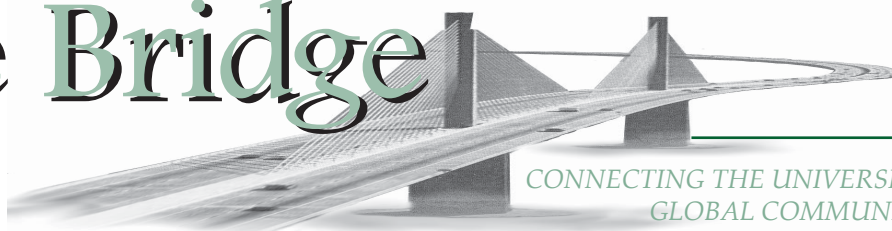


# The Bridge



CONNECTING THE UNIVERSITY AND THE  
GLOBAL COMMUNITY

## Julian Bond Keynotes Gala

On January 27, 2007, the Robert W. Saunders Foundation, Inc., and the University of South Florida Institute on Black Life presented a Gala fundraiser for the construction of a 13,000 square foot Cultural Arts Center and Theater in the Robert W. Saunders Sr. Library located at 1505 North Nebraska Avenue. The Gala was held at the Wyndham Westshore Hotel and featured NAACP Chairman Julian Bond as the keynote speaker.



The Robert W. Saunders Foundation endeavors to build community through support of projects that strengthen families and improve the quality of life for those who live and work within the inner city. Similarly, the Institute on Black Life's mission is to serve as a resource on issues relevant to the African American community. In pursuit of this mission the Institute conducts and promotes interdisciplinary research, university and community based programs, faculty and student development, and related social and economic initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all peoples.

There were over 300 attendees at the Gala. Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez, Interim Director of the Institute on Black Life was Mistress of Ceremonies and Clara Cobb, also from the IBL, chaired the VIP Reception. The Institute presented Mr. Bond with a football autographed by NFL Hall of Fame member, Mr. Leroy Selmon. The IBL will continue to collaborate with the Saunders Foundation on other community projects.

## Message From the Director

In the fall of 2007, the Institute on Black Life will celebrate twenty-one years as a critical connection between USF and the larger community. This means that for more than two decades, the Institute has consistently developed and implemented a range of local, state, national and international projects; provided substantial support



Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez

for faculty and student research; and established innovative relationships that facilitate learning opportunities for youth and families. This legacy of service and support is one that must be acknowledged and cheered. IBL's service and support has not only benefited scholars and scholarship within the USF community, it has also created opportunities for growth and learning for residents of Hillsborough County and beyond.

The Institute will build upon this legacy by using what we've learned in the past to raise new research questions and develop new models for serving the community. For example, through projects like our Faith based Community Integrated Access (FACIA) we will continue to facilitate successful after-school programs for children in low-income communities. However, we will also use this project as a means to understand how communities participate in closing the achievement gap. IBL will strive to understand ways to contribute to sustainable communities in the US and globally by developing research projects that will broaden perspectives on a range of topics. We will continue to address the difficult issues –those that reflect deeply ingrained histories of social injustice –and we will also address the complicated forms that these old problems assume in the 21st century.

As we continue to grow and evolve, the Institute on Black Life will transform itself while continuing its mission as a sturdy bridge between the University of South Florida and its many local and global constituencies. At twenty-one, IBL is now "of age"; many opportunities await!

Cheryl Rodriguez  
Interim Director

### 2006 Conference Focuses on Community



Michael Eric Dyson

The eleventh annual Institute on Black Life Research Conference (*Celebrating Community Empowerment, Engagement and Achievement*) was held April 13-14, 2006 at the Embassy Suites. The event was the fourth in a series of conferences focusing on issues affecting the Black Children and Families. The conference featured keynote speaker Dr. Michael Eric Dyson, an ordained Baptist minister, professor of Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania, and author of numerous books including, *"Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and Color of Disaster."*

Other conference sessions tackled such issues as economic disparities, the science and technology gap, education, and health disparities. Two successful community programs were also featured. Dr. Kweku Forstall discussed Project GRAD, a program to ensure quality public education for disadvantaged students. Ms. Jennifer Bransom provided a session on Big Thought, a successful arts program in Dallas, Texas.

