

# the Houghton Star

10 February 89

## Reflections on the past

by  
alicia beckford

February is an important month for Americans—after all, the 14th is Valentine's Day, or "National Love Day" as someone called it. This February has a significance for all of us, particularly at Houghton. This is the first year that Houghton's participation in the national month-long celebration of Black History Month will be supported by the Student Activity Fund. While the nation's theme is "Keep Hope Alive," Houghton has a special calendar of events which will be centered around the campus' theme, "Reflections on the

Past." Established in 1926 by Carter Woodson, Black History Month was first celebrated at Houghton in 1980 with a long weekend of events, initiated and organized by Dr. Mary Conklin. "My motivation was grounded in the fact that other institutions recognized the event," said Conklin, "and I felt that our institution needed to have some ownership of the activity." Furthermore, she thought that Houghton's black students needed

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# Reflections. . . continued

## Black Awareness Month events:

**February 12:** Evening church service with Rev. Paul Thompson of the New Hope Baptist Church in Buffalo, followed by a choir concert by New Hope's "Gospel Chorus" and "Inspirational 7."

**February 14:** Chapel with Houghton alumnus Ruby Wilson Waluyn. Lorna Hill will perform an adaptation of her autobiographical play at 8 pm.

**February 20:** The movie *Ethnic Notions* at 7 pm in Fancher Auditorium.

**February 24:** Chapel with evangelist Geneva Miller followed in the evening by the movie *Cry Freedom*.

**February 25:** Jazz coffeehouse sponsored jointly by ESA, BSO and AAIC (a committee on alcohol awareness).

**February 28:** Dr. Lola Haller will lead a discussion on black authors and illustrators in children's literature at 8 pm in Fancher Auditorium.

## continued from cover

to see some affirmation of their culture. A committee originating in the Student Development office during the fall of 1986 was formed to facilitate Houghton's tribute to black heritage and black contributions to American culture. The members of the Black History Month Committee this year are Dr. Conklin, Nancy Louk-Murphy, Kim Humbert, and Michelle Robinson. While the planning of black history month is not the duty of the Black Student Outreach, BSO has helped organize the celebration of the part blacks have played in

the shaping of history.

Monday, January 16, set the stage for this month's events with a voluntary chapel service and evening discussion in honor of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. More than three hundred students, faculty, administrators and community members filled Wesley Chapel from 11:05 to 11:40. Some learned for the first time about Dr. King's dream and his influence on American civil rights. Marjorie Stockin, one of the founders of the art program, presented a painting to the college entitled, "I Have a Dream," which will be housed in the new Academic Building. The guest speakers of the day were Rev. Ernest Wilson from Philadelphia, who had once shared the stage with Dr. King, and Rev. Leslie Braxton of Buffalo, who spoke to a full Fancher Auditorium at 7 pm. A week ago, BSO held its annual chicken wing study break, this year featuring the music of Motown, USA, with a special appearance by Houghton's own Supremes.



"I Have a Dream" by Marjorie Stockin

alicia beckford



## Scratch the surface

The following is a solicited essay by **Alicia Beckford**, steering committee member of Black Student Outreach.

Why is there a need for "black history month" at Houghton? Good question. I've given it quite a bit of thought in the past weeks. When I first came to Houghton, I received invitations to attend BSO activities. I made excuses not to come because I felt that such a group unnecessarily brought division between black and white students on campus. I didn't want to be associated with anything of the sort. There's no WSO (White Student Outreach), so why should there be a BSO?

About that same time, a friend of mine was taking a special topics course on African history. Every time I talked to him, he said, "Hey, did you know," or "Did you ever realize," and told me about new, exciting things he'd just learned. Then, he invited me to a BSO meeting, and I refused as politely as I could. He made me realize how little I knew of African history, and, more importantly, how anxious I was to dissociate myself from it. Sorry to say, I thought of the Africans as a people way behind Americans economically, socially, intellectually, medically and every other-ly. I knew that my race's roots were grounded in Africa, but I didn't see that as something to be proud of. All I wanted was to fit in with the people around

me, and my dark skin only made things complicated.

Does this sound like racism? It was, pure and simple. Based on stereotypes that I naively accepted, I had constructed a whole slew of judgments about a people I didn't even know, who are a part of my *own* identity. Yet the fact remained that I had never been successful modeling a complete identity for myself after my white American friends and schoolmates.

