
Howard Hermes



Winter 2003/04

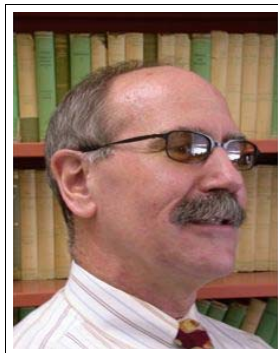
Quid novi at Howard Classics

Here we are, on the heels of a truly remarkable '02-'03 academic year with so much being accomplished by our most recent Classics graduates. I'll list them in alphabetical order: Janyyn Baird is now in Howard's Dental School; Maria Kane is a doctoral student at Duke; Duval ('Tre') Miller is preparing himself for Law School by doing para-legal work in the District; Uche Nwamara is a doctoral student at Harvard; and Marianna Ofosu is embarking on her Rhodes Fellowship at Oxford.

I should also mention that of the 42 Phi Beta Kappas from the COAS last year, five were majoring in Classics. The bar has been set rather high and I hope that all of you undergraduates in Classics will be inspired and even challenged by the achievements of your 'elders.'

Let me report as well that Keith Harris ('02) is pursuing a doctorate in Classics at Penn and is a recent recipient of a Mellon Fellowship. Keith

EGO MULTOS HOMINES
EXCELLENTI ANIMO AC
VIRTUTE FUISSE SINE
DOCTRINA ET NATURAE
IPSIUS HABITU PROPE DI-
VINO PER SE IPSOS ET
MODERATOS ET GRAVES
EXTITISSE FATEOR; ETIAM
ILLUD ADIUNGO, SAEPIUS



*Dr. Rudolph Hock, Chairman
of the Howard University
Department of Classics*

AD LAUDEM ATQUE VIR-
TUTEM NATURAM SINE
DOCTRINA QUAM SINE
NATURA VALUISSE DOC-
TRINAM. ATQUE IDEM
EGO HOC CONTENDO,
CUM AD NATURAM EX-
IMIAM ET INLUSTREM AC-
CESSERIT RATIO
QUAEDAM CONFORMA-
TIOQUE DOCTRINAE, TUM
ILLUD NESCIO QUID
PRAECLARUM AC SINGU-
LARE SOLERE EXISTERE.

and Garnetta Lewis ('04) were our interns at the Center for Hellenic Studies this past summer. It is obvious that the director of the Center, Professor Gregory Nagy, and his staff remain very pleased with the efforts of our students. The best proof of their satisfaction is that they have increased the number of internships for this academic year to three; Vernon Edmondson ('04), Marisol Gouveia ('05), and Joycelyn Peyton ('05).

Elsewhere in our inaugural HERMES newsletter you will be meeting some new faculty members: Patricia Bochi, who is replacing Dr. Roth, on leave for the year; Susan Joseph, who is an adjunct teaching two courses, and Rebecca Kennedy, who was appointed Assistant Professor over the summer. I know that everyone will extend to them the warmest of welcomes. To all of my colleagues and to all of you students, past and present, my best wishes for a happy and productive year ahead.

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On Staying In Touch

As all you classics students and alumni well know, Hermes is the Greek messenger god suitably outfitted with winged sandals, traveler's hat, and supportive staff or in this 21st century reincarnation sporting a Howard H and traveling electronically. For the ancient Greeks, Hermes served to connect the "inside" with the "outside," crisscrossing boundaries to enable a fruitful exchange between home and the hinterland.

For students and alums, Locke 254 serves as home for 4 (or a bit more!) years and we - faculty, staff, and students who send you off - miss you when you leave, wish you great good luck, and

very much want to hear what you are doing. We also want to tell you what we are doing--what has changed and what has stayed the same (hopefully the good things). We also know that you want to hold on to the friendships you formed within the Department as you lounged in the Lounge, hung around Deidra's desk, partied in the Minoan Palace, and yes, studied your declensions.

And so our HOWARD HERMES was born. We hope that you will use this forum to share your experiences and thoughts with your teachers and fellow students in the form of an annual paragraph or more. Keep us up to date on your whereabouts (including current addresses, phone numbers, and emails), and yes, send pictures.

