Oberlin Alumni Association of African Ancestry (OA4) Reunion: October 2-5, 2015

June, 2015

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to invite you to attend the eighth reunion of the Oberlin Alumni Association of African Ancestry (OA4) that will take place in Oberlin during the weekend of October 2-4, 2015. This reunion’s theme is *We are Descendants of George B. Vashon, Class of 1844, and Mary Jane Patterson, Class of 1862: Celebrating the Legacy of 180 Years of Black Students at Oberlin*. We will celebrate Oberlin’s historic decision to allow the admission of African-Americans in 1835 and the legacy of OA4 alumni for 180 years. George B. Vashon was the first black man to earn a BA degree at Oberlin and Mary Jane Patterson was the first black woman to earn that degree. Both went on to lead exceptional lives as professionals and community leaders. They are at the beginning of a long line of distinguished black alumni who have excelled in all fields and provided distinguished leadership in America and throughout the world. While reflecting on our history, we will use this reunion to explore how we can make our affiliate group a more effective vehicle to support each other, current students and our alma mater.

Our program will include updates on current campus issues; opportunities to meet with current students, faculty, and staff including a networking lunch with students; a presentation by Board of Trustees members Lillie Edwards ’75 and Chesley Maddox-Dorsey ’81; a performance of Alice Childress’ play *A Wedding Band*, directed by Assistant Professor Justin Emeka ’95; a Soul Session; time to reconnect with old friends and meet new friends; and other events as outlined on our enclosed preliminary schedule. If you have not been on campus recently, you will be impressed by new buildings including the Kohl Building at the Conservatory, the Austin E. Knowlton Athletics Complex, the Ward Alumni Center, the new Oberlin Inn Gateway Complex, and much more.

A major goal of our reunion will be to discuss an organizational and committee structure for OA4 that will provide more opportunities for alumni participation and make our organization more productive. The proposed committees include Academic Affairs, Admissions, Communications, Conservatory, Development, Leadership Development and Regional Affairs. Details about these proposed committees will be shared soon.

To register for this important event, complete the included registration form or register online at http://tinyurl.com/2015OA4. If you are interested in volunteering to help with our reunion (we

*(over, please)*
welcome help!) please contact me or Dale Preston ’83 in the Office of Alumni Relations (dale.preston@oberlin.edu). A block of rooms has been reserved at the Oberlin Inn and further information on housing is provided on the registration form and will be shared on our Facebook group and on our website (http://tinyurl.com/2015OA4).

Our previous reunions in 2006 and 2010 were the largest special reunions at Oberlin with each drawing over 200 attendees. We would like this reunion to top those records and we can guarantee that you will have a wonderful weekend and be deeply impressed by all the exciting things happening at Oberlin. At our reunion dinner, in addition to our Trustees’ presentation, we will hear from Oberlin’s president Marvin Krislov and recognize special guests.

Please plan on attending this milestone event. We have so much to be proud of about Oberlin and there is so much that we can each do to support current students and the advancement of our college. I look forward to seeing you in October.

Sincerely,

Wendell P. Russell, Jr. ’71
Chair, Reunion Planning Committee
Co-Chair, OA4
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