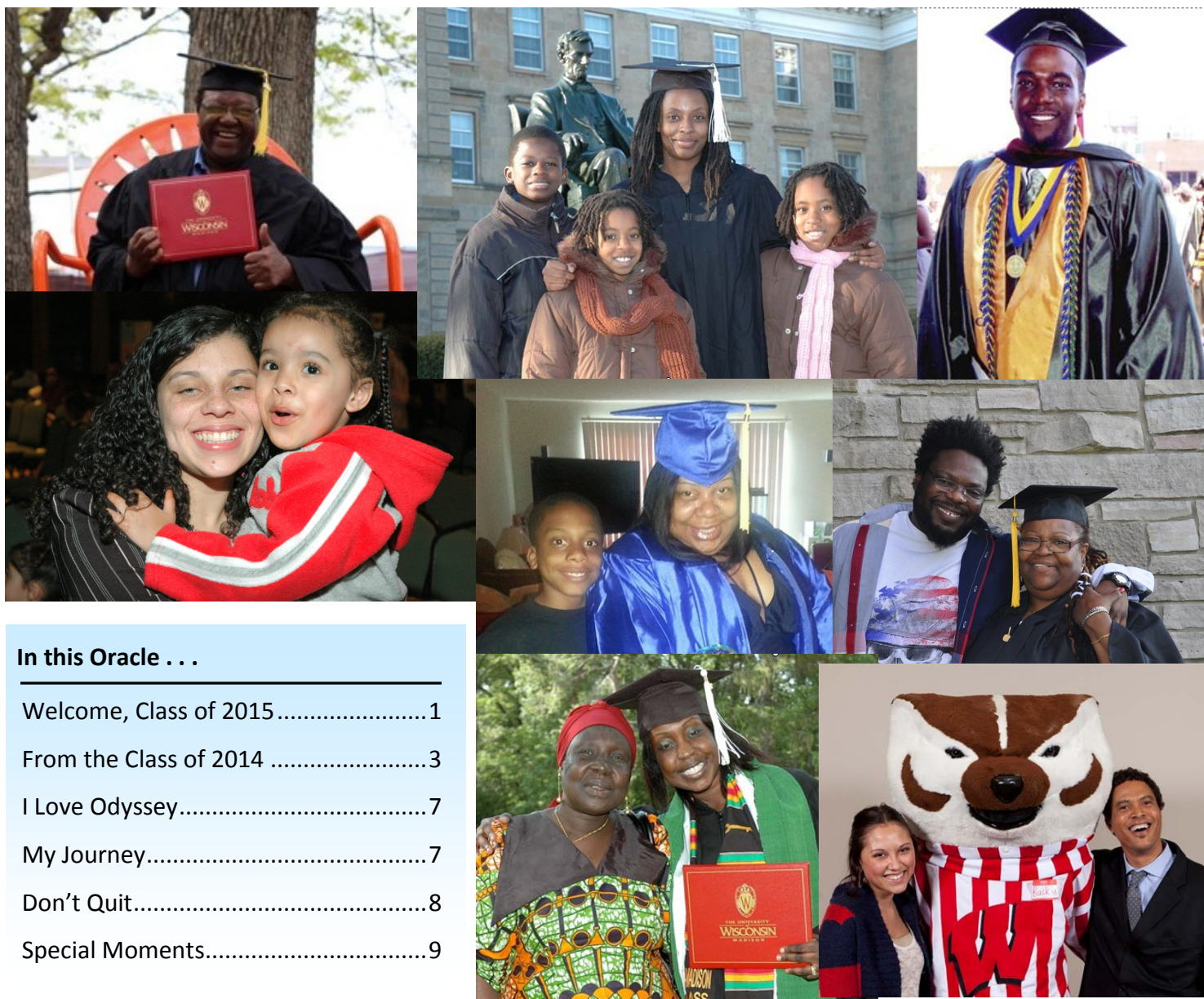


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ODYSSEY ORACLE

WELCOME, CLASS OF 2015!