Other speakers included: Dr. James Renick, Chancellor of North Carolina A&T; Dr. Stephen Thomas, Director of the Center for Minority Health; Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, President of the University of Maryland Baltimore Campus; Dr. Marvalene Hughes, President of Dillard University in New Orleans, and Dr. Yvonne Freeman, Executive Director of the Southeastern Consortium for Minorities in Engineering (SECME). The Institute would like to thank our community sponsors whose support contributed to a successful event.



Dr. Yvonne Freeman



Dr. Freeman Hrabowski

### Project FACIA 21st Century Community Learning Centers



Ms. Debra Thrower  
Project Director

The Institute on Black Life is continuing a partnership with local faith-based organizations to provide after-school programs for students in five Hillsborough County neighborhoods. The Faith-based Community Integrated Access (FACIA) program, funded by a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning grant from the Florida Department of Education, targets students in need of additional assistance to reach academic benchmarks as well as those who are struggling to work on grade level.

Project Director, Ms. Debra Thrower, MSW, has extensive experience with federal grants and faith-based projects. She has a masters degree in social work and has served as the community/church coordinator for the Central Healthy Start Project at The Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy mothers and Babies.

The program is designed to offer innovative enrichment activities that engage students in learning. It also offers intergenerational learning activities for parents including parent leadership training and computer skills. For further information on the project and our faith-based partners, please see the IBL web site at [www.usf.edu/ibl](http://www.usf.edu/ibl).



### AFRICAN AMERICAN PIONEERS PROJECT

The Institute on Black Life is conducting research on African Americans and peoples of African ancestry from throughout the Diaspora that were "the first" to serve in various capacities in the Tampa/Hillsborough community and the State of Florida. This information will be included in an on-line publication.

We hope the data from this project will highlight the importance of African Americans in the history of our city, state, and country.

If you have any information that you would like to share please contact The Institute on Black Life at (813) 974-4727 or [ibl@ibl.usf.edu](mailto:ibl@ibl.usf.edu).

## Events and Projects

### First and Goal Students Visit USF



To enhance the linkages between USF and the community, the Institute on Black Life recently established a partnership with Derrick Brooks and his *First & Goal* initiative. The mission of *First & Goal* is to prepare youth ages 14-18

for successful entry into post secondary education or occupational training programs. *First & Goal* focuses on improving academic skills, raising FCAT and SAT/ACT scores, enhancing career skills and increasing high school graduation rates. *First & Goal* is also designed to empower youth to address the issues preventing them from pursuing higher education.

The Institute, as part of this community initiative, sponsored a USF Showcase that featured the Office of Admissions, Student Health Services, and the Office of Financial Aid on August 30, 2006 at the Wilbert Davis Boys & Girls Club. On October 2, 2006, the Institute also sponsored an academic tour of USF which included the Office of Admissions, College of Engineering, Departments of Mathematics and Physics, the College of Business, and On-Campus Housing.

### Local Students Explore Africa at USF



As part of its mission to promote research and cultural activities that highlight Africa and African descendants in the Diaspora, the Institute on Black Life hosted its annual *Many Faces of Africa* program on January 18, 2007. Students from Hillsborough County middle and high schools enjoyed a day of education and fun on the Tampa campus.

The program featured an introduction and welcome from IBL Director, Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez, and a passionate, thought-provoking lecture by Dr. Edward Kissi, Assistant Professor in the Africana Studies Department. The students were also awed by animals from different countries in Africa, showcased by the Busch Gardens staff. The Marshall Center Ballroom was adorned with beautiful African artwork provided by USF's School of Art and Art History in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. In addition, Mrs. Clara Cobb, Coordinator, provided activities, prizes, lunch and educational fun and laughter.

*Many Faces of Africa* is an annual event hosted by the Institute on Black Life. We are currently planning for the January 2008 *Many Faces of Africa* program. Please visit our web site for details and updated information.