When Dr. Zoller offered a course on black American literature this fall, I jumped at the chance to fill in the gap in my identity by relating to the experiences of other black Americans. In my history courses in high school and in Western Civilization at Houghton, my teachers never taught about African civilizations. Though I respect these educators, their emphasis was primarily in relating European history and literature. For many students, an understanding of African history begins with slavery in the American South, taught from a white American viewpoint. Important names like Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, and Alice Walker meant nothing to me. Are they familiar to you? Did you know that there were twice as many Africans killed in transit from Africa to America as there were casualties in World War I? Did you know that these Africans were taken from established civilizations, some far more advanced than the one they were brought to? When you think of Egypt, do

you remember that it is a northeast African country? Who was Malcolm X?

We need black history month at Houghton, and all points elsewhere in the United States, because our knowledge of American history, even world history, is incomplete without the understanding that it is inextricably tied to black Americans, Africans and African history. Carol Hostetter commented that black history "is an area in which I don't know as much as I should. We don't know enough about the heroes and leaders who brought the black race to where it is now." Another student said, "If the rest of the country is recognizing it, so should Houghton. I think that sometimes white people think whites are the only ones who have contributed to our history. If they think of any black, it's Martin Luther King." Tom Kagoro, a native of Zimbabwe, Southeast Africa, expressed the concern that even when African History is taught in American schools, the texts and information are twenty or more years outdated, and little is really known about current events on the African continent.

A month may seem like a long time to dedicate to one race of people, but when you weigh the amount of time most of us have spent studying European and Asian history against the amount of time we've spent studying native African and Afro-American history, a month is barely enough time to scratch the surface.

## Coping with indignity

Moss Nthla is a young black South African, married three years with a two-month old son. His family lives in a designated "black" township, and when they leave it, they must ride a designated "black" bus.

Moss relayed an experience that happened to a young black African pastor. In South African society, where politeness is the norm, the pastor was going to a church conference with a white pastor, his boss. Due to the length of the trip, the black pastor needed to spend the night at the white pastor's home. As they were preparing to go to bed, the white pastor said that he was sorry, but that his family did not have a guest bedroom, and the black pastor would need to sleep in the car. Because of the cold, he offered the black pastor some

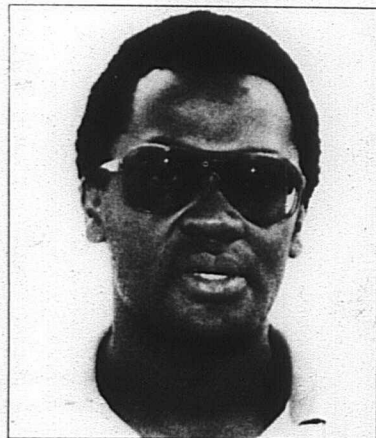
blankets. When the pastor returned from the car with the blankets in the morning, the family dogs began to bark and jump at him. A maid peeked out the back door and said not to worry—the dogs wouldn't bite; they had simply missed their blankets.

Moss Nthla is interested in helping black South Africans cope with indignity. He is the national director of Concerned Evangelicals, a predominately black group of 1,000 young people and evangelical pastors. The organization brings the gospel to the young, embittered black South Africans and attempts to bring reconciliation amongst the peoples of South Africa. Concerned Evangelicals educates pastors on ways in which they can work against apartheid. The organization encourages the actions of black labor unions,

political boycotts and economic sanctions.

Moss emphatically believes that only if the Western world will band together to fight against apartheid will the battle be successful. As concerned Christians, he urges us to negate Jerry Falwell's and Pat Robinson's support of the white South African government. Moss explained that their support began a surge of organized pro-apartheid organizations in South Africa, which fear that communism, not free-market capitalism, would replace the current government if it were overthrown.

In Moss' opinion, a capitalistic economic system would continue to be an oppressive environment for black South Africans, since whites would still control the majority of the wealth and production sites in South Africa. He argued that socialism is the just solution; a fair distribution of goods would induce not only economic equality but social equality as well, leading to mutual respect among the various races living in South Africa.



*Moss Nthla spoke about South Africa in chapel last Wednesday.*

juli bray (& holly keyes)



# Destroying a frankenstein

jonathan hendricks - buffalo suburban campus

A notable guest appeared at the University of Buffalo last Sunday. The Most Reverend Desmond Tutu presented a lecture on apartheid to a record-breaking 11,000 people (a standing room only crowd).

