Witness to King assassination in Memphis will give keynote to start MLK Celebration

A longtime civil rights activist who was a witness to the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. will be the keynote speaker Sunday, Jan. 9, beginning this year’s celebration of King’s life. WMU and the Northside Ministerial Alliance are teaming up for the third year to put on a memorable series of events honoring the memory of the slain civil rights leader.

A focal point of the collaboration will be the Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, which will precede a week of activities. The celebration is set for 4 p.m. in Miller Auditorium and is free and open to the public.

The keynote speaker of this year’s program is the Rev. Samuel “Billy” Kyles. Kyles has been pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., since 1959. He has participated in many of the civil rights struggles throughout the South and is recognized as a valuable resource in the civil rights movement.

Kyles had close ties with King. After Memphis sanitation workers went on strike in February 1968, Kyles organized nightly rallies and raised money to support striking workers. He scheduled a major rally on April 3 and persuaded King to speak at it. King delivered his famous “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” address and was assassinated the next day at the Lorraine Motel. Kyles was an eyewitness to the shooting and was with King during the last hour of his life.

Kyles continued his involvement with the civil rights movement and is a founding member of the national board of Jesse Jackson’s People United to Save Humanity, known as PUSH, and is the executive director of Rainbow-PUSH-Memphis. He also worked on Jackson’s 1984 and 1988 presidential campaigns. President Bill Clinton appointed him to serve on the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad.

Kyles has appeared in several television documentaries on the life and death of King and has traveled the nation extensively, speaking about King and his message.

In addition to Kyles’ speech, University programs, departments and registered student organizations will participate in a weeklong, campuswide observation of King’s life Jan. 18-21. A wide range of activities is planned in keeping with this year’s theme “Integrating our Past with our Present: Impacting our Future.”

Deveta Gardner, Career and Student Employment Services, is chairperson of the WMU Martin Luther King Jr. Committee. She says working with the Northside Ministerial Alliance on the annual celebration has been very beneficial.

“It is again a pleasure to collaborate with the Northside Ministerial Alliance,” Gardner says. “This unique collaboration continues to blaze a trail of hope, and proves that all things are possible if we focus on our commonalities instead of our differences.”

Check Web site for full details on MLK activities

A full round of related activities is planned for Jan. 12 to Jan. 21 to commemorate the life of Martin Luther King Jr.

For a complete list of events and details on those activities, visit the MLK Celebration site online at www.wmich.edu/mlk.

University hires seasoned professional to manage enrollment

Veteran college admissions and enrollment professional John Beacon has been appointed vice provost for enrollment management at Western Michigan University.

Beacon comes to WMU from the University of Maine, where he has been assistant provost and dean of enrollment management since 1997. His appointment at WMU is effective Feb. 1, 2005.

“With John Beacon, we’re hiring a very senior, seasoned colleague with nearly 37 years of experience in enrollment management, admissions and financial aid,” says Provost Linda Delene. “I think it’s important to note that he has been the admissions director at three research universities before coming to us.”

Beacon is expected to focus on the total enrollment management picture at WMU and will oversee such areas as admissions, financial aid, the university’s First Year Experience program and the Registrar’s Office.

During Beacon’s tenure, Maine has enjoyed a 60 percent increase in the enrollment of new first-time students. Prior to taking his current position, Beacon spent 10 years at the University of Nebraska, serving as both director of admissions and director of scholarships and financial aid during most of that time. In addition, he has held admissions directorships at Oklahoma State University, Eastern Illinois University and Illinois Valley Community College.

Cherry report now available

The long-awaited report by a statewide commission charged with finding ways to double the number of college graduates in Michigan over the next 10 years was published Dec. 15 and is available on the Web.

The group, headed by Lt. Gov. Jennifer Cherry, began its work in March and was made up of 40 voting members, including college and university presidents, lawmakers, state officials and representatives of business, labor and 1-12 education. WMU Trustee Birgit Klohs served on one of the commission’s working groups devoted to maximizing economic benefits.

The commission developed 19 recommendations that Gov. Jennifer Granholm calls “a road map” to a stronger economic future for Michigan. The governor’s state of the state address this month is expected to focus heavily on those recommendations. To read the commission’s complete report, go to www.cherrycommission.org.

Graduate catalog now online

WMU’s 2004-06 graduate catalog is now available online for download at this site: <catalogs.ur.wmich.edu>. The catalog is available as a fully searchable and printable PDF and has a table of contents similar to the print version. Users can locate an item on the contents page and click on it to go to the appropriate page in the PDF. They also may print as much or as little of the PDF as they wish.

According to David H. Smith, university relations, the catalog will not be continuously updated but will be updated each time a new print version is completed.

The 2005-06 edition of WMU’s undergraduate catalog is available at the same Web address.

