

# Oracle

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## Mary Moore's Mid-Year Message

So many wonderful things have been said about my classmates as a whole already that I'm struggling with myself to come up with more. Before this class I had never experienced a group of people that I would come to like so much so fast. Every Wednesday I'm like a robot with only one command programmed into my head: "Gotta get to class!"

Now you are all I ever talk and think about anymore. When one of you is absent, that person and their children are on my mind as well as my heart until I see them again. I've even started to add my beloved classmates to my prayers—asking that He always keeps you all steadfast and strong in your daily lives and embraces you all and your families with the same love and guidance and protection that He's given to me and mine over these years.

To my ladies, . . . usually females are so petty, envious, and judgmental of one another that . . . we can't see ourselves reaching out to and trusting each other. That is no longer so with this group of strong, supportive, accommodating, nurturing, compassionate, thoughtful, brilliant, and beautiful women

that I've had the pleasure of experiencing in this class.

. . . To my men, . . . you're all so handsome, strong, intelligent . . . I find you all irresistible, charming, and charismatic in all your own individual ways.

What an array! I feel indescribably blessed to make the acquaintance of each and every one of you. You all make such great contributions to the *Oracle* and class alike, and it's my personal delight to have a meeting of the minds with you all every week.

All my classmates never cease to amaze me and touch my heart!





# To Conform or Go Against the Grain?



*Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. ~Dr. Seuss*



~John F. Kennedy



*I am not eccentric. It's just that I am more alive than most people. I am an unpopular electric eel set in a pond of goldfish. ~Edith Sitwell*



When I was in the army, a couple of people with higher rank tried to physically and mentally abuse me. For example, they sent me to do all their laundry, to buy food for them, and be like a maid. I never said no to them. If I could go back to those years, I would say no and accuse them to the head of the army, if

possible, because actually this kind of abuse was not allowed. Probably these people were sure that I would not do anything to accuse them.

Now I know and understand that people need to defend their rights and values without fear of something or somebody.  
**(Erika Rosales Serate)**



I am currently involved in a racial discrimination complaint because I chose to ask how an LTE (Limited Term Employee) was hired over a full-time employee and state worker for six years. My questions were initially dismissed because the Department of Revenue's management styles have never been questioned and fought. I guess there is a first for everything.

This all started nine months ago. I suspect it can last nine more. I am committed to my cause. I will continue to seek justice, not only for me, but for all people of all colors.  
**(Lea White)**

In 2003-2004 I was in high school. I was voted on the Junior Prom Court. People continued to influence me to stay on the court. "You will change the face of Prom Court," they said. "We need a change," they said, as if



I was Barack Obama.

Being a Christian, I decided a school dance wasn't a venue I wanted "in" on. So after rejecting my principal paying for my tux and limo and dinner, I respectfully declined Junior Prom Court.

Though people were disappointed I was an "oddball," they respected my principles and unwavering dedication to God.  
**(Otis Harris)**



When I was a "rapper" I had a lot of pressure to talk about the streets because I'm from Chicago. But knowing the effects that life has on families it was not something

I wanted to glamorize just to sell more albums. The people I was working with eventually showed their true colors, and we parted ways.

I am glad that I never sold out. Most of the music I have can be listened to by people of all ages!  
**(James Horton)**

Last week I turned down the opportunity to be given \$200 cash to go to Ho Chunk to gamble and drink strawberry margaritas. All three people who invited me to go out knew that I once enjoyed





doing just that. I declined their offer, and all three of them began to talk about me, saying I think I am better than they are just because

I'm in school, active in church and the community.

I told them and they all know I've been sober for 15 months and I wasn't going to jeopardize my recovery for a few hours of what they called fun. So I was told not to call them and they would call me.

If losing a friendship—or what I thought was friendship—is what it takes in order for me to stay focused, then so be it. A real friend wouldn't have suggested or pushed that issue.  
(Felicia Jones)



When I was in college and everybody was in the dorm room drinking, I decided that it wasn't my scene. The guys on the squad gave me the

nickname "Rev."  
(Robert Garel)



I was an oddball when I acted like I didn't care about Obama winning the election. Everyone was

making a big deal over it, like all of our problems are now over. To me it still feels untrue. Everyone was looking at me like I was crazy.

(Shannon Lawrence)



In school I was always the one picked on because I didn't have the clothes that everybody had, the shoes that were "the thing," the money. I was mostly picked on because I had nothing but the boys loved me.

(Emily Robinson)



I quit smoking weed and stopped drinking. And I don't really curse anymore. I started working and am working for a college education. Unfortunately to my friends that's strange. I'm now the square of the crew.

