

LAFAYETTE

Spring 2016

# McDONOUGH

V O I C E

Civility and Justice:  
Rasheim Donaldson '06

CELEBRATING  
**10**  
YEARS





Chuck Zovko

## In Honor of David Kearney McDonough, Class of 1844

Aug. 10, 1821, New Orleans, La.—Jan. 15, 1893, Newark, N.J.

The McDonough Network, which provides networking opportunities for African American and other black alumni and students, is named for Dr. David K. McDonough and is associated with the *McDonogh Voice*, a magazine launched in 2007 to celebrate the impressive contributions of African Americans to the Lafayette College community and beyond. The magazine is not only about past and present achievements, but also about aspirations—the hopes and dreams of all.

In addition, the Presidential Lecture Series on Diversity, launched in 2000 to encourage intellectual discourse on diversity, was renamed in honor of McDonough in 2009. It is now known as the President's McDonough Lecture Series.

When McDonough came to Lafayette College in 1838, he was a slave. His owner, John McDonough, a Louisiana planter, sent him to receive an education so that he could travel with a group of freed slaves to Liberia to serve as a missionary. But McDonough wanted to become a physician. When he graduated in 1844 as the College's first black graduate, he went on to attend classes at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. Although the institution would not grant him a degree, his classmates treated him as a physician. He later received a degree from Eclectic Medical College of New York. He became a member of the staff of the New York Hospital and New York Eye and Ear Infirmary. After his death, McDonough Memorial Hospital was named in his honor and opened as New York City's first hospital to admit physicians and patients without discrimination by race. He is buried in the historic Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.



The sculpture, *Transcendence*, which stands adjacent to the David Bishop Skillman Library, was created by Melvin Edwards to honor McDonough. Dedicated in September 2008, it is made of stainless steel and stands 16 feet tall. The massive upward-reaching form represents struggle, tension, and achievement. Edwards was artist in residence at the College's Experimental Printmaking Institute in 2004-05, supported by the David L. Temple Sr. and Helen J. Temple Visiting Artist Fund. ♦

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## V O I C E



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**On the cover:** Rasheim Donaldson '06 is an assistant district attorney in Bronx County.

Photo by Roy Groething

#### Diversity and Inclusiveness Statement

Lafayette College is committed to creating a diverse community: one that is inclusive and responsive, and is supportive of each and all of its faculty, students, and staff. The College seeks to promote diversity in its many manifestations. These include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, disability, and place of origin. The College recognizes that we live in an increasingly interconnected, globalized world, and that students benefit from learning in educational and social contexts in which there are participants from all manner of backgrounds. The goal is to encourage students to consider diverse experiences and perspectives throughout their lives. All members of the College community share a responsibility for creating, maintaining, and developing a learning environment in which difference is valued, equity is sought, and inclusiveness is practiced. It is a mission of the College to advance diversity as defined above. The College will continue to assess its progress in a timely manner in order to ensure that its diversity initiatives are effective. **Adopted 2009**



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Chuck Zovko

A Year of Dialogue

The McDonogh Network's celebratory 10th anniversary year comes at a time when issues of race and ethnicity have been a focus on many campuses. I am proud of the way our students have moderated substantive, productive discussions at Lafayette about race, ethnicity, diversity, and inclusion.

At November's #MoreThanMizzou forum, student facilitators led hundreds

of students, faculty, and staff in lively discussion of difficult issues—a powerful model of the value of open dialogue. This spring, direct and candid conversation was important as we grappled with a presidential working group recommendation to consider reducing participation in the Posse program from two Posses to one, in order to free up resources to explore other ways to achieve and support diversity. After hearing students' respectful but passionate testimony about the role Posse plays not only for Posse scholars but for many students from underrepresented groups, we decided to defer considering the recommendation and focus on building more robust student support systems. To that end, we have formed a Presidential Working Group on Student Support [see page 20].

This year is particularly significant because of the decision to embrace a strategic direction centered on making substantial new investments in Lafayette's people as the best way to ensure the College's future success. The primary objective is to strengthen financial aid resources, with the goal of being able to admit the most qualified students regardless of their ability to pay. We will also expand enrollment by 350 to 400 students over six to eight years, while maintaining or improving our 10:1 student-faculty ratio, and enhance faculty recruitment and retention [see page 18].

This direction conveys our deep commitment to the idea that a diverse and inclusive community is a critical component of undergraduate education. Increasing enrollment at a time of strong demand gives us a unique opportunity to simultaneously increase the diversity and the quality of our student body. While I am proud that for two consecutive years Lafayette has attracted our most diverse and most academically accomplished incoming classes ever, the challenges of changing demographics and changing expectations for higher education will make it even more important to draw outstanding students from a wide range of backgrounds. We are also increasing efforts to attract and retain a diverse faculty and staff.

My thanks to all who have helped the McDonogh Network to reach the 10-year milestone. I know how important this group has been to many alumni, to many current students, and to the College. I look forward to our continued work together.

Alison Byerly

Alison Byerly

LAFAYETTE  
McDONOGH  
V O I C E

*Celebrating the contributions of African Americans to the Lafayette community*

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Sylvia Daniels Weaver '75  
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Alvin M. Yearwood '83

The McDonogh Network is an active and engaged networking organization consisting of multiple generations of Lafayette College black alumni and students. The network enriches and informs its constituents through communications, events, and activities that promote their interests on campus and in the community at large. The organization supports and mentors the current black student body by encouraging their academic and social progress and promotes diversity among the student body.

Committees include events, communication, professional development and networking, resource development and fundraising, ad hoc governance, and recruitment, retention, and reclamation. To get involved, contact Robert M. Young, Assistant Director, Annual Fund, (610) 330-5683; [youngr@lafayette.edu](mailto:youngr@lafayette.edu).

*McDonogh Voice* is published annually for African American and black alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff, and friends of Lafayette College by the Communications Division, Feather House, 17 Cattell St., Easton, PA 18042; 610 330-5120; fax 610 330-5217.