Spring Frostic readings begin

Award-winning poet John Koethe will read from his latest book, “North Pointe North,” at 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 13, in the Little Theatre as the Spring 2005 Gwen Frostic Reading Series gets under way.

“North Pointe North” is considered Koethe’s break-out book. It includes some of his critically acclaimed work from such earlier collections as “The Late Wisconsin Spring” and “Falling Water” as well as new material.

Koethe’s awards include the Frank O’Hara Award for Poetry, the Bernard Malamud Award from the Paris Review, and the Kingley-Tafts Award. He is a professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Milwaukee’s first Poet Laureate.

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Campus welcomes new faculty members

Alia Al-Fuqaha, computer science, comes to WMU from Reston, Va., where he was a senior member of the technical staff of Lambda Optical Networks. Prior to that, he was a software engineer for Sprint Corp. in Kansas City, Mo. A specialist in optical communication, computer and communication networks, and artificial intelligence, he earned a doctoral degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Petroleum & Minerals in Saudi Arabia before coming to the United States to pursue graduate education, and he earned a master’s degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Kathleen M. Baker, geography, came to WMU from the University of Michigan-Flint, where she had been a faculty member since 2002. Before that, she was a research assistant for three years at Michigan State University. Her research interests include geographic information systems and analysis, environmental risk assessment, and Web mapping. Her work has focused on using geographic methods for climatology modeling and plant disease control. She earned a bachelor’s degree from Central Michigan University in 1995, a master’s degree from WMU in 1998 and a doctoral degree from MSU in 2002.

Carmen A. Corneiles, educational studies, earned a WMU doctoral degree in special education in 2003 and served as a doctoral associate at the University. She also has been a research associate on WMU’s Project SEETAP—Special Education Evaluation and Technical Assistance. She earned her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from WMU in 1982 and 1998, respectively, and she spent a year in South America earning a diploma through a joint program involving the Organization of American States and the University of Chile. In addition, she has worked as an educational consultant for the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in Naperville, Ill.

Bill Davis, art, came to WMU from Antonelli College in Cincinnati, where he had been teaching since 2004. A photographer, Davis also has taught at both the Tyler School of Art and Temple University, both in Philadelphia. He earned a bachelor of fine arts degree from Ohio University in 1993 and a master of fine arts degree from Tyler in 2004. He worked as a commercial photographer for three years in Chicago and the Czech Republic, and he has a wide range of exhibition and curatorial experience in the international arena. His work is part of several permanent collections in the United States and Europe.

Stuart Dybek, English, closed out the year by seeing a piece of his writing selected as one of “The Best American Short Stories 2004.”

Dybek is the author of “Breasts,” one of 20 stories selected by editor Lorrie Moore for inclusion in the annual anthology published by Houghton Mifflin.

Other authors whose work was selected for the honor this year include literary luminaries John Updike, Sherman Alexie, Alice Munro and Annie Proulx as well as a number of newcomers to the field.

Dybek’s contribution was first published in his most recent book, “I Sailed With Magellan,” and is an anchor piece in that volume of interrelated short stories. Set in Chicago, the tale revolves around a Chicago hit man, a bar owner and a failed wrestler.

Since its inception in 1915, the Best American series has become the premier annual showcase for the country’s finest short fiction and nonfiction. For each volume, a series editor reads pieces from hundreds of periodicals, then selects between 50 and 100 outstanding works. That selection is pared down to about 20 of the very best pieces by a guest editor who is widely recognized as a leading writer in his or her field.

Washington’s Rosa Parks play will be part of boycott events

Von Washington, theatre, has had his play about civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks selected to help commemorate the 50th anniversary of the famous Montgomery Bus Boycott.

“Rosa Parks—More than a Bus Story” will be staged Jan. 12 and 13 in Montgomery, Ala. The play is an outgrowth of Washington’s 2001 play “Rosa,” which was premiered on campus and uses Parks’ autobiography as a window into her role in the civil rights movement. It is the only stage adaptation of her life that Parks has authorized.

Washington will play the main narrator and several other parts, while his wife, Fran, will reprise her role as Rosa Parks from the 2001 premiere. In addition, their daughter, Alicia, will appear and WMU alumni Curtis Gullidge and Dwandra Nickole will act and sing in the production. Nickole’s last name was Lampkins when she attended WMU.

“This is what I had hoped for all along, to perform this play in Montgomery, where the momentous activity began,” Washington says. “Having it as a part of the 50th Anniversary celebration is almost unbelievable.”

Dec. 5, 2005, is the 50th anniversary of the day Rosa Parks was arrested when she refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus. For more information, visit www.50busboycott.com.
Summerville, who was associate VP since January 2004, has served as WMU's director of human resources since January 2004. She first joined the WMU staff in 1993 and was named manager of wage and salary in the Department of Human Resources in 1994. She was appointed to the role of assistant director of human resources in 1996, promoted to associate vice president Dec. 1 into WMU's 25 Year Club at the annual gala held at the Bernhard Center. New, active and retired members were guests of the University for the evening.

