

# New Directions

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## newsfile

Editorial Staff

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## NEWSFILE

### Officials of The Ford Motor

**Co.** presented a \$1 million grant to the university at a special ceremony in November. The grant will be allocated to the university's endowment to be used for a Ford Scholar Program that will fund scholarships for students, primarily in engineering, business, law, chemistry and mathematics.

Among the officials attending the ceremony was Harold A. Poling, Ford's vice chairman who will assume the duties of chairman in March. Support for education not only is "clearly in Ford's corporate self-interest," he said, but also "vital to our nation's ability to remain a dynamic force in world affairs."

The grant is but the latest marker of the ties between the university and the giant auto manufacturer. Ford has participated at annual Career Day programs at Howard for the past three years; the number of Howard students working as summer interns at Ford has increased from four in 1987 to 25 in 1989; and nearly 60 Howard alumni are now employed by the company.

**The Center for the Study of Nonlinear Phenomena** in Engineering and Physical Systems, based in the School of Engineering, has received a \$4 million grant from the U.S. Army to broaden the Army's effort in computing technology.

Specifically, the grant will fund interdisciplinary research to investigate and advance the applications of current supercomputers

and computer networks in areas of critical interest to the Army. It is all part of the development of an Army High Performance Computing Research Center involving both Howard and the University of Minnesota.

"This grant is the window of opportunity for Howard faculty to participate actively with ongoing research at all the major Army research centers and laboratories," says Tepper Gill, chairman of the electrical engineering department at Howard.



**Actor Al Freeman, Jr.**, of "One Life to Live" popular daytime soap fame, is teaching drama students at Howard this academic year.

Freeman, who joined the Drama Department at the beginning of the school year as artist-in-residence, has since been involved with the presentation of "A Soldier's Play," which he directed and also acted in, in the newly refurbished Ira Aldridge Theater.

Currently, he teaches one class, "Acting for Television and Film," but plans to add master acting classes to his schedule this winter.

**The Physician's Assistant Department** in the College of Allied Health Sciences has received a \$462,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for the next three academic years.

The funds will be used to extend the department's degree program

from four to five years and to refurbish classrooms, purchase computers and finance student travel.

**The first annual Dr. Charles R. Drew World Medical Prize** was awarded in October at an elegant dinner ceremony in the nation's capital that was keynoted by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Louis W. Sullivan. Family members and friends of the Drew family and luminaries in the field of medicine were among those in attendance.

The two recipients of the first Drew prize are Harold Amos of the United States and Benjamin Otuwakayode Osuntokun of Nigeria. Each received \$50,000.

Amos, of Boston, Mass., retired recently after 40 years at Harvard Medical School, where he had served first as a professor and later as chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics and as chairman of the Division of Medical Sciences.

As a researcher, he has done ground-breaking work in the field of animal cells in culture.

Osuntokun, from Ibadan, is an internationally renowned health practitioner and researcher who has studied such topics as the neurological impact of cyanide poisoning of dietary origin and the association between the sickle cell trait and migraine.

He also has made significant contributions in medical and university education, health, manpower development and administration on an international level, serving, for instance, as provost for the World Health Organization.

The Drew medical prize was established by Howard University Hospital in honor of the Howard physician-scientist whose pioneering work in blood preservation saved innumerable lives during World War II. It was conceived as a way for the hospital to recognize outstanding achievements by people of color

who have made significant lifetime contributions in public health, health research or the delivery of health care.

Competition for the inaugural prize drew 87 entries from 31 countries.

Noted LaSalle D. Leffall Jr., chairman of the award's selection committee, "We are very pleased to have the opportunity to honor Dr. Amos and Dr. Osuntokun. Their contributions to the medical world have had directly and indirectly an impact in the world, and we hope, this award will draw attention to their humanitarian efforts."

**The renovated facilities** of the Materials Science Research Center of Excellence (MSRCE), housed in the School of Engineering, were dedicated in a special ceremony at the school early in October.

The center, which does basic research on electronic and electro-optic materials and devices, was established in 1987 with the support of a five-year, \$5 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). It is one of six centers in the nation established by NSF under its MSRCE program.

The major goal of that program, noted NSF director Erich Bloch at the dedication ceremony, is "to increase the presence of minorities in science and engineering careers by supporting visible, high-quality research and training opportunities at minority research institutions."

"This goal is particularly important now," he added, "because the nation needs to broaden participation in science and engineering to meet the projected future demand for scientists and engineers."

Michael G. Spencer, director of the Howard center, closed the ceremony with a series of statements summing up the hopes and dreams of the Howard researchers involved in the enterprise. Each began with the words "We believe." A sampling:

"We believe that the research conducted by this center will make important contributions to the field of electronic materials and through this research, we believe that we will produce Black scientists and engineers who will more than participate in science and technology. Indeed, they will take leadership positions to help shape science policy, to improve technology, to map the human genome, to solve the energy crisis, to clean up the environment, to understand how man learns, to make the next generation of computers, to find the cure for cancer, to meet the challenges of space ... and to write down the lyrics of the universe."



**The College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences** has launched a lecture series to memorialize Rep. Mickey Leland, the Texas Democrat who died last August in a plane crash in Ethiopia while on a mission to inspect refugee conditions near the Sudanese border.