Commencing with a history of the evils involved in the South African system, he graphically illustrated how the black man is starving in a land where food is plentiful. He spoke of how black family life is being undermined deliberately; sometimes, fathers have to work away from their families for eleven months at a time. The term "native" is given to blacks; if a black South African calls a white man born in South Africa a "native," it is not long before he realizes the measure of the "offense" he has committed.

Blacks are exposed to sub-human treatment, said Tutu; they are merely allowed a state-formed independent nation recognized only by the apartheid regime, a system he called a "Frankenstein." "You don't reform a Frankenstein," he proclaimed. "You destroy it." He likened the system to Nazism and asked, "Would you say you are going to put Jews in a concentration camp humanely?" He pointed out that not all South African whites are for apartheid; there are many whites, especially young whites, who protest by refusing to enlist in the nation's defense force.

The government has made it increasingly difficult to protest non-violently. Anyone caught in protest, whether peaceful or not,

is usually convicted of treason. "If that is the case," said the archbishop, "then I am guilty also."

He spoke of misrepresentation within the South African parliamentary system, in which the minority whites have four delegates, while the Indian population has one and the 73% black majority has two. Tutu laughed and said, "I have never been good with math, but two plus one will never equal four!" He paused, and added, "in a country that claims to be Christian."

He thanked young people around the world for getting

involved, and asked that all would "make it impossible for any [American] administration, Republican or Democratic, to want to collaborate with perpetrators of apartheid."

He pointed out that without economic sanctions, violent protest is inevitable. He dismissed claims that economic sanctions would starve the black people, arguing that apartheid already starves them.

His final words were these: "We know we are going to be free, and we want to be able to invite you when we celebrate our liberation."

## the Minefield

Houghton as a Christian institution is dying. It is true that we are changing, but in an increasingly secular direction. When I arrived here as a freshman, I knew there would be diversity, but I naively thought that at least the basics of Christianity would be held sacred. Boy, was I ever wrong! I would like to briefly address a few problems along these lines specifically confronting the students.

The students of Houghton appear (with some exceptions) to fall into three categories: a) those who are so apathetic that they pass through Houghton almost unscathed; b) those who are said to be earnestly "searching." Some of these students ultimately realize that what they heard about Jesus in church since childhood is mostly right. Unfortunately,

## freshmen illusions and senior reality

others come in as "searching" freshmen and leave as "searching" seniors. Their "search" (which never seems to arrive at the answer, Jesus Christ, as authoritatively shown in the Bible) reminds me of the verse, "Always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7). The third category is c) the "remnant" of Christians who still hold to the fundamentals of the faith, but are afraid to "make waves." If you are part of this group, remember that we are commanded, "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves" (James 1:22).



mick williams

## Dear editors. . .

Would you be so kind as to send the following words of encouragement and advice to your columnist Mick Williams:

First of all, tell him how grateful we are for his tireless work in exposing the "dark underbelly of Houghton." If it were not for his efforts, we would remain in the dark about the peril that threatens every sincere Christian at this place.

Needless to say, though, his righteous efforts are starting to meet with criticism from ungodly students, liberal professors, and homosexual axe-murderers. I am writing this letter because I could not let their self-serving challenges go unanswered, and also I wanted Mick to know the enemy so that he might better be able to confound them in their iniquity.

What sort of criticism have I heard, you ask?

Well, some alleged Christians have tried to divert us from the real issues by suggesting that Mick does not know how to argue properly. For instance, in his last article they say he defined a pseudographer as a "forger," a "religious con artist," a "false prophet," and a "religious imposter." Those who were not convicted by his words devishly suggested that Mick was begging the question. That is, they claimed that he had assumed the truth of an issue that he was pretending to analyze. His approach, they said, was similar to defining a civil rights worker as a "rabble-

rousing communist lackey," and then proceeding to "discover" that such workers were malicious trouble-makers. Everyone knows, they claim, that question-begging is one of the most elementary logical fallacies one can commit, and they hinted—somewhat maliciously, I thought—that the Deity and Mick needed to get their act together.

