

It's Time For a Change at Virginia Union University

By Krystina Stephens

"Dr. Perkins is to Virginia Union University, what Barack Obama is to America. He is the change for which we've been patiently waiting. Thank you Dr. Perkins for improving VUU by enhancing what we stand for," said DeVonja McLemore.

Virginia Union University upgraded its status by appointing Dr. Claude

G. Perkins as permanent president on January 21, 2009.

"We are proud to welcome Dr. Perkins to the VUU family on a permanent basis," said Dr. Frank S. Royal, chairman of the Board.

Dr. Perkins is a veteran educator who recently retired from Albany State University in Albany, Georgia, where he served



*Dr. Claude G. Perkins
President*

as Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and

Dean of the Graduate School.

Virginia Union University recently welcomed one of the largest freshman classes in the university's history. Dr. Perkins made this possible by increasing marketing efforts, reduction of first installment fees, and increasing scholarships. Approved by the Board of Trustees, Dr. Perkins used \$1.8 million dollars

to install air conditioning in Newman Hall and to provide a fitness center on campus. The campus also has new lighting, and additional security measures.

Dr. Perkins earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Supervision from Ohio University in 1973 and a Masters of Arts in Economic Education from the Krannert School of Management at Purdue

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Photo Credit: Ms. Ayasha Sledge

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**Editors in Chief**

Franklin Buisset and Robert Sims
flbuisset@vuu.edu and rlsims@vuu.edu

Managing Editor

Franklin Buisset
flbuisset@vuu.edu

Sports Editor

Robert Sims
rlsims@vuu.edu

Staff Photographer

Robert Sims
rlsims@vuu.edu

Advisor

Dr. Thomas Fensch
tcfensch@vuu.edu

EDITORIAL STAFF

The VUU Informer is open to contributions from all Virginia Union University students. We encourage all students, regardless of major and/or classification, to participate in the production of this newspaper. For more information concerning your contribution to The VUU Informer please visit room 214 in Ellison Hall or email your contact information to Thevuuinformer@yahoo.com.

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Have Grace Under Pressure: The Hall Directors' Motto

By Latoya Henderson

Virginia Union University embarked on its biggest endeavor yet by bringing in over 500 new students, the largest freshman class in five years. Accommodating this large incoming class was a task of mass proportions. This job was that of the VUU faculty and staff, mainly the hall director's job.

Demarcus Merritt is the hall director of Storer Hall and Deondra Jackson is the hall director of Newman Hall. They were assigned the task of handling all issues surrounding this large class. Issues varied from housing to personal problems, but the issues were still their responsibility.

"Many things weren't put into place like they

Graham Court. That was the negative aspect of the big incoming class," said Merritt.

"The positives are that the mass turnout showed that students were interested in attending VUU despite the retention rate. The retention rate is when freshmen usually don't return as sophomores due to no particular reason," Merritt said.

"I think they brought in such a big class as an incentive for more students to stay in school because their peers were staying too. I think the incoming class affected residence life because we had to focus on mainly housing instead of proper planning for the semester. We

we went along while still trying to meet everyone's needs. Our biggest thing was not to let our students see us sweat or see how stressed we were from all the pressure we were under trying to get them all situated, and we're still regrouping," Merritt said with a grin.

The hall directors are also implementing the new university restrictions on the freshman class. There is no coed visitation for freshmen until after midterms. They have a curfew now: Monday through Thursday at 11pm, Friday and Saturday at 1am. They do have the option to sign themselves out, but they have to be off campus the entire weekend.

"... the mass turnout showed that students were interested in attending VUU..."

were supposed to be, mainly because the large number of freshman caught us off guard. The university ran out of campus housing so they had to rent hotel rooms and they even leased apartments at Colonial and

could have been better trained, or doing building setup," Jackson said.

"Student issues had to be put on hold because hall directors were focusing only on housing needs and other weightless issues. We learned as

"If we could go back on anything regarding this large freshman class, it would be to start training earlier," said Jackson. There is always behind-the-scene stress when there is a big production.

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University in 1968.

Becoming a teacher was not Dr. Perkins' first career choice. He had plans to become a lawyer, but that later changed.

"I always had a strong interest in promoting opportunities and social justice for people," said Dr. Perkins.

Then he thought maybe becoming certified to teach would help him with law, and he could save some money for law school, but that quickly changed.

"My role is to be a servant leader. I lead but I also serve," said Dr. Perkins.