While Leland's commitment to end world hunger was well known, many were unaware that his training and early work was in pharmacy. Before entering politics, he had been an instructor in clinical pharmacy at Texas Southern University's College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, where he had earned a degree in 1970.

The first of what is slated to be an annual George "Mickey" Leland Memorial Lecture was presented on September 18 by Robert C. Johnson, executive vice-president of the California Pharmacists' Association. In his address, Johnson stressed Leland's commitment to the causes in which he believed and encouraged pharmacists in the audience to follow Leland's example and do what they can to change society.

**The School of Education** has entered into a partnership with an elementary school in a drug-plagued area of Washington, D.C.

Through the partnership, the School of Education will utilize an interdisciplinary approach to provide educational counseling, staff development and cultural enrichment opportunities for teachers, students, and parents at J. C. Nalle Elementary School in the southeast section of the city.

School of Education Dean Beverly Caffee Glen, who initiated the project, views it as a way to assist the elementary school "in its pursuit of academic excellence" as well as to broaden the horizons of her own school's students and faculty.

**The Monsanto Co.** of St. Louis, Mo., a major chemical manufacturer, recently made a grant of \$600,000 to the university.

Monsanto Vice President Michael E. Miller traveled to Washington, D.C., to present the check for the grant to Howard's Interim President Carlton P. Alexis.

The three-year grant, to support programs in chemistry and chemical engineering, will be applied toward equipment purchases, facilities renovation, fellowships, and the recruitment of high school chemistry students.

Said Miller: "The bottom line is this, Howard University produces more Black chemists than any other university in the country, perhaps, the world. In fact, one in

five chemistry Ph.D.'s held by Black U.S. citizens was awarded by Howard. Given this historical strength, Howard University is a logical partner for Monsanto."

**The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation** has awarded the university \$100,000 to support the College of Liberal Arts' honors program. The funds will be used to provide research grants for juniors and seniors in the program and to support its Visiting Professorship in the Humanities.

"This signal of support from a national foundation affirms the college's commitment to provide an intellectually challenging academic program for the nation's National Merit scholars who choose to matriculate at Howard," observes College of Liberal Arts Dean Wendy G. Winters.

**Howard alumna Bernice Johnson Reagon** has received a coveted MacArthur Fellowship.

She will receive \$275,000 from the Chicago-based John and Catherine MacArthur Foundation in its latest round of awards. The awards, which recognize achievement in a wide range of fields, are often dubbed "genius grants."

Reagon, who received a Ph.D. in history from Howard in 1976, is a cultural historian who founded the Program in Black American Culture at the Smithsonian Institution. She is also known for her work as founder and director of Sweet Honey in the Rock, a five-woman a cappella singing group whose songs combine the gospel tradition with themes of social justice.

**Professor Ronald W. Walters** of the Department of Political Science recently received the Ralph J. Bunche Award from the American Political Science Association.

Walters was recognized for his book, *Black Presidential Politics*

*in America: A Strategic Approach*, which was identified by the association as being among the best scholarly contributions on ethnic and cultural pluralism.

**Gilberto Gil**, Brazilian musical "superstar," songwriter and recording artist, came to Howard in October to get acquainted with the institution.

Gil, whose full name is Gilberto Passos Gil Moreira, spoke to a handful of professors, program administrators and journalists at the Undergraduate Library. The focus of the discussion centered on forging links between African American institutions, Howard in particular, and the Center for Black and Mestizo Culture (CERNE) in Salvador, Bahia, which Gil heads.

Gil said he was "here to find out possible areas of collaboration" in cultural activities, resource-sharing and knowledge exchange.

CERNE, which was formed in spring 1989 with \$100,000 in start-up funds from a major Salvador-based construction company, was specifically created to advance the cause of Black culture, first around its home base of Salvador, and eventually the rest of the country.

According to Gil, CERNE "will conduct research, collect, publish and share information on the history, religion and cultural contributions of Black people in Brazil."

Besides his involvement with cultural and environmental issues, Gil also is politically active in his hometown of Salvador and once unsuccessfully ran for mayor. Currently he is a member of Salvador's City Council as well as president of the Municipal Assembly's Commission for the Environment.

For more information on CERNE's seminal efforts, interested readers may write to: Centro de Referencia Negromestica, Rua Nelson Galo 17, Rio Vermelho, 41910 Salvador, Bahia, Brazil.



**"One-Third of a Nation: African American Perspectives,"** a five-day conference on the status of the African American, was convened at Howard last November 8-12.

Scholars, policymakers, elected and public officials, political-social-cultural activists, labor leaders, educators and students gathered to map a direction for the future.

Under the auspices of the University Senate and through the involvement of a university-wide task force, the conferees dealt with 15 specific subject areas—from education to jobs, from health to science and technology.

Roughly 150 papers were presented on issues relevant to the future well-being of African Americans and other minorities in the United States. These are to be published at a later date by the One-Third of a Nation Task Force.

The One-Third of a Nation Task Force, according to a summary report prepared by Lorenzo Morris and Ura Jean Oyemade, co-chairs, "was conceived in October 1988 . . . with the encouragement of [then] Howard President James E. Cheek."

A related item: At the end of the conference, Cheek presented his own proposal for the creation of a new national organization. When formed, it will be called the National Organization of African Americans. □