For two weeks in June, four University of Dayton students traveled to the South to learn more about their heritage and to tutor a group of elementary school students. They thought they would learn more about African-American history. They were surprised to find how much they learned about themselves and each other.

"I knew everybody going into the trip," said Yusef Murphy, a sophomore pre-med major. "But when I came back I was friends with all of them."

"In the end it all brought us closer together," agreed Rashad Young. "They're my extended family at UD."

This extended family includes Murphy, Young, senior Genaia Hill, first-year student Candace Smith and Tim Spraggins, director of UD's office of African-American student services. The students and Spraggins visited Birmingham, Ala., where they tutored elementary school students, visited civil rights museums and memorials and listened to civil rights participants tell their stories. In Atlanta they visited the King Center.

"They came to understand service in a new context and experience cultural enrichment," said Spraggins. "They talked with people who marched with Dr. King. Their whole sense of history evolved. That whole sense of what happened and how it impacted them took on a new meaning."

They gained a better understanding of community service from tutoring students at the elementary summer school.

"When you leave you know those kids really needed you," Murphy said. "When I left this trip, those kids really looked up to me, and it was a mutual thing. They gave me something as well."

Sister Mary DePorres and William Kendall, who coordinated the tutoring program with Spraggins at Holy Family Elementary School in Birmingham, agreed the experience was positive for everyone involved.

"I saw the students learn to create good relationships, which is very important, especially for African-American students, to have that positive personal support," said Kendall, assistant principal at Holy Family. "The UD students had the image we wanted to project to the children. There was a lot of modeling going on."

When UD students left the school it was difficult for everyone involved, with a lot of crying and exchanging of addresses. Some students have sent letters and tapes of them reading back to Dayton.

"It was probably one of the best experiences I could have had going into college and making that transition," said Smith, who also is the recipient of this year's W.S. McIntosh Memorial Leadership Award, named for the Dayton community leader who lost his life while trying to help another human being. The Alabama experience "offered so much, and I learned about myself and found out things that will help me in entering college."

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Homecoming Events Sept. 29-Oct. 1

Friday: 7-9 p.m. African American Student Services Welcome Back Reception, Kennedy Union Torch Lounge.

9 p.m. - closing Black Alumni party and mixer, Kennedy Union Pub.

Saturday: 10 a.m. Tailgate, UD Arena parking lot.

9 p.m. - 2 a.m. Party, location TBA

Sunday: Celebration and Farewell Brunch, Radisson North, time TBA.

Ask about purchasing VIP passes good for all the weekend's events.

Contact: Kathleen Henderson at (513) 229-3634 or Bernard McClung at (513) 222-9907 x 531.
From a low coil at the end of the Trotwood wood, Northwest Track Club youth summer track members begin striding along the burnt red terrain, legs and arms pumping fiercely, mouths puffing, hands clenched.

Among them are Maria Moss and Kaamilya Davis, both recent graduates of Springfield North High School and Ohio high school state champions. Both have their sights now on bigger goals—competing at the next level, sprinting against the best in the college championships or maybe even in the Olympics or World Games.

Moss and Davis are first-year recruits signed with UD women's track coach Harold "Lefty" Martin, noted for his success with the Northwest Track Club.

Martin, with a reputation for making the good the best and the better, has coached 46 individual national youth champions, seven of them winning NCAA Division I individual titles, including his daughter, national standout hurdler LaVonna Martin. He's been the national chair for Youth Track and officiates at many major meets around the country.

"If there's something happening in the track world, I've done it," Martin says of his decades of promoting youth track.

Although born and raised in Alabama, Ada Long-Croom, an associate professor at Dickinson School of Law, said it feels like she will be coming home this summer when she spends a year as a visiting professor in the UD School of Law. Long-Croom graduated from Wright State University, spent three years at UD to earn her law degree in 1985 and received her pilot's license in Brookville.

"I'm looking forward to going back to Dayton," she said. "I'm thankful for the opportunity to get back here. It should be interesting as well as fun."

On this return trip, Long-Croom will teach contracts and sales in the fall and contracts and commercial drafting in the spring, legal interests that she wasn't able to fully pursue while serving for more than four years on active duty with the United States Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps. As a criminal trial attorney in the Navy, she tried more than 125 cases. In the Marine Corps case at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, that was the basis for the movie A Few Good Men, she represented a defendant.

Her courtroom experience has shown her the importance of being active in cases that put legal theory into practice.

"I like to see young people succeed, not just in track, but also in life."

A 100, 200 and high jump record-holder himself at Central State University, Martin has brought his coaching and recruiting talent to UD to help the University construct its first women's track program.

Martin was an obvious choice as coach because of his coaching and recruiting reputation, says Elaine Driedame, senior associate director for athletics at UD.

"I'm looking forward to building from scratch, to construct something without having a prior format or something concrete to live up to," Martin says.

Martin plans to tap the local market as well for many of his recruits.

"If we can get some of these kids to come to UD, other runners who idolize them will want to come too, especially since getting local talent means getting local coverage."

But Martin says that although he'll be concentrating on recruiting sprinters and hurdlers, the University will still enjoy continued success in cross-country.

"Dayton has always had good distance runners," Martin says. "We've got several upperclassmen who'll step right into that role and take off."

The women's track season will kick off with a meet at Ohio State University in January. After that, Martin is looking forward to UD's Atlantic 10 affiliation. "The A-10 has been dominated in track for several years by West Virginia," Martin says. "Now that they've left the conference, it's pretty much wide open."