### Let's Get Real About AIDS!



The Institute on Black Life's first colloquium for the Spring 2007 "Dialogues on the Diaspora" series addressed the AIDS crisis in the Black community.

Local activists and medical professionals discussed many of the complex issues associated with the spread of this disease. Speakers for the event included: Sharon West, Tampa's Housing and Community Development Manager, Dorothy Nettles, Human Services Program Specialist, and Tish Carlton, RN, ARNP at St. Joseph's Hospital.

### Undergraduate Scholarships

The Institute on Black Life (IBL) currently administers a number of undergraduate scholarships, that were established to provide academically talented students the opportunity to study at the University of South Florida. All awards are need-based and require students to complete a financial aid (FAFSA) application. The following scholarships are available from the IBL to US Citizens and permanent residents. Preference may be given to students demonstrating involvement in African-American culture and issues.

- Robert Louis Allen Memorial Scholarship
- Ruth and Jerry Bell Scholarship
- Catherine and John Lott Brown Scholarship
- First Florida Bank Scholarship
- Jones Intercable Scholarship
- Xerox Corporation Scholarship
- Ivory Club Scholarship (International Students only)

Application forms and detailed information on each scholarship can be found on our web site at [www.usf.edu/ibl](http://www.usf.edu/ibl) or through the USF Scholarship Office <http://usfweb2.usf.edu/scholarships>.

#### INSTITUTE STAFF

**Dr. Cheryl Rodriguez**, Interim Director  
**Dr. Marvin Moore**, Assistant Director  
**Ms. Clara Cobb**, Coordinator  
**Ms. Valerie Guzman**, Administrative Assistant  
**Ms. Jody Duke**, Office Assistant  
**Ms. Debra Thrower**, Director, Project FACIA  
**Mr. Buddy McNitt**, G.A., Project FACIA  
**Mr. Felix Romero**, G.A., Project FACIA  
**Ms. Evelinda Watkins**, FACIA, Clerical Support  
**Mr. Sidney Gasset**, FACIA, Technology Support  
**Mr. Alwin Woodall**, MSW Student Intern

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#### Upcoming IBL Events

Please visit our website, [www.usf.edu/ibl](http://www.usf.edu/ibl) for information regarding upcoming conferences and events including:

- Spring 2007 Colloquia Series
- Fall 2007 Forum on Electoral Politics
- Spring 2008 IBL Conference.

### Richard F. Pride Fellowship Recipient Ms. Robin Boylorn

In her fourth year as a Richard F. Pride Fellow, Robin Boylorn is a Ph.D. candidate in Communication Studies. Her research is focused on collecting and telling the stories of rural black women. She plans to merge this research into a creative dissertation in the form of a novel.



Robin Boylorn  
Richard F. Pride Fellow

Robin credits the Pride Fellowship with contributing to her success at USF. "As a Pride fellow I had the opportunity and privilege to dedicate my first year of doctoral study to writing and researching topics that eventually led to my first publication and numerous opportunities to present at local and national conferences (within and outside the field of communication). The Pride fellowship freed me to pursue my studies full time to establish myself as a scholar and future academic. As a Pride fellow I have received recognitions and awards including a creative writing award, teaching award, assistantships, publications, and peer reviews."

### The Richard F. Pride Doctoral Fellowship

The Richard F. Pride Research Fellowship for the Improvement of Minority Educational Opportunities identifies individuals who have demonstrated strong academic abilities and provides them with an opportunity to engage in advanced study in pursuit of a Doctor of Philosophy degree at USF. Named for a local educator and USF professor, the fellowship provides a stipend of \$20,000 per year for up to four years and an 80% tuition waiver.

Information on eligibility, the selection process, and applying for a Fellowship is available on our website at [www.usf.edu/ibl](http://www.usf.edu/ibl).

#### 2006-07 Richard F. Pride Fellows

**Robin Boylorn**, Communication      **Dorielle Tucker**, Engineering  
**Timetria Bonds**, Medical Sciences      **Ronee Wilson**, Public Health