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# ODYSSEY ORACLE

## WELCOME, CLASS OF 2019!



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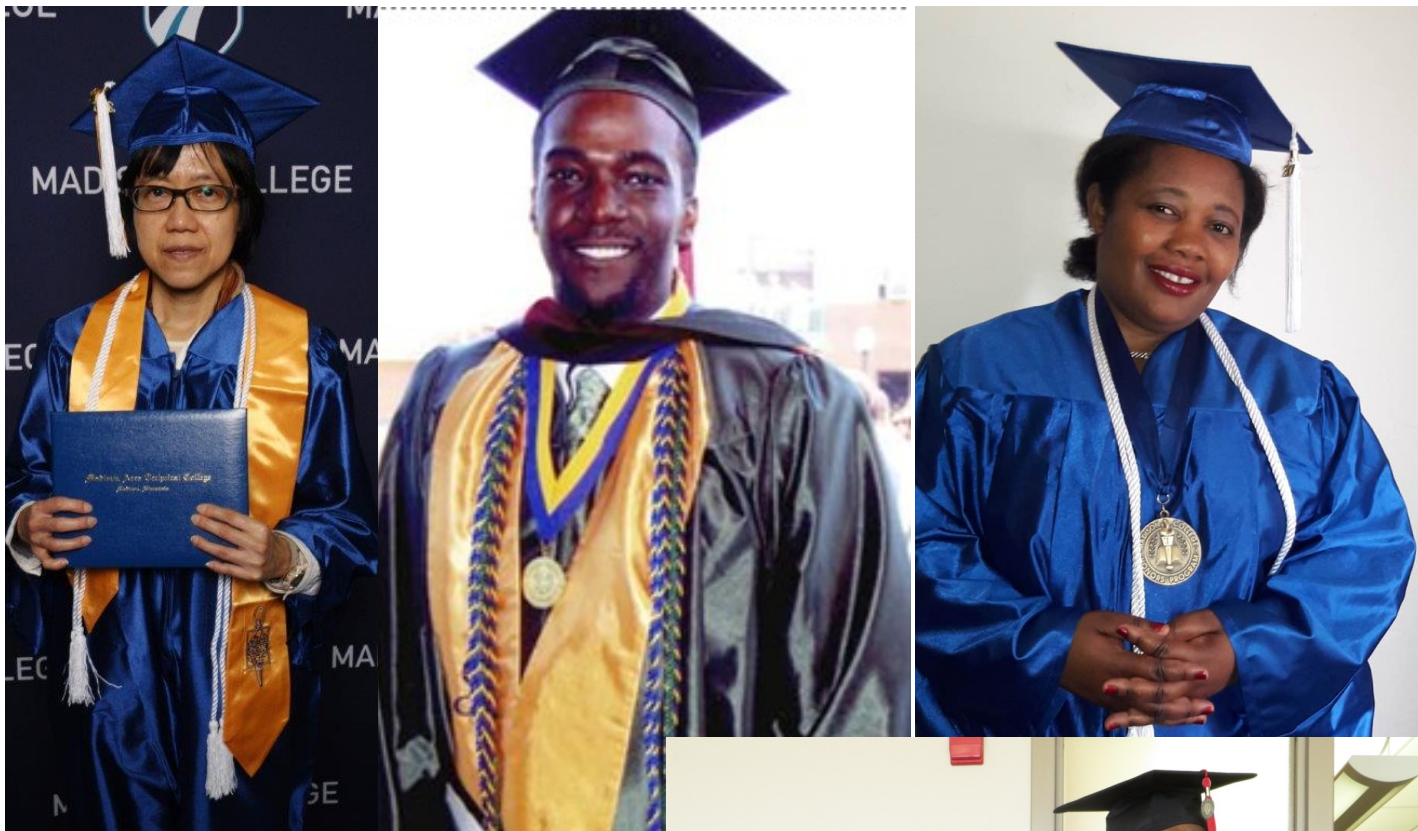