And that's an inviting challenge for Martin's fledgling program.

"I'm interested in areas where law and society intersect," Long-Croom said. "Terrible social issues are confronting us, and the legal system isn't working as effectively with various social agencies to resolve problems—as opposed just reacting to them—to the extent that it could."

Long-Croom was directly affected by such an intersection of law and society when the courts mandated desegregation in the 60s. Several families in her town of Slocomb, Ala., wanted to send their children to the white school but were afraid of losing their jobs and homes. Long-Croom was the only one to attend because her father was a self-employed farmer.

Her own experiences have given her a strong interest in researching racial divisions in the United States to try to better understand why they exist.

"I think that a black person in this country, probably more so than any other racial or ethnic group, is constantly battered by racism," she said. "I don't know if you can say racism is better or worse but it has gotten different in a lot of ways."
ENGINEERING STUDENT MAKES TIME FOR MUSIC

Eric Bryant has done something that 95 percent of UD students don’t do — commute to campus every day for class. But the drive from Trotwood hasn't taken the drive out of Bryant, who will be president of UD's chapter of the National Society for Black Engineers in addition to playing trumpet in the Pride of Dayton Marching Band and jazz ensembles.

"It's just a matter of trying to stay focused on my studies and have some fun. And try to keep in contact on campus so I know about things and something doesn’t come as a surprise."

The junior chemical engineering major already has ideas for NSBE when he takes the helm in December including increasing membership and presenting workshops to bring speakers to campus in a setting where members can ask questions. Bryant also is a member of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and has a full-tuition scholarship.

This fall Bryant also will gain more engineering experience when he co-ops with Delphi Chassis Systems in Dayton. While he likes engineering, he hasn’t ruled out possible careers in medicine or law.

When not studying, Bryant makes time for his music, which is often the highlight of his busy days.

"As tedious as my school schedule is, it’s really enjoyable to try to play," Bryant said. "That’s the part of my day that I enjoy the most."

Sean Murray
USA TODAY SCHOLAR TO ATTEND UD

Sometimes the best plans fall through and better, unexpected opportunities come along. Sean Murray, a junior mechanical engineering major, knows how to go and grow with the flow.

Before moving to Dayton, a desire to fly helicopters took Murray to the Air Force, but motion sickness kept him out of the cockpit. So he found another way to keep his interest in flight.

"I decided if I couldn’t fly, then I’d fix them," Murray said. "And being a mechanic got me interested in engineering."

The Buffalo native started engineering studies in New York until his wife, Grace Wingfield-Murray, was transferred to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Murray knew nothing about Dayton except that it had turned up on a list of possible engineering schools.

He attended Sinclair Community College’s engineering program to save money for two years with the goal of transferring to UD.

At Sinclair, another opportunity came along, but not one that Murray with his busy schedule readily accepted. The first two times school officials at Sinclair asked him to apply for the All-USA Two-Year College Academic Team sponsored by USA Today, he said no.

The reason? He had to write an essay.

"I didn’t like English," Murray said. "So I said no. Finally they convinced me. They said it would look good for me and that I had the qualifications."

Murray’s essay on his work tutoring students at Sinclair, his grades, academic awards, leadership and community service earned him the second team award.

The experience has been good for Murray. He currently interns with DP&L, and General Motors offered him an internship after seeing his name on the list of honorees. But Murray’s main reason for working so hard isn’t for his own success.

"I want to be a role model for other children who grew up in inner-city neighborhoods," he said. "If they see me succeed, they can say, 'If Sean did it, then there’s a chance for me to do the same.'"
Physicians put their dreams into practice

Crystal Amos '84

It's no surprise Crystal Amos supports planning ahead — she's planned on being a doctor since the seventh grade.

Last year all that planning paid off. After a three-year family practice residency at Good Samaritan Hospital, Dayton, she and Angela Long-Prentice, also an '84 UD alumnus, joined Samaritan Family Care and opened a Dayton office. "It's been a challenging year," says the Wright State Medical School graduate. "But it's been well worth the wait."

A family care specialist, Amos says building rapport with her patients and seeing them on a regular basis not only makes her job more enjoyable, but also serves to prevent future patient health problems.

Throughout her career, she says race has never been a negative factor for her. "There are so few minority physicians that everyone wants you to succeed and make it," she says.

And she believes female doctors can only help the profession. "I think female doctors have brought a more sensitive side to medicine both professionally and from a physician-lifestyle perspective."

Brian Coleman '81

Although he says that becoming an orthopedic surgeon was simply the best way to maximize his "organic brain matter," there is nothing technical about Brian Coleman's reason for choosing his vocation. "I really have a burning desire to make things better," says the 1981 graduate.

Coleman specializes in foot and ankle surgery. He finds it gratifying to see the results of his work, especially when treating people hurt in serious accidents. "You can see the results in a short period of time," says the graduate of Indiana University Medical School.

Coleman and his wife live in Chicago. Among his patients are professional baseball and basketball players.

Before his current positions in private practice with Orthopedic Centers in Northwest Indiana and as director of rehabilitation at Northwest Family Hospital in Gary, Ind., Coleman did a six-year residency at Baylor College of Medicine, Houston. He did a one-year foot and ankle fellowship at Howard University Hospital, in Washington, D.C. — the first black person in the history of the college and one of fewer than 15 minorities in the world to do a fellowship.