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# Are you in the right room?

If students believe in news biz and democracy, said '71 J-alum, hold on

By **Wayne Dawkins**

DURHAM, N.C. – Is the newspaper business and the mainstream media about to die? It didn't seem that way based on the 120 students from 13 schools who participated in the Black College Communications Conference here. Last year, 170 students from 20-plus schools participated in Baltimore. The decline revealed budget stresses on a number of Historically Black College and Universities.



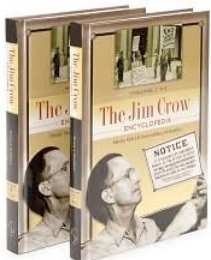
For those students who did come, **Reginald Stuart, '71**, of McClatchy Newspapers [photo] assured them that they were in the right room: “The news business is not dying; it’s changing. Unlike the automobile and airline industry, it’s never been challenged like this before.” Stuart continued, “For people of color, don’t drop the baton because the race got tough. Hold on tight.”

At that awards banquet, attendees didn't get to see or hear why the students won, however those who attended the previous day of workshops got a strong taste at the “How they got the story” session. A Jackson State student’s expose of rampant campus crime resulted in the administration making \$1 million in public safety improvements. At Florida A&M University, students revealed a grade-changing scandal that involved 90 people who had 630 grades altered. North Carolina Central University students reported on their administration’s decision to operate a satellite campus in suburban Atlanta, clearly in violation of university rules.

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## Encyclopedic output by J-alums who are professors

**Donald Scott Sr., '90**, an assistant professor in the English Department at Community College of Philadelphia, contributed several essays to “The Jim Crow Encyclopedia,” two volumes published in October 2008 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt’s Greenwood Publishing Group.



Hailed as the first encyclopedia devoted to the Jim Crow era of segregation and racism against blacks following the Civil War and through much of the 1900s, the “authoritative entries are written by a host of historians with expertise in the Jim Crow era,” according to co-editors Nikki L.M. Brown and Barry M. Stentiford, professors at Grambling University in Louisiana. Scott focused on police brutality, South Carolina, and the great migrations of blacks to the Northeastern and Western areas of the United States.

In September, Scott was awarded the Cheltenham-NAACP Community Service Award and a citation from state Sen. LeAnna Washington of Pennsylvania for his journalistic, history-research and authoring a book about Camp William Penn, the first and largest northern-based facility to train black soldiers during the Civil War that was located in what is today Cheltenham Township, Pa.

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## Pageantry and purpose

Obama's first speech to Congress appeals to better angels



For much of President Barack Obama's 50-minute address to the joint session of Congress, the opposition sat stonily. Near the end, the Republican House members had to stand up. The opposing GOPs had no choice but the stand up when the young president, who has served as scold-in-chief for speaking critically about Wall Street greed and Washington gamesmanship, summoned examples of people who are on the side of the angels: *Read more of Wayne Dawkins' Feb. 27 [commentary](#) at [politicsincolor.com](#).*

## Chronicling a people's journey



I take exception to the idea that Black History Month is mostly about combating the prejudice in others. The more important goal to me is working to combat black people's prejudice and ignorance about themselves by helping them dig out from under the mountains of lies that have left many feeling inferior, believing that they have no history but slavery, that their people never gave anything important to the world -- and seeing instead that black people are just as good, just as beautiful, just as smart and just as capable as everybody else on the planet, no matter what anybody says. *Read more of Betty Winston Baye's Feb. 19 [commentary](#) in [The Courier-Journal of Louisville, Ky.](#)*

## Boot-camp style opinion writing seminar March 9 deadline, hurry!

If you're receiving this message, then you or someone you might be eligible to participate in the upcoming National Conference of Editorial Writers' upcoming Minority Writers Seminar. The seminar is a four-day boot camp for minority journalists and journalism professors who are interested in learning more about opinion writing. The program began as an effort to get more minority journalists interested in editorial page positions and column writing, but many of its basics can be applied to the new world of opinion in the blogosphere as well. If you, or someone you know, is interested, go to [www.ncew.org](http://www.ncew.org) to find application information.

**Doug Lyons, J-'74**

NCEW MWS program director

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Most of these students attended public institutions and understood or were advised by faculty that it was their duty to monitor powerful officials and hold them accountable for their decisions.



Work like that is what mainstream editors said they were looking for in an industry that is brutally reinventing itself. Representatives from the Herald Sun of Durham, News & Observer of Raleigh, Daily Press of Hampton Roads, Va. and Star-News Telegram of Wilmington, N.C. scouted talent.