For more, visit  
[sites.lafayette.edu/mcdonogh/](http://sites.lafayette.edu/mcdonogh/)

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

Looking Back, Looking Forward

The McDonogh Network celebrates its 10th anniversary this spring with events that include a Gala Reception featuring cocktails, live music, a silent auction, and student awards on April 23 and a special reception on June 4 during Alumni Reunion.

From its beginning, the network has had a tremendous impact on the College. Its first official events were a reception and panel discussion during Homecoming in September 2008 in conjunction with the dedication of *Transcendence*, the magnificent campus sculpture by Melvin Edwards that commemorates Lafayette's granting of a degree to David Kearney McDonogh in 1844. The panelists were Joseph Godwin '81, Britney McCoy '05, Alfonzo Owens '75, Nkrumah Pierre '06, Renee Becton Strickland '82, Thomas Sumners '80, Winston Thompson '86, and George Weaver '72.

The network's history and impact stretch back even further, to the inaugural issue of this magazine (then called *The McDonogh Report*), published in 2007. The issue celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Experimental Printmaking Institute under the leadership of Prof. Curlee Raven Holton and announced that EPI had engaged Edwards to create *Transcendence*. Leroy Nunery '77 and Pierre were co-chairs of the steering committee that provided initial direction to the network.

Since that time, with the support of the College's administration, McDonogh Network members have worked to fulfill the network's mission: (1) To enrich and inform its constituents through communications, events, and activities that promote their interests on campus and in the community at large, (2) To support and mentor the current black student body by encouraging their academic and social progress, and (3) To promote diversity among the student body.

Members have positively influenced Lafayette students and fellow alumni as mentors and role models. They have helped advance the College as volunteers in key leadership positions, as catalysts for campus dialogue about social justice at Lafayette and beyond, as participants and partners in exhibitions and performances, and as financial supporters. The success of the network can be seen in increased engagement of alumni of color with the College. Homecoming and Reunion gatherings and the senior celebration have become very popular annual events.

In addition, network members have played a role in helping Lafayette attract the most academically accomplished and diverse incoming classes in the College's history during the last two years.

Looking forward, a new organizational structure, new student leadership group, and other initiatives promise to enable the network to be even more effective in fulfilling its mission as it moves into its second decade.

UPCOMING  
MCDONOGH  
NETWORK EVENTS

**Gala Reception**

Saturday, April 23  
Pfenning Alumni Center

**10th Anniversary Reception  
Reunion 2016**

Saturday, June 4  
Portlock Black Cultural Center

**Homecoming Social**

Saturday, Oct. 1

**Your Support**

Thanks to the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends, endowed funds honoring David and Washington McDonogh are having a growing impact. To learn more, see page 19 and contact Robert Young '14 at [youngr@lafayette.edu](mailto:youngr@lafayette.edu) or 610-330-5683. To contribute, visit [development.lafayette.edu/give](http://development.lafayette.edu/give) or send a check to Lafayette Annual Fund, Box 3000, Easton, PA 18042.





# PROFESSIONALISM AND COMPETENCE

Rasheim Donaldson '06 values civility and justice—  
as does his mentor, Alvin Yearwood '83.

By Geoff Gehman '80

**RASHEIM DONALDSON '06** likes to watch Bronx Supreme Court trials conducted by Judge **Alvin Yearwood '83**, his legal mentor. Yearwood's courtroom is a sort of school for Donaldson, a Bronx County assistant district attorney.

Here Donaldson is reminded that no matter what the case—murder, robbery, drug sale—criminal lawyers, young and old alike, are expected to be civil, “a sometimes undervalued virtue.”

“Judge Yearwood requires professionalism and competence in his courtroom,” Donaldson says. “I’ve witnessed him emphasize the importance of respecting the rules of court to lawyers who attempt to advocate defiantly. As a former prosecutor, he’s very adept at giving constructive criticism. He’s a great role model.”

Donaldson grew up in the Bronx, the son of an aide for a major hospital and a social worker for a methadone clinic. He graduated from Frederick Douglass Academy in Harlem, a predominantly African-American school. He came to Lafayette as a member of the College’s first class of students sponsored by the Posse Foundation.

Donaldson prepared for life as a campus minority with his 10 Posse colleagues, a tribe that included students of Indian and Chinese heritage. The training helped him defend affirmative action in a First-Year Seminar where he was the only person of color.

“I didn’t want to fit into that stereotype of underperformer or overmatched, and I certainly didn’t want to feel like a charity case,” he says.

“I felt I was under the microscope at Lafayette. Whether I liked it or not, I would be representing black men, especially black men from New York City. It was a heavy weight on my shoulders and it made me work harder on what to do, and what not to do, in life, to not succumb to the powers that be.”

For the next four years Donaldson studied and practiced power. As an anthropology and sociology major, he analyzed race and ethnicity, wealth and social capital. As a volunteer for a children’s center in Easton, he learned about domestic violence, poverty, and alienation. As president of the Association of Black Collegians, he united black athletes with black non-athletes, moderating discussions about everything from sports to politics. He capped his College Hill career by being featured in a 2006 *New York Times* story on Posse. In the

article he recalled defending his scholarship to minority students of color who defended traditional scholarships.

After graduating from Lafayette, Donaldson returned to his Manhattan alma mater to teach English and social studies. After graduating from law school at Wake Forest University, he directed enrichment programs at Brooklyn public schools for a community-based non-profit organization.

In 2012 Donaldson became an assistant district attorney in the general crimes division of the Bronx County district attorney’s office. Last year he helped convict a serial abuser of women of a 1993 killing, aided by DNA from a 1994 knife attack. Violent crimes, he points out, are more commonly prosecuted without scientific evidence. One of his duties is to “soften the expectations” of jurors accustomed to the forensic epiphanies of fictional TV shows, a phenomenon known as “the CSI effect.”

Donaldson has mixed with fellow black graduates of Lafayette during tailgate parties sponsored by the McDonogh Network. He met Yearwood in 2012 when they served as panelists in a McDonogh Network career-development workshop for students. Yearwood, a Bronx native who had been an assistant DA in the Bronx for 13 years, has made Donaldson his legal protégé. His courtroom tip sheet reads something like this: Come to chambers with a firm, flexible plan. Think carefully before you speak. Don’t mislead the jury. Don’t undermine the justice. Shoot from the hip and you may get shot down from the bench.

