

**Bethune-Cookman University
National Alumni Association
Orange County Chapter
Orlando, Florida**



“It is indeed an honor and with great pleasure that we salute Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune during Black History Month! The legacy of Dr. Bethune reaches beyond Daytona Beach, Florida; from the parks and celebrations of her birth place of Mayesville, South Carolina, to the only black beach where African Americans were permitted in Volusia County, to national recognition in 1936 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt who appointed Mary McLeod Bethune as director of African American affairs of the National Youth Administration and a special advisor on minority affairs. Dr. Bethune rose from humble beginnings and founded what is today known as Bethune Cookman University. With only a \$1.50 and faith in God - what a great American story! I am filled with pride as an alumnus of the “GREAT” Bethune Cookman University to recognize and highlight many of our institutions accomplishments this past year. The University was founded on a legacy rich in tradition and deeply rooted in strong religious beliefs that continue to sustain us today.”

Bethune Cookman College was founded in 1904 by Mary McLeod Bethune. The 15th child of former slaves Mary McLeod Bethune rose to become an advisor to U.S. presidents, human rights leader, champion for women and young people, and a world-renowned educator. The dream of opening her own school took Mary McLeod Bethune to Daytona Beach, Florida, with \$1.50, faith in God and five little girls for students that would later become Bethune Cookman University.



The University is ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* 2009 America's Best Colleges edition as one of the top baccalaureate institutions in the South and one of the nation's top historically black colleges and universities. In 2007, under the direction of Dr. Trudie Kibbe Reed the college received University status with a master's degree program in transformative leadership. B-CU has experienced a steady growth in student enrollment, solid financial strength and resurgence in campus construction and improvements since Dr. Reed's tenure. Construction of new facilities include: L. Gale Lemerand School of Nursing Building, the Center for Civic Engagement and the Alexis Pugh and Eugene Zimmerman Scholarship Houses. Additionally, B-CU held groundbreaking ceremonies for the Larry R. Handfield Athletic Training Center and the Lee Rhyant Residential Life Center which are fully paid for with an anticipated opening in 2010.

In 2009, the Bethune Cookman University Board of Trustees elected Larry Handfield, a prominent Miami attorney and B-CU alumnus, to the position of chairman. Handfield is the first alumnus of the university to be elected chairman in the institution's 105 year history. Since graduating from Bethune Cookman College in 1978, Handfield has distinguished himself as a professional and a community leader. Handfield is a native of Miami, growing up in Liberty City, Opa-Locka and Carol City. He attended B-CU on a band scholarship as drum major for the Marching Wildcats. We are very proud of his accomplishments and know he will serve as both an asset to the school and role model for the students.



Under the direction of Mr. Donavan Wells and his outstanding staff, the Marching Wildcat Band, also known as “The Pride,” continues to thrill and mesmerize the crowd with their half time performances which boasts 320 band members. The band recently performed at the NFL Pro Bowl during half time at Dolphin Stadium in Miami, Florida. Last year, the Marching Wildcats performed at the NFL Super Bowl pre game, NFL halftime shows for the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, NASCAR Daytona 500 pre-race show, ABC Walt Disney World Christmas Special and the Honda Battle of the Bands, just to name a few of the high profile events where they have been featured. If you have not seen this high stepping, dynamic and talented group of musicians along with the legendary 14KT Gold Dancers and the Sophisticat Flag Corps you have missed one of the top college bands in the nation.

The Bethune Cookman Concert Chorale is another example of the quality of students that attend the university. Under the direction of Dr. Rebecca Steele, who has experienced a very successful career as a choral music director, voice teacher, music educator, singer and arts administer, the Concert Choral choir is composed of over eighty dedicated members along with instrumental accompanists and a group of 13 dancers. This talented, inspirational and dedicated group is constantly in demand for performances throughout the United States. The audience can expect to experience a wide range of vocal selections from Bach to Gospel. Mark your calendar to attend their next local performance at the First United Methodist Church of Winter Park on Sunday, April 18th at 9:45 am and expect to be thrilled by one of America’s premier college choirs as they “lift their voices to sing”.

Bethune Cookman University alumni and booster fans are excited and proud to announce Brian Jenkins as the new head football coach. Coach Jenkins hails from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida and was an assistant coach at Rutgers University during the 2009 season. We can’t wait for the Wildcats to take the football field this season, especially for the Florida Classic game against arch rivals Florida A & M University. As you know, the Florida Classic is a time honored Orlando tradition between B-CU and FAMU. Despite our losing the game this past year against the Rattlers, the Wildcats had one victory; B-CU won the President’s Challenge over FAMU by selling 39% of the overall Classic tickets.

The Wildcat baseball team was selected as the unanimous pick for 2010 MEAC Conference for the fifth straight season. Wildcat sophomore LHP Ali Simpson was named the pre-season pitcher of the year and senior C. J. Lauriello was named the co-player of the year in the voting by conference head baseball coaches and sports information directors.

If you are a B-CU graduate or just interested in supporting the school by becoming a B-CU booster, we welcome and encourage you to attend our monthly Bethune Cookman University / Orange County Chapter Alumni meetings every third Wednesday at the Orlando Public Library (Highland Lake Shopping Center) located on West Colonial Drive at 7:00 pm. If you can not make the meetings, please support our annual Seafood Fest in June which supports local scholarships for students who attend the university from this area. The Harris Foundation and

the Orange County Alumni Chapters of Bethune Cookman University and Florida A&M University annual Golf Classic tournament is another way to get involved; proceeds from this event benefit students through scholarships at both universities. This annual event occurs during the Florida Classic weekend at the Shingle Creek Golf Club in Orlando.

We salute the “**GREAT**” Bethune Cookman University during Black History Month where the legacy of Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune continues to live and is strong despite the test of times. We celebrate the strength, endurance, and, most of all, the “**PRIDE**” of our Black people. We honor the struggles of the past, because we stand on the shoulders of those before us and challenge the next generation, our future, to live the universities’ motto – “**...enter to learn, depart to serve**”. Happy Black History Month!

-Written by Stephanie Jones



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2009 – 2011 Executive Board

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