The New York Times recruited for its two-week pre-summer institute in New Orleans.

Stuart, corporate recruiter for McClatchy, publishers of the News & Observer, Miami Herald, Sacramento Bee, Kansas City Star, Charlotte Observer and other dailies, counseled students to learn a second language [he opened his speech with a few sentences in Spanish], and also urged students to be curious and well read in multiple topics.

For students passionate about sports, he said, pay attention to the police & courts and political beats. Stuart referenced the A-Rod [Alex Rodriguez] and steroids story that moved off the sports pages and up to page one. Don't get "bigfooted" by other reporters, advised Stuart, "Make yourself bulletproof."

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## '88 Alum toured China's ethnically diverse provinces

**Toni Randolph, '88**, of Minnesota Public Radio visited China last fall on a Hong Kong Journalism Fellowship through the East-West Center. She traveled to Beijing, Kunming and Shangri-La in Yunnan Province, and to Hong Kong.



"Yunnan Province," said Randolph, "is one of the most ethnically diverse provinces in the country. In fact, the Chinese put the diversity of this province on display, even touting it in tourism brochures. It's in southwestern China and borders Tibet, so even though we didn't go to Tibet, in Shangri-La we got a glimpse of the Tibetan lifestyle.

"We ate meals with Tibetan families, which were cooked and served in the traditional way, complete with butter tea, which

they say is hearty enough to keep you full for an entire winter day on the farm.

"And we also ate yak, which is similar to beef. It tastes delicious and has less fat. Since I've been back, I visited a yak farm in Minnesota to purchase burgers and pepper sticks.



"We visited Pudacuo National Park, China's first national park. It's absolutely breath-taking. When we met with the Party Secretary of the Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, he said the park was inspired by visits to national parks in the United States.

"Several people who had lived in or traveled to China told me to be prepared for people to stare at me since the Chinese don't see many black people. I didn't notice many people staring at me at all. I think they were captivated by the two blonde reporters who were also on this fellowship."

The China trip was Randolph's second to Asia. The first was to India, also in 2008. She visited Bangalore, Delhi and Agra to see the Taj Mahal.

Randolph's PHOTOS: She greets lamas at Gedan Songzanlin Lamasery in Shangri-La; Tour guide at Stone Forest in Kunming, Yunnan Province.

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## Encyclopedic output/Continued from front page



**Kissette Bundy, '87, and Wayne Dawkins, '80**, assistant professors at Hampton University and its Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications, contributed 14 entries to the "Encyclopedia of African American History from 1896 to the Present" [[Oxford University Press](http://www.oup.com)], published in February.

Bundy wrote profiles of CEO Reginald Lewis, and playwright Ed Bullins. Dawkins wrote profiles of Anatole Broyard, book critic, and Bernard Shaw of CNN; David A. Paterson, governor of New York, and David Dinkins, New York City mayor; Percy Julian, the "Forgotten Genius" [PBS, 2008]; jazzmen Herbie Hancock, the Marsalis Family [Wynton, Branford, Ellis], and Joshua Redman, and sports legends Bob Gibson [St. Louis Cardinals], and Bill Russell [Boston Celtics].

Dawkins also wrote about a historical period, George Herbert Walker Bush and Black America, 1989-93, and a practice, journalism, print and broadcast, a 2,500-word piece that began with an elderly Frederick Douglass and closed with individuals applying entrepreneurial and techno skills to navigate and remake 21<sup>st</sup> century mass media. **Tamara Cooke Henry, '75**, assistant professor with the American University School of Communication, wrote the entry about the National Association of Black Journalists. Nearly 400 university, independent and international scholars contributed entries to the five-volume encyclopedia.

Bundy and Dawkins were among five Hampton University professors who contributed 25 of the 1,200 entries. Inside the books are 640 biographies, 50 U.S. state entries, and 500 images.

The **Black Alumni Network** of Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism was founded in May 1980 and since July the group has published a monthly newsletter. The BA Newsletter's mission is to keep people connected. We publish job changes and moves, news about books and films published or produced by alumni, and family milestones. And of course we keep alumni connected to news from the Columbia GSJ. Log on to our Web site at [www.jrn.columbia.edu/alumni/services/ban/](http://www.jrn.columbia.edu/alumni/services/ban/) or see our link on the home page of [www.blackjournalist.com](http://www.blackjournalist.com) Wayne J. Dawkins – **editor**, Betty Winston Baye, Kip Branch, Kissette Bundy, Angela Chatman, Cheryl Devall, Dan Holly, Keith Rushing, **contributing editors**  
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