“With the power of the DA office comes discretion and responsibility,” says Yearwood, a member of the McDonogh Network Steering Committee. “You have to seek justice, and justice doesn’t always mean winning in the traditional sense. What you have in this business is your word. If people can’t trust you, you have severely injured yourself as an attorney.”

Guided by Yearwood, Donaldson has become a legal advocate outside the courtroom. He regularly attends bar-association events and trains seventh graders to compete in mock trials. Teaching justice, he believes, helps him practice more justly.

“I want to support promising students,” Donaldson says. “I want to make people feel less disconnected and less disaffected by telling them that I was once one of them. I want to tell them that sometimes the most challenging moments are the most rewarding in the long run.” ♦





Roy Groething



Douglas Kilpatrick

# STEPPING INTO LEADERSHIP FOR LAFAYETTE

Maurice Bennett '06 and Terese Brown '07 have important roles with the Board of Trustees.

By Stevie O. Daniels

**M**aurice Bennett '06 and Terese Brown '07, leaders in their careers and communities, are bringing their perspectives to the College's leadership in important roles with the Board of Trustees.

Bennett, vice president and equity trader for Credit Suisse, is serving a two-year term as a trustee associate. He attends full meetings of the board and is a member of the Committee on Development, Alumni, and Community Relations.

"Lafayette is set to embark on a transformational journey to increase student enrollment, increase our footprint, and take strides to become a need-blind institution," he says. "Serving as a trustee associate allows me to have a voice at this critical time as we execute on a plan that will forever change our institution."

Brown, creative director and CEO of Terese Sydonna, the fashion design firm she founded in 2011, is serving a three-year term as an alumni associate to the board. A member of the Committee on Student Life, she echoes Bennett's motivation.

"I saw this as a chance to truly effect positive change in regard to the student experience," Brown says. "I have always been passionate about issues of social justice, student life, and how Lafayette facilitates an environment that allows students to be challenged and grow."

Both Brown and Bennett note the changing social and political landscape in the country and at the College.

"My presence with the board is a reflection of the changing times of our nation," Brown says. "My

experiences as a member of Lafayette's second Posse, ability to motivate students and alumni alike, and experiences as an entrepreneur will offer an alternative point of view that is much needed. I plan to bring flair and creativity to every collaborative effort that the committee and board undertake."

Bennett's work has enabled him to interact with some of the top minds in the financial world. "By competing day in and day out with highly talented people, my experience has grown at a rapid rate, which will hopefully prove useful as we debate the pressing issues that face our institution."

Bennett adds that some of his proudest moments working on Wall Street have been philanthropic efforts. This includes co-founding the Black Professionals Network at Credit Suisse, which partners with charitable organizations such as Opportunity Network, Harlem Academy, and Work to Ride. He also founded Greenwood Capital Investments, a real estate investment company, in 2008 and serves as its CEO. "My goal is to create a subsidiary that will begin building affordable housing in places like Philadelphia within the next couple of years."

In her community, Brown mentors designers affiliated with the Philadelphia Fashion Incubator and worked with them to form the Philadelphia Fashion



Alliance to promote community engagement. She is the alliance's public relations coordinator.

Terese Sydonna fashions are available in selected boutiques in Philadelphia such as Aoki Boutique, Jade's Closet, and Intrigue Fine Apparel. They will soon be featured in specialty boutiques and department stores in New York also.

"My success is a factor of family, friends, and fashion," Brown says. "They encouraged me to continue when others said no. Hard work, sacrifice, and perseverance have worked in my favor. I dream, but I am also a realist who has recognized a shift towards practicality and comfort in fashion."

Brown and Bennett both serve the McDonogh Network as members of its Steering Committee.

A network member since its founding in 2008, Brown has participated in events with President **Alison Byerly** and at networking gatherings in New York and Philadelphia. She says the group not only enables alumni to network but also to connect with current students who identify as black and African American.

"It is a chance to nurture and develop a group that has been somewhat misrepresented and under-represented at Lafayette," she says. "It was rare to see someone who looked like me in the classroom or in leadership roles during my time at Lafayette. Often I was chosen by my peers and professors to be the spokesperson for all blacks and African Americans. Other times I was told that I should not be studying economics or that I was too confident and outspoken for a Jamaican girl raised in the Bronx by working-class immigrant parents."

Bennett values the network's annual meeting for the updates from students and administrators.

"Network members can share ideas, express concerns, and have a voice in important matters of the College," he says. "As a millennial, I find the importance of face-to-face contact is getting lost. The network provides



Given the proposed changes, the College has an opportunity to be more inclusive than ever. Everyone should be and will be encouraged to contribute to the future of Lafayette.

—**Maurice Bennett '06**



I wish a group like the McDonogh Network had existed during my Lafayette experience! This group reinforces that there are others, like me, who share a common Lafayette experience.

—**Terese Brown '07**

an opportunity to build meaningful relationships with incredibly successful people of color, which is a vital resource for those who find it a challenge to connect outside of social media spaces."

Bennett recently joined the executive committee of the College's *Live Connected, Lead Change* campaign.

"I wanted to take part in this important work to make sure that a diverse, youthful, millennial voice was heard," he says. "Lafayette is currently standing at one of its more critical points in history. It has never been more important to communicate effectively and to ensure that all of Lafayette's stakeholders, including students, alumni, faculty, and the surrounding community, are all aligned." ♦

# IMPACTING THE WORLD

Lenora Johnson '81 meets many challenges at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

By **Stevie O. Daniels**

## EXPLAINING THE SIGNIFICANCE

of studies by the National Institutes of Health related to heart, lung, blood, and sleep disorders rests on the shoulders of **Lenora Johnson '81**.

She is the director of science policy, engagement, education, and communications for the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). With an annual budget of more than \$3 billion, NHLBI is the third-largest of NIH's 27 institutes.

"Having a new scientific portfolio has been very exciting," says Johnson, who served as director of communications at NIH's National Cancer Institute through 2013.