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Graduates of the Odyssey Project have gone on to earn undergraduate and graduate degrees from Madison College, UW Madison, Edgewood College, and other institutions, have won scholarships and awards, and have gotten accepted into graduate school. Alumni pictured on page 1 are Tom Gardner '08, Kegan Carter '04, Cameron Daniels '07, Rocio Morejon '06, LoLita Phillips '13, James Horton '09 with Yasmin Horton '07, Josephine Lorya-Ozulamoi '08, Brian Benford '07. Alumni on p. 2 are Sherri Bester '08, Mary Wells '07, Molinda Henry '07, Billie Kelsey '12, Anthony Ward '04, Tineisha Scott '04, Lorena Lovejoy '97 with Katy Farrens' 07, Shanita Lawrence '09.

FROM THE CLASS OF 2014

Dear Class of 2015:



Hello, Odyssey of 2015. This class is going to be the best, most encouraging, lively, hard, challenging, and helpful class/journey you have ever had in your life. You're going to love it. It will be difficult, it will be fun, and it will have you in tears sometimes, but you just keep on moving in the direction you came here to go in. **NEVER** give up. **(Kelli Green)**



Welcome to a community of people who believe in the power of your dreams and want to help you make them a reality. Initially, you may feel uncomfortable around the table with strangers. I promise that if you allow yourself to be vulnerable, you will be richly rewarded: mind, body, and spirit. Please do not cheat yourself. Give this opportunity you have been blessed with every ounce of your potential, determination, and courage. **(Jamie Lovely)**



Let the class fill you up with knowledge and experience. Absorb all of it. It's a blessing that will propel you to greater heights. **(Jaquan Fleming)**



Don't let anything or anyone distract or stop you from being in class. Being in class for me was like a magical educational ride that I got to take every Wednesday. I could be myself. I could show how smart I was without being judged. I grew to love my fellow classmates like family. I was so blessed to be given this opportunity. Remember not to miss your ride. Stay on track and you can do it! **(Isis Bernard)**



Your professors and people here will always be there to help with a welcoming heart and without a judging eye. Take your time in class wisely, listen, and pay attention to your classmates' opinions. Become a family, as we have. Don't be afraid. **(Jackieta Fairley)**



Welcome new students in the class of 2015. Cherish this honor that you've been given. Get all you can out of it, take part in it, absorb it, and challenge yourself to be a better you. Life might get in the way. Your child might get sick, your car might break down, but don't give up. You will have more help than you ever thought possible. Dr. Emily will not let you give up on yourself. I know because I tried. **(Jeannine Shoemaker)**



Sitting here writing this last paper brings tears of joy to my eyes. Class of 2015, y'all will become a family, just like the classes before you guys. The Odyssey Project helped me in so many ways you can't imagine. I had one family member taken from me [brother murdered October 2013], but I got 29 brothers and sisters with the class. Odyssey instructors, tutors, and alumni are very supportive and will help you through. **(Latrice White)**



Our minds have become so open and wide and curious of what we may find. We are on an Odyssey to greatness. I can express myself more effectively in speech and in writing. **(LaPrice Black)**



No matter how old you are, you're never too old to learn. Come to class prepared to learn and grow. **(Derick McCray)**



I hope you realize how lucky you are to be in the Odyssey Project. Be prepared to have your mind blown. It's good to have opinions, but come to class every day with an open mind, ready and willing to learn. Odyssey has opened a door that I'm not closing back—a door to more education and a brighter future. Odyssey made me under-

stand that people may not be the same, but we all have obstacles and struggles in our life. Odyssey is not just a class full of strangers. It becomes a family, and you will look forward to every Wednesday night. Good luck and I hope you accomplish your dreams. P.S. The food is always awesome. **(Zeynab Ahmed)**



I sat in your chair last September. I was you. I was nervous, excited, and feeling blessed. No matter what you do, come to class. No matter what you do, keep your head in the clear. Shine your light for all to see, and let no one—no one—put your light out. You are

beautiful, you matter, and you are college material. Push! Push! Push! Don't give up and don't give in! **(Charlienne Cotto)**



Are you all very excited and happy? You should be. This will be by far one of the best educational experiences that you will have. This class will change your life! Odyssey is a unique experience that will change your life forever. Enjoy every moment of it to its fullest.

