

DePaul News 6: An Evolution Unveiled

By Jaymee Lewis

Few student publications have existed and thrived within the DePaul community. Started as an extension of the Black Student Union and a forceful voice for the Black community as a whole, The Hawk Magazine opened its arms to all those who were ready and willing to put their creativity in print. It gave students opportunities in writing as well as management, photography and creative design. However, what was especially important about the magazine was its perspective on affairs of concern on campus, all from the vantage point of students of African descent. Included were submissions on health, politics, relationships, current events on campus, and the infamous opinion pieces.

While continuing to pay homage to our history, The Hawk magazine has transformed itself into Onyx magazine. On September 15, 2010 an intimate crowd gathered for the unveiling in the Brownstone Annex. Light refreshments were served as the program began. Magazines were immediately distributed and students and staff were given time to engage in the new changes of the student-run publication. Most noticeable was the Onyx logo, nestled at the top right corner. It was a clear representation of a beautiful embodiment of black.

Editor-in-Chief of Onyx magazine is current DePaul graduate student, Christa Smith. In her third year over the magazine she acknowledges that as the magazine progresses it “takes with it the understanding of providing the Black community at DePaul an everlasting, powerful, and courageous voice”. Smith continues, “The direction I would like the magazine to go in is one that will continue to serve as a voice... To provide this demographic with the courage to state the facts and not fear the negative or unfavorable feedback they may receive”. Being allowed creative freedom, and ultimately challenging each other as well as society, the magazine has become a mainstay in the experience of being Black at DePaul, and has been sure to chronicle that history as a sign of progression and success. This September issue of Onyx was celebratory of the incoming class of 2014. Featured on the cover were first year students smiling proudly under the Egan statue that stands outside of the Student Center. At the Launch Party, attendees independently read a detailed description of the evolution that was to occur.

There to support as proud members of the professional staff on campus were Director of Student Life and Student Life Manager, Suzanne Kilgannon and Franco Sambataro as well as Dr. Katrina Caldwell, Director of the Center for Intercultural Programs, and Sara Doyle, as the featured staff member and Residence Director for the University Apartment Community.

Looking around the room, nods of approval were shared. Also represented at the Launch

Party were members of organizations on campus that are in some way connected to the magazine. Regardless of the name change and detailed improvements, Onyx remains a voice for what is painted black, including organizations that have a large Black assemblage.

As the program continued, Bonnie Bright presented an eloquent spoken word piece on the transformation of the magazine as a source of communication that has aided Black people for many years. Following her performance was a viewing of video testimonials capturing students' heartfelt anecdotes about the magazine. Transformation was key! Students spoke on not only the visual images that have enhanced the quality of the media outlet but acknowledged the history of what was the Hawk newspaper - started in 2006 by the Black Student Union, under the direction of then Editor-In-Chief, Charity Clay.

Smith has stated her goal in hosting a Launch Party was to give students, old and new, an experience that would truly demonstrate the changes that have taken place over the publication's five-year history. Jakita Walter, a senior and contributing writer, commented on the new look declaring, "I love the new look! It's more inviting and connects deeper with the student body".

Onyx magazine is truly for students – by students. As a person of color I connect with the idea of having a compilation of resources that are directly aimed at my success as a student. Also, it has given me a place to better my skills as an English major. Being able to see this change and become more actively involved is exciting.

What is to come from the affectionately known Black magazine? Much success and progress is expected. With new funds designated towards the magazine Onyx is truly the new face of Black Students at DePaul.

Issues are located in the Office of Student Life, located on the second floor of the Student Center. If you are interested in writing for Onyx magazine or would like to have a topic discussed in the publication please contact Editor-in-Chief, Christa Smith, at onyxmagazine.dpu@gmail.com.