EDITORIAL: Black History Month
Shannon Wood

From the bottom of the slave ships, where 15 million Africans were transported to America, to standing in line chained to a brother or sister from the motherland. From working long hours on the plantation to being sold and auctioned off on that same plantation. From gathering around the biggest trees to provide shade from the sun to viewing a loved one hanging from that same tree because of the philosophies of Willie Lynch. This is a small part of history. Why not celebrate me?

The history of Black History Month can be traced back to 1926 when Carter G. Woodson started Negro History Week. Woodson was disturbed growing up to see how books ignored the success and accomplishments of African Americans. He made it his priority to write in the nation’s history the contributions of African Americans. He chose the second week in February initially (when it was Negro History Week) because of Frederick Douglass’s and Abraham Lincoln’s birthdays. Beyond Douglass’s and Lincoln’s birthdays there were many other things to be celebrated such as W.E.B. DuBois’s birthday, passing of the 15th Amendment, Hiram Revels taking office and the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

I feel that Black History Month is very important although not all people of my generation see its significance. Many people get riled up during February about the history of African Americans but I have a problem with that. We are only subjected to a month (February) when the “world” recognizes us. But why should we accept that? African Americans have to get to the point where we know our history and accept it for what it is. Not only do we have to understand where we came from but we also need to show in our everyday lives its significance to us. We cannot sit around waiting on people of other races and ethnicities to acknowledge us as a people but we must be proud of our heritage and celebrate ourselves. I can remember being in elementary school and having special programs and presentations to celebrate Black History Month but today this is lacking and more and more children are oblivious of what the celebration is all about.

So … How much do you know about Black History?
Below is a sample of questions asked during this year’s Black History Bowl, we challenge you to see how well you would have answered these questions.

1. What does the acronym S.C.L.C. stand for?
2. Who was the first African American woman to fly in space?
3. In what state was Douglas Wilder elected the first black governor since Reconstruction?
4. What name was given to the escape system used by slaves to escape to the North?
5. The discovery of gold and what other mineral led to the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899?
6. What was the first black owned company traded on the New York Stock Exchange?
7. Who founded the National Council of Negro Women in 1935?
8. Were slaves taken from the lower, upper or middle classes of African society?
9. Vonetta Flowers was the first African American athlete to do what?
10. What well known educator started the Westside Preparatory School in Chicago?

Answers on page 3
The 4th Annual Black History Bowl was a success in its efforts to bring together a diverse representation of the student body to not only compete but to share and increase their knowledge on the contributions and legacy of African Americans throughout history.

This year’s questions incorporated a new wave of current events questions. Competitors formed 8 teams which represented all 3 Greek Life Councils, roommates, and a variety of social and civic campus organizations. First place winners were “TEKE” (Tau Kappa Epsilon Fraternity members: Timothy Jackson, Andrew Ciserano, Matthew Torres, and Nick Thompson) who won a team prize of $100. Second place winners were last year’s champions “420” (Eric Russell, Alexandria Speaks, Lane Boone, Horace Holloway) who won a team certificate for 2 pizzas.

Stacie L. Williams, Director of Intercultural Programs

Black History Fun Facts!

Jumping the Broom

February 14th is a day filled with thoughts of love and romance. This tradition is generally given credit as having its origin in the customs of West Africa. During slavery, slaves were not allowed to marry legally; therefore, in a desire to symbolize the significance of a union between an enslaved couple, they literally “jumped the broom”. Today, various meanings for the broom and the ceremony of jumping over the broom are recognized. Most commonly, it is said that the ceremony symbolizes the brooms sweeping away of the old life of being single and welcomes in a couple’s new life and beginning together, the leaping over the broom is said to represent taking a “leap of faith” into the future together, and the actual broom (which may have been sticks placed on the ground in early African ceremonies) represented the couple’s new home.