Our graduates have earned associate's, bachelor's, and master's degrees from Madison College, UW-Madison, Edgewood, and other schools. Pictured on pp. 1-4 are Josephine Lorya-Ozulamoi '08; Yasmin Horton '07 with son James Horton '09; Keena Atkinson '10; China Moon Crowell '13 and Yolanda Cunningham '12; Mustafa Saed, Shaimaa Ahmed, Umaina Saed '16; Mary Wells '07; Tineisha Scott '04; Adrian Molitor '18; Michelle Brown '05; Shirley Norman '04; Lavern Brown '09; Dominique Christian '09; Molinda Henry '07; Shanita Lawrence '09; Zeynab Ahmed '14; Sharisse Hancock '13; Kegan Carter '04; Sahira Rocillo '15 and Mai Neng Thao '16; Milli Lau '14; Cameron Daniels '07; Luci Chikowero '14; Sherri Bester '08 and Tom Gardner '08; Edwina Robinson '11;



# TO THE CLASS OF 2019

## LETTERS FROM THE CLASS OF 2018



I don't know where to begin to tell you about this odyssey you will take. This is going to be a great experience for your soul. This is going to take you on an odyssey you will never forget. The most important thing you can do is come to class. There are so many great people that want you to be successful. I would have never imagined that I'd be in a place where people wanted to strive for the same excitement of learning as myself. This odyssey will open up your mind to the powers you possess. This is the stage to your life. You are the lead actor/actress. I would never trade this experience for anything in the world. If I can do anything to help you be successful in this class, reach out to me. But you made it – you made the first choice for the best part of your life! **(Tandalaya Taylor)**

***This odyssey will open up your mind to the powers you possess.***

read anything and everything that you couldn't before. What you have signed yourself up for will be an amazing and

unforgettable adventure! **(Bao Thao)**



Welcome and congratulations on getting into this class. You deserve it! Here are some pointers to this class. Tutors will help you become a better student. Don't be afraid to ask for help. God knows I was, but

I'm glad I asked for the help when I did because it helped me in so many ways that you can't even imagine. Get to know people; don't be shy about hanging out. Try to be as open as possible. Your classmates are like family. You could be going through a lot of stuff at home and in your personal life, but your classmates are always open to helping you. When you're at a low point, don't be afraid to ask for help. They're always available to help whenever you need them. Good luck! **(Lisa Simmons)**



Welcome and congratulations! There was a reason why you signed up for this class. Therefore, make it meaningful. Get ready to take full advantage of what this class has to offer you. Please take this moment to

look at all your classmates. Without you knowing, they'll all become more than just classmates. Your class will become like a family. Every one of you comes from different families and different backgrounds, but through reading and writing, you'll learn that you all are very similar in some way. Speaking of reading and writing, you'll learn how to





Hi, my friends. First of all, congratulations!! I am very happy for you to accept this challenge and to enter onto a new road. This new path will change your life. When I found out I

got accepted into the Odyssey Project, I was very happy because it was one of my dreams to be part of this university. I dropped out of high school 17 years ago, so when I started this class I was nervous, shy, and a little scared. All of this was new to me, and maybe you feel the same way. But let me tell you a little secret between us: a lot of your classmates feel the same way right now, so don't worry about that.

Let me tell you about my experience in Odyssey. Before Odyssey, I thought I knew a lot of things, but when I read about Socrates and Malcolm X, I knew that I actually didn't know a lot. I really recommend that you read Malcolm X's essay "Homemade Education" because you will learn that with a dictionary, self-discipline, and good luck you can learn how to write. You already have two of the three ingredients: the good fortune of being in Odyssey with fantastic teachers, and a dictionary. Now it is just up to you to be successful! **(Victor Rojas)**



My name is Nathaniel Robinson, and I am a graduate from 2018. Something I wanted to share with you all in regards to the Odyssey Project is the compassion and care each one of you will get. This program

is not like school. Every Wednesday when you meet it almost feels like a family get-together where you just chill and learn about interesting topics that are somewhat ignored by society



today. The best part of the course is that they won't let you give up. The staff and faculty are too caring to give up on you. We all have struggled with some major hardships in life, and the one thing about Odyssey is that they will go through the battle with you. They will be right at your side.