The club, which now has 393 active and 480 retired members, was founded in 1982 with 98 charter inductees. The WMU Board of Trustees established the club as a way to recognize the valuable contributions made to the University by employees who commit their careers to the institution. New members receive a 25-year service pin and framed certificate, and they may choose from a selection of commemorative gifts.

Marcia A. Agema, Davis Dining Service; Mark S. Allen, campus facility development; Theoni Androutopoulos, physical plant-building and support services; Kurkose K. Athappally, business information systems; Jane Bauck, dance; Kailash M. Bafna, industrial and manufacturing engineering; Patricia A. Banks, Student Center; Guy R. Barks, Miller Auditorium; Kathy B. Beaugard, intercollegiate athletics; Eileen J. Boven, physical plant-building custodial and support services; Andrew A. Brogowicz, marketing;

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Pay increases effective Jan. 3

Eligible Staff Compensation System employees received a 3 percent pay increase, effective Jan. 3.

The increase will be reflected in paychecks beginning Jan. 3. Employees and unit heads should note the following:

• Increased wage rates for prior pay periods.

• Managers of Staff Compensation System employees will be sent a report listing their employees’ eligibility, old pay rate, increase amount, and new pay rate. Managers are being asked to share this information with their employees in individual meetings.

To be eligible for the 3 percent increase, employees must have been hired into a Staff Compensation System position before April 1, 2004, have a satisfactory 2003-04 performance review, and be on the payroll on Jan. 3, 2005.

Jobs


FOR SALE—Three-bedroom Cape Cod home, hardwood floors, heated/air conditioned two-car garage/shop, beautiful pond and waterfall, five minutes north of campus. Asking $589,900. Call 381-4488.

Employees lauded for 25 years of service

Dozens of Western Michigan University faculty and staff members were recently honored for a quarter century of service to the University.

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Alabama’s Greene set to take reins of College of Engineering and Applied Sciences in April

An industrial engineer with a track record in academic leadership and service to industry has been selected to lead WMU’s College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Timothy J. Greene, assistant vice president for research and academic affairs at the University of Alabama, will take the reins as dean of the engineering college in April. His appointment, which was approved by the University’s Board of Trustees Dec. 10, includes a tenure appointment as a faculty member in the Department of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering.

“Professor Greene has had an outstanding academic and administrative career, and he brings with him solid experience in such important areas as graduate education, research, corporate collaboration and fund raising,” says Provost Linda Delene. “With his leadership, we expect this important college to continue and grow in its multiple roles of serving students, advancing our research agenda and working in partnership with the community.”

Greene has been in his current role at Alabama since July. Before accepting the position, he had served as dean of the College of Engineering there since 1999. Prior to joining the administration at Alabama, he was associate dean for research for four years at Oklahoma State University, and he earlier served for four years as head of OU’s School of Industrial Engineering and Management. In addition, Greene was a faculty member at Virginia Tech from 1980 to 1991.

“I’m very pleased to have this opportunity to lead this outstanding college,” Greene said of his new role. “The college has wonderful new facilities, an excellent faculty and staff, and a top-notch and energetic student body. With these attributes, we’ll continue to both build the college’s reputation and make real contributions to the region’s economy.”

Greene’s background also includes extensive consulting work in private industry, reviewing production operations and providing expert advice for such diverse clients as Brunswick Corp., Ingersoll Rand, Union Carbide, Federal Mogul and IBM Corp.

He is a senior member and fellow of the Institute of Industrial Engineers and served as national president of that organization in 1997-98. He also is a senior member of the Society of Manufacturing Engineers and a member of honor societies Tau Beta Pi, Alpha Pi Mu and Sigma Xi. In addition, he has served as an onsite evaluator for ABET—the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology Inc.

Greene replaces Dr. Michael Atkins, who is retiring after serving as dean since 2002 and as a member of the engineering faculty since 1971. Atkins has agreed to continue leading the college until Greene arrives in April.

Trustees approve contract with Power Plant employees

WMU trustees approved a three-year labor contract covering campus employees who are members of the Michigan State Employees Association and who run the University’s power plant.

The new contract, which was ratified by MSEA members Nov. 8, calls for a 3 percent across-the-board wage increase in January 2005, a 2.5 percent across-the-board increase in July 2005 and a 2 percent across-the-board increase in July 2006.

Other agreement provisions include a commitment by the parties to continue with a downsizing and restructuring plan first agreed to during 2000 negotiations and streamlined discipline and grievance procedures. The new contract is in effect through June 30, 2007.