

Education



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Page 9B

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SGA at Southern Choctaw urging donations to tornado victims at Enterprise High School

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

ENTERPRISE — "We're trying to get everyone involved in this," said Patricia Miller of Southern Choctaw High School.

The devastation caused by the tornado that hit Enterprise High

School on March 1 has prompted residents throughout the state to offer assistance, including an effort led by the Southern Choctaw High School Student Government Association.

Organized by Miller, who is SGA sponsor at SCHS, the organization is putting together an effort to send monetary and

other types of donations to the Enterprise area, in particular to the victims at the high school.

"We want this to be a countywide challenge," Miller said. "Individuals and organizations are being asked to donate."

According to Miller, the SGA is challenging people from around the county to give a minimum

of \$1 to the assistance effort. The donation drive will be held until the end of March, with donations sent directly to the Tornado Relief efforts in Enterprise.

"We are suggesting that everyone send their donations directly to Enterprise so that they will get there faster," said Miller.

The Enterprise City School System Tornado Relief Fund has been established at CB&T Bank in Enterprise. Those who wish to contribute can do so in one of two ways.

Donations can be made by check to Enterprise Tornado Fund at CB&T Bank, P.O. Box 311254, Enterprise, AL

36331. Credit card contributions can be made by visiting www.cbt-alabama.com. For more information, CB&T Bank can be reached at 334-347-0081.

Miller added that a team of SGA members from the school are hoping to travel to Enterprise in the coming weeks to help with clean-up efforts.

McRae receives President's Volunteer Service Award

BUTLER -- Joshua McRae, son of Edna McRae has been honored for his exemplary volunteer service with a President's Volunteer Service Award.

The award, which recognizes Americans of all ages who have volunteered significant amounts of their time to serve their communities and their country, was presented by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program on behalf of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

McRae participated in the Spirit of Community program this year as a representative of Choctaw County High School and was recommended by Kevin L. Howard, principal.

"The young people recognized by the Spirit of Community Awards demonstrate an enormous capacity for giving and reaching out to those in need," said Gerald N. Tirozzi, executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals. "NASSP is proud to honor them as they are wonderful examples of the high caliber of young people in our nation's schools today."

McRae will receive a letter from the President and a certificate in recognition and appreciation of his commitment to strengthening our Nation and for making a difference through volunteer service.