"Great things are happening at Virginia Union University. I welcome Dr. Perkins with open arms. There's a large difference in the appearance of the school. It actually looks like a college now," said Ms. White, Administration Assistant.

"I'm excited that we now have a president that you actually see and communicate with. I'm glad I won't be spending the next three years here saying I don't know my president, because I do now," said Tyler Venable.

"I have seen Dr. Perkins, but I'll be honest, I've

never spoken with him. I'm sure we'll have a conversation one day soon," said Danoven Brooks.

Prior to his appointments at Albany State, he held the position of Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent for Special Student Services in the Richmond Public School System in Richmond, Virginia. His extensive experience also included Superintendent of Schools positions in Kansas City, Missouri and Clark County, Nevada. Clark County, which includes Las Vegas, is the fifth largest school district in the United States, with more than 300,000 students enrolled.

In 2005, The Clark County, Nevada School Board approved the naming of the new Claude Grandford Perkins Elementary School in recognition of Dr. Perkins' service to the Clark County, Nevada education community. The \$25 million dollar facility was completed in the fall of 2007.

"That was a very 'high on Earth' moment, to have a \$25 million dollar school named after me," said Dr. Perkins.

"I like Dr. Perkins. The vision he has for VUU is

an awesome one. I like the fact that he interacts with the students. Dr. Belinda Anderson...I never saw her," said Marquis Berkley.

"Dr. Perkins is just what VUU needs. There have been so many positive changes on our campus. I can honestly say I am for once proud to be a student at VUU: school of positive change," said Ashley Cabler.

Dr. Perkins has shared his professional expertise as a consultant to educational institutions and private business enterprises throughout the nation, including public schools in Alaska, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Oregon, and Maryland. Colleges he has served include Kent State University, Ohio University, University of Central Michigan, Valdosta State University, and University of Nevada.

"In three to five years from now, I see Virginia Union with better technology, hoping to put air conditioning in all the dorms, a Fine Arts program, and so much more," said Dr. Perkins.

How did VUU get blessed with a president like Dr. Perkins is a question a lot of students have been asking themselves. He is a man who has taught all over the world, been to every continent except for two, and has a school named after him.

"The reason I chose to come to Virginia Union was because I have so much respect for a lot of the VUU graduates. I evaluated it carefully and

my wife and I felt it was worthwhile to do," said Dr. Perkins.

"I believe Dr. Perkins' changes have brought a 'position' atmosphere to Virginia Union. He's bringing back the band. What's a historically black college university without a band? His main focus is the academics. I think Dr. Perkins is planting the seeds for the long run," said Ms. Horace, Director of Upward Bound.



Photo Credit: Ms. Ayasha Sledge



Mass Comm senior Camille Farrow enjoys enhanced security.
Photo Credit: Ms. Ayasha Sledge

It may look like a light pole with a box attached to it, but looks can be deceiving. These boxes located in various locations on campus are the latest in safety precautions taken by Virginia Union University. Inside of these boxes are phones that allow people to connect directly to the Campus Police Department.

"When the caller picks up the phone, a recording will play advising the caller what to do. After the caller selects an option, a dispatcher will answer, ready to assist the caller," said Campus Police Chief David Horace, who has been the Chief of Police at VUU for one year. He was formally the Chief of Police at Columbus State Univer-

sity located in Columbus, Georgia.

There are a total of five call boxes located on campus, in high traffic areas such as the Hovey Field parking lot and the main student parking lot located behind Huntley Hall.

"These boxes were put into place so that students, faculty, and visitors can quickly get in touch with the police when a cell phone is not present," Horace said.

The idea of the call boxes came from Horace, who presented the idea to University President Dr. Claude G. Perkins in January.

"When I was at Columbus State we had call boxes, and I suggested to Dr. Perkins that call boxes were needed here at Union," Horace said.

Though the purpose of the call boxes are for emergency purposes, they have been used as more of a convenience. They have been used for such things as traffic collisions and campus directions.

"We would prefer that callers use the call boxes in emergency situations," Horace said jokingly.

The campus call boxes are not the only steps be-

ing taken to ensure campus security. The guard box at the entrance of campus by Newman Hall will now be manned 24 hours a day. Along with this comes new fencing on campus as well.

"The campus fencing is currently in a continuation phase which began in 2007. There is currently fencing behind Storer Hall running to Graham Road. With another set of fencing from Graham to the corner of Brook Road. Our major goal is to then have fencing from Brook all the way down Lombardy Street, which will make the campus almost entirely fenced in," Horace said.