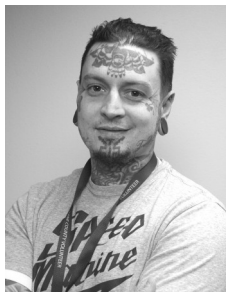
I have struggled on and off throughout the year with many personal roadblocks. I have struggled to deal with my own hardships while being in school. It was hard for me to bring to the surface my true problems, but over time, I understood that we were family and we were there to comfort each other and let each other know that we are not alone. The more I tried to give up, the more the program pushed me forward. They never left my side; when I went down, they brought me back up and always made it okay for me to express my most sensitive issues.

The assignments are fun, and there is nothing better than enjoying learning something you

really didn't know about. All of the topics in the course reader were interesting and educational, but most of all they are things that will stick with you for life. Somehow, some way, the topics that you learn about will be entwined with your life forever.

***The best part of the course is that they won't let you give up.***

My number one rule for this class is to not panic. It may be something new and it may get a little overwhelming, but don't panic. I know you all will be in good hands, so please just finish the journey. **(Nathaniel Robinson)**



My name is Adrian Molitor. I am a graduate of the Odyssey Project Class of 2018 and now a graduate of the Liberal Arts program at Madison College. The first observation and wisdom I would like to impart on you is this: the sooner you

let your guard down with your classmates and teachers, the sooner the magic of this group's collective story will crack your heart so wide open that it would be impossible for you to remain the same person. Regardless of your faith, denomination, gender, race, class, nationality, or level of education, the men and women you see to your right and left in this classroom are not there on accident. It is hard to be vulnerable with new people, especially when your life has been a constant struggle, but know that the Odyssey Project Class of 2019 will have your back and see you through. Your job is to engage in conversations that may be uncomfortable with this new family and to make new friends.



## ***Question every teacher you meet for the rest of your life.***

My second thought is concerning the work required to graduate. Do your best. The day you compare yourself to others is the day you lose perspective. Every single time you improve is a total success. Ask for help! Don't let that pride keep you back. Kevin and his tutoring crew are there to help you because they want to. Nobody is judging your reading abilities or vocabulary. The Odyssey Project is not a practice of perfection; it is about progression. Just improve and don't look back.

The final thing I would like to address is the way you conduct yourself in class. The teacher-student dynamic is intended to be a balanced interaction. You can rest assured that what you've survived in your respective lives cannot be learned in any college. If you are in the classroom, you are a miracle, a warrior, and a survivor. I recommend you make these teachers work by questioning everything. As a matter of fact, question every teacher you meet for the rest of your life.

In closing, when it's time to eat, please wash your hands before Char has a damn fit.

**(Adrian Molitor)**



As long as you are in class every Wednesday, that is all that matters. Emily and Kevin are very understanding when it comes to different situations. If you need help with the homework assignments or you just don't get it or want

feedback, tutoring is the place to be. They provide tutors that are there to help you. It's okay to not know a lot about a topic that the class is learning about. That's why Emily and Kevin are there to help. **(Arioun Jones)**





You will have so much fun in this class. You will make new friends and have a wonderful odyssey. You will have a lot of homework, but all of it will be interesting. If you do your homework on time, you will understand the class better. I

hope you all have the same wonderful experience that I did! **(Carla Herrejon Tinajero)**



I would love to share a quote with you all: "Everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish on his ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid." – Albert Einstein

I spent most of my time believing I wasn't college material just because I was often compared to other people's abilities. The Odyssey Project has given me a new opportunity and a different perspective on things. If you are sitting in this classroom all I can say is congratulations that you are one of the lucky ones accepted into the program. Please enjoy this class.