In other words, HERMES is for all of us and like the ancient Greek Hermes, is all about connections and exchange.

*Molly Levine (aka
Doc, Magistra, Livy, and
now Maia)*



Dr. Molly Levine and Marianna Ofosu ('03), our Rhodes Scholarship winner

“Hold on to the friendships you formed within the Department as you lounged in the Lounge, hung around Deidra’s desk, partied in the Minoan Palace, and yes, studied your declensions.”

Your Submissions

Send written submissions (texts and pictures) and updates on your whereabouts via email to:

dlgoodwin@howard.edu.

By post, send to:

Howard University,
Department of Classics,
254 Locke Hall,
Washington, D.C. 20059.



Our beloved Deidra, hard at work in the department's office.



By Maria Kane
(‘03)

“I felt a sense of ownership of the material because of my wonderful experience in Roman Civ. and the instruction that I received, whereby Roman history was presented to me as if it were my own to know. I couldn’t explain it, but it just all came full circle.”

Owning my classical education

Classes are in full swing at Duke and I am loving it. I'm taking 4 courses--Faith & Freedom, Early and Medieval Church History, Old Testament Interpretation, and The Pastor's Vocation. It's challenging, but the experience is wonderful and Duke is an experience in itself--it's an experience though that I am glad I am having now, not as an undergrad...and you'll see why.

This past Tuesday on my first day of Early & Medieval Church History my professor, Dr. William Smith, passed out a hand-out of quotes regarding the Roman attitude towards the early Christians. And who else was there but Trajan and Pliny. I didn't know whether to smile or cry (smile, because I saw everything come full circle and I understood the text in ways some of my classmates didn't--or cry with joy because I knew that I had come upon a treasure many years ago and now sorely missed it).

Anyway, I was so excited because not only did I recognize what they were saying, but I also remembered the lecture in Roman Civ. on Pliny's letters. I remembered the Latin words of the letter. As Dr. Smith contin-

ued, he offered a "crash" course on Roman culture and politics. I just sat there with the biggest smile. I knew this material. More than that, I felt a sense of ownership of the material because of my wonderful experience in Roman Civ. and the instruction that I received, whereby Roman history was presented to me as if it were my own to know. I couldn't explain it, but it just all came full circle when I came to Duke. And whenever we did introductions throughout the week and I mentioned majoring in the Classics, the eyes of my professors become wide. "Ah, so you studied about Socrates and Pliny...Greek or Latin, perhaps?" And with the greatest joy and pride I've said, "Yes, Latin." At the same time, a slight sadness entered--I could have gotten so much more out of it, I think--and yet I still feel as if I got so much out of it. Still, I think I could have gotten more, simply because there is so much there, but at the same time I learned so much beyond just the texts.

And in one of my classes "The Pastor's Vocation" our dean, Gregory Jones, said to me on Thursday very matter of factly, yet with authenticity"

Continued on next page



Uche Nwamara (‘03)
and Krystal Williams
(‘04) recovering from
class in the Lounge.

Owning (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

"You went to a good place study the Classics." I don't know if he has any Classics background, but if he doesn't, I think it speaks even more of the department's depth.

I loved my experience on the second floor of Locke and I would not, nor could I, trade it for anything in the world. But even more, studying Classics at Howard made

me feel as if I could learn anything I wanted to and ask anything I wanted to...and even make mistakes, for the passion and beauty in teaching and learning has never been as strong as it is in that department. I shudder whenever I think of the time I "dropped" the major for the sake of solely studying modern history on the advice of an advisor. And when I finally decided on seminary I struggled for nearly the entire semester over the potential choice. I felt like and feel like I am meant to be here. Yet could I be abandoning my love of Classics and history? It was a hard choice.

But I slowly realized this summer that I cannot abandon that love of classics or what I learned. It is so much a part of who I am and still becoming, inside and outside the classroom. More than anything, Classics taught me to read, really read, and to write, and unlock the joy and web of meanings in everything around me.