There will also be the use of external cameras, which are located in various locations such as Newman Hall and Pickford Hall. There are also cameras in the common room of Storer Hall, with cameras coming to the common areas of other dormitories later.

Other than cameras, it is important to alert students of major events that can affect everyday student life.

"Our first option to alert students and staff is through mass emails, but

we understand that everyone is not always going to be around their computer which is why we also have the E2 campus cell phone alert system," Horace said.

The E2 system sends alerts out through students' cell phones, which are usually in closer proximity than computers.

Also new to the campus is the use of the Whelen system, a system of alarms that will alert VUU personnel and students of major campus incidents, such as life-threatening danger, and severe weather alerts. This system uses a set of eight pre-recorded messages that will allow people to know what is going on, and what steps to take.

A shooting on campus occurred recently. A male student was shot in the leg by an outsider. The suspect was captured by Richmond and VUU police. The gun was found in a nearby dumpster.

Since this horrific event, a strong emphasis has been on campus security and safety at VUU. Though we hope to never have to use the new call boxes, there is a sigh of relief to know that they are there in case of the unexpected.

Safety in a Box

By Lonnie Gaines

"These boxes were put into place so that students, faculty, and visitors can quickly get in touch with the police when a cell phone is not present."

Governor Candidates Make Appearance at VUU

By Michael Livingston II

On September 22, 2009, Creigh Deeds (D) and Bob McDonnell (R) campaigned for votes on the campus of Virginia Union University.

Every space from Ellison to Coburn Hall was covered with signs of Deeds and McDonnell as their respective campaigns worked early and hard to set the tone for the rest of the evening, even going so far as to put signs of their candidate in front of their opponent. Virginia Union University students did their part in helping Deeds by setting up signs across campus, and holding them up before the forum began.

The event was sponsored by Radio One Inc., the Chesterfield Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., the



VUU students feel the exhilaration of the debate.

Rho Eta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and the Richmond Crusade for Voters in partnership with Virginia Union University.

This is not the first time Deeds has made a visit to Virginia Union University. He came to the university 12 days before the community forum to talk with students about scholarships. Deeds proposes that high school students who maintain a B average can earn scholarships that will cover half of their college tuition. In return, they have to work for two years in

public service, jobs like police officers, teachers and nurses.

Deeds did his part to appeal to African American voters, who turned out in historic numbers to vote for Deeds' party member and U.S. President Barack Obama. McDonnell did his best to reach out to the black audience by lauding the efforts of L. Douglas Wilder, the first African American governor in U.S. history and a 1951 graduate of Virginia Union University.

Both Deeds and McDonnell argued as to whether or not to appear on stage at the same time, so both candidates spoke individually. Both candidates understand how important it is to win the African American vote, a crucial key to winning the Virginia governor race.



Visionaries

By Kianni Johnson

Maria W. Miller Stewart

Born in 1803 in Hartford, Connecticut, Maria Stewart grew up to become an African American lecturer, abolitionist, and feminist. She was orphaned at the age of five and sent to live with a minister and family. While living with the family, she became a servant and was deprived of an education. When she turned 20, she began to attend Sabbath School where she learned new things. After her marriage left her a widow, she began giving speeches to support herself. Stewart was the very first American woman to give public lectures. She did this in an era when no woman, black or white, had the courage to deliver a public speech from a podium. She lectured on women's rights—especially the rights of black women. "How long," she asked in *Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality* "shall the fair daughters of Africa be compelled to bury their minds and talents beneath a load of iron pots and kettles?" Stewart addressed social justice and religion. She was influenced by David Walker, publisher of *David Walker's Appeal*. Her public speaking career lasted for three years. She gave her farewell address on September 21, 1833, in the schoolroom of the African Meeting House. She died in 1879.

Robert L. Vann

Robert L. Vann was born in Ahsokie, North Carolina in 1879. He was a lawyer, editor, and publisher of the *Pittsburg Courier*, a black newspaper. He shaped the *Courier* to become one of the leading Black newspapers of the 1900s. It became one of the highest circulated newspapers with approximately 14 editions being published around the country. Vann was involved with politics through his newspaper. He converted to the Democratic Party after becoming disillusioned with the Republican Party. He delivered a speech, "The Patriot and the Partisan," which urged African Americans to support the Democratic Party and its candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt. He campaigned for the enactment of equal rights for African Americans in the state of Pennsylvania. He died in 1940.