Things might get hard along the way, but you will never be alone. Many people are willing to help. Rely on the professors and your classmates and keep on pushing through. The Odyssey Class of 2019 will be your new family. By the end of the program, you will understand what I'm talking about. I hope the program helps you just as much as it helped me and many others. Enjoy this new journey and be ready to have a marvelous experience. Welcome to the Odyssey family! I can assure you that you will not regret this decision.

**(Guadalupe Hernandez Nuñez)**



Congratulations! You were accepted into the Odyssey Program! Now that you've made it, your journey begins on your educational path to success. You're probably nervous like most people are on their first day, but soon you'll

feel right at home in this class. You will learn something new and interesting every day that you probably wouldn't hear anywhere else. If you ever feel overwhelmed and want to quit, don't do it. This class is a great opportunity and an unforgettable experience. Have fun and good luck!

**(Angela Carpino)**

***Take a chance,  
raise your  
hand, open  
up, and never  
stop trying.***



Look around the room and take it all in because you are about to start a beautiful friendship with beautiful people. This room will be filled with nothing but love. In the end, everyone who started out

as strangers will have become your family. Emily, Kevin, Coach, and all the other Odyssey staff will welcome you with open arms and make you feel

right at home. I can honestly say that joining this class was one of the best decisions I ever made. I was already almost nine months pregnant when I began the class, and I successfully graduated with a seven-month-old son. If I can do it, so can you. These people are changing the world and education for the better. Take a chance, raise your hand, open up, and never stop trying. My only regret is that it had to end so fast.

**(Keziah Bester)**







The first thing I will tell you to do is to breathe. Everything will be okay and there is no need to be so nervous. There will be lots of nice people who care

about you and your wellbeing. However, I will say this: buckle up because if you weren't a fan of reading and writing, you will be once this course is over. It is a very motivational and informative class. I found a whole new me as I gradually started to get to know everyone. Reading and writing became easier. Although some assignments were challenging, I still held on and pushed through like a real soldier. Make sure to open up and just be yourself. Get really creative when it comes to your writing assignments because it will help you become a better writer in the future. Stay true to you and have fun! I was the class clown LOL.  
(Sch'Royce Brown)



First and foremost, congratulations and welcome to the Odyssey family! When I first applied for Odyssey, I was lost. I was so caught up in my role of being a mother and wife. I wasn't sure if I would do well, but I

promised myself I would try. No matter what you have going on in your life, Odyssey is your safe place. Odyssey is your family. We've all been scared and we've all had outside influences, but we all have each other. The staff, alumni, and tutors are amazing. They are here for you every step of the way, even when you stumble. You will learn so much, including physical, tangible knowledge along with knowledge of the self. Odyssey will tap into parts of

***Odyssey will tap into parts of you that you either haven't met yet or haven't seen in a very long time. Learn as much as you can, soar as high as you can, and may your odyssey never end!***

you that you either haven't met yet or haven't seen in a very long time. Learn as much as you can, soar as high as you can, and may your odyssey never end! (Tori Armour)



My name is Ruth Allen (Ruthie), and let me start by saying welcome to the Class of 2019!

Get ready for an awakening of your mind and spirit. Get ready to make new friends and gain family members. Most of all, get ready for your new chapter in life, be it your second, third, or fourth beginning. I would also like to encourage you to stay up on your homework and reading assignments. It is a bitch trying to play catch up.

I don't know how, but Emily and Kevin manage to pick people that make your learning experience unique to your class. Enjoy this adventure. (Ruthie Allen)





I know you are probably nervous, maybe with a body full of anxiety and fear, but fear not. Everyone that is sitting around you will become as close as family. You are in for a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. If you are anything

like me, it probably has been some time since you have been in a classroom setting. You may even be thinking, “am I smart enough for a UW course?” There is no such thing as a dumb individual when you set foot in the Odyssey classroom. Emily, Kevin, Coach, and a host of others make sure of that.