"Funds are granted across a wide range of research, from basic studies to clinical settings. I am also overseeing a reorganization of programs and structures guided by Dr. Gary Gibbons, who recently became the new director."

For example, Johnson says, funds have been awarded to examine the relationship between mitochondria and the proliferation of cancerous cells. A project called LungMAP is exploring the interplay among different cell types that results in healthy lungs. That work will help lead to more effective treatments for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, the third-leading cause of death in the United States.

Of particular interest to her is the emerging approach of precision medicine. A project called TOPMed will conduct whole genome sequencing of 20,000 individuals from diverse groups to study a variety of disorders. Combining this data with molecular, environmental, and clinical information will help identify factors that prevent disease and lead to more personalized treatments.

"People need to be aware of how important it will be to let their genetic makeup be known so that treatments can be targeted specifically to their genetic profile."

Johnson and her staff communicate research advances to the public. "The challenge of explaining the complex research in a way that enables everyone to understand the



Courtesy of NIH

significance and relevance to their lives is what makes the work most meaningful for me," Johnson says. "I also thrive on keeping up with the rapid changes in science and technology as well as the many new communication venues."

Johnson's passion for public health was inspired by her mentor, William H. Foege, an epidemiologist who helped eradicate smallpox in the 1970s. She met him when she was working on a national anti-tobacco campaign he initiated as president of the American Public Health Association, then subsequently worked for him when he was the executive director of the Carter

Center, founded by President Jimmy Carter.

"Dr. Foege showed me how public health helped people live better lives and encouraged me to pursue that path," she says.

Johnson went on to earn a master's in public health at Emory University and a doctorate in public health, with an emphasis in behavioral science, from George Washington University. She recalls having to study all the time at Lafayette, where she majored in biology and played varsity basketball. But she realized in graduate school that she had been well prepared and had a stronger foundation than her peers.

When she attended Lafayette, there were few people of color and few women, she says.

"I came from an environment that was the opposite, so it was a difficult adjustment, but the challenge taught me how to get along. I developed a strong support group and I thrived," she says.

"We don't always choose the path that we happen upon, but once we are there we are fortunate to encounter great opportunities that open other doors," she adds. "In hindsight, I might not have chosen Lafayette, but it turned out to be optimal. I am grateful because it paved the way for a career in which I can impact the world and work among some of the most intelligent people in the country." ♦





# FINDING COMFORT IN UNCOMFORTABLE PLACES

Yolanda Wisher '98, poet laureate of Philadelphia, builds alliances and strengthens communities.

By Geoff Gehman '80

**OVER TWO DECADES**, Yolanda Wisher '98 has built alliances as an English teacher, a performing poet, and a leader of one of America's leading municipal mural programs. As Philadelphia's third poet laureate, a two-year job she began in February, she's strengthening communities with a spiritual vitamin blend she calls "iron for your mind."

A native of North Wales, Pa., Wisher arrived at Lafayette with "black and white" goals. She intended to major in international affairs and play varsity basketball. Disappointed by her experiences as a global-studies student and a shooting guard, she began concentrating on English programs. She was empowered by a first-year poetry seminar highlighted by a trip to a major poetry festival, a position as a writing tutor, and an enchanting introduction to *The Canterbury Tales*.

Wisher's course was changed by her mentors, English professor **Ian Smith** and economics professor **Rexford Ahene**. They made her take classes in subjects she initially dismissed as irrelevant: economics, logic, Shakespeare.

"Rex and Ian put me in places where I wouldn't be the best and the brightest star shining. They put me in places where I would grow," she says. "Today, I'm an awesome teacher of Shakespeare!"

Inspired by Smith and Ahene, Wisher embraced other potentially awkward situations. She interned at a city newspaper, taught inmates in a county prison, turned a Black Studies minor into a self-designed second major to go along with English. She made college a cultural crucible for forging a new personality, a new perspective.

"I was challenged to see myself through lenses of race, class, and gender," says Wisher, who as a senior received the College's H. MacKnight Black Poetry and Literature Prize. "I learned how to be a fighter, how to be more of a diplomat and not necessarily an equivocator. The whole experience clarified my sense of justice, my sense of good people and good intentions."

After graduating, Wisher expanded "modes of community" she learned on College Hill. She became the first poet laureate of Montgomery County, Pa., in 1999, while studying for a master's degree in English and creative writing at Temple University. At Germantown Friends School she taught Shakespeare with a fierce relevance, launched a poetry festival, and hosted a field

trip along Germantown Avenue, an ethnographer's dream of poor, middle-class, and wealthy communities.

Wisher extended her communal vision during a five-year stint as director of art education for the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. Her initiatives ranged from a poetry anthology, *Peace Is a Haiku Song*, to a 33-site exhibit of art works by at-risk youngsters, some enrolled in the juvenile-justice system.

In 2014 Hanging Loose Press published Wisher's *Monk Eats an Afro*, a collection of urban, urbane meditations on everything from mentorship to motherhood. In one poem she renders giving birth as an ancestral rite: "the motion between each contraction/like African sleepin sickness/motions of slave ships in these hips."

Last year Wisher left her mural post to spend more time making her poetry more than "a side hustle." In February, life became even more of a mosaic when she became poet laureate of Philadelphia, the city of her birth. That month she hosted her first major event, a Poetic Address to the Nation that involved more than 100 communities. Contributing a sonnet was **Ross Gay '96**, whose collection *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude* won this year's National Book Critics Circle prize for poetry and other awards. Gay and Wisher have shared several poetry readings at Lafayette.

Wisher promises to join the McDonogh Network when she gets a break from being a mother of a 6-year-old son, a partner of a double bassist, and a "rhapsodist of wherewithal" for the U.S. Department of Arts and Culture.

**Robert Young '14** envisions Wisher as a McDonogh leader. He places her in the company of other African American "trailblazers" he interviewed for his Lafayette film projects, including **Darlyne Bailey '74**, dean of Bryn Mawr College's graduate school of social work and social research. "Yolanda is a great networker," he says. "She's fearless. She's truly a rock star."