(Stephen Taylor)



When I was in the seventh grade I befriended a new boy in class named Shawn. Nobody liked him. Everyone

thought he was crazy except me. Everyone always had bad things to say about him. I must admit he was a little different, but he was real creative, and he was what I considered a friend.

(Ricky Barners)



My brothers and I used to wear the same clothes. We looked like triplets. This was not popular, and I felt like the underdog because people used to talk about us. I think they wanted to do the same thing.  
(Sammy Bester)



A step that I took that I was proud of was when I made the choice to move away from home. To take the initiative to leave my family and friends and start over somewhere else was a choice that none of my sisters or mother would take. To not be afraid of what's to come is an Odyssey I was willing to take as long as I had the support that I needed. I don't believe this was a bad/wrong choice for me because otherwise I wouldn't be standing before you today.  
(Tiffany Harston)

I was always myself and people didn't like me. I was what you called a girl jock and



... I played basketball with the guys. Just being yourself can sometimes make you feel like the outcast.

**(Lavern Brown)**



I didn't turn against my co-defendants after they had turned against me. Knowing that I was pregnant and facing 85 years,

I continued to stay true in not telling. Even to this day, I am forgiving and trying to remain a friend. **(Shanita Lawrence)**



During my years of middle school all the way through high school, smoking became popular, using drugs became

popular, and drinking soared through all age groups. While my friends were going to parties, drinking, smoking cigarettes, and using marijuana, I decided to live my life as a developing adult who could enjoy herself without using drugs, smoking cigarettes, or drinking.

I decided that my health was more important than a celebration that could lead to death, confusion, and dishonesty. I decided that if I allowed myself

to follow the norm, I would betray myself, my family, and my beliefs. **(Dominique Christian)**



In high school I can remember that seeing where you would sit during lunch period for me wasn't just a moment but seemed like a decade. I always was the oddball. People called me stuck up, conceited, and other names.

But what made me different was not that I didn't talk to or sit with the normal popular crowd. I became a friend to many. Honestly I sat by disabled kids and kids that didn't look like me. I felt as though I was different, and I actually didn't want to be the same. Many people thought that I was weird but I didn't care. I still remain the same—that's who I am.

**(Nicole Barnett)**



When I decided to leave an abusive marriage, it was harder than I expected. I belonged to a church where my husband and

in-laws attended. There were some people who were angry and disappointed because I chose to leave him. There were others who used the words "faith" and "love" as reasons I should stay with him.

I had to follow my own

convictions, which ultimately was the best decision for my children and me. I have never regretted or turned back since that day. I have realized since that time that people will try to influence you to do things that aren't right for your own life. **(Rhonda Johnson)**

I had a really nice job working for Goodyear in Sun Prairie. It was a good paying job that most wouldn't pass up, one that's not easy to get and doesn't come around that

often. I worked there close to a year and never really felt content. I had two babies, had to get up at 2 AM, be at work at 4:30 AM until 4:30 PM. I couldn't take my son to school or pick him up. My home was off balance and I couldn't get past it.

When I talked to people about it, their response was, "At least the money is good." That wasn't enough to me because my home was out of order.

When the company went on strike, I saw that as my out! When the strike ended, I made a very unpopular choice, which was to resign. The job I work at today is where I've been since that time. **(Wynetta Taylor)**

I would say quitting my use of drugs and alcohol was a big step against the norm in my family. Even now when I get around my cousins and other relatives, it's like a big topic of discussion how



I don't drink or use drugs anymore. I find myself part of many jokes and little ridicules, saying I've

got religion and people are controlling my life. I realize that they (my family) are just trying to make themselves feel better about their continued usage.

**(Charles Sallay)**

When I was in junior high I was on the basketball team. I was popular, played center, hung out with the rich girls. There was also a new girl who



moved to Hancock, Michigan, from Detroit. While she was in the shower, the girls were commenting on how she couldn't play ball and they thought she should be able to play because she was black. There were a few other things said not worth mentioning.

After hearing these things, I couldn't hold back. I stood up for what I knew was right. I personally let each and every one of them know they were wrong. I didn't care if they didn't like me anymore.

That day I gained my best friend for life without any clue that she even knew I did that. Long story short, by her senior year, she was Copper Bowl queen of an almost all-white school.

**(Betsy Pelto)**

## A Night of Awe

### Madison Symphony Orchestra Review

By Felicia Jones

I want to thank the Odyssey Project (and donors Bob and Carroll Heideman) for giving me tickets to see violinist Sarah Chang and the Madison Symphony Orchestra. The show was amazing and enchanting, and it transported me to several places. Also the tickets allowed my daughter and me to build new memories of spending "quality" time with each other.