You will learn to break down the longest words and dissect difficult poetry. You will find yourself going home eager to share with family and friends everything you have learned. You will become anxious for your next Wednesday night class. If difficulties happen to fall in your way, DO NOT be afraid to ask for help. Unlike many people I have come across in life, the teachers and staff of Odyssey want to help with no hidden agenda. They want to see you succeed wherever life takes you.

Lastly, showing up is the most important thing. I regret missing a couple of classes. I know those

nights were full of knowledge, silly outbursts, and venting sessions that my classmates and I shared weekly. I’m sad Odyssey has to come to an end, but I am excited for what this opportunity has geared me up for. I look at life a little differently now. I am not afraid of how many pages are in a book, how many syllables a word might have, or how to read a poem written in the 1800s. Odyssey will always be a part of my life, as will each person I have met this last year. **(Charnice Anderson-Morris)**



Let me start this letter by saying how privileged I am to be graduating from Odyssey, which is the reason I am writing this for you! Future Odyssey graduates: we welcome you to the family! If you are reading this, then you

are a very special person. You were hand-picked to join Odyssey, and I am so happy for you! Odyssey changed my life. Please read this letter and take it to heart, from one graduate to another. This program will have an impact on your life, and I have some advice for you. Ready?

Attendance is crucial! There are so many things said in class that you will miss out on if you are

not there. That way when you get your homework assignment you will be prepared to do it! Being in class with everyone will lift your spirits on bad days and, if you’re anything like me, when you leave class you will be so excited that you’ll text a bunch of people telling them what you discussed and learned that night. Homework won’t seem like a chore if you dedicate one or two nights a week to attend tutoring. The staff of Odyssey have your bases covered, and they know how hard life can be for people





of color or people in a lower income bracket without a college degree.

They provide home-cooked meals for dinner before class and bus passes for transportation. They make it very accessible for us! That's how important we (the students) are to them. It is so important for people to continue to take in knowledge. I learned to listen closely to others that don't have the same viewpoint as myself. This class is a safe space to talk about your personal experiences and to step out of your comfort zone. Dive into whatever projects they have set up for you! The more you write for your homework assignments, the more the teachers and your classmates will know about you. They will set you up in your path moving forward.

If things in your life fall apart, you will always have Odyssey. Consistency is so imperative so that you can set up a support system. Don't be afraid to participate in class! That's what makes it so interesting, having everyone involved. If you can't read that well, read out loud! Everyone here will encourage you and you will get better. I remember coming to class one night and when it came time to volunteer and stand up in front of the class, I felt so embarrassed. However, I put my trust in Emily and Kevin and forced myself to do it. After that, I was so proud of myself! The feeling you get when your classmates clap for you or erupt in laughter after you've read one of your writings is like being a rock star! Cell phone courtesy in class is something I need to mention, too. Please turn your ringers off when you're in class. If you can just wait until break to check your phone, that really shows everyone that you're here to pay attention. You will

***Once you are part of the Odyssey family, you are in it for life.***

have some very important guests stopping by to teach, so showing

them a level of respect is a must. They come here to give us their time and share tons of knowledge, so unless it is an emergency, try to stay as focused as you can.

Honestly, some days during class I've cried, either quietly to myself or in the bathroom, just wanting to go home! I didn't feel like being there because I had a lot of trauma and family drama going on during that time. Do you think I decided to leave? I stayed. I came to this class to make a huge change in my life and to show my daughters that there is a better future for us starting now!

