

Religious Organization Returns To Campus

By Sharilyn Seale
Ink Staff Writer

Founded in November 1981, the Black Interdenominational Student Association once carried 250 members representing students, faculty and staff.

In May 1982, the leadership graduated and BISA was dissolved. But this year the work of coordinator and chaplain Jo Watson and the efforts of a few members have resurrected BISA, and they all hope it will soon be as powerful and invigorating as it was ten years ago.

BISA is an organization designed to provide avenues of fellowship for University students of various religious affiliations.

Watson, a founding member of the original BISA, is a licensed minister in the Eastern North Caro-

lina Association, Southern Conference United Church of Christ. She received her bachelor's degree from UNC in African-American studies and her master's degree in divinity from Duke University.

"University students should join BISA because the organization addresses the spiritual and religious needs of students, particularly those who are African American," Watson said. "At BISA, we want students to be just as intelligent in the books as they are in the bible."

In an effort to remain conducive to an active student life, BISA holds an on-campus worship service on Sundays from 5 to 6 p.m. Feast and fellowship, a time when students, faculty and staff congregate while partaking of a potluck dinner, is held immediately following each service.

"At feast and fellowship hour I get to know other Christians," said Sonya McCauley, a junior BISA member from Charlotte. "I know that if I ever need good Christian advice, I can find it there."

Both the service and fellowship take place in the Wesley Foundation Chapel at 214 Pittsboro St. behind the Carolina Inn. Every Sunday there is a different style of worship. BISA observes Communion Sunday, Traditional Sunday, Heritage Sunday and Outreach Sunday, respectively.

On Traditional Sunday, the service is without a theme and informal, and on Outreach Sunday, BISA emphasizes community involvement by recognizing organizations that work within the community, like the A.P.P.L.E.S program, the Inter-faith Council and Habitat for

Humanity. These services will commence Oct. 6.

Jimmy Lewis, a junior from Lumberton, said BISA gives students a chance to learn about other denominations. But, "It is a group that shares the same interests," he said.

BISA is composed of several committees including the membership, newsletter, budget and public relations committees; all are open to prospective members. Full-time University students who wish to join should complete a brief membership application. No dues are required.

Gregory McLeod, interim president of BISA, encouraged students to join because the organization supports students through Christian fellowship.

"BISA allows its members and

guests to interact with one another at worship service, Bible study, and other BISA-supported functions," he said. "Each of us has a chance to share our talents and customs."

BISA is run by an Advisory Board comprised of several campus and community notables. Board members have agreed to make sure the BISA tradition perseveres.

The board members are: Bertina H. Baldwin, the Rev. Richard Edens, Edith Wiggins, Esphur E. Foster, Dr. John W. Hatch, Shirley M. Hunter, Velverton G. Land, Sibby Anderson-Thompkins, Vice Chancellor Harold G. Wallace, Vice Chancellor and Chaplain Manuel Wortman. The late Dr. Sonja H. Stone had also agreed to sit on the board.



UNC Alumna Remembers, Honors Sonja Stone

This resolution is being submitted to the Black Ink as documentation of BISA's support of the efforts of the Sonja H. Stone Task Force."

Remembering Dr. Sonja H. Stone

I once read about an African nation's tradition of believing that when one's soul returned to God, their status or position with the heavenly council was qualified by how often they were remembered by those they left here on earth. So, whenever the family circle was broken on earth by a loved one's homegoing, our ancestors would remember that individual by sharing reflections of that person's life with each other on earth, naming a newborn after them...they would find ways to honor their loved one's memorial day and sometimes their birthday...those left on earth would petition the ancestral spirit of the person that they personally knew to intercede with God on their behalf, and at certain times they would pour libation to them. The more times their ancestor's name was mentioned, called upon, remembered... or the more times good deeds or activities were done in the name of the one whose soul had taken flight from earthly vessel, then the greater their chances were of helping earthlings get their prayers answered.

Sonja Haynes Stone—my men-

tor while I was an undergraduate student majoring in Afro-American Studies and an active member of the Black Interdenominational Student Association almost 10 years ago; Sonja H. Stone—my mentor and friend while I served as president of the Black Student Movement and pledged the Theta Pi Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority; Sonja H. Stone—my mentor, my dear friend, and my big sister while I worked as her employee and elsewhere in the Chapel Hill/Durham community, and then later when I accepted my call to the ministry. Sonja H. Stone—my dear friend, big sister and prayer partner throughout my matriculation at Duke Divinity School and as an active member of the UNC Alumni Association...These are just some of the many reasons why I must join in the efforts to keep the name and spirit of Sonja H. Stone alive and well here on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

SO...

BE IT KNOWN THAT
WHEREAS,

Members and potential members of the Black Interdenominational Student Association will not ignore the supportive presence of Dr. Sonja H. Stone in BISA's history when it was founded 10 years ago and her

support of its re-establishment on campus this year; and

WHEREAS,

Sonja H. Stone was more than a feminist and was philosophically a womanist, that the spiritual leadership of BISA will require the same of its Chaplain—that issues of not only sexism, but rather issues of sexism, racism, and classism in the Holy Scriptures be properly placed in its theological context and appropriately addressed through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Sonja H. Stone extended her sisterhood beyond her sorority, denomination, and even crossed generational and racial lines, BISA has agreed to host and coordinate the Sonja H. Stone Memorial Service for the General Alumni Association (Black Alumni Reunion) which is scheduled for the weekend of 25 October 1991; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Sonja H. Stone extended her role modeling, leadership and her professional and personal contributions beyond the university community to the community at large, BISA challenges other organizations (particularly the church community wherein she also made di-

rect contributions as a leader and role model) to establish an auxiliary, fund or whatever the respective churches or other community groups deem appropriate in her honor to maintain positive linkages to the university community; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Sonja H. Stone was like Queen Esther of the Holy Scriptures in that she willingly made personal sacrifices to go before the powers that be for justice on behalf of others, and also like Queen Esther, Dr. Stone recognized and preserved the heritage of the queens (and kings) who had gone before her; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Sonja H. Stone believed in sisterly relationships like Mary and Martha of the Holy Scriptures—and was indeed her sister (and brother's) keeper; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Sonja H. Stone, like Elizabeth did with Mary, celebrated rather than envied or begrudged the blessings received by others; and

WHEREAS,

Dr. Sonja H. Stone was like Joanna, Susanna, Lydia, and other certain female disciples of the New Testament, in that she too, followed Jesus;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT

the Black Interdenominational Student Association, in the tradition of our African ancestors, pledge to continue to help the university community to lift up the name and spirit of Dr. Sonja H. Stone so that she will maintain her rightful place on our ancestral grounds. AMEN.
Jo Watson
BISA Chaplain



Dr. Stone speaks at the Western North Carolina Women's Missionary Annual Conference last May. The Conference was held at St. Joseph's Church in Durham.