When Wisher enters the network fold, she expects she'll discuss the importance of finding comfort in uncomfortable places.

"These places don't have to be perfect for everybody," she says. "I didn't get the glove fit I was looking for at Lafayette, but I was able to make it fit for myself. The important thing to remember is: Just break the mold." ♦





Roy Groething

# PUZZLES AND PEOPLE

Ryan Benjamin '10 determines risk and promotes inclusion at Moody's Analytics.

By Stevie O. Daniels

**F**inding ways to determine the risks and potential of financial investments spurs the imagination of Ryan Benjamin '10, assistant director/senior financial engineer at Moody's Analytics, which provides research, software, and advisory services to global risk-management companies.

"I love solving puzzles," says Benjamin, who majored in computer science at Lafayette. He uses mathematical formulas and writes computer programs to create models of structured finance securities. He designs technical specifications and tests new features for Moody's analytical software. He is currently leading the design and creation of a new loan-matching algorithm.

"One of my first projects was to continue to build out an automatic process that ensures the quality of our data and models," he says. "To do this I had to use a lot of clever and powerful programming techniques that I learned at Lafayette."

Benjamin enjoys connecting with people, too. At work, this takes several forms, including presenting on-site demonstrations of products for prospective customers and consulting with risk-analysis clients on ways to customize Moody's software to build their own internal analytical tools.

He also assists Moody's administrators in planning programs for employees and in efforts to ensure diversity and inclusion. He works with the human resources office regarding diversity recruitment and attends company-sponsored luncheons at which college and high school students learn about careers in the finance industry.

A project of particular importance to Benjamin grew out of a conversation with an employee group about a way that Moody's could support local youth in New York City.

"We started a program in which employees can mentor and interact with young men of color in their sophomore year of high school to ensure that they are focused not only on graduating but also on continuing their education," he says. "It is modeled after the My Brother's Keeper initiative."

Being connected to Lafayette is important to him as well.

"Friendships and experiences I have had at Lafayette continue to impact my life and career today," Benjamin

says. "Whether I'm catching up with a friend or meeting students or alums, I am inspired by others and their stories."

His experiences as a member of the debate team and a Posse Scholar were particularly influential, he says. He remains involved in the life of the College and serves as an inspiration himself.

"Debate teaches you how to construct arguments in a logical way and improves your public speaking and writing skills," he says. "Most of all, it teaches you to first listen and then think critically about a response. I use these skills daily in meetings and to make business decisions."

His Lafayette coaches, **Scott Placke** and **John Boyer**, continue to call on him to participate in judging both college and high school debates.

Benjamin also points to the value of interpersonal skills he learned through his experiences at Posse retreats.

"The retreats brought together representatives from all communities at Lafayette," he says, "Emphasis was placed on the importance of hearing and understanding points of view different from your own, a skill that is crucial for interacting in the world today."

In October, Benjamin visited campus with four other members of the McDonogh Network to speak with students at a panel discussion and dinner that the network co-sponsored with Career Services.

"I saw this as an opportunity to bolster old connections and create new ones. Meeting with other Lafayette alumni is always a pleasure, and students benefit from speaking with us about navigating their careers and determining what factors to consider when making choices," he says.

"The McDonogh Network helps make the individuals it serves and the College successful. People's shared experiences galvanize them together." ♦





# INNOVATING IN TECHNOLOGY AND MUSIC

Darryl Clark '82 evolves in developing software and playing bass guitar.

By Stevie O. Daniels

**JUST AS A JAZZ TUNE** evolves as it progresses, **Darryl Clark '82** moves forward in his career as a technology manager and in his art as a bassist.

"In my field you have to keep evolving. Every three or four years you have to adapt, learn new information and techniques," says Clark, director of appliance software for Nexenta Systems, Santa Clara, Calif.

The latest evolution in his field is software-defined storage, where Nexenta is a pioneer. Based in New York, Clark oversees a team with members in Russia, India, and California that is developing the user interface for the next-generation Nexenta product.

"Today people know about cloud storage, and it seems routine, but 16 years ago the concept was just emerging," Clark says. That's when he and several partners developed the idea of a storage-service provider.

"Storage Networks provided offsite storage for large enterprise customers. In 1999, this was a big deal. I was an early member of the team and learned about dense wave division multiplexing long before it became commonplace," he says. He led the team that built a fiber optic ring around New York City.

A chance encounter as a Lafayette student led to his first job. An A.B. engineering major who worked in the computer lab, he met the vice president of development for Chemical Bank during an admissions tour led by **Alvin Yearwood '83**. Clark went on to hold positions in network systems programming at Merrill Lynch, American Express, and MBNA, where he also managed infrastructure planning and storage administration.

Having played classical guitar starting at age 7, Clark switched to electric bass in high school and studied at the JazzMobile Workshop. He was a student under the late Earl May for two years. In Lafayette's Jazz Ensemble, he played with **Jay Katz '84**, with whom he still performs occasionally.

"The roots of all popular music are based on understanding and playing the standards," Clark says.

Always stretching the limits, he regularly plays smooth jazz with guitarist Frank Piombo and straight-ahead jazz with the Perfect Alibi Ensemble. Performing with the reggae/folk group Owens Brothers Ensemble at the 2014 Lincoln Center Out of Doors concert honoring Pete Seeger was particularly memorable.

"It is hard to describe the emotion of looking out across the thousands in the audience," he says. "Many of them sang along to Seeger's 'Oh Freedom/Amazing Grace' medley."

Clark enjoys open jams at Hedley Club in San Jose, Calif., and Hat City Kitchen in Orange, N.J. On Sundays he plays with the gospel group at Bethany Church in West Orange.

Clark has been involved in the New York City Mayor's Adopt-a-Class program and Essex County, N.J., Youth Detention Center ministry. For eight years he chaired the library action committee of the Langston Hughes Community Library and Cultural Center in the Corona-East Elmhurst neighborhood, where he grew up.

"The Black Panthers created the library in the 1960s because they wanted to have local control," he says. "It provided a homework-assistance program for children in the area, and I benefited from that program."