The last thing I would like to rave about is Odyssey Junior. If you have children or grandchildren ages 2.5-18, you should definitely bring them with so they can be a part of this with you and start their own odyssey. The staff that works with the kids are



all amazing, and I feel like kids are missing out if their parents are in Odyssey and they aren't able to come. This program helps you break down the barriers that are hindering you from getting jobs, and they want to give your whole family the gift that keeps on giving: knowledge.

I am so thankful we are all a part of Odyssey now! Previous students have set the bar pretty high for us after we graduate. I'm so impressed with the success of Odyssey graduates and the quality of work that they do. I'm super excited to meet the next class! Once you are part of the Odyssey family, you are in it for life. I am looking forward to visiting your class in the future!

Congratulations to you for being accepted! That is a big deal! We need more of the good guys! **(Tyjeana Galloway)**



Felizidades and congratulations! Your life will change nine months from now as long as you can make it to class every Wednesday! You will find yourself supporting your classmates sitting to your left and right, and they will support you right back. You will be eating some great dinners and desserts throughout the year, made by people who are supporting your dreams. I want every student to know that it is a privilege to be sitting in your seat right now, and you should make the most of your Wednesday classes. It took me a couple of years to get into the program. This program really does open doors if you let them and,



most importantly, if you believe in yourself. I met my best friend in this program, and I hope some of you become great friends forever. Kevin, Coach, and Emily will make sure you are in good hands, and you will get to know them. Because of them, you are here. They are your fans rooting for you! Good luck, and may this odyssey fulfill your hopes and dreams.

**(Selena Muñoz)**



Welcome to the beginning of a new adventure to achieve success to your future. Don't give up, come to class, come to tutoring, bring your family with, and come with the spirit to learn and to get to know your classmates and

amazing teachers. This is the beginning of a new experience that will enhance your vocabulary and knowledge. I wish you the best, and welcome to the Odyssey family.  
**(Sayury Peralata Vivanco)**



I remember sitting in my car in the parking lot, looking at the front of the door of my Odyssey Project class. I had anxiety; my mind and my heart were racing. I wanted to get out of my car and walk through the door and into my class, but parts of me didn't want to go in. It was as if my body and parts of my mind were determined not to go in, not to even try. I think it was the fear of not knowing



if I could actually comprehend the content in the class and be able to keep up with the assignments because I usually have to read or hear things three times to really understand their meanings. I usually have to do the same when doing homework, so taking a literature class with all the reading and writing seemed overwhelming in many ways.

I paused and looked up at my red lanyard, which hangs proudly on my mirror. I looked down at my lanyard and at my UW ID card. I thought about being seven in 1967, and my teacher telling me and my mom, "He needs to be in a remedial class because he cannot keep up." In the same year, I remember overhearing my father say, "He's not going to be sh-t." I remembered being seventeen in 1977 and visiting the UW campus, and realizing that I was not college material and how badly it hurt. Then I thought about now. It's 2017. Emily, Coach, and Kevin believed that I was college material and admitted me into the Odyssey Project! They took the whole class to get student IDs after giving us notebooks to write in and books by authors and poets, some I had never heard of. We also got a list of assignments. I realized then that actually, just starting to take the class was causing my anxiety. Then I thought, I could go back to the life I know, not have a future, and just exist while watching my life pass me by and regret it later. Or I could choose to grow. I chose life, I chose to grow, and I realized how badly I

***I put my big boy pants on, got out of my car, walked through the doorway and into the next phase of my life.***

wanted and needed to be in this class! I thought about my situations at seven, and seventeen, and the time I spent in addition trying to fill the holes in my soul. I thought about being 57 now and having this opportunity for redemption! I thought about how my class could help fill that hole and help me create a new perception of self, leading to the creation of an awesome and fulfilling new life for me and my daughter and my grandchildren. I thought about leading by example for them! I thought about those defining moments and how they shaped my perceptions of who I am now. I thought about my resilience and resolve, about not allowing those negative situations to define who I am and how I choose to make myself a better person for my family, my community and myself.