If I had any measure of money it would go straight to the Classics department. However, I confidently tell myself that one day the time will come when I'll be fortunate enough to give money back to the department...which by then will probably be under the fine direction of my classmates who experienced the same challenge, rigor, and joy I encountered...the same challenge, rigor, and joy that doesn't ever leave.



Members of Eta Sigma Phi hiked in Great Falls, Virginia in October. Professors Kennedy and Mayer tagged along.

“Studying Classics at Howard made me feel as if I could learn anything I wanted to and ask anything I wanted to.”

Order your Howard Classics T-Shirts



Alumni and Friends!

Order your Howard Classics T-shirt now and support the department. Indicate size (S, M, L, XL) and number of shirts and send a check or money order for \$15 x number of shirts to:

Howard University,
Department of Classics,
254 Locke Hall,
Washington, D.C. 20059

Shipping and Handling are included.



Dr. Danielle Allen, the inaugural Frank Snowden Jr. Lecture speaker, and a group of Howard Classics students.



Marianna (center) flanked by two future Classics students?

Marianna & Vernon: A dialogue in Geneva

(The following is excerpted from Marianna's "Geneva Chronicles: The Poverty Log" a weekly narrative of her summer experiences during an internship at the UN Development Program in Geneva. Vernon's Geneva experience was underwritten by the Lucy Moten Foundation. This Fall, Marianna started at

"There were some 500,000 visitors to Geneva that weekend, streets were blocked off and littered. This is the most action this village sees throughout the year."

Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship where she began an M.Phil in Development Studies. Vernon returned to Howard to fortify himself with more Greek before entering the "real world")

Marianna

This year, there were fireworks and champagne the night of my birthday, extra chocolate cake for breakfast the following day, and good company throughout the weekend. The fireworks courtesy of the city of Geneva; the champagne courtesy of Lilian Zhao; the chocolate cake courtesy of my lovely roommate, Val; the good company thanks to the both of them, my college friend Vernon, and a bunch of international strangers who filled the city for the weekend.

You see on July 31, Geneva began its annual toast to itself, a 10-day festival, complete with roller coaster rides, international food stands and world music concerts and parades.

Then there was August 1, or Swiss Day, a showcase of nearly naked bodies jiggling to techno music on moving trucks from 2 p.m. until 2 a.m. Yeah, it all resembled MTV Spring Break, but people - from toddlers to grandpas - lined the streets for two hours in the midday sun to toast good ol' Geneve.

There were some 500,000 visitors to Geneva that weekend, streets were blocked off and littered. This is the most action this village sees throughout the year.

Having said that, Vernon, who's sitting by my window trying to keep cool (Geneva's trapped in the pre-

AC era) just mentioned that, in reality, the festival got boring after the second day, but it's still "kind of raging on." In light of that comment, and in light of the fact that Vernon's been here for a week now, it may be refreshing for all of you to hear his impressions of Geneva. Vernon?

Vernon

Not only is Geneva still raging on, but it's also still blazing on, much to the dismay of the very old, very short Swiss ladies whose frequent good fortune it has been to

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Vernon Edmonson ('04), our brave Greek major, and Uche at graduation celebrations last May.

A dialogue (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

stand next to this very tall, very sweaty American on *le autobus*.

I thought that Geneva would be nothing more than a sleepy little village dressed up in big city clothing, and that I would be the tall, dark 'stranger in the village' come to briefly give this place a little more flavor and, needless to say, a little more color. But much to my surprise and to the devastation of my misconceptions, this sleepy little village is not only very awake, but also rather colorful.

The juxtapositions are interesting: the ancient cathedrals on the same street as the Golden Arches; the random

woman with bright eyes shining through the slits of a burqa next to the very liberally outfitted agéd matron, flashing tanned skin through a twopiece... and much, much more. Although Geneva never sleeps, unfortunately I do and French class begins early in the morning. To be continued...

Marianna

There you have it from Vernon. His self-portrayal as a 'stranger in the village' is hardly an honest one. He uses my apartment as a hideout from the women, Swiss and international alike, who seem to have taken

a liking to him, and who, seemingly, take too much initiative in knocking on his door just as he begins leafing through his Nietzsche.

