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**HELPING IDEAS BECOME REALITY:** Veta Byrd-Perez seeks to empower Afro-Latinas so that they can improve the quality of their communities.

## Creating a Sense of Sisterhood

When Veta Byrd-Perez attended Spelman, a historically black college for women in Atlanta, she developed a sense of sisterhood with other African-American women.

“At Spelman, we were constantly told that we were intelligent, dynamic powerful and beautiful,” said Byrd-Perez, an associate general counsel at Rice University. “It was a very nurturing environment.”

Inspired by her new community, Byrd-Perez majored in economics and did extensive research on issues affecting women in developing countries, including Mexico and Ghana. She concluded that the key to improving the quality of life of black communities in Latin America lies in the black women.

“In order to lift a community out of poverty,” Byrd-Perez said, “you have to provide the women and girls

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## Creating Narratives of Houston’s Past

Yani Rose Keo, a refugee from Cambodia and current director of a local community-service organization, had eagerly agreed to participate in an interview with interns at the Rice University’s Chao Center for Asian Studies (CCAS). Still, as she recalled her experiences, she wept.

“I’m sorry, every time I talk, I miss my parents, my family. We don’t know when they [were] killed, how they [were] killed or where they [were] killed,” Keo, who fled Phenom Penh, Cambodia, in 1975 with her immediate family but lost most of her extended family, explained. Her husband, Saroth, returned to Cambodia, because he did not want to leave behind the many people who depended on him, but en route there he was allegedly killed. Believing him to be dead, Keo settled in France with her children. Seven months later, her telephone

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**Inside:**



**EQUIPPING TEACHERS TO INSPIRE OTHERS:** A yearlong professional course sharpens teachers’ knowledge of biology. See story on Page 4.

with the economic, educational and political resources to do so.”

To that end, Byrd-Perez founded When and Where I Enter, Inc., a nonprofit organization that seeks to empower Afro-Latinas to improve the quality of their lives and be self-sufficient, contributing members of their community.

The name is taken from a speech by Anna Julia Cooper, an early African-American civil rights advocate, who once said: “When and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there, the whole race enters with me.”

Byrd-Perez came up with the idea for the nonprofit when she was on sabbatical from Vinson & Elkins, LLP, an international law

Tumaco, Colombia, received \$5,000 to analyze how black women are being portrayed in the media and what effects it is having on them. Black women often suffer low self-esteem because of the negative stereotypes perpetuated in the media, explained Byrd-Perez. The project involves 40 women who will participate in three workshops on social justice, leadership and gender awareness.

The grant also is helping the group develop a leadership program for women and girls so that they can become advocates in their communities, especially in calling for a more dignified image of black women in the media.

“In Tumaco, we have never had a project of this type and magnitude,” said Elsi Angulo, director of Despertar. “When and Where I Enter made it possible for us to do this work, and my community is very grateful for this.”

Another organization in Colombia

tral way of living,” said Bibiana Peñaranda, program director.

In Lima, Peru, the Black Association for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights received \$5,000 to continue a leadership project in which 15 young women will learn how to become decision-makers, contribute to economic development, and promote gender and racial equality in their communities.

These programs illustrate the need for When and Where I Enter, said former board member Michael-Bryant Hicks. “The communities of black women in Latin America have plenty of ideas regarding how to improve their lives and care for their children,” Hicks explained. “What they need is access to capital that can transform ideas into reality.”

Hicks credits Byrd-Perez for helping transform those ideas into reality. “Byrd-Perez is a tireless worker on behalf of women’s causes

“When and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there, the whole race enters with me.”

—Anna Julia Cooper

firm, where she worked for seven years after receiving a law degree from Yale. During her leave, she went to Quito, Ecuador, to volunteer for a microfinance institution that was developing products for North American investors. While there she met a group of Afro-Ecuadorian women from the Black Women of Ecuador organization and she became inspired by their tenacity and drive to improve their socioeconomic status despite their lack of financial resources.

Returning to Houston in 2005, she started When and Where I Enter, Inc. The first fundraising events were held in 2007, with two receptions that raised \$2,500 each. Last year, the annual fund-raising event raised approximately \$12,000. Over four grant-making cycles, the group has awarded \$44,000 to 10 organizations in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela for a variety of projects focused on leadership and economic development and education.