I remembered how long it took and how difficult it was to teach myself how to mentally overcome those situations, turning the negatives into positives. I thought about all those things, and mentally put my big boy pants on, got out of my car, walked through the doorway and into next phase of my life. God, it's been an awesome feeling every time I go through that door! I

***This classroom is a place where magic happens, lives get transformed, and dreams start to become realities, as long as we are willing to consistently come to class and do the required work.***

think about Plato's Cave analogy on a regular basis. If you're reading this, eventually you will too, so I won't give the plot away, but I can say it's awesome! My advice to you is to choose to give these classes your all and, in return, you will get more than you could ever imagine. Have fun learning, don't miss classes, do your homework, go to tutoring before you need help just to meet the tutors because they're awesome, and ask for help early so you don't get behind. Work hard because this is about your future and because you get so many opportunities to grow and have fun in class. Homework will get hard sometimes, but when it does, let your teachers know and work through it even if it's a little at a time because it will make you a better student and a better person. Remember this is your time and your opportunity to shine!

Remember at the beginning of this when I said just thinking about going into the doorway gave

me anxiety? That anxiety changed immediately after going through the doorway and into the classroom! I repeated that because almost everyone in my class had similar feelings

during the classes and worked through them and came to really love the class, too. All of my teachers are truly amazing and supportive like you wouldn't believe, but you will! My peers were awesome and supportive, too. It's like an extended family! This classroom is now a very, very special place for me. It's not just a classroom, and my teachers were not just teachers. For me, this classroom is a place where magic happens, lives get transformed, and dreams start to become realities, as long as we are willing to consistently come to class and do the required work.

This class, my class, will always have a special place in my heart because everyone in it contributed to making the magic happen for themselves, the people around them, and our teachers. This is now your time, so work hard, come consistently, listen, learn, laugh, talk, and make your own magic happen!! **(Bruce Moore)**





# ALUMNI CORNER

## 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.

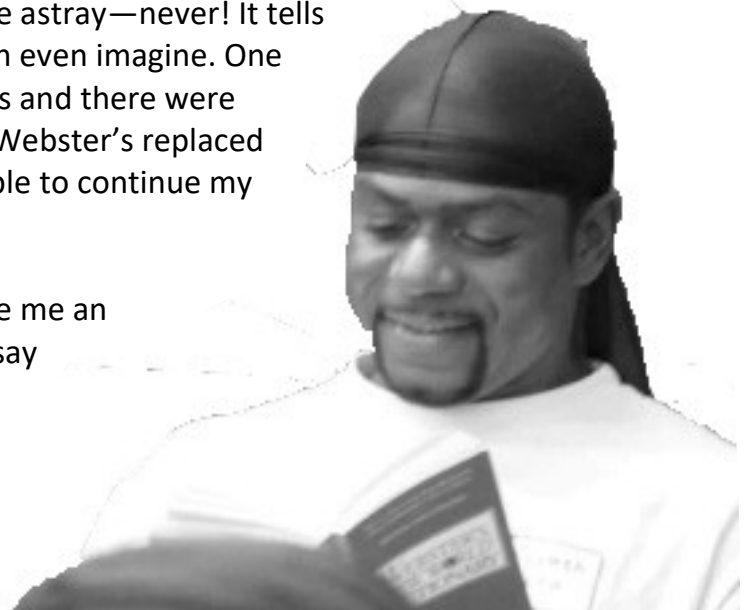
I feel that I am not alone anymore if I need help with a problem. I feel that I am loved by my teachers and classmates. I feel that life is beautiful this year and the rest of my life because of Odyssey. I feel that there will always be help available to me. I feel blessed.

## I LOVE MY WEBSTER'S

BY TOSUMBA WELCH '13

**I love my Webster's** with a great passion and sense of dependency. Webster's has never stood me up, let me down, or led me astray—never! It tells me secrets that sometimes no one else can even imagine. One time I was walking through a path of words and there were blank spots on the path. Out of nowhere, Webster's replaced those blank spots with words, and I was able to continue my walk.