Best wishes! **(Vanessa Lopes Maia)**



You have now embarked on an Odyssey. Your life is the storm, and Odyssey is the helm of your ship. The things you are about to learn and encounter will forever change you for a lifetime. You're about to set sail on a voyage that will dock at various locations—for example, Socrates. Class of 2015, please be true to yourselves. Read, read, read, and use your dictionary. These are your best friends along with the staff and classmates. You are selected individually but united as one. Use your voice, your story, and become an inspiration to someone else. Enjoy your odyssey, and explore and absorb every time you dock. **(Janet Shelton)**



Buckle your seatbelts! **(Shiquille Ward)**



Please don't take this chance for granted. A project like this only comes around once in a lifetime, so jump aboard while you have the opportunity. Don't be afraid to open up and be you. Never hold back from Emily and the rest of the Odyssey family and you will be surprised what results you get.

Be understanding, open minded, and open hearted. This is your stepping stone to better your education and future. God bless you all! **(Mallory Carter)**



I always thought I hated reading, but in Odyssey I discovered just how much I actually like it. The Odyssey Project has been my eye opener that it's not too late to go back to school. **(Alisha Taylor)**



Welcome to the best of your life! This will be a journey that will bring you either to your knees asking for help or asking for more, more. I found a whole new world in this journey that I truly enjoyed. Also, to anyone who is 40+, don't ever think you're too old to learn. God will show you that you still got it! He did it for me!
(**Nafisa Davis**)



I have become more dedicated to my future and my family because I notice that when I'm happy my kids are happy. I would recommend this program to anyone that's ready to give their future a fresh start and a second chance.
(**Toshiana Northington**)



I've never participated in class as much as I have this year. I'm a person who does not like to speak in front of class, but Odyssey changed that about me. I don't mind anymore. (**Chris Bester**)



I found that my pronunciation and writing improved through meeting with tutors and asking professors questions. I have gained confidence in my ability to learn. I talk with more of my classmates than before. It is the first time I feel I am a part of a class even though I have already finished many credit classes. I know I will never be rejected by my teachers when I need help. (**Milli Lau**)



During Odyssey I became so excited about my education and so ready to learn more. The homework is always thought provoking and challenging. Not only am I learning but often my whole family learns, as I

am often on fire with ideas inspired by this class.
(**Robert James**)



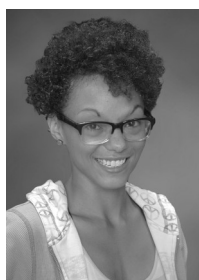
Unlike most people, I found Odyssey while imprisoned. This class has helped me stay on the path I vowed to take and see life from a clearer view. Things haven't been easy, but I wouldn't have it any other way. Nothing worthy ever comes easily. (**Kunga Chokten**)



Before Odyssey, I was alone. Now I am part of a family of peers. Without Odyssey I would never be able to become the type of person I want to become for my son.
(**Tracker Dunn**)



Look around you. You are surrounded by 29 other people that will be here for you for support. Question everything. Question your life, your family, your surroundings, and most of all yourself. If you ask the right questions, you will find the right answers. This class has awakened me. I'm not ready to go back to sleep—ever. (**Michael Martin**)



I see life differently, as a critic, friend, a lover of philosophy, art history, literature, American history, and extensive critical writing, so a lover of wisdom.
(**LaTrease Hibbler**)



As a single mother of three kids, I am glad that I got to start my education with Odyssey. It really is a great transition for getting prepared for school fulltime.
(**Nyagoa Hoth**)



Being in the Odyssey Project, I have been introduced to things I never thought I would have done, seen, read, heard, or written.
(**Amber McCarley**)



The mosaic of Odyssey was made up of love, pain, fear, homelessness, incarceration, struggle, illnesses, and death. Each piece from every one of our classmates given during our journey created a beautiful spirit of love, respect, empathy, joy, encouragement, and strength together. We have all made it, a mosaic of Odyssey 2014. (**Starr Miles**)

Celebrate that you have been selected to this wonderful program. You will never be the same again. Come to class ready to learn, and you will



never be disappointed. Enjoy the ride and prepare to be amazed. I looked forward to coming to class every week and wished the class could be every day. It is a bonus to work with people who believe in you and are anxious to bring the best out of you. (**Lucia Chikowero**)



Hello, beginners! You feel a sense of anxiety right now, I'm sure. I remember the wonder of what's to come. I can tell you that the anxiety and worry will only turn into a sense of fulfillment you will appreciate. Odyssey class brought a light to my spirit. The 30 people you look at today will no longer be strangers but will be your family. Let me start by saying, I love you, brothers and sisters! Welcome to UW Odyssey! (**Simone Lawrence**)



I LOVE ODYSSEY

BY JUANITA WILSON '07



I love Odyssey because before Odyssey I always felt like an outsider when I was among a group of people. I now feel that I can contribute to the conversation and feel that I am no longer a slow learner. I feel that I can accomplish whatever I set out to do. I am happy most of the time now.