The nation benefited from Clark's service as small boat coxwain in the U.S. Coast Guard reserve from 1988 to 2000. Two occasions stand out in his mind, one of them ceremonial: during Fleet Week in 1993, his boat was among those that escorted the Russian destroyer *Bezuderny* to the U.S.S. *Intrepid*. The other occasion was the 1991 Nor'easter that became known as the Perfect Storm.

"Long Island Sound was very choppy—not rolling waves like the ocean—so it was too dangerous to keep the boats at dock," he says. "The crew would take the boats out and then return for a shift change every four hours throughout the storm." ♦



# TOP OF HIS PROFESSION

Quincy Miller '97 leads the nation's largest mutual bank.

By Stevie O. Daniels

**WITH QUIET** self-determination Quincy Miller '97 has risen to the top of his profession. After 10 years at Citizens Bank, where he was president of business banking, he was promoted last June to Massachusetts state president. In March he joined Boston-based Eastern Bank as vice chairman and chief banking officer and will become president next January, succeeding his long-time mentor and friend Robert Rivers.

Miller's steady voice exudes enthusiasm and passion. He says his foundation for success rests in the examples set by his mother, who raised two sons by herself, and his grandparents when he was growing up in the inner city of Harrisburg, Pa. His own competitiveness and desire to prove himself also fuel his focus: service to others.

"I want to demonstrate that with the right approach and hard work you can be successful. You have to keep grounded and stay humble. Helping others achieve their goals helps me achieve my goals, which makes the team successful and thus the company."

Miller was named to the 2016 *Get Konnected* list of Boston's 100 most influential people of color. He attributes his success as an African American in a sector that generally lacks diversity to his consistent objective of demonstrating his ability to do a job with excellence and then asking his supervisors what he needs to do or learn to progress to the next level.

A key advancement was his promotion in 2006 to retail banking director for Citizens Bank in Ohio, with responsibility for 100 branches. There was an obstacle: "It was the lowest performing market, and I could only propel my career if I could turn it around." Helping paint a vision that inspired 800 employees, he led efforts that raised the bank to the top quartile the first year, to the top the second.

"You have to understand what is important to employees at all levels," says Miller, who values getting to



know employees individually. His favorite position is teller. "They are on the front line, closest to our customers, and that is key to the service industry. You have to bridge the gap between what happens day to day and the strategic direction of the company."

Founded in 1818, Eastern is the nation's oldest and largest mutual bank, with assets totaling \$10 billion. It is a community bank. "What we do is for the customers, not shareholders. We give 10 percent of our net income to charity each year and are committed to advocacy and diversity." Miller

serves on the boards of the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, Bottom Line, Zoo New England, and Greater Boston Food Bank. He is a member of Lafayette's McDonogh Network Steering Committee and Career Services Employer Advisory Committee and an internship sponsor.

An economics and business major in college, Miller began his career in a management-development program at M&T Bank. "I learned all aspects of the banking industry and was able to apply leadership skills I had gained as captain of the football team and president of Brothers of Lafayette."

In his first job, as an assistant M&T branch manager in New York, he met Bob Rivers, who was in charge of the eastern part of the state. Miller returned to Harrisburg in 1998 to help his family, taking a position at Keystone Financial. M&T acquired Keystone a year later, and Rivers moved to Harrisburg, becoming Miller's boss. Rivers joined Eastern Bank three years later. When Miller moved to Massachusetts from Ohio, he reconnected with Rivers, who had become president of Eastern Bank.

"The lesson," Miller says, "is to be aware that you have an impact on every person you meet in your career, and they have an impact on you." ♦

# SCHOLAR AND ACTIVIST

Drew Brown '06 focuses on the cultural relationship of race, sports, and gender to black lives.

By Stevie O. Daniels

**GROWING UP IN** Windsor, Ont., Drew Brown '06, now a visiting scholar in African American studies at the University of Houston, observed that poverty-stricken areas of nearby Detroit and other U.S. cities were dominated by "black and brown people."

He wanted to find a way to better their lives, to change the underlying cause, but realized that he first had to understand how the situation developed. So after majoring in economics and business and starring in football at Lafayette, then spending a short time with the Canadian Football League's Edmonton Eskimos, Brown earned master's and doctoral degrees in African American studies from Clark Atlanta University and Temple University, respectively.

He has established himself as a prominent emerging scholar focusing on the cultural relationship of race, sports, and gender to black lives.

"The historical, sociological, and cultural layers of this issue are complex," he says. After initially resisting the suggestion of his mentor, Daniel Black, to explore race and sports, he wrote a paper at Temple on the racial integration of the National Football League in 1946.

"I recognized that blacks could have utilized their athletic capital or power for deeper inclusion, even to have whole teams implemented rather than one player at a time," he says. "I could see that this area had rich potential for future understanding. I was hooked." His Ph.D. dissertation focuses on NFL draft prospects' conceptions of manhood and ideas of playing in the NFL.

"I discovered that black males use sports and sports achievement to achieve their identity goals, to affirm their understanding of what it means to be a man," he says. "Then when sports is no longer a part of their lives, they go through an identity crisis that all too often leads to depression, violence, or suicide." They sometimes rely on illegal activity for income, which Brown calls "the playing-field-to-prison pipeline." The understanding



that his research unveils could help individuals find healthy alternatives.

An activist as well a scholar, Brown says, "My goal in my vocation overall is to help black youth develop into self-loving people who have mastered good character."

He is the founder of the annual conference on race and sports called Passing the Ball. He was invited to the White House as part of the Black LGBT Emerging Leaders program in 2013. As an LGBT ally, he worked in the Human Rights Campaign and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. He also is

on the board of The Brothers Network, which highlights successful black men who are centered in their identity and serve as role models.

At Lafayette, strong role models were instrumental in his development.

"George Bright, my sounding board, understood the challenge of being a black male on campus. Rex Ahene guided me, pushed me, and helped me understand how to explore the complexity of black issues," he says. "The late Bryan Washington introduced me to the writings of W.E.B. DuBois and James Baldwin, which had a deep impact on my understanding of race and being a black man."