But it doesn't end there. The enemies of truth never sleep and they are wise in the ways of the world. Therefore, when they say that Mick contradicted himself in the same article, they need to be answered. For example, Mick supposedly cited I Thessalonians 5:21-22 which directs believers to "test everything." Later in the same column, Mick allegedly insisted that it was a given for a Christian that "Jesus was always right." Apparently, they chortled, Mick was not willing to "test everything" after all. Talk about "imposter" or "con artist," they hooted!

Well, I just want to say to Mick that he should ignore their carping and fault-finding. Tell Mick that logic has nothing to do with any of this. Tell him that logic is the devil's tool, and that he should continue to ignore it. Tell him to keep right on thundering against wickedness wherever he finds it and not be limited by man's wisdom.

As the Psalmist said, "Break the teeth of mine enemies."

Cheerfully,

brian sayers

Thank you for a most remarkable presentation of the controversial issue of Dr. Meade's refused tenure. Most of the articles and comments were well balanced and certainly broadened my perception and understanding of the situation. Unfortunately, there was one article which displayed ill-informedness and abuse of scripture: Mick Williams' "Minefield." If Mick has read Dr. Meade's book, he has not grasped the author's deep commitment to scripture. In his book, Dr. Meade neither opposed the divine inspiration of scripture nor its authority. It is therefore quite a bit off the track to suggest Dr. Meade asserted that "Jesus was mistaken." Furthermore, Mick's claim that in Mark 12:26 and Matthew 24:15 Jesus made an actual statement about the authorship of the five books of Moses and Daniel is pushing the text beyond what it actually says, as Jesus merely quotes these scriptures by their known names. In general, it appears that Mick's use of scripture is indiscriminate and somewhat disrespectful (using it for merely rhetorical purposes), and reflects blatant ill-informedness. Although the presentation of a different opinion is laudable, the way it was presented was questionable. But could it be that I totally misunderstood the purpose of the article, as it was featured on the same page as *Calvin and Hobbes*?

helmut kostreba

## Practicing a new art form (for Houghton)

Under blue and purple lights the Sugar Plum Fairy kicks and leaps. Her sparkling white dress blurs as she spins like a dreamy little girl. The audience claps and comments that "she makes it look so easy." Stephanie Langford, however, knows what it takes to make pirouettes look so effortless: "dedication and hard work."

Stephanie has taken ballet classes since she was three. After 14 years of training, she became an assistant. From then on, she checked and corrected the younger students' mistakes in class, while continuing to take classes herself.

Now, Stephanie is extending the benefit of her knowledge and experience to Houghton students by offering ballet classes every Wednesday at 7 pm. This is the first time that Stephanie has taught entirely on her own, and so far she thoroughly enjoys it.

To accommodate the dancers, the ballet room (PE 202) has just had barres installed. A barre is a wooden handrail that ballet dancers use to balance themselves. The barre is an essential element of any ballet class. Stephanie is very proud of these handmade beauties. However, there are no mirrors in the room, making it "extremely difficult to teach," said Stephanie. Because her students cannot watch themselves, Stephanie must mimic their moves for them.

Another exciting thing about this year's ballet classes is the number of men who came for



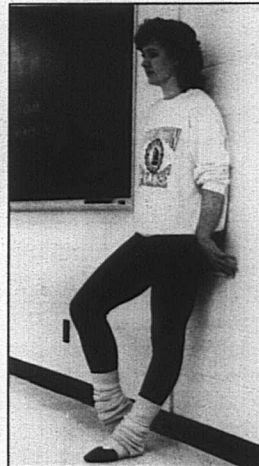
the first class. The grand total in this class is four—quite an improvement over the one man who attended last year and dropped out because of back problems. The number of women also increased; fifteen came to the first class as opposed to the eight who attended last year.

Stephanie is optimistic about her upcoming classes. Ballet is an art form that she loves wholeheartedly and she hopes that students will enjoy it as much. She fears, however, that too many may want to skip the basic exercises that ballet dancers need. "Everyone wants to be the prima ballerina yesterday," she said. This is where teaching can require patience. Flexibility, posture, agility, and muscle coordination must be cultivated gradually. Ballet is clearly a beautiful way to develop these qualities and to learn to appreciate them in others who have dedicated their lives to developing them. Those who take ballet can begin to realize that no soft weakling can be a Sugar Plum Fairy.



patty carole

Stephanie Langford



The Star is a weekly student publication; its attention is turned inward upon Houghton College. Letters to the Star should be signed and sent before 12 noon on Tuesday, and should be no longer than one page double spaced. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions.

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