dameron-Johnson. She is collaborating this year with three student assistant directors: William Wallace, Karena Jackson, and Edward Miles.

English majors serve as crew chiefs for film, costumes, and make-up.

The final dress rehearsal will be held on October 28 and is free to UMES students. Tickets for the play will be sold at the door. General admission is $5; senior citizen admission is $3; tickets for UMES students with I.D. are $2. All performances will begin at 7:30 p.m.

ADVISING 101 WORKSHOP

The Department of English and Modern Languages will hold a workshop on best practices in student advisement on Thursday, October 8, at 11 a.m. The discussion will be led by faculty member Bonni Miller who has written a department handbook on advising and who conducts senior credit audits for English majors.

“Giving timely and accurate academic advice is one of our most important responsibilities as faculty members,” she said.

Department chair Betty Taylor Thompson asked Ms. Miller to schedule the discussion to be sure all faculty members are up to date on general education and English specific course requirements.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Heather Molnar (English Grad ’08) has won a $1,000 scholarship to help her complete her master’s degree at Johns Hopkins University.

Ms. Molnar and Mr. Teffreau

Ms. Molnar and Mr. Teffreau

Photo provided by Karena Dixon

The scholarship is named for a politically active Eastern Shore resident and will be awarded to local students who plan to pursue a career in public service or who have demonstrated a history of community service involvement.
Congratulations are in order for two of the department’s newest graduates. I-Quasia Dorsey and Candace Johnson, who graduated with English non-teaching degrees in May, have both secured employment, despite the difficult economic climate.

Ms. Dorsey is employed in the human resource department of Jos. A. Banks Clothiers’ corporate offices in Hampstead, Maryland. Ms. Johnson is working in enrollment management at the University of Maryland University College.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE?

“A dream come true”—that’s how public speaking instructor Will Rose described watching his daughter perform in the Rutgers Theater Company’s recent production of Hamlet.

Portia Lee Rose is a senior at Rutgers and one of fourteen students from the school who spent a year studying at Shakespeare’s Globe in London. The production was originally performed there, then staged again on the Rutgers campus last month.

“To see my daughter deliver Shakespeare’s lines the way they should be, it made me melt in my seat,” Mr. Rose said. Mr. Rose has performed on stage, in film, and on television. Ms. Rose’s mother is also an accomplished actress.

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TALENT SHOWCASED

English major Cherish McMillan was one of the featured performers at a recent “Open Mic” night sponsored by the junior class.

Ms. McMillan performed a praise dance to BeBe Winans’ Love and Freedom. Ms. McMillan described her choreography as “full of energy” and her presentation as “very dramatic.”

Ms. McMillan, a native of Wilmington, Delaware, volunteers as a dance instructor for a local church and has danced during performances of the UMES drama society and the University’s concert choir. She is also a member of the University’s English honor society, part of the management team of the department’s student-run Internet radio station, and a tutor in the campus writing center.

MEET THE AUTHOR

James McBride, the author of Song Yet Sung, will discuss his book Wednesday, October 28, at 2:30 p.m. in the Student Services Center theater.

The book, the story of runaway slaves and freed blacks set on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, is the 2009 One Maryland One Book selection.

One Maryland One Book, a program created by the Maryland Humanities Council, encourages a statewide dialogue through the shared experience of reading the same book.

FLEDGLING HAWK

The UMES Writing Center, administered by the Department of English and Modern Languages, is open for the semester.

The interim director of the center, Dean Cooledge, encourages students to seek assistance when they begin to work on an assignment. “We can help at any stage of the writing process, but we encourage students to come early...to avoid costly mistakes later,” Dr. Cooledge said.

The center is located in Room 1107 in Wilson Hall. It is staffed with student tutors and faculty volunteers Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Returning student tutors include Brittany Anderson and Nicholas Washington; the new members of the student tutoring team are Chanda Brown-Wilson, Natalie Hull, Naemah Kitchens, Quanika Lewis, Nadia Marston, and Cherish McMillan.

Meet Addison Joshua Julien, son of Deborah Meadows-Julien (English Grad ’05) and her husband, Jessie. Addison arrived on May 25, 2009.

Welcome to the English department’s extended family Addison!