



Making the NetWork Media Conference: A Catalyst for Change in the Next Generation of Media Professionals



From left to right: Shannon Peen, James Polk, Professor Wayne Dawkins (rear), Dr. Gale J. Issacs, Stacy Gatling, Greg Childress (rear), Rehema Ellis, Tyrone Reid, Ronel Brewer, Dr. Murel Jones

By: Tyrone D. Reid

The eyes of the ECSU campus and beyond were focused on the Language, Literature, and Communication Department when it hosted its "Making the NetWork" Spring Communications Conference March 23-24.

Johnson Hall, which became a mini utopia for communications students, was abuzz with ECSU students, faculty, and others in the community who welcomed back Rehema Ellis, the NBC news correspondent, and six other young media professionals—including five ECSU alums who are making their mark in the media industry.

The events began with a reception which saw Ms. Ellis prematurely pressed into service in an impromptu talk to students

about her experiences in journalism. Attendees sat in silence and awe as she spoke of the terrible events which occurred on September 11, 2001. "I wanted him to get out so I could drive..." Ellis said referring to the timid cab driver who refused to take her to the site of the worse urban terrorism in America's history, Sept. 11, 2001. Ellis said that even though it was her day off, she knew she had to be a part of reporting this tragic event.

LLC chairman John Luton was effusive about the conference, having Ms. Ellis on campus again and also the department's graduates.

"The whole idea of the Mass Media Conference is completely attributable to Professor [Kip] Branch. I will never forget how excited he was when he shared with

me his ideas for March. I know that a lot of excitement stemmed from the opportunity to bring Rehema Ellis to campus. He was equally excited about having ECSU graduates come back and report on their progress to inspire the next wave of Mass Media professionals to join the ranks," Luton said. "There was an unlimited fountain of wisdom stemming from each participant! I refused to walk away still thirsty in my walk toward success in my career. I thoroughly enjoyed this conference from beginning to end," said Ashley Williams, a senior Communication Studies major.

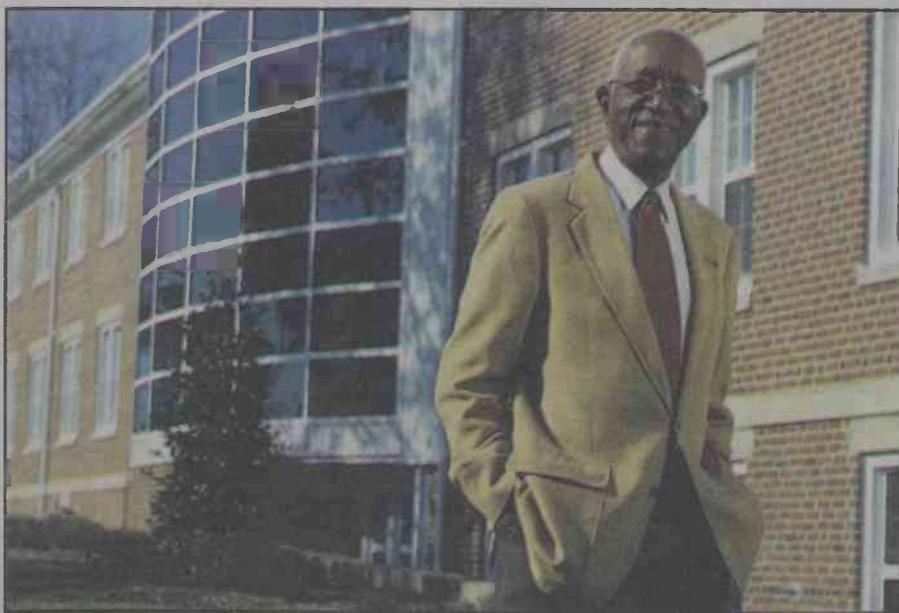
Each of the LLC grads who participated in the program, Shannon Penn, Stacy Gatling, James Polk and Ronel Brewer have gone on to become rising stars in the fields of media and education. Each had very specific advice

for the students who sat before them. Polk, a former Mr. ECSU, currently works as Creative Services Producer at Media General, Inc. in Richmond, Va., Gatling, former editor of The Compass, is an English and Language Arts teacher in Maryland, Brewer, a former Compass writer, is CEO of his own magazine and has created his own blog and teaches high school in Virginia Beach and Penn, who is the voice of Viking football, hosts a sports radio program in Raleigh, NC. The moderator for the event was Professor Wayne Dawkins, a professor at the Scripps Howard School of Journalism at Hampton University. Greg Childress, a writer for the Herald-Sun in Durham, NC, whom Mr. Branch taught 20 years ago was also on the panel.



Rehema Ellis speaks to students during conference

John Hope Franklin



John Hope Franklin outside the Franklin Center located on Central Campus of Duke University

By: Brittnee Exum

The historian Dr. John Hope Franklin died on March 25, 2009 at Duke University Hospital in Durham, North Carolina. He was 94. The cause of death was congestive heart failure.

A renowned scholar and historian, Dr. Franklin will be best remembered for his book "From Slavery to Freedom" which vividly described the struggles and experiences of African Americans' quest to gain equality.

Dr. Franklin graduated from Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. He earned his Ph.D. in history from Harvard University.

In 1978, the Oklahoma native was inducted into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. In addition, Franklin was the first individual to receive the Cleanth Brooks Medal of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. In 1995, Franklin also received an award for his outstanding achievements from the Organization of

American Historians.

Franklin shared his knowledge and enlightened the minds of many of the nation's youth in other ways, primarily through his teaching assignments. Dr. Franklin taught at North Carolina Central University, Howard University, St. Augustine's College, and Fisk University. He was Professor Emeritus of history at Duke University at the time of his passing. "We must go beyond textbooks, go out into the bypaths and untrodden depths of the wilderness and travel and explore and tell the world of great glories of our journey," Franklin once said.

"I want to be out there on the firing line, helping, directing or doing something to try to make this a better world, a better place to live."

—John Hope Franklin