



James E. Stewart, Founder

# Inside NCCU

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NEWSLETTER FOR FACULTY,

STAFF, ALUMNI, AND FRIENDS

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## NCCU / NAJRI Host Jazz Festival/Summit

NCCU in partnership with the African American Jazz Caucus (AAJC), an affiliate of the International Association for Jazz Education (IAJE), has scheduled the inaugural NCCU/AAJC (NAJRI) Annual Summer Jazz Festival/HBCU Jazz Summit June 20 - 23, 2007, on the NCCU campus.

"We encourage everyone to attend, support, get involved, and help others to recognize and understand jazz as a significant part of their cultural heritage," said Ira Wiggins, director of the NCCU jazz Studies Program.

The annual conference has been established to provide a forum where historically black colleges and university (HBCU) jazz educators can meet and collectively discuss the unique issues and challenges they face at their respective institutions and within the African American community. Prior to this, the only opportunity available for them to share their experiences has been at the annual conference of the IAJE, held each January. Because of the extensive activities and distractions at this massive event, the amount of time that is focused upon the unique situations inherent to HBCUs is extremely limited.

The NCCU/AAJC (NAJRI) Annual Summer Jazz Festival/HBCU Jazz Summit is a four-day event consisting of workshops, panels, and seminars designed to address the needs of HBCU jazz educators.

"These individuals are dedicated to passing on and preserving our rare and valuable national American treasure," said Larry Ridley, AAJC executive director, master musician and educator. "This HBCU jazz Summit is occurring mid-year between the annual IAJE Conferences. Educators will have the opportunity to focus on specific concerns, mutual concepts, strategies, and solutions."

Each session will provide tools that will assist in establishing new horizons for interdisciplinary jazz studies programs among historically black colleges and universities.

Two particularly important



NCCU's Dr. Vernon Clark was honored with the endowment of \$200,000 for a scholarship in his name and a bronze bust in his likeness to be displayed in the biology department of the Mary M. Townes Science Building.

## Health Society Honors Professor Vernon Clark with \$200,000 Endowed Scholarship

At the annual meeting of NCCU's Pre-Professional Health Society, Dr. Vernon Clark was honored with an endowment of \$200,000 for a scholarship in his name.

Looking back at his life, Dr. James E. Graham, retired gynecologic oncologist and associate professor from Michigan State University College of Medicine, recognized that if not for the influence of Clark, he would never have become a doctor.

Now in a position to express his gratitude to the man he considers to be a consummate mentor, he and his wife Sadie D. Graham, M.P.H., have established the Dr. Vernon Clark Endowed Scholarship Fund at NCCU to assist minority undergraduates enrolled in NCCU's allied health programs. In addition,

a stipend will be made available to new minority graduates from NCCU who intend to pursue further education in medicine, dentistry, or pharmacy.

Clark has always taken a personal interest in the achievement of his students, inviting them to attend meetings of the Pre-Professional Health Society that he guided into existence 30 years ago and continues to serve as its first and only faculty advisor. He exhorts these promising students to become doctors and dentists rather than lab technicians and assistants and offers them arguably the most rigorous courses of their career at NCCU to better prepare them for their future academic challenges. "He was rough and tough," said Todd-

Houston. "I knew if I made a B in his class, I would make an A anywhere else in the world."

In addition to the endowed scholarship, the Grahams commissioned Clark's likeness to be cast in bronze. The bust by Michigan artist Suzanne Johnson will be displayed in NCCU's Department of Biology in the new Mary M. Townes Science Building, and the biology wing will be named in Clark's honor.

Regarding the tributes bestowed upon him, Clark said, "It is highly gratifying but somewhat difficult to express in words what this really means to me. Although this effort has been directed to me, I share it with my students."

Clark has also served as an adjunct professor at UNC-CH and Duke University. He was

the first African American to direct a Governor's School, the prestigious summer program for gifted and talented rising seniors enrolled in North Carolina high schools.

Clark has been president of the National Institute of Science and the Research Triangle Park Chapter of the National Technical Association, two organizations with the mission to enhance science scholarship and research at minority serving institutions. He is past president of the National Alumni Association of Shaw University and for several years, he served as editor of the *Beta Kappa Chi Bulletin*, a publication of the Beta Kappa Chi Scientific Honor Society.



## Defensive Lineman Greg Peterson Selected in 2007 NFL Draft

NCCU's defensive lineman Greg Peterson was selected in the 5th round (#141) by the Tampa Bay Buccaneers in the 2007 National Football

TFL per game), while adding a team-high two fumble recoveries. Peterson utilized brute strength, solid technique and distinct quickness to

coverage of the NFL. Draft when he became the school's first draft pick in 18 years. Projected as a sixth or seventh round selection, Peterson