During Black Heritage Month, Brown addressed the definition society places on black masculinity in a talk at Lafayette entitled "Outing Odell: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Athletics."

"Black players were speculating about Odell Beckham's sexuality and gender identity based on a YouTube video of him doing a choreographed dance," says the four-year letter-winner and starting linebacker on two Patriot League championship teams.

"It was a great example of what happens if a black male does not adhere to the majority view of black male masculinity. That situation is not only oppressive to males but also to the entire black community." ♦



# Lafayette's People, Lafayette's Future

Admitting the most qualified students regardless of their ability to pay is the key objective of a new strategic direction for the College announced in February by President **Alison Byerly**.

"This direction represents a shared conviction on the part of the administration, the faculty, and the Board of Trustees that Lafayette College is defined by our people," Byerly said.

Lafayette will make transformative investments in its people and the vibrancy of the educational community. Strengthening financial aid resources is a central element of the plan and a key goal of the College's *Live Connected, Lead Change* campaign.

"Each year, we are unable to admit many students with outstanding academic qualifications who cannot afford the cost of attending Lafayette. Our plans call for significant increases to our need-

based financial aid allocations in the coming years," Byerly said.

"When we reach our goal, we will join the ranks of the nation's finest colleges as a place where all students are admitted solely on the basis of their own merit. Lafayette will be known not only for its distinctive, integrated liberal arts and engineering education but also for making that education available to all, regardless of financial means."

The College also plans to grow the size of the student body to 2,850-2,900 over six to eight years while maintaining or improving the student-faculty ratio and enhancing faculty recruitment and retention through competitive salaries.

"By increasing our enrollment by 350 to 400 students at this time of strong demand, we have a unique opportunity to simultaneously increase the diversity and the quality of our student body," Byerly said.

These initiatives are the product

of extensive study and discussion undertaken by three Presidential Working Groups, composed of faculty, administrators, and trustees who were appointed last fall.

"We believe that the interrelated elements of this plan will combine to catalyze greater change than any single element would accomplish individually and that our vision can transform Lafayette into the college we aspire to be," Byerly said.

The *Live Connected, Lead Change* campaign, the most ambitious fundraising effort in Lafayette's history, is enabling the College to enhance and improve every aspect of the Lafayette experience. The support of thousands of alumni, parents, and friends is propelling the campaign toward its goal of \$400 million to build on and connect the College's strengths, solidify its standing among the nation's most outstanding undergraduate institutions, and position it for future success.

# Our Beloved Community

For the second consecutive year, the McDonogh Network contributed to the success of the Admissions Office's annual symposium called Our Beloved Community, a day-long event focusing on diversity and inclusion, multicultural competence, civic engagement, global citizenship, social justice, and more. The symposium attracted 150 prospective students from around the world on Nov. 14. It is named for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a society that embraces its members through understanding and celebrating differences.

The McDonogh panelists (at right, L-R) were **Damilare Oyefeso '15**, **Washcarina Martinez Alonzo '11**, **Robert Young '14**, **Stephanie Silva '13**, and **McHerdy Saint-Germain '15**. They shared personal



experiences about their time at Lafayette, touching on topics that included being a first-generation college student, being a minority at a predominantly white institution, the benefits of coming to Lafayette,

and managing the academic rigor at Lafayette. The panelists were impressed with the prospective students' intellectual curiosity and eagerness to become change agents in their communities.

# Endowed Funds' Growing Impact

Thanks to the generosity of alumni, parents, and friends, endowed funds honoring **David** and **Washington McDonogh** are having a growing impact on the student experience.

The McDonogh Fund supports the McDonogh Network Awards program (see page 21) and other initiatives sponsored by Intercultural Development. Its impact this year includes supporting open discussions about racial activism and the visit of civil rights activist Diane Nash to give the keynote speech of Black Heritage Month. The fund also helped make possible a special event in March featuring attorney **Jeffrey Robinson '80** that was co-sponsored by Kirby Government and Law Society and Prelaw Advising.

The McDonogh Scholarship Fund was established in 2014 through a bequest from **Edward M. Phillips '58**. Support from the fund will benefit students beginning this fall.

To learn more and to contribute, contact **Robert Young '14** at [youngr@lafayette.edu](mailto:youngr@lafayette.edu) or 610-330-5683.

# National Accolades for Ross Gay '96

The latest volume of poetry by **Ross Gay '96**, *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, was the recipient of the National Book Critics Circle Award and Claremont Graduate University's Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. It also was named a finalist for the National Book Award and NAACP Image Award.

The author of two previous collections of poetry, *Against Which* and *Bringing the Shovel Down*, and co-author of two

chapbooks, Gay is a founding editor of the online sports magazine *Some Call it Ballin'* ([www.somecallitballin.com](http://www.somecallitballin.com)). He is an associate professor of poetry at Indiana University and teaches in Drew University's MFA program in poetry. He is the recipient of a fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, Cave Canem, and the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference.



Chuck Zovko

# Mentoring Students



Stewart Daniel '18

Five members of the McDonogh Network returned to campus Oct. 6 to speak with students at a panel discussion and dinner co-sponsored with Career Services. **Ryan Benjamin '10** (at left, L-R), **Thomas Sumners '80**, **Kareem Clarke '11**, **Vanessa Youngs '07**, and **Harrison Bailey '95** shared experiences and insights about their career paths and encouraged students to think about their own careers. This successful event marked the network's first dinner panel in partnership with Career Services.



## Focus on Student Support

Saying that “building a more connected community is an important goal we all share,” President **Alison Byerly** announced that a Presidential Working Group on Student Support has been formed to develop a comprehensive system of student support on campus.

It is chaired by **Robin Rinehart**, dean of the faculty and chief diversity officer, and **John McKnight**, dean of intercultural development.

Byerly also said the College will postpone consideration of reducing its participation in the Posse program from two Posses to one. The Presidential Working Group on Financial Aid, Tuition, and Student Profile recommended the College consider this reduction in order to reallocate some of the merit funding currently expended on that program toward students requiring need-based financial aid.