One of the grant winners, Despertar (Awakening), a nonprofit whose mission is to provide education for the Afro-Latinas in



**WHERE PROGRAMS MEET PEOPLE:**

When and Where I Enter, Inc. has awarded \$44,000 to 10 organizations in five countries.

that received \$5,000 was the Akina Zaji Foundation, which is using the funds for economic development by buying seeds, fruit trees, chickens, machetes and other agricultural implements. The purpose of the program is to encourage communal farming so that the women can be self-sufficient and productive members of the community.

“This program gives the women an opportunity to be owners of something, it allows them to dream, to increase their confidence in making decisions and to recover an ances-

and Afro-Latinas in particular,” he said. “Her sustained effort to make the rest of us aware of this through WWIE has touched many lives.”

For the future, Byrd-Perez would like to raise more money and increase the amount awarded annually from \$15,000 to \$20,000 and get Rice students involved in doing outreach in the Afro-Latina communities.

“The experience could benefit both the students and the Afro-Latinas,” Byrd-Perez said. “The Rice students could offer training in leadership development, prevention of unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as computer and basic business skills and in return learn about another culture.”

For Byrd-Perez, the benefit is feeling connected to Afro-Latinas, much like she felt when she was an undergraduate. “Going to Spelman, I had such a sense of sisterhood and this is sort of an extension of that feeling.”

► For more information about WWIE, please visit [whenandwhereienter.org/veta\\_byrd.html](http://whenandwhereienter.org/veta_byrd.html).

DAVID D. MEDINA

Director

Multicultural Community Relations

## Narratives *Continued from Page 1*

rang at work. Her husband, who had found his way to Houston, was on the other end. Keo soon found her way to Houston, as well.

Keo's life story, along with a diverse collection of other oral histories, is part of the Houston Asian American Archive (HAAA). The HAAA project provides a repository for the preservation of Houston's Asian American narratives, including those of native Houstonians and immigrants alike.

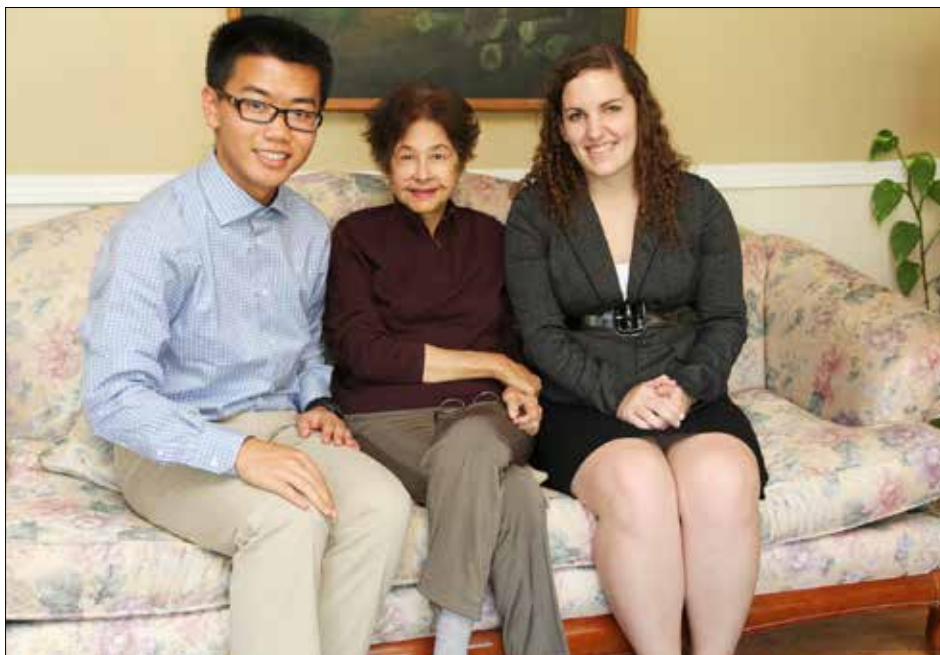
Since its inception in 2009, the archives have grown tremendously, though the goals of the project have remained consistent: to cultivate a collection of Asian-American oral histories and material artifacts for careful presentation and use by community members and scholars alike. The Chao Center works closely with members of the various Asian-American communities, as well as with Woodson Research Center archivist Amanda Focke, who oversees the final digitization process.

HAAA holdings include 90 English-language audio interviews with full-text transcripts, documents and photographs, some of which date back to the early 20th century. In addition, HAAA has acquired nearly 100 Vietnamese-language interviews and newspapers in Chinese and Vietnamese. Most HAAA interviews are available online and can be accessed at [scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/36136](http://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/36136). Thus far, the interviews have had nearly 2,000 views, reflecting a high level of interest in Houston's 360,000-strong Asian-American population. Digital archive patrons hail not only from the United States but also China, Hong Kong and Japan.