The Best is Yet to Come

By Robert Sims

It was 11:45 Saturday, October 3rd, 2009. When we left the Virginia Union University campus. As our Virginia Union panthers got set to play the Saint Paul Tigers, we were an hour drive from Richmond to Lawrenceville. The SGA organized a trip to the game. Two buses full of Virginia Union students went to support their fellow students and show off their school spirit.

This was my first time going to see the Union football team in action. Virginia Union has always had a very historic football team.

This year's team is different for first year head coach Mike Bailey. He has his work cut out for him. Along with a rookie coach, the team has a large number of rookie players. In all there are 32 freshmen on the 66 man roster. So, this team needs all the support they can get.

The main theme of the trip for the students was to support the football players when they are on away games.

We reached the game at the end of the first quarter. Union held onto

a slim lead, 3-0 after one quarter. The Union students were seated in the same bleachers as the Saint Paul students. You could tell in the air that this game was going to be one that would be fought both on the field, and in the stands.

The first play of the second quarter was a long touchdown pass that was called back because of a holding penalty. This game was sloppy because the yellow flag was thrown more times than the football. The

second quarter was one of bad punts and interceptions that made the crowd eager for their respected team to score. At

the half, the score was still in Union's favor, but the momentum was in Saint Paul's favor. They used that momentum to score on a drive late in the third quarter with 5:46 remaining.

While I sat in the crowd, I got the feeling that Union would let this game slip away. If they did, it wouldn't be because of the crowd.

"We came to support our team," sophomore Naikira Crandel shouted from the stands. Many other Union students did just that from their seats, but it wasn't enough.

The Tigers went into the fourth quarter on a scoring drive and scored, to put the game out of reach. If you know anything about a Union Panther, you know they don't go down without a fight. They did just that, scoring on a touchdown pass. There was 8:57 left in the fourth quarter.



Dr. and Mrs. Perkins enjoy the football game.



Above: VUU fans explode in ecstatic cheer following a touchdown.



Left: A St. Paul's supporter heckles VUU panther fans in the stands.

In the end, it seemed that the Tigers were just mentally prepared for this game more than the Panthers. This is a credit that should be given to the coaching staff.

Union, on the other hand, can't say the same. One play that stood out happened right after a Tiger player was helped off the field after being injured. The players and coaches had ample time to discuss any plays that needed to be changed, or discuss anything relative to the game. Seconds after the player left the field and the game was back

in progress, Union called a timeout. Some would call that a lack of concentration on the coaches behalf, wasting a timeout when the game was still on the line. One student in particular, Davon Clark, believed that the "talent of this years team is limited by the coaching staff."

I had the chance to speak with our new president, Dr. Claude Perkins.

"It's not over yet," Dr. Perkins said.

With spirit like that I can see Union becoming great in the future. I hope to say the same for our football team.

How You Can Stay Fit With a College Schedule

By **Zhinia Watson**

Did you know half the US college population is overweight? Many students find it hard to balance a healthy lifestyle with a heavy curriculum.

According to the American Obesity Association, 64.5 percent of adults age 20 and over are overweight, and 31 percent of the total US population is obese.

"I realized the importance of being fit when I was a high school cheerleader. I learned a lot about myself, flexibility, and stretching.

"After I had my third child I was a size eight. Around that time, in 2003, I accepted a challenge from my sisters. They all wanted to lose weight. Whoever lost the most in 90 days got a new sweat suit and shoes. I was all game.

"We were on the no carb Atkins diet for three months. I faithfully went to the gym four times a week. I attended kickboxing classes and bootcamp with high cardio. I went down to a size two.

"I won the challenge with my sisters. I felt great. In doing so, I earned the respect of my instructor," Resa McCane, personal fitness trainer at the YMCA, said.

McCane was promoted to another position.

"I had the highest class attendance, I was healthy, and I was feeling great," said McCane.

Here are some questions I asked McCane. Her advice may help you reach your fitness goals.

Zhinia Watson:

As students, what do we do to become overweight?

Resa McCane:

Students snack too much, and do not eat healthy. Most students don't eat breakfast, which is the most important meal of the day. Students also eat too late.

ZW: How can students watch what they eat, and still eat what they want?

RM: Students should portion their sizes. Most students indulge in a meal because they don't know when their next meal will be. Students should space out their meals, and carry a snack to eat between each meal. Drink lots of water, and stay off soft drinks.

ZW: What quick exercises can you perform without going to a gym?