Webster's sat me down one night and gave me an idea that landed me second place in an essay contest answering the question "Why Vote?" I have never known Webster's to be anything but perfect. Webster's has given me 230,000 reasons to be in love with it. I love my Webster's.



# 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*

# WE ATE DOG FOOD

BY ALICE MCDANIEL '09

WRITTEN FOR KEVIN MULLEN'S ODYSSEY ALUMNI COMPOSITION CLASS



... You can only write about what you feel and know really. I know that my mom was not a high school graduate, but no one else would have known that unless she told you herself. She was a very well-versed, super-intelligent, beautiful, spiritual, and loving woman.

My dad, on the other hand, could hardly read or write. He has lived most of his life with those limitations. He is a very funny, kind-hearted, spiritual, and good-looking man.

While in the care of my dad, my four other siblings and I ate dog food. That is what we were told some years later, and our mom confirmed that story. You are probably wondering how that happened. Well, I will tell you what we have been told.

My dad went to the grocery store. He was in the canned goods section, or so he thought. He looked at the picture on the can of some corn beef hash. "Ha, ha!" he said and grabbed it.

When my mom arrived home from work, she asked him if we

had eaten yet. His reply was "Yes." My mom asked him, "What did you feed the children?" He said, "some hash." For those of you who have never eaten it and never want to, hash, according to Webster's Dictionary, comes from the French *hacher*, to chop, and means "to chop up meat and vegetables for cooking; usually a baked mixture, a muddled mess." She asked him again, "What did you say you fed them?" My dad replied again, "Hash. The cans are in the trash can."

My mom went to the trash can. As she lifted each of the cans out, she screamed at my dad, "You fool! You gave my children dog food, with your, 'no reading' ass!" It goes without saying, that he was not asked to go shopping for groceries again.

My parents didn't have the opportunity to complete their education due to obstacles. My dad was from the small town of Stamps, Arkansas. By the age of four, his mom was now a single parent. His father had left them. As the oldest of her two sons, he was now the man of the house. He went to school on a regular basis only up to the third grade. He had to work in the fields, either having to stay home or be pulled from his class at school whenever it was time for crops to be harvest.

***We ate dog food,  
but we were rich.***



Mother was from a large family of eleven and also from Arkansas. She got to go to school every day until she met my dad. With her parents' permission, they got married a year later.

They moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin several years later along with their two daughters. During their marriage they had some economic struggles. It was not for lack of ambition and determination and drive. Both of them would work—Dad as a laborer and Mom as a waitress or maid. I remember she would wear a black and white uniform when she rode the bus to

the eastside of the city where the rich people lived. . . .

Both of my parents instilled in their children that we should do our best at whatever we chose to do in life. "'Can't' is not a word," my mother would say. We could not use it at all as an excuse or reason not to go for things in life, like getting an education. . . .

Education is the key to freedom, to advancing your world. Wealth is not only of material and financial means; it is also knowledge.

We ate dog food, but we were rich.

# ODYSSEY POEM

## BY ANTHONY JEFFERSON '17

Odyssey is the pencil of life with which we can erase past regrets and rewrite our future.

Every "word" formed solidifies our resolve, those periods at the end a proud stamp of success.

Sentence by sentence, we forge a new tale.



# SPECIAL ODYSSEY MOMENTS



Odyssey Project receives award at Chancellor Becky Blank's house; Teresa Tellez-Giron '04 receiving 2014 YWCA Woman of Distinction Award; Urban farmer and genius grant winner Will Allen with Nicki Cooper '16; 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; Tosumba Welch '13 winning Best Actor award from the Bartell Theatre; scholar Henry Louis Gates '04 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; author Jelissa Edwards '16 on cover of BRAVA Magazine.