Interviews are produced through the HAAA Internship program and undergraduate Asian studies classroom participation. In 2013, eight HAAA interns engaged in a comprehensive oral history experience. They conducted interviews, but also transcribed, indexed and prepared supplementary



**KEEPING LIFE STORIES ALIVE:** (Above) Interns collect Asian-American oral histories and material artifacts that will be preserved for use by scholars and community members. (Below) Bapsi Sidhwa (middle) was interviewed by two Rice interns, who also transcribed, indexed and prepared documents.



documents for transfer into the Woodson Research Center.

Chris Johnson, an intern and Rice junior, explained, "I think the realization that everyone has a story to tell has been the most enlightening part of the project. The focus of HAAA has been especially interesting to me because the stories and narratives that are collected aren't necessarily the ones that usually get told or recorded (through other primary historical sources)."

The HAAA project welcomes donations

of old photographs, letters, scrapbooks, business-related documents, diaries and other textual mementos. For example, along with her interview, Keo also donated an invitation from her 50th wedding anniversary party.

► For more information about HAAA, please visit [chaocenter.rice.edu/haaa/](http://chaocenter.rice.edu/haaa/).

**UZMA QURAIISHI**

Project Manager

Houston Asian American Archive

Chao Center for Asian Studies

**"I THINK THE REALIZATION THAT EVERYONE HAS A STORY TO TELL HAS BEEN THE MOST ENLIGHTENING PART OF THE PROJECT."**

—CHRIS JOHNSON

## Teachers and Students Benefit From Biology Program at Rice

About 40 teachers in the Houston area participated in a yearlong professional development course that sharpened their knowledge of biology and improved their teaching skills.

This intensive course, Teaching Biology Via Active Learning, incorporated wet and dry laboratory activities, guided discussions, interactive demonstrations, problem solving, case studies, and lectures to enhance teacher biology content knowledge and establish a professional community for collaborative development and sharing of engaging teaching activities.

The new professional development course was offered through the Rice Excellence in Secondary Science Teaching program in partnership with the Houston Independent School District. Beth Beason-Abmayr and Elizabeth Eich, Rice University lecturers in biochemistry and cell biology and School Science and Technology assistant directors, organized the course and worked with high school biology teachers throughout the year.

“I definitely feel you were all a great source of inspiration on my personal voyage to change my teaching style,” said Awilda Rivas Fernandez, science teacher and science department head at Sharpstown International School.

“As it stands, 98 percent of my students satisfactorily passed the biology STAAR exam,” she added. “I am trying to get my



**A HANDS-ON APPROACH:** Biology teachers study classification of species with a live turtle during the summer institute.

science department teachers to attend the next session.”

Since the average biology teacher teaches at least 150 students a year, this program impacted more than 6,000 Houston area students in its first year. A student at Sam Houston Math Science and Technology

Center sent an email to his teacher, Jessica Ross, and thanked Rice for giving his science and engineering club a molecular biology kit.

“We are very interested in the field of genetics but we never had the chance to experiment with these kinds of labs,” the student said. “The lab from this kit really

**THE BIOLOGY CLASSROOM GETS A BOOST:** **A.** Biology teachers explore the use of micropipettors to deliver small volumes of liquid. **B.** Biology teachers load a sample into an agarose to determine the size of DNA. **C.** A biology teacher uses a whiteboard to display his team’s description of a superhero whose powers are derived from a plant.



## Rice Reaches Out Through a Fulbright Opportunity

excited me about doing research in college. It also was a very strong influence in my potential college major.”

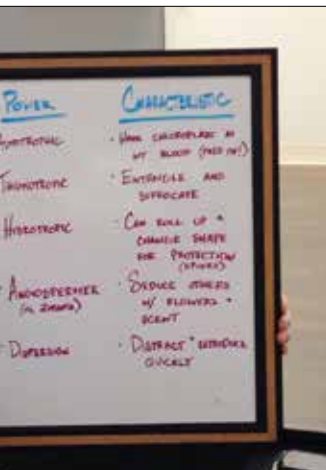
The program began last year with a six-day summer institute. Teachers participated in activities they could take back to their classrooms, learned pedagogy about scientific teaching, and worked in teams to develop activities and assessments for part of a lesson plan. They also visited Sea Center Texas and the Health Museum.

In the fall, teachers investigated topics such as DNA and genetics. These sessions included some games that incorporated these themes, and there were fun prizes for the winners. In a role-playing activity, participants used an analogy of a candy factory to demonstrate how proteins are made. Teachers got the opportunity to perform common procedures used in research labs, such as introducing foreign DNA into bacteria.