Songs and Sight

As enslaved Africans sought freedom from the South they often shared messages of escape in plain view and in hearing distance of their captors. Songs such as “Wade in the Water”, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” and “Follow the Drinking Gourd” were song to share information about when an escape would be initiated and how to proceed. Symbols which were often overlooked were quilt designs which could be hung out on fence posts in the appearance of simply airing out linens. Certain quilt designs which are still used today are the “Monkey Wrench” and “Bear Paw.” These symbols would inform slaves of what to pack and what might be encountered during their journey.
Most of us know Samuel L. Jackson as an actor from movies such as: Pulp Fiction, Deep Blue Sea, Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace, and Snakes on a Plane. What you might not know about Sam Jackson is his past with the black power and civil rights movements.

After the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackson attended the funeral in Atlanta as one of the ushers. Jackson then flew to Memphis to join an equal rights protest march. In a Parade interview Jackson revealed:

"I was angry about the assassination, but I wasn’t shocked by it. I knew that change was going to take something different — not sit-ins, not peaceful coexistence.”

He attended the historically black Morehouse College in Atlanta and became increasingly involved in the black-power movement. In 1969, during his junior year of college, Jackson and several other students held members of the Morehouse College board of trustees (including a nearby Martin Luther King, Sr.) hostage on the campus. The group was protesting the absence of blacks on the board of trustees and a black studies course. The college eventually agreed to change its policy, but Jackson was charged with and eventually convicted of unlawful confinement, a second-degree felony. Jackson was then suspended for two years for his criminal record and his actions.

While he was expelled, Jackson was employed as a social worker in Los Angeles. Jackson decided to return to Atlanta, where he met with Stokely Carmichael, H. Rap Brown, and others active in the Black Power movement. However, before Jackson could become involved with any significant armed confrontation, his mother sent him to Los Angeles after the FBI told her that he would die within a year if he remained with the Black Power movement. That same year, Jackson watched a performance by the Negro Ensemble Company and gained a new inspiration - acting. Jackson returned to Morehouse to pursue the study of acting and received his Bachelor of Arts in Drama in 1972.

Sources:
http://www.answers.com/topic/samuel-l-jackson

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**Black History Month Quiz Answers!**

1. Southern Christian Leadership Conference
2. Mae C. Jamison
3. Virginia
4. Underground railroad
5. Diamonds
6. BET (Black Entertainment Television)
7. Mary McLeod Bethune
8. All classes
9. Win a gold medal in the Winter Olympics
10. Marva Collins
MARCH IS WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH!!
The Ladies of African American History

As we approach Women’s History month (March), it is a wonderful time to recognize a few of the women who have contributed to and continue to contribute to African American history. **Sojourner Truth** (1797-1883) – Abolitionist and Women’s Rights speaker and advocate, famous for the statement “Ain’t I a Woman” as she brought attention to the fact that she as a former slave was as much a woman as the women of European decent and desired rights as well. **Shirley Chisholm** (1924 – 2005) – First African American woman to sit in the US House of Representatives and the first woman and first African American to campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. **Rosa Parks** (1913– 2005) - Civil Rights Activist, known as Mother of the Civil Rights Movement, her refusal to give up her seat on December 1, 1955 on a segregated bus in Montgomery, AL helped make the Montgomery Bus Boycott successful. **First Lady Michelle Obama** (1964- ) First African American First Lady of the United States of America. A graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School, she is a lawyer by profession and previously served as the Associate Dean of Student Services at the University of Chicago.

UPCOMING WOMEN’S HISTORY AND ICP EVENTS

March 24 @ 7:00 pm
SAC Mezzanine
Edgewood: Panel Perspectives from the cast and director of Edgewood: Stage of Southern History
Come and hear from those who were a part of the making of Edgewood. What has this experience meant to them and how has it shaped there view of history?

March 30 @ 12:15pm
H&SS 116
Intercultural Roundtable: Dr. Michele Harmon, Global Warming

March 30 @ 7 pm
Etheredge Center Main Theatre
“Edgewood: Stage of Southern History” Docudrama about the Pickens-Salley House

ALL LISTED EVENTS ARE FREE.

Cherokee Recording Artist: Michael Jacobs Event

A campus audience of approximately fifty students, faculty, staff and community members attended the February 24th performance of Michael Jacobs. Jacobs blended cultural knowledge from his Cherokee Native American background and personal views on human issues and love to share his music and messages of peace, justice, suffering, and the environment with the USCA community.