Students elect Woodard

Focusing on multiculturalism and promising to bring diversity training to both students and faculty, Chris Woodard defeated two opposing tickets on his way to winning the 1997-98 Student Government Association presidential election.

Woodard, who ran on the platform “students first,” promises that his administration will be more involved with campus organizations in attaining collective goals.

While Woodard, only the second black president in the history of SGA, hopes that he will not be viewed differently because of his race, he knows that he will be expected to be more knowledgeable and active on issues of diversity.

“Diversity and multiculturalism are issues that I will address, not just because I am a minority student and now a minority president of SGA, but because we are preparing for the future,” Woodard said. “These are things that we will be dealing with in the real world. “The first step in doing this is putting it all on the table for students to discuss. We must stop talking among separate groups. Blacks talking amongst blacks will do us no good. We must open the lines of communication.”

Woodard, who earned a 97-vote victory, is the first black president of SGA since James Wilkerson ’53 held the post more than 40 years ago.

Raven Moore, president of SGA for the 1996-97 term, believed that Woodard’s ability to relate rather than empathize with the African American community will strengthen his role. Moore and her vice president, Meghan Geiger, faced similar reactions when they were elected as the first female tandem in office.

“As much as people like to say they don’t see colors, they do,” she said. “He is a black president in SGA. He has an entirely different insight, just as we did as women. These differences are going to shape the impact he has on his position.”
Richardson touts commitment

When Pete Richardson '68 was a student-athlete at UD, commitment was a given. "You just assumed that as hard as you were working to get stronger and better, both on the field and in the classroom, your teammates were doing the same thing," said Richardson, a standout football player who was inducted into the UD Hall of Fame in January.

"Today you can't make the same assumption," he said. "As a coach, the challenge for me is to make sure the players understand what commitment and dedication are all about." Richardson said he draws upon his experiences at UD and with the Buffalo Bills as head football coach for Southern University in Baton Rouge, La. "I played for some great coaches," said the former defensive back.

"Coaches like John McVay, George Perles, Jerry Hanlan and Tom Moore demanded a lot from themselves and expected the same from the players. In order to be successful, you have to have that attitude from the top down."

Richardson has a record of 35-12 at Southern. Ten of McVay's assistants went on to coach in the NFL including Wayne Fontes (Detroit Lions) and Dennis Green (Minnesota Vikings).

"Those teams started the legacy of winning that is still there today," said Richardson, mindful of UD's perfect 11-0 record in 1996. Richardson has amassed a record of 35-12 at Southern including two black college national titles over the past four years. He entered the 1996 season with high expectations. "We were coming off an 11-1 season and ranked number one in the country in Division I-AA," he said. "But then a few of our top players were ruled academically ineligible and a few more suffered season-ending injuries. That just made us focus on our goals a little harder."

Richardson said he feels a personal loss when a player fails in the classroom. "I consider myself a teacher," he said. "I try very hard to show my players that a degree has to be their primary motive for going to school on an athletic scholarship. Very few ever make it into the pros."

The Jaguars finished the 1996 season 7-5 overall. "The challenge that lies ahead is to establish new goals and to do our best to achieve them," he said. "A challenge can become an opportunity if you're willing to give complete commitment."

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**Dayton Area Black Alumni Officers**
President: Don Hubbard '67
Vice president: Bernard McClung '70
Treasurer: J. Michael Henderson '80
Secretary: Tanya Cook '87

**Fraternity Reunion**
More than 200 people, including Kappa Alpha Psi alumni, came to campus in April to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Alpha Phi Alpha.
Aikens wants to serve

"You have to learn to think like a lawyer." Like thousands of other law students, Renee Aikens '94, who received a degree from UD's School of Law this spring, heard that advice as a first-year law student. Since law schools have been traditionally populated by white males, minorities can run into some obstacles pursuing that time-honored advice. Aikens points to a 1990-91 attrition rate for minorities at UD School of Law of 50 percent.

"The success rate," she says, "is not related to LSATs or GPAs but to skills and acculturation." Among Aikens' activities in law school was sitting on a committee that reviewed the Academic Excellence Program, which for six years under the director of Vernalia Randall has eased the transition of blacks into the role of law students.

Attrition has dropped to under 7 percent. Aikens has also worked with Randall on developing a leadership training program for anyone interested in serving in African American communities. Serving the Dayton community also has been a function of the Black Law Leadership Group (formerly known as the Black Law Student Association), which has run a voter registration drive as well as mentor programs for law students.

Serving the local community further is Aikens' goal. Her college freshman year in Washington, D.C., and an internship last summer with the Legal Aid Society in Manhattan have given Aikens a perspective she didn't have growing up in Jefferson Township. "In D.C. and New York," she says, "I saw diversity. I saw how polarized Dayton is by comparison. That there is not a coming together inhibits growth." Aikens wants to do something about it, so she plans to become involved in community development. "I don't feel you can be a product of a community," she says, "and not contribute."

CLASS NOTES

Jerome E. Covington '76 (PSS), an internal medicine specialist, is medical director of Old Town Medical Center and assistant chief of staff of Lower Florida Keys Health Systems in Key West. He also teaches at the University of Miami Medical School.

Charles W. Gates '65 (ACC) was honored by the Central Texas Annual Conference of the AME Church as Outstanding Man of the Year, 1996, for contributions to the African American people. Gates is director of aviation for Austin, Texas.

Jacqueline Kay Thompson '76 (MUS) appeared with the sesquicentennial touring arts team in Iowa's statehood celebration. Thompson owns Potpourri Fine Arts Academy.

Reneé Fountain Waggoner '84 (SWK) is a staff nurse at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Dayton and a graduate student at Wright State University specializing in nursing administration. Included in a number of Who's Who publications, Waggoner is a member of Miami University's Nursing Honor Society.

Ronyl Minor Williams '85 (EDE) is an elementary school guidance counselor for Prince George's County Board of Education. She writes that she is "still active in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. - Iota Gamma Omega Chapter - Prince George's County, MD."
Roberts joins provost’s staff

Len Roberts has joined the staff of provost John Geiger as executive assistant and chief of operations.

Len Roberts

Roberts, who has been UD’s director of foundation relations since 1991, will be responsible for facilitating the work of the Presidential Task Force on Diversity in Community and for enhancing diversity in the academic division. He will also handle the office’s relations with the board of trustees; develop, review and revise academic budgets; provide logistical support within the office; and coordinate services needed for strategic planning and policy making.

Before coming to UD, Roberts served as special assistant to the governor of Ohio and deputy director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

According to the search committee, “Len Roberts’ experiences and networks of contacts both inside the University and in the community make him a solid candidate. ... He has experience ... a broad view of diversity, a philosophy of developing people through their work and an appreciation for consensus building and the art of compromise.”