In the spring, the class focused on animal and plant systems and ecosystems. They started off the year with recent scientific advances in photosynthesis research that connect photosynthesis to other topics, such as evolution and biotechnology. Next the teachers explored the flow of matter and energy in individual animals and plants as well as within ecosystems.

For their final project, teachers presented a lesson from the program that they implemented in their classrooms. The projects described their execution of a lesson or part of a lesson as presented in class.

► For more information about this and other programs, please visit [sst.rice.edu](http://sst.rice.edu).



One of Rice’s greatest assets is its positive global impact. In fact, Rice’s beginnings were founded on consulting some of the greatest scholars from around the world before opening its doors just over a century ago. The goal was to create an institutional groundwork of excellence based on strong global competencies.

To foster its continued international presence, Rice hosts and participates in international research collaborative projects; attracts outstanding faculty, students and researchers from many countries around the globe; and encourages and sends Rice students, faculty and staff abroad.

Thanks to the Fulbright Scholarship program, which is sponsored by the U.S. State Department and seeks to create international understanding through fostering academic scholarly dialogue, I was selected as a member of a Fulbright delegation of higher education international administrators and spent two weeks in South Korea this summer. While there, I had the honor of sharing what Rice does to academically enhance our world.

South Korea has long been a country of particular importance to the Rice community. For years, it has represented one of the top five countries of our international student population (currently ranks fourth at Rice and third in the U.S. overall), and consistently has ranked high in our international faculty population, as well.

Common knowledge tells us that cross-cultural friendships and awareness begins with dialogue. During my visit, I was given the opportunity to initiate such conversations. Our audiences included higher education administrators, faculty and Korean university presidents, all of whom had received a degree at an American university, and one who had earned his degree at Rice.

Several times a day, as we met and greeted Korean professionals, we started our conversations by introducing ourselves through a business card exchange. However, I was grateful to represent Rice in an even more friendly way by also giving those I met a lapel pin with Rice’s logo on a flag coupled with a South Korean flag, graciously donated by the President’s Office at Rice. The pins were enthusiastically received as a keepsake by our South Korean colleagues and accelerated Rice-Korean friendships.

As a result of my Fulbright experience, my continuing responsibility is to seek out opportunities to expand U.S.-South Korean interaction through conversation, which I strongly embrace. Stay tuned as Rice continues its academic collaborations, friendship and outreach with South Korea in the months and years to come.



**GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS:** As a Fulbright Scholar, Adria Baker visited South Korea to spread the news about what Rice is doing to academically enhance the world. She visited with higher education administrators, university faculty and government officials.



**“COMMON KNOWLEDGE TELLS US THAT CROSS-CULTURAL FRIENDSHIP AND AWARENESS BEGINS WITH DIALOGUE.”**

—ADRIA BAKER

**ADRIA BAKER**

Associate Vice Provost  
International Education

## Fifth Graders Discover the Wonders of Rice

Fifth graders from Highland Heights Elementary in HISD were transformed briefly into college students this summer at Rice University as they explored the wonderful world of numbers.

Their fifth-grade teacher, Shanica Mitchell, and the Rice University School Mathematics Project (RUSMP) planned the visit to inspire students to attend college and to reward their outstanding performance during the academic year.

The mathematical tour was conducted by RUSMP directors and provided students with an opportunity to explore the mathematics of the beautiful Rice campus and to learn mathematics vocabulary that

they will encounter in middle and high school. Students began their explorations at Lovett Hall's Sallyport.

They were able to recognize and name the year, 1911, inscribed in Roman numerals in the cornerstone of Lovett Hall. By using deductive reasoning, they identified the faces of a university freshman, sophomore, junior and senior carved into the Sallyport. Walking through the Sallyport and into the Academic Quadrangle, students discovered mathematical patterns, symmetry, concentric circles and geometric shapes.

After visiting William Marsh Rice's statue in the center of the quad, students experienced the marvels of the whispering niches and the acoustically active vaulted ceiling of Herzstein Hall, the former

home of the physics department. The decorative frieze at the entrance to Anderson Hall provided much fun for the fifth graders, as they estimated the number of centimeter holes outlining the doorframe. When they ran their fingers rapidly over the vertical row of holes, the frog sound that was produced was described as being "unique."