RM: You can do jumping jacks, walking, crunches and push-ups. Get a jump rope. It's not just a kid's game, it's very good for the heart. It's a total body workout.

the next. Exercise your abdominal muscles every time you work out. You can never crunch too much.

ZW: How should someone who just gave birth get in shape?

RM: She wants to get into it slowly, by walking and changing her eating habits.

ZW: Do you recommend anything from General Nutrition Center (GNC)?

RM: GNC has a machine

that takes your weight, tells you what your ideal weight should be, and it's only 50 cents. GNC has a great selection of vitamins, like B12 and C. You want to educate yourself, and never take diet pills that speed up and damage your heart.

ZW: I'm overweight. What risks are associated with being overweight?

RM: You are at risk of diabetes, heart disease, and kidney failure.

How do Virginia Union

University students feel about health and nutrition?

"Dinner is my most important meal of the day because of its significance: when families come together. I mainly eat soul food, and 'Healthy Choice' brand food. I don't play in any activities, and I wish I weighed a little more," said Jamel Carelock.

"Breakfast is the most important meal of my day. I eat pizza, chicken, cereal, things like that. I try running on the treadmill. Usually I workout at the fitness center. I'd rather be toned, and a little heavier," said Michael Livingston.

To lose excess weight and shed unhealthy body fat, take the challenge and start exercising today.

"I encourage students to not be discouraged. It's about having your mind made up. It's a lifestyle change," said McCane. "As you get older, you can avoid a lot of health problems by adopting an exercise and nutrition plan today."

"I already know you are a determined person because you are in school, pursuing a degree," said McCane. "Start today. It is hard work, but it can be done."



Save money, use and appreciate the convenient new fitness center on campus.

ZW: What good exercise habits should we develop everyday?

RM: While watching television, exercise during the commercial breaks. Do three easy sets of 10 push-ups during the breaks.

ZW: How many times should I work out every week?

RM: Exercise two to three times per week. Do at least a half hour of cardio, and alternate upper body one day, and lower body

Campus Undergoes Beautification

By Frank Buisset

Take a look around the new and improved campus of Virginia Union University. Does anything look different? A great deal of positive change has occurred.

In the spring, a new flower bed was completed at the corner of Admiral Street and Lombardy Street. It has a VUU symbol cast in cement in the center. Across Lombardy, there is a huge bust of a fierce panther. It is surrounded by a flower bed, and enclosed with a stone wall.

A new fence has been added along Graham, and will continue along Lombardy.

Trees were not over-

looked at this time when beautification and new landscaping is going on around campus. There were several dying trees between the Hovey field parking lot and the intersection of Admiral Street and Lombardy Street. The trees were very old and had decaying, dead limbs. These branches were ready to come crashing down on unsuspecting victims. These trees posed a threat to pedestrians, students, football players, and grounds staff.

The dying, old trees were removed. New flowering dogwood and redbud trees were planted around the Wilder Library. Evergreen trees were

planted in rows by the Martin E. Gray Hall parking lot. Chrysanthemums were planted everywhere.

"I feel it's the start of new changes, and hopefully there will be more," said mass communications junior Christin Johnson.

VUU has set the standard for the North side. A new appreciation for landscaping and aesthetics is present at the college.

The new look of VUU indicates that a new era has begun. It signals that VUU is under new leadership, of Dr. Claude Perkins. An energization is clearly in progress, indicating "a proud heritage, and a bright future," for all of us here at VUU.



Quiz Bowl QUEST

By Frank Buisset

The quiz bowl students of Virginia Union University are excited. Why? They yearn to win the Honda Campus All-Stars Challenge.

The challenge is much like the popular television game show Jeopardy. Contestants buzz in the quickest correct answer to score points.

There are 64 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) that compete in the tournament since it began in 1989. In the Fall of each year, the tournament is open to all students on each campus. Then, in the Spring, a team is selected from each college. The team goes on to the national challenge, in Florida.

"In VUU's campus challenge, the team 'Ratchet City (Bang Bang)' clenched first place," said coordinator and coach Dr. Peter Sutton. "Team members Carlton Anderson, Roderick Ford, Jonathan Freeman and Brian Seymour all have an automatic bid to be on the varsity team for VUU."

Let's all support our team in the Honda Campus All-Stars Challenge. If our team wins the blue ribbon, our team brings home \$50,000 for our prestigious university. Keep up to date with the quiz bowl quest at www.hcasc.com.