“I believe it will be important to have a robust system of student support in place before we revisit this issue,” Byerly said. “We should be in a better position in two or three years to determine the best configuration of support systems for both current students and those we hope to bring to Lafayette in the future as we increase our financial aid commitment and expand our community.”

Discussions at open meetings held in February by the faculty’s Enrollment Planning Committee and Diversity Committee played a key role in the decision to postpone consideration of reducing the Posse participation.

“Students spoke compellingly about the value of the support provided by the Posse foundation, by the Lafayette faculty mentors who participate in the program, and by their fellow Posse students,” Byerly said. Students who are not part of the Posse program also spoke about the importance of the leadership and support that Posse students bring to the community.

These conversations “demonstrated that faculty and staff members have a strong interest in supporting our students,” Byerly said. “We hope to take advantage of that energy as we build a more comprehensive system of advising and support for all our students.”

Students on many campuses are looking at the student culture and asking how colleges can ensure that a diverse community is also an inclusive community, in which everyone feels welcomed and included.

In November, in the wake of events at the University of Missouri, Yale University, and Ithaca College, Lafayette student groups sponsored a community-wide forum called **#MoreThanMizzou**. About 400 students, faculty, and staff members participated in the event. Many different topics were discussed in breakout sessions that included about 15 people each.

“At Lafayette we’ve been very fortunate that the students themselves have moderated the discussion” about race, ethnicity, diversity, and inclusion “and done it very skillfully,” Byerly said. “It has been important for us to have that dialogue.”

## Campaign Progress and Impact

Gifts, pledges, and bequests to the \$400 million *Live Connected, Lead Change* campaign total more than \$291 million. The most ambitious fundraising effort in Lafayette’s history, the campaign is enabling the College to enhance and improve every aspect of the Lafayette experience.

### Academics

More than \$98 million has been raised to strengthen the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering, including faculty positions, facilities, equipment, student research, and more.

### Financial Aid

The campaign has added more than \$41 million to the College’s resources for financial aid. More than 100 new named scholarships have been established in the permanent endowment or through annual giving.

### Facilities

More than \$79 million has been raised for facilities to enhance excellence in all four academic divisions and enrich students’ residential, co-curricular, and extracurricular experiences.

### Annual Giving

The campaign has raised more than \$57 million for the Annual Fund. An important campaign priority, annual giving is an essential source of flexible funding that is vital to meeting pressing needs.

Learn more at [liveconnected.lafayette.edu](http://liveconnected.lafayette.edu).

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## Diane Nash: The Power of Love

“I want you to know that even though we had not yet met you, we loved you,” Diane Nash said. “We were trying to create the best society we could.”

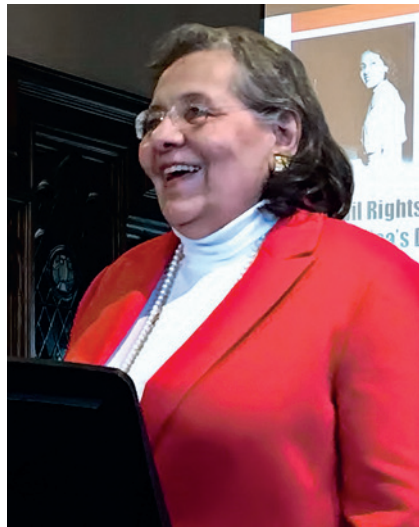
One of the most respected student leaders in the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, Nash delivered an inspiring keynote speech during Black Heritage Month. As cofounder of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, she and her colleagues constantly faced danger during a troubled, turbulent time. They made great strides by “using energy produced by love instead of the energy of violence.”

“We were doing this for generations yet unborn,” she said, adding that answers to

social problems that plague the United States today—poverty, crime, government corruption, unemployment, mass shootings, and continuing race and class tensions—will not come from lawmakers.

“Every generation faces its own challenges, and future generations are going to look to you to do the same,” she said. “The movement of the 1960’s provides us with a legacy that you can use in 2016. But you have to realize that no one will solve these problems but you and me.”

**Charles Evans ’19** took that advice to heart. “It was great to see another perspective from one of the greatest activists of our time, because that’s what we’re trying to do right here. It’s refreshing to see



Kristen Lopez

someone who has done this before you and helped pave the way to set you in the right direction.”

## McDonogh Network Awards

Several major annual student awards for academic achievement and dedication to furthering diversity on campus and in the surrounding community will be presented at the McDonogh Network Gala Reception on campus April 23.

Now called McDonogh Network Awards, these longstanding prizes that are named in honor of current or past McDonogh Network Steering Committee members and other African American alumni had previously been presented at the annual Intercultural Awards celebration recognizing members of the Lafayette community for academic achievements, contributions, and efforts in promoting diversity through leadership and education.

**Darlyne Bailey ’74 Excellence in the Humanities and Social Sciences Award.** Presented to a student whose academic/artistic accomplishments reflect an outstanding level of scholarship and advance understanding on an important issue related to diversity.

**Dr. Eugene DeLoatch ’59 Excellence in Science and Engineering Award.** Presented to a senior in the natural sciences or engineering whose academic accomplishments reflect an outstanding level of scholarship.

**Dr. Eugene DeLoatch ’59 First-Year Academic Achievement Award.** This award is granted to first-year students studying engineering and science with the highest GPAs.

**Otis Ellis ’89 Scholar Athlete Award.** This award is granted to a successful varsity athlete who has achieved an outstanding level of scholarship.

**Leroy Nunery ’77 Intellectual Citizenship Award.** Presented to a student whose research on important social, political, or economic issues advances knowledge and involves the student in activities within a community.

**David A. Portlock Cross-Cultural Relations Award.** Presented to a student who has worked diligently to promote cross-cultural relationships on campus and/or in the community.

**Jeffrey Robinson ’80 Leadership Award.** Awarded to an accomplished student who is also characterized by noteworthy leadership in college activities and student life.

**Riley Temple ’71 Creative and Artistic Citizenship Award.** Presented to a student whose creative scholarship in the visual and/or performance arts contributes to knowledge on societal issues of multicultural concern.



# LAFAYETTE COLLEGE

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