The students' mathematical tour continued while they sauntered through the art installation of Soo Sunny Park's "Unwoven Light" in the Rice Art Gallery. Joshua Fischer, assistant curator, and Rice student Kaori Matsui provided detailed information about the creation of the exhibit and encouraged them to discover the mathematics embedded within it. Students identified geometric shapes, angles, lines and patterns evident throughout the exhibit.

After the tour, students experienced a mathematics lesson in a college classroom in Sewall Hall. The lesson focused on applying critical thinking skills to solve a logic problem. Rice students, Cynthia Alejandre and Henry Anderson, then spoke to the students about college life and encouraged them to develop goals and set standards to achieve their dreams. The fifth graders listened attentively, asked questions and left with a plan for preparing for college.

As the students departed, they expressed a genuine appreciation for mathematics around them and the importance of seeking a college education. Visiting Rice gave the Highland Heights fifth graders an opportunity to dream and to set goals for college.

**SUSAN TROUTMAN**

Associate Director for Secondary Programs  
Rice University School Mathematics Project

**CAROLYN L. WHITE**

Associate Director of Elementary and  
Intermediate Programs  
Rice University School Mathematics Project



**DOING THE MATH:** (Above) Highland Heights Elementary students tour the Rice Art Gallery as they attempt to find the mathematics embedded in the art installation "Unwoven Light." (Below): Students sit in a class to use their critical thinking skills to solve a logic problem.



## HISD Students Flock to Rice as Young Owls

Thanks to the hard work of two 2013 Rice graduates, 72 high school students from the Houston Independent School District spent some time on campus June 8–15 as part of the Young Owls Leadership Program (YOLP).

Recent graduates Norma Torres '13 and Zack Marx-Kuo '13, co-founders of YOLP, a program that focuses on college preparation for students from underserved communities in the Houston area, especially those who will be the first in their families to go to college, helped organize the event.

School administrators and counselors select students for the program, which was funded in 2013 with a \$48,541 grant from HISD EMERGE. EMERGE was started in 2010 by a group of HISD educators and community leaders who shared a vision of sending many more bright and driven low-income students from the Houston community to the nation's top colleges.



**SEEING THE POSSIBILITIES:** Rice sociologist Stephen Klineberg lectures the Young Owls about the changing demographics of Houston and the importance of a college education.

“We designed our curriculum and programs around the college application process, college life, and leadership and personal development,” Torres said. “Specifically, this year’s program included workshops on financial aid, the college admission essay, admission into highly selective universities, public speaking, etiquette, team-building exercises, science, technology, engineering and math fields, academic opportunities in college, career paths and more.”

YOLP students even got to experience Rice’s residential college system; they stayed overnight in Baker College and ate in the

Hanszen College servery all week. Students also sat in on lectures by Rice faculty members, including Richard Tapia, University Professor and the Maxfield-Oshman Professor in Engineering, and Stephen Klineberg, professor of sociology and co-director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research.

“It’s our mission to build confidence in students and help them picture themselves at a place like Rice,” Marx-Kuo said. “There are so many highly motivated students that simply lack resources. We want them to know that college is possible.”

**AMY HODGES**

Senior Media Relations Specialist  
News & Media Relations

## Public Affairs Wins Two CASE Circle of Excellence Awards

Rice’s Multicultural Centennial Weekend Celebration won a Gold Award from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) in the diversity programs category. More than 700 ethnic alumni returned to Rice Sept. 14–15 for a weekend of multicultural events in honor of the university’s Centennial Celebration. Multicultural Community Relations in the Office of Public Affairs planned the weekend celebration.

The Gold Award is one of two CASE Circle of Excellence awards that Multicultural Community Relations received for its Centennial Celebration contributions. A Silver Award in the general information video category was given for “Young, Gifted and Black: Reflections From Black Alumni at Rice,” an 80-minute film exploring the lives of 15 distinguished black alumni before they came to Rice, during their stay at Rice and their careers after Rice. It was produced for the Multicultural Centennial Weekend Celebration.

The Circle of Excellence Awards are CASE’s premier international awards program exclusively recognizing the work of CASE members. The awards acknowledge superior accomplishments that have lasting impact, demonstrate the highest level of professionalism and deliver exceptional results. Winning programs epitomize the profession’s best practices, raise standards and contribute to a growing body of knowledge about advancement.

**JENNIFER EVANS**

News & Media Relations





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# AT LARGE



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:** Fifth graders from Highland Heights Elementary School in HISD were transformed briefly into college students this summer at Rice University as they explored the wonderful world of numbers. See story on Page 6.

**David D. Medina**, Director, Multicultural Community Relations, Office of Public Affairs