I must describe in detail what the Madison Symphony Orchestra did to my whole being. They played so skillfully I could hear glimpses of nature, birds, wind, water, and fire. I heard tones soft as a butterfly gently landing upon a flower. I also heard the fierceness of a harsh wind blowing. I even heard the sound of water falling. At one point I felt as if I was being tossed to and fro on a boat at sea.

The orchestra also played with an extreme intensity. It was almost warlike, as if the Calvary was on its way to battle, then returning triumphantly. The bass seemed to take human form, like that of a gladiator.

I also enjoyed how the conductor [guest Anu Tali] conducted the orchestra. She went from playfulness to such dramatic force with one wave of her baton. I enjoyed when she had a woman playing the flute start because it seemed to add a sense of suspense to the music being played.

The whole experience left me

with such a feeling of AWE.

Now here we go to Sarah Chang: OH BOY!!!

Sarah Chang was simply breathtaking. She played with a total oneness with her violin, as if she had been born playing it. Well, technically I guess you can almost say that since she started playing at age four. Her fingers moved with such ease and grace, her dress was beautiful, and so was she. As she played, I closed my eyes for awhile, and I could see myself sitting in my parents' living room watching a Walt Disney class film, dancing to the instruments that played so enchantingly.

All I can say is thank you for a very memorable and enjoyable night out with my daughter.





## To An Anonymous Odyssey Student Battling Alcoholism From Marshall Cook

I want to tell you where I'm coming from. We've got more alcoholics in my family than the Kennedys have got politicians. Alcohol destroyed my father's father—and my father's home life. Alcohol ruined my mother's life for 25 years and made things tough in the house for the rest of us. Alcohol is in the process of taking my only brother down with it. And alcohol, with help from other drugs, damn near killed my son. (He's been taking life one day at a time for over seven years, and I get down on my knees—literally—and thank God for

that every day.)

I quit drinking when I realized I was likely headed for trouble my own self, and I'm so glad I did, I can't tell you.

I hate what alcohol does to people I love. Hate it! I truly wish there were no such thing. I can't think of one good thing alcohol has EVER done for ANYbody (jokes about helping white men dance to the contrary).

I'm praying that you'll whip it. If you do, it'll be one day at a time, too; there's no other way. I think you got a hell of a good start by coming

clean about it to Emily.

I know you have to make a choice: you can drink on Wednesday afternoon, or you can come to Odyssey class Wednesday night, but you can't drink on Wednesday afternoon and come to Odyssey Wednesday night. Your call.

If I can help, I'd be very, very happy to. Mostly, you've got to walk this yourself, like Christ in the desert, but that doesn't mean I can't be walking and praying for you.

Love,  
Coach

**In 2007 Marshall Cook received a campus-wide award for teaching—an award also given in the**

**past to both Craig Werner and Emily Auerbach. In her nomination letter for Marshall, Emily wrote, "I**

***could not ask for a more devoted and gifted writing coach than Marshall. Because he genuinely regards each student with respect and love, he coaxes out of them a voice they did not know they had. While simultaneously nurturing their creative gifts, he helps them understand the importance of writing mechanics and accuracy. This combination of creativity and discipline has changed lives."***



# Waterboarding (published in the Capital Times, February 2008)

## By Thomas Jasen Gardner, Class of 2008

When I read about the increasing acceptance of waterboarding as a form of torture, I vividly recall how in 1968 members of the Memphis, Tennessee Police Department believed I could tell them information about Civil Rights insurgents arriving to create havoc. Forty years later I still hide my serrated scars.

I was 14 years old and forgot I was black boy living in racist America and heading for the Devil's den of discrimination. Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* stimulated my raging hormones for truth, justice, and the American way.

Like the main character in his book, I stuck out my thumb for a ride from my home in Wisconsin. I was so excited when someone pulled over for me that I went in the wrong direction. After hitchhiking the rest of the way from Milwaukee to Memphis with no trouble, I put out my thumb for the last ride to my grandfather's place. I was sure he could take me to demonstrate alongside Martin Luther King Jr. to support his recently announced policy on poverty and Southeast Asia.

"Boy, where you from?" asked the toothpick-sucking officer in the passenger seat as

his partner walked around the car to me. I was hauled to the station.

Tennessee police officers beat me because I was a threat to the status quo of time-honored Uncle Tom behavior. In retrospect I would have kept the King's English to myself, shuffled my feet, and goggled my eyes in adherence to the South's renowned sacred social rule for young black bucks.

The physical and verbal abuse heaped upon me caused several broken bones in my body and several dozen switches on my 14-year-old skull. I guess these seven policemen were trying to protect the good citizens of Memphis from more of Dr. Martin Luther King's peaceful demonstrations. Between the baton blows to my body and over my screams of youth and innocence, their loud accusations that there were people supposedly coming to