His impression of Geneva as a wild, wild town have been shaped, in part, by the location of his living quarters in the "red-light district" of the city. I feel a bit bad about all of this because I found him the place, though I had no idea that the Paquis area, by the river, housed all those "easy lovin'" spots. Somehow I think that he'll be alright.

Marianna & Vernon



*Vernon,
the philosopher.*

"The juxtapositions are interesting: the ancient cathedrals on the same street as the Golden Arches."

Short Cuts

Britt Cannon Johnson ('01)

I'm in Little Rock working as a Museum Interpreter at the Historic Arkansas Museum. I'm doing very well, life is good. My address & e-mail are: 915 Cartier Ln., Little Rock, AR 72211. bcjohns@sbcglobal.net

I have made my first and second alumni contributions to Howard & requested that they be forwarded to the Classics Department!



Britt ('01) protecting a delightful spread at the Minoan Palace.



By Keith Harris
(‘02)

Selling Dad on the Classics

So what is the next step for one who gains a B.A. in Classics from Howard University? Or in the sobering words of my venerable working-class father, who always speaks with such

“Studying classical civilization can give you a long view of history that humbles the prestige of any human endeavor.”

unction, "So what the hell are you gonna do now?" Ahh, easy to see where my appreciation for eloquent diction comes from!

For those of you who undertook the study of the Classics as undergraduates at Howard because "it's great for pre-law and pre-med," or whatever other reason those persuasive rhetors camped out in Locke 254 gave you, realizing the vulnerability of intellectually starved young people who came to college with the crazy idea that they are actually supposed to learn something, answering my father's question may not be so easy.

Studying classical civilization can give you a long view of history that humbles the prestige of any human endeavor, and suddenly career paths that once seemed noble and glorious don't have the same glow and air of greatness. And so suddenly your synoptic understanding of *de rerum natura* has brought you face-to-face with that haunting question that you now find impossible to separate from your

career choice, "What *is* the meaning life, or does it have any meaning at all?"

For me, however, the study of the Classics has become an end in and of itself, and seeing that I have made the decision to pursue a professional career as a classicist, I have the luxury of not having to answer that question right away, and I can spend the rest of my life using classical humanism as a platform for suggesting possible answers to it.

After Howard I enrolled in a post-baccalaureate program for classical studies at the University of Pennsylvania, a year-long purgatory between undergraduate and graduate school, which gave me an opportunity to sharpen my Greek and Latin, and to beef up my c.v. for my graduate applications. I applied to only three schools, Princeton, and the universities of Pennsylvania and Toronto, feeling these to be the only ones worthy of me, a feeling natural to one who has been inculcated with a Platonic ideal of scholarship, the result of studying under the tutelage of one Alexander Tulin, Howard's own eccentric gadfly.

I was only accepted by the University of Pennsylvania

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Keith (from left), Dr. Levine, Dr. Hock and Britt smile for the camera.



Keith spreading the gospel of Latin & beer to Marisol (left) and Kelley.

Selling Dad (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

nia. Penn offered me a five-year fellowship with a generous stipend, and I also won a one-year Mellon fellowship from the Woodrow Wilson foundation, with an even better stipend (Who says academia doesn't pay?). I am now a first-year graduate student in Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, hoping to do my primary research in Greek philosophy and rhetoric.

And so back to my father's question; despite my many attempts to explain to him precisely what I do, he still doesn't quite get it, and probably never will (bless his heart!), although he loves bragging to his friends that his son is attending graduate school at a university ranked fourth for graduate study by U.S. News & World Report. I think these types of reports don't have any real value, but hey, the old man needs something more tangible than Plato's Forms to take pride in his son!

If any of you graduating from Howard have been deeply touched by the Classics faculty there, and feel drawn towards the study of the Classics at the professional level, yet you are surrounded by the

likes of my father, whose own ignorance of the value of secular humanism is nowadays surpassed even by some university administrators, you should realize that the survival of the Classics department at Howard probably depends on its own graduates returning to take hold of its stewardship.