I am going to be a lifelong learner.

I feel that I am not alone anymore if I need help with a problem. I feel that I am loved by my teachers and classmates. I feel that life is beautiful this year and the rest of my life because of Odyssey. I feel that there will always be help available to me. I feel blessed.

MY JOURNEY

BY RENÉ ROBINSON '08



My journey started about eight months ago,
 How I would fare, I really didn't know.
 Reading, writing for sure there would be,
 But from six to nine, that I couldn't see.
 The professors were there for all to meet,
 Outlining History, Humanities, and Philosophy.
 I was scared but I didn't know why,
 Maybe it was the thirty years that had quickly gone by.
 Getting acclimated was a little rough at first,
 But soon thereafter to read books I would thirst.
 See, prior to Odyssey, I didn't read,
 All the info I got was from the TV.
 But things have changed
 Mainly the screen
 From the TV to the computer
 I'm now a Google Queen.
 My journey, my journey,
 Who would have thought
 Would be the beginning of me being taught,
 Being taught the importance of opening my mind,
 Instead of sitting around wasting my time.
 Thank you, Odyssey, for choosing me,
 I've found knowledge,
 My greatest discovery

DON'T QUIT

BY JOE ROBINSON '04

My advice to the new Odyssey class is don't quit. No matter how hard it gets, don't quit.

When you get off work at 5:30, and you only have 30 minutes to get the kids situated and get to class, don't quit.

When you get stuck in the middle of writing a paper or doing a project, don't quit.

When you find out that your father has cancer and has to have surgery and treatment, don't quit.

When you have circumstances that occur that make you miss a class and you get behind on your work, don't quit.

When you feel as if you're not getting anything out of a particular subject, don't quit. When people tell you you are wasting your time, don't quit. When your car breaks down, and it's twenty below outside, and the only way to get here is on the city bus, don't quit. When your spouse is complaining that your five children are driving her crazy every Wednesday night, don't quit. When one of your

classmates makes you feel stupid for voicing your opinion, don't quit. When your boyfriend or girlfriend accuses you of cheating on them because you had to turn your cell phone off during class, don't quit.

And if you get to the point where you just can't find any more motivation to force yourself to keep coming to this class, my advice is to call Emily, and I guarantee you that she won't let you quit! There were many times that I wanted to just give up, but Emily would not let me. She believed in us more than some of us believed in ourselves.

Finally, I would like to say that, the first couple of weeks, I was in class trying to figure out, what is the catch? Why are these people offering us this course for free? There must be a catch. I found out what the catch was. Each one of the teachers was trying to trick us into believing that our lives would somehow be better if we completed this Odyssey class and then go on to graduate from college. I guess I must be a little naïve, because I fell for it, hook, line, and sinker.



Joe Robinson with classmate Tineisha Scott, who earned her Master's Degree at Edgewood College



Joe Robinson with his family

SPECIAL ODYSSEY MOMENTS



Channel 15 news reporters with Terry Hart '12 and Josephine Lorya-Ozulamoi '08; Teresa Tellez-Giron '04 receiving 2014 YWCA Woman of Distinction Award; Wisconsin Supreme Court Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson with Oroki Rice '07, Ivonne Ramos '08, and Kegan Carter '04; former UW Chancellor Biddy Martin flanked by Madison Police officers Anthony Ward '04 and Corey Saffold '06; Class of 2014 students featured on Capital City Hues cover.



TV personality Tavis Smiley and scholar Cornel West taking Odyssey students out to dinner during their Poverty Tour; Growing Power genius Will Allen working on Odyssey garden with Simone Lawrence '14; scholar Henry Louis Gates with Kegan Carter '04 and Josephine Lorya Ozulamoi '08; Yolanda King (daughter of the late Martin Luther King, Jr.) with Emily Auerbach, Juanita Wilson '07, Pamela Holmes '04, and Denise Maddox '04; former Channel 3 news anchor Katy Sai with Juanita Wilson '07 and Annette Bland '06