

LE JOURNAL

West Virginia State College Office of International Affairs Newsletter

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William H. Gray III visits West Virginia State College



William Gray with WVSC faculty.

On October 30, 2000, Former U.S. Congressman and President and Chief Executive Officer of the College Fund/UNCF, William H. Gray III paid a special visit to the WVSC campus to deliver the keynote address at the annual Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU) Convocation.

As chairman of the Democratic Caucus and later as Majority Whip, Mr. Gray was the highest-ranking African American ever to serve in Congress. Mr. Gray was a leading advocate for HBCUs through his support of set-aside programs at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). He was also a co-sponsor of the Black

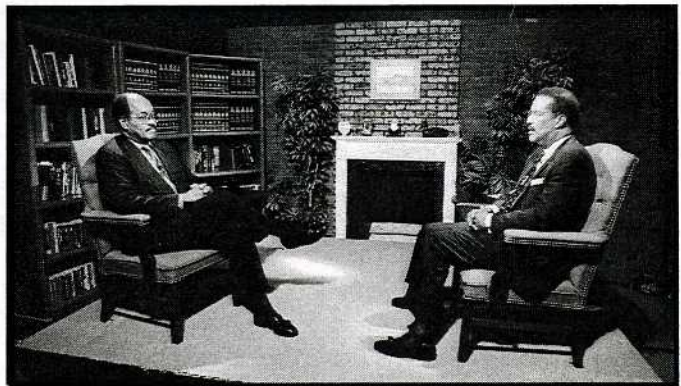
College Act, which provides formula-driven federal funds for the enhancement of HBCU programs, faculty and facilities.

During the HBCU Convocation Mr. Gray gave an inspiring talk on the importance of education. He stated that education will play a key role in developing stable relations in an ever increasing diverse U.S. population.

With his visit falling one week before elections, Mr. Gray emphasized the importance of voting. He reminded us that the 2000 presidential race was similar to that of 1960 when every vote made a difference.

After the convocation, WVSC President and Mrs. Hazo W. Carter, Jr. hosted a luncheon that included, among other guests, participants in the IDP Partnership between the WVSC Drain-Jordan library and the library at the National University of Benin. The IDP Partnership is the result of an agreement between The College Fund/UNCF and USAID.

The luncheon concluded on an informal note as Mr. Gray agreed to answer questions posed by various guests. Mr. Gray finished the day's activities by taping a "State Today" show with President Carter.



President Carter and William Gray tape a "State Today" show.

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Spring Break Study Abroad and Travel Tours 2001

Egypt

March 16-April 1, 2001
Contact: Dr. Herta Jogland
Campus Box 100

Mexico

Department of Sociology
Sociology 399 Field Study Abroad
Spring Semester Classes: Tuesday 5:00-6:45
Spring Break Field Trip to Oaxaca, Mexico: March 17-24, 2001
Contact: Dr. Bob Hall
766-3047
hall@mail.wvsc.edu

Mexico

WV State College Faculty Trip
March 17-24, 2001
(in conjunction with the Sociology 399 Field Trip)
Contact: Dr. James Natsis
Office of International Affairs
766-4249
natsisja@mail.wvsc.edu

Middle States African Studies Association

Second Annual Conference
“Black Plague: Health, Population & AIDS in the African Diaspora”

May 3-6, 2001

to be held on the campus of
West Virginia State College
Institute, West Virginia

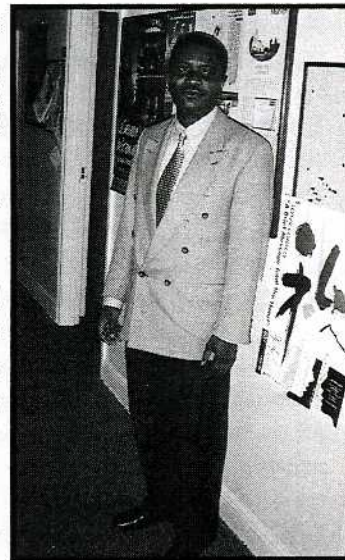
Contact: Dr. C. Stuart McGehee, Dean
Department of History
307 Hill Hall, Campus Box 162
West Virginia State College
Institute, West Virginia 25112-1000
(304) 766-3240 Telephone
(304) 766-5186 Fax
email: mcgehest@wvsvax.wvnet.edu

The WVSC-Benin Connection: Mr. Alban Aimée Amamion

Mr. Alban Aimée Amamion arrived in early October for a 2-month stay at WVSC as part of the WVSC-Benin partnership funded by The College Fund/UNCF and USAID. During his stay at WVSC, Amamion worked closely with the library staff and WVSC Computer Services Director, Bob Huston. In addition to his training at the WVSC campus, Amamion visited libraries and attended seminars and conferences throughout the Charleston area, as well as in Huntington, WV, Pittsburg, PA and Nashville, TN.

