

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Jan. 27 Issuance of financial aid refunds begin

Feb. 26 Midterm exams

March 4 Midterm exams end

March 5 Midterm break begins (No classes-university open)

March 7 Interim grading period ends

March 11 Midterm break ends

March 25 Deadline for removing incomplete grades

March 25 Deadline for withdrawing from classes

April 22 Spring Holiday (University closed)

April 22 Deadline for withdrawing from the university

April 25 Final exams for graduating seniors begin

April 30 Final exams for graduating seniors end

May 2 Final grades for graduating seniors due

May 6 Final exams end (for students not graduating)

COLUMN, from previous page months I have seen the spark of life and of inspiration.

I have always asked a lot of questions, but never seemed to get answers that satisfied. I may have been asking the wrong people.

Fear, it is what makes us cringe when certain topics are put forth. It is what makes us hide in corners, behind books, desks, cars and doors. Fear is what keeps us from trying, from stepping outside our social and cultural comfort zones, and it keeps us from speaking out.

Sometimes that freedom we think we have is an impediment and a disguise to keep us from exploring new realms and possibilities.

Sometimes when we think we are safe hiding behind closed doors, familiar friends and jobs what we are really doing is not making connections, not learning and not growing.

I realized the connection is there, you only have to be willing to open that door and step outside. You only have to stop being afraid of what other's might think, say or do.



photo by Dea Spicer

Carlotta Walls Lanier (left) talks with Fayetteville State University professor Skye Dent at a book signing after Mrs. Lanier's speech Thursday at Seabrook Auditorium.

CHANCELLORS DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER SERIES

Pioneer urges students to take stand

By Charnell Harris
Voice Features Editor

"You've got to know your history," she said adamantly yet with a quaint smile. The "she" is Carlotta Walls Lanier, the youngest member of the nine African-American students who pioneered school integration in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1957. The Little Rock Nine were made up of a group of young, courageous and most importantly committed teenagers who felt that getting the best education possible was worth all the hardships they faced at Little Rock Central high school.

Mrs. Lanier's visit to the Fayetteville State University campus last Thursday for the Chancellor's Distinguished Speaker Series began with a video clip of the events that made her story possible, stories like the Supreme Court case, *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka* which ended segregation in public schools. It showed how the then Governor of Arkansas used the National Guard to prevent the African-American students from entering the building. The students walked through angry mobs, their families lost their jobs and had to leave town, they were harassed and constantly received death threats during their tenure at Central High. Despite all of these obstacles, in 1960 she became the first African-American female to graduate from Little

Rock Central high school.

Central high school had been voted one of the top schools in the nation, not to mention the most beautiful. Mrs. Lanier recalls walking past it everyday, because it was just blocks from where she lived. She admitted that at age 14, she didn't see going there as something the nation would celebrate her act the it is celebrated today. She saw it as access to an opportunity, and the right to go to the school, that had she been white, she would have been allowed to attend.

In 1958, the governor had the all the public schools shut down, and put more than 3,600 students, both black and white out of high school for a year. However, not one to miss out on learning, young Mrs. Lanier attended correspondence school to keep up with her studies. It is precisely that kind of commitment that she feels this generation is gravely lacking.

"I don't see commitment with the younger people. I don't see the passion and the 'stick-to-it-ness' that [my generation] grew up with," said Mrs. Lanier, during an interview with *The Voice*.

The thing she learned the most about was fear, but not her own. The kind of fear that the mob shared, they feared people who were different, an "unfounded" fear. What made her continue on with her journey was the fact that she knew she was doing something right, and that was all that mattered.

Who's up next?

Who: Judith Jamison, Artistic Director, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

When: February 3, 2011

6:00 p.m.

Where: Seabrook Auditorium

Cost: Free

"Getting that diploma validated everything I had been through," said Mrs. Lanier.

One of the most important lessons Mrs. Lanier tried to get across to students was that ultimately the job of each new generation is to do better than the last, and in today's economy the only way for us to do better is to get an education. And in order for that to happen, this generation needs to push forward and show a stronger commitment to excellence and passion for success.

"I just want the students to understand the world is out there for them and they can achieve anything they want to, they just have to work for it. So let's eliminate excuses. Let's not find a problem for why things can't get done, otherwise you're a part of the problem," said Mrs. Lanier.