University Chaplain Featured in Ebony Magazine

University Chaplain Reverend Davis is one of several chaplains featured in this month’s Ebony magazine, in an article about the unrepresented numbers of African-Americans serving as religious leaders on college campuses. The article quotes Davis as saying that one of the great strengths of the African-American clergy is ‘their experience working with a variety of groups.’

New Grants Help Columbia Libraries Preserve Rare Books and Recordings

Columbia will be pleasantly surprised this term when University Libraries elevate the importance of their nontraditional media collections. Grants from New York State and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation will help fund new initiatives by the libraries to study and preserve the University’s collections of rare books and audio recordings, and to preserve their collections for generations to come.

A New York State grant will provide $37,000 for a Columbia-led effort to preserve and photocopy endangered color atlases and other over material as part of the Preservation Photocopy Project. "We are targeting items that are heavily used," she went on, explaining that this is the ‘first time we’ve had a good format for replacing microfilm that will allow them to be used as they were meant to be used.’

The Mellon Foundation initiative provides approximately $160,000 to purchase unique audio and moving images collections. "The survey will enable us to identify the most that are most endangered and most important, and thus to set meaningful priorities,” said Gertz.

Columbia Libraries' Audio and Moving Image Collections

The project will produce approximately 4,550 photocopies on acid-free paper that can be shelved in open-stack areas of the Libraries and the originals will be protected in storage facilities. At a time when non-print documents are becoming increasingly important to humanities and social science research. Columbia Libraries will also use $160,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to conduct a two-year survey of the University’s audio and moving image materials, including tapes of Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr. and other historic figures.

"We have over 40,000 unique pieces in our audio and moving image collections," said Gertz. "The survey will enable us to identify the most that are most endangered and most important, and thus to set meaningful priorities.”

Acclaimed Playwright August Wilson Dead at 60

August Wilson, hailed as one of America's greatest playwrights, died in Seattle on Oct. 2. He was 60.

Growing up, Wilson lived in a dilapidated part of Pittsburgh, which later became the setting for nine of the 10 plays in his epic theatrical cycle—big, sprawling, poetic dramas telling the story of the black struggle in 20th-century America, decade by decade.

Taking more than 20 years to complete, the cycle was one of the most ambitious in modern drama. "Radio Golf," the final play in the series, was finished only this year.

Wilson’s 1984 breakthrough drama, Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom, about a recording session of blues artists in the 1920s, has an unforgettable series of lines by the title character: “White folks don’t understand the blues...They hear it but don’t know how it got there. They don’t understand that life is a way of talking. You don’t sing to feel better. You sing so that cause that’s a way of understanding life.”

Wilson collected many accolades for his work including seven New York Drama Critics’ Circle Awards and a Tony award for "Fences" (1987), his biggest Broadway hit. He was given two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama, administered by Columbia University, one for "Fences" and the other in 1990 for "The Piano Lesson." In 2004, Columbia awarded him an honorary doctorate.

Constance Baker Motley, Pioneering Judge and Civil Rights Champion, Dies at 84

Constance Baker Motley, civil rights advocate and trailblazer for women in the legal profession, died Sept. 28. She was 84.

Motley was the first African-American woman to serve in the New York State Senate (1964) and the first woman to be elected as Manhattan Borough President (1965)—also the first candidate for that office to be endorsed by Republican, Democratic and Liberal parties.

In 1966 President Lyndon Johnson appointed her judge— the first black woman to sit on the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. In 1992, President Bill Clinton appointed her to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York, the largest federal trial bench in the world. In 1981, President Jimmy Carter appointed her a federal judge, the title she held until her death.

As a senior at Columbia Law School, Motley clerked for future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, joining his staff as associate counsel upon graduation in 1946. She went on to play a prominent role in landmark desegregation cases involving the universities of Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Oklahoma, Georgia, and also Clemson College in South Carolina.

Motley won nine of 10 cases she argued before the U.S. Supreme Court. A tall, gracious, statuesque woman who dressed elegantly, Motley spoke in a low, lilting voice, earning a reputation as the chic courtroom technician of the civil rights movement. In her autobiography, *Equal Justice Under Law*, published in 1998, she said her goal was simple: “Dignity for all.”

As a federal judge, she made New York City news with her rulings allowing female reporters to enter Yankee Stadium locker rooms during the World Series, and permitting gay protesters to march in front of St. Patrick’s Cathedral because “the City owns the sidewalk, not the Church.”

In 2001, when President Bill Clinton appointed Motley the President’s Citizens Medal, she said: “America was broken down political, social and professional barriers, widening the circle of opportunity in America.”

By Ellen S. Smith


News in Brief

Columbians Advocate for Increased Student and Science Funding

By Ellen S. Smith

Tight federal budgets remain a source of concern to the Columbia community.

The office of Government and Community Affairs, under Vice President Maxine Griffin, facilitated many activities earlier this year and continues its efforts in these two areas.

1) Student Funding: Twenty students and administrators went to Washington, D.C., in spring 2005 to advocate for increased student aid. Visiting more than 40 legislators with colleagues from Cornell, they made the case for increased current funding or adding funding to programs such as Pell grants, Perkins funds and work-study programs. Back on campus, under-graduate student leaders organized a day of free cell phone calls to Washington legislators to urge them to increase grant aid on student aid is also being formed.

2) Science Funding: Federal funds for science will remain the same or receive only modest increases across the board. In addition to joining with colleagues from the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Science Coalition to advocate for increases, Colum- bia Executive Vice President David Hirs met with top key scientific leaders in Washington, including the head of the National Science Foundation, staff at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, NIH leaders, Energy Department officials and members of Congress.

The Bush administration has proposed drastic cuts in federal funds for a number of climate-research programs at NOAA, which fund much Earth Institute programs. The Office of Federal Affairs has been working with other institutions to inform Congress of the vital nature of NOAA supports at univer sities like Columbia.