Born in the small town of Boyicon, located in the heartland of the Fon ethnic and linguistic group in the central region of Benin, Amamion left for Cotonou with his parents at the age of 8-years-old. He graduated from the French Lycée in Cotonou where he spent his last 3 years of high school, and then enrolled in the electronics program at the Collège Polytechnique Universitaire as a computer science major.

Presently, Amamion is the Director of Computer Services at the National University of Benin library. Amamion and his former high school sweetheart and wife for the past 5 years, Maryse, reside in Cotonou. The couple have a 1-year-old son, Primale David. Primale means "premier and unique" in Fon.

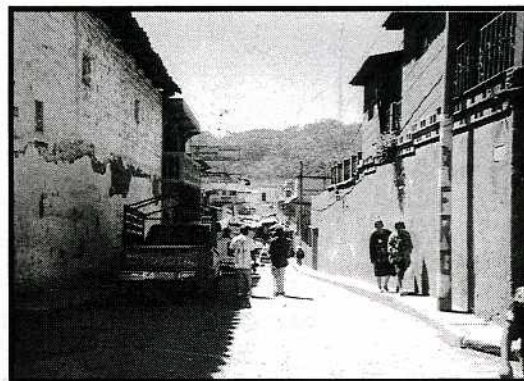


Alban Amamion

Post Card from Guatemala

My name is Thomas DePriest. I am a Computer Science major at WVSC. For a little over six months I was given the opportunity to live in Guatemala, Central America by the International Studies Department. I stayed in San Lucas Toliman, a small city with a population of about 20,000 (including surrounding villages) located on the shore of Lake Atitlan in the mountainous highlands of Guatemala, about 4 hours from Guatemala City. I worked with the Roman Catholic Mission under the guidance of Father Gregory.

I will always cherish my memories and experiences of being submerged in Latin American society, and being allowed to encounter up close the Mayan culture. While in Central America I worked with children, teenagers, and adults in many areas. We exchanged language classes, constructed facilities for learning, participated in reforestation projects, agricultural activities such as planting and picking coffee, and observed the medical personnel perform their duties. I feel that this opportunity to live in another country has allowed me to grow as a person, and a student. I had to use all the knowledge I acquired while attending college in order to function. Communication is probably the most significant one because I had to use more than words to express myself. My Spanish isn't all that good, but I learned enough to survive.



San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala

The views outside of the city in the mountains are breathtaking. And the people are friendly. I would recommend this country to anyone traveling to Central America. It was great!

The WVSC Office of International Affairs would like to extend a special thanks to Dr. Ann-Marie Evans (History). Her efforts made this trip possible.

The Voice of the Students

Do you think that the 2000 U.S. presidential elections tarnished or strengthened our image as a model democracy in the eyes of the world?

Yes [tarnished our image]. The election made the U.S. look stupid. We are supposed to be a super power and we can't even count votes. *Tara Dotson, Nursing*

I believe that America's reputation has slowly been on the decline for a good period of time. After this 2000 election we (America) have really shown our hind ends. The world is slowly no longer looking at us as a "Power House" country, but a joke. *Elizabeth Mullins, Education*

I believe that the election was a disgrace because Gov. Bush from the State of Florida caused this confusion through allowing the past racism to catch up with the present by hindering the votes of minorities and whites in predominately black neighborhoods. It will make Americans take a look at how our country really is under the surface. *Martha Gale Poore*

I feel it has proven that the people still have the opportunity to vote. *Dave Jones, Social Work*

I believe the 2000 election strengthened our image. Even with all of the controversy, it has shown democracy in action. In some other countries a protest would not have been tolerated; the person would have been executed for even mentioning a recount, much less demanding one. I think that Gore had reflected a bad image by dragging it on so long and has harmed his chance of winning a future election by being a sore loser. It seems he will not believe an accurate count has been made until he gets the answer he wants, and he wants to keep Florida counting until they say he won. *Kim Kidd, Criminal Justice*

For "we" the people of the U.S., this election seemed to have strengthened the importance of voting. Globally, with good reason, it is likely that most people see great humor in this mess. I feel sure that many countries are glad to see what has happened because of the way the U.S. government always seems to push our "Democratic" ways onto those struggling to develop their governments. It is time to eat our words. *Helen G. Poffenbarger, Art Education*

I feel the 2000 election tarnished our image. In the early outcome I felt strongly with Gore that the voter had a right to be heard. Now, I feel both candidates are behaving childishly. *Elizabeth Summers, Social Studies Education*

2001 Rhonez Scholar: Gloria Crouch

The Office of International Affairs would like to congratulate our 2001 Rhonez Scholar, Gloria Crouch. Ms. Crouch has enrolled in Professor Bob Hall's Sociology 399 Field Study Abroad course during the spring semester. During Spring Break 2001, the class will go to Oaxaca, Mexico for a field experience as part of the course work.

The Rhonez Scholarship was created in 2000 with the aim of enabling a WVSC student gain a study abroad field experience who, without such financial assistance, may not be able to do so otherwise. The annual scholarship award is \$500. Contact the Office of International Affairs for dates and requirements regarding the submission of scholarship applications.