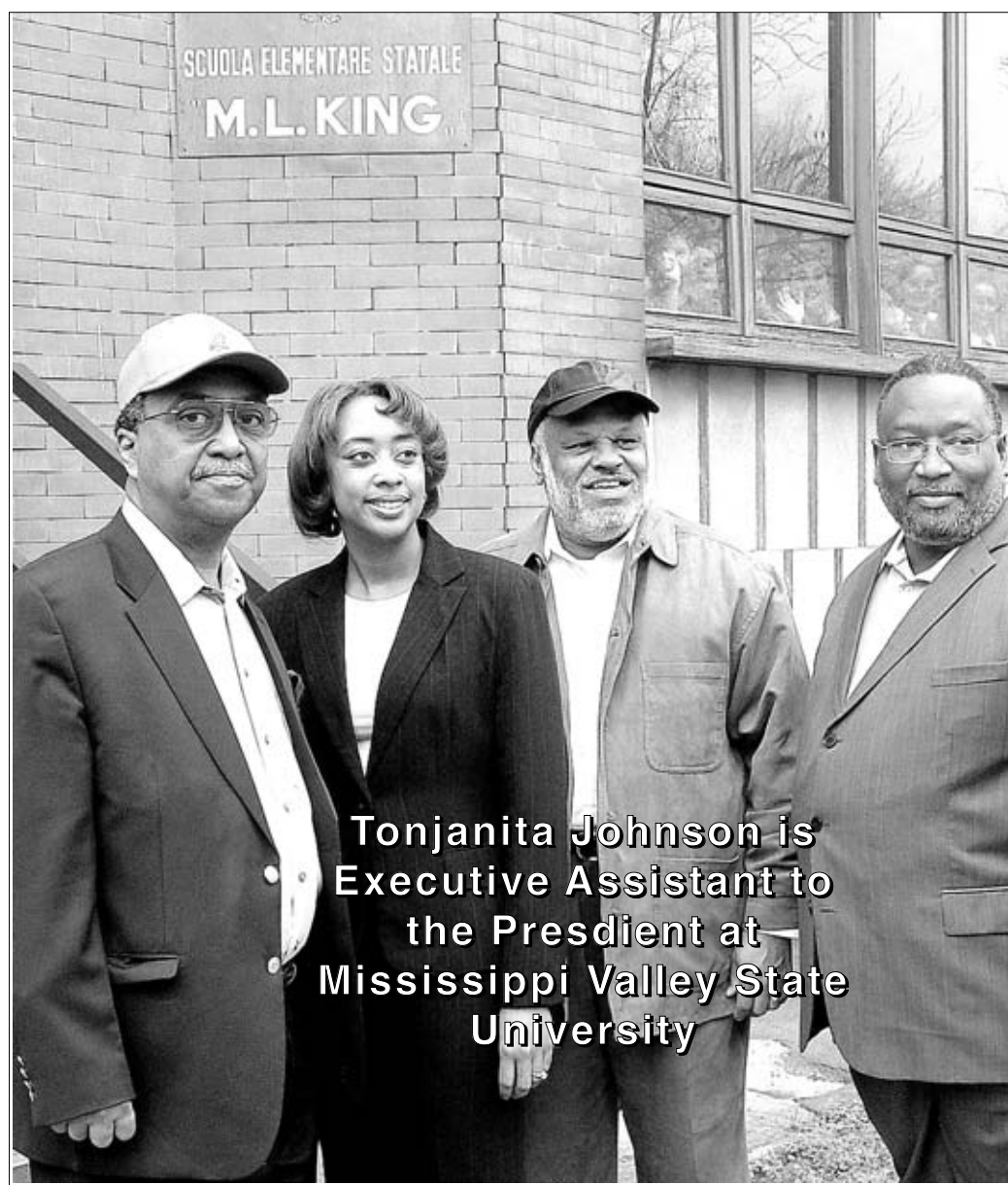
Local native travels to Italy with SCLC

ITTA BENA, Miss. — Choctaw County native Dr. Tonjanita L. Johnson, who serves as Executive Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff at Mississippi Valley State University, was among a select group of individuals who recently traveled to Torino, Italy with top officials from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which is based in Atlanta. The purpose of the week-long trip was to explore international options for teaching the theories of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., to help solve personal and global conflicts.

Along with Dr. Johnson, among the other officials traveling to Italy were SCLC National President/CEO and former Alabama state senator Charles Steele, Jr.; Spiver Gordon, National SCLC Board Treasurer; and MVSU President Lester C. Newman. Other representatives from SCLC, MVSU and Emory University in Atlanta also made the trip.

Two nationally acclaimed journalists also traveled with the delegation, George Curry, who is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service and BlackPressUSA.com, and Vern Smith of Ebony Magazine. Stories regarding the group's international visit have appeared nationwide in numerous newspapers and online publications as well as in the April 2007 issue of Ebony magazine.

"We are extremely excited about the possibilities associated with the partnership between MVSU and SCLC," said Dr. Johnson. "This trip to Italy not only gave us an opportunity to explore options for teaching



Tonjanita Johnson is Executive Assistant to the President at Mississippi Valley State University

Submitted photo One of the highlights of the group's trip was a visit to a local elementary school in Torino which is named in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The students were excited about the visit and can be seen waving in the background. Pictured are: SCLC President/CEO Charles Steele, Jr., Dr. Tonjanita Johnson; SCLC National Treasurer Spiver Gordon; and MVSU President Dr. Lester C. Newman.

people to resolve conflicts on an international scale, but it also reminded us of the importance of using Dr. King's philosophy of non-violence to help solve problems in our own communities right here in the

United States." MVSU currently offers a minor and a certificate program in Conflict Management, which utilizes King's philosophy as a foundation for the coursework. According to

Johnson, the University ultimately hopes to offer a degree in conflict studies and establish the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Conflict Resolution Center through Nonviolent Intervention in Ivrea, Italy. In

addition, the University expects to offer courses associated with the new program worldwide via the Internet.

"The conflict resolution centers were created in the spirit and teachings of Dr. King," said Steele. The first center, established by SCLC in Dimona, Israel with the African Hebrew Israelite Community, was followed by the second center in Dayton, Ohio. Other centers are scheduled to open throughout the world.

Johnson, who also teaches in the MVSU Communication Department, is not only expected to play a pivotal role in the continued development of the partnership between MVSU and SCLC, but she will also be involved in teaching one of the communication courses that is part of the Conflict Management curriculum. Johnson and other MVSU faculty members in the program are expected to receive additional in-depth training related to teaching courses in conflict studies this summer in Rhode Island.

A 1987 graduate of Choctaw County High School and a two-time graduate of the University of Alabama, Johnson is the daughter of Odis and Christella Butler of the Mt. Sterling community. She received her Ph.D. in urban higher education from Jackson State University, where she was a Jake Ayers Fellow, in August 2006.

She and her husband Tony, a former University of Alabama football standout who is now retired from the NFL, live in Greenwood, Miss., with their six-year-old daughter, T'Anna Gabrielle.

Who will be the next Teacher of the Month?

Find out next week ONLY in the SUN!

A special thanks to all our friends and family who made our birthday celebration so wonderful. May God Bless All of you.

Millard Audry and Ruth Sikes

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