I hope to be one of those graduates, and hope that at least a few of you have such an ambition as well. Molding a new generation of leaders will require professors who can give students the humanistic worldview that an education in the Classics helps to foster. If being a part of that process doesn't seem to be a tangible enough career choice for you, then your education in Classics has yet to serve its purpose.

Whether you decide to be a classicist, grade-school teacher, or whatever your heart desires, never forget that oft-quoted proverb of the comic poet Terence, a proverb which every student of the Classics should know by heart, especially students like us, who live in a world where ethnic and national identities too often trump our common humanity, and who are often made to feel that the legacies of Greece and Rome are somehow not a part of our own cultural heritage: "*Homo sum, humani nil a me alienum puto.*"



Keith and Britt laugh at one of Dr. Tulin's jokes about the Aorist.

“You should realize that the survival of the Classics Department at Howard probably depends on its own graduates returning to take hold of its stewardship.”

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- Feel free to contact me at any time.

Letters Home



Markus Hunt ('92)

“Love to all and Latin to the rest”



Seth and Dr. Hock deep in conversation.



Marisol (right) and her aunt having fun in Philly.

Markus Hunt ('92)

After graduating from Howard University, I spent the next five years as a Latin teacher. However enriched, I decided to pursue another passion - film and theatre. So, I moved to New York and found that between starving, I could actually find work in the "industry."

I worked as an assistant director on a feature film, which was great fun and hard work. The movie was horrible, so don't go looking for it. The director of photography was also a Latinist, so we spent most of the month alienating the rest of the crew.

In theatre, I had the opportunity to direct for Opera Works, a chamber opera company. In my two seasons with the company, I directed Milton Babbitt's "Philomel" and Thea Musgrave's "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge."

It was after directing "Philomel" that I was reminded of the rich tapestry that the ancient world had woven. Not long after that, I decided to return to the classroom. But I have not left the arts all together. I continue to write and recently had a play ("Mother, Brother, Sister,

Hooker") produced at the Manhattan Theatre Source in New York.

Next summer, you can find me at the Greek Institute at CUNY. I know, finally Greek for Mr. Hunt.

Love to all and Latin for

Marisol Gouveia ('05)

Marisol, who held a summer internship as a copy editor at the Philadelphia Inquirer, writes of her love of journalism:

I was completely and utterly absorbed in my little newspaper world.

I returned from Philly armed with clips of my headlines and the certainty that I have finally found what I was made for.

All my heretofore useless knowledge found application in my everyday duties as a copy editor, and the challenge of writing headlines for stories I am excited about, or have no interest in, gives me daily motivation. The thrill I get when I discover a factual error in the text, relying only on what's already in my head, is matchless.

I'm a copy editor for life now, I'm afraid, though Classics was a great temptation for a moment there!

Faculty Notes

Dale Sinos is on leave for '03-04 as Visiting Professor at Amherst College where he taught Catullus and Euripides in the Fall, and is teaching Homer and Sophocles this Spring.

Alex Tulin who was on sabbatical (Fall '03) and is the proud parent of a new daughter Shoshami, says: "Hello from the depths... or the *omphalos* (as the case may be...). On sabbatical, finally!!!! Sleeping, reading, writing, and baby-sitting. Our daughter turns 9 months (*tempus volat!*) and already knows the first three Latin declensions. (She loves *puella-puellae*, but cries at *rex-regis...go figure!*) See you soon...

P.S. Don't forget to work on your Greek....

NEW FACULTY FACES

Patricia Bocci writes: I received my PhD in the History of Art, with a specialization in Ancient Egyptian art, from the University of Pennsylvania. I am particularly interested in how art functioned as a visual language, which, just like the written texts, can inform us about the beliefs and practices of the ancient Egyptians.

I am also interested in

issues dealing with art and society. I hope to be able to share with my students this year as much as I can about this rich and truly amazing culture.

Susan Joseph writes: For the past 15 years, while my husband labored at the law and our son went through high school, college, and law school, with a German shepherd for company I studied and taught literature and language at the University of Maryland, Catholic University, Academy of the Holy Cross and Connelly School of the Holy Child. I choose to teach at Howard because while in the high schools there is more concern with students, and at universities the emphasis is usually on the intellectual development of the teachers, at Howard teaching and independent scholarship are equally important.

My little sixth-grade Latin students became philology birds, and I am eager to instill that love of language by giving Howard students the tools to discern the Greek and Latin elements of English words. To paraphrase Kenneth Burke, my humanities students will learn that situations in literature can equip them for life. My dissertation on very recent



Dr. Alex Tulin

“Our daughter turns 9 months (tempus volat!) and already knows the first three Latin declensions. (She loves puella-puellae, but cries at rex-regis...go figure!)”



Dr. Patricia Bocci



Dr. Susan Joseph

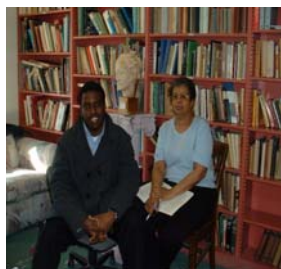


Dr. Ken Mayer

“My humanities students will learn that situations in literature can equip them for life.”



Dr. Rebecca Kennedy



Uche and Dr. Carrie Cowherd in the Lounge

Faculty Notes (continued)

(Continued from page 10)

Susan Joseph (continued)

and performances of Euripides' tragedy *Medea* has taken me literally and figuratively through the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. In September I presented a paper on Irish *Medea* plays in a global context at a conference on Irish adaptations of Greek tragedy in Galway, Ireland.

Kenneth Mayer writes: I joined the department in 2002 and am teaching Classical Myth and Satire and Comedy. I work on ancient historiography and the theme of “going native,” and am currently working on Alexander's adoption of Iranian culture.

I have just assumed the mantle of adviser for the Eta Sigma Phi Honor Society, and have led my classes on two trips to the Classics and Egyptian collections at the Walter Art Museum in Baltimore.

In January I gave a talk on the mythological theme of ritual antagonism in *Contempt*, a French film intriguingly based on the *Odyssey*.

Rebecca Kennedy writes: I am a new Assistant Professor here at Howard. I did my graduate work at The Ohio State University and my undergrad at UC

San Diego.

My primary research interests are on Athenian imperialism and politics in the fifth-century BC, Greek tragedy and historiography, both Greek and Roman.

I am also interested in philosophies of history and other problems of cultural identity and its relationship to language. Most importantly, however, I am interested in how the study of antiquity translates to modern America, especially politically and on the big (and little) screen.

Professor Emeritus Frank M. Snowden Jr. Honored with 2003 Humanities medal

Professor Emeritus Frank M. Snowden Jr. was honored by President Bush and the NEH when they announced the 2003 Humanities medals in November. The award is given to distinguished Americans for their contributions to the humanities.

Prof. Snowden is one of the foremost scholars on blacks in ancient Egypt, Greece, and Italy and the author of many books on blacks in the ancient Mediterranean world.



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In This Issue...

Faculty Notes & New Faces...Alumni Reflections...Letters Home...A dialogue in Geneva



Sgt. Michael Simzak

A Letter From Iraq

At the rate that my mail reaches the U.S. I will make it home before the next letter I sent out. I am safe and hoping to get out of here sometime soon.

Everything eventually turned out alright in Mosul and I got to do some great sight seeing at Ninevah and Saddam's Palace.

I worked to return some 400+ refugees to their homes. These people were displaced by Saddam's Arabization program and we are trying to get them

back to the city that they were forced to leave.

I went to one of the dams up here and it was just about the most beautiful place I have seen possibly ever.

Since there are very few American soldiers in this Area (Just us and the SF boys- and they don't take pictures) we are like rock stars around here. When we go places we pretty much stop traffic sometimes.

The first time I had real local food I got Saddam's revenge and after that I was cool.

Hope to see you all soon!

"I went to one of the dams up here and it was just about the most beautiful place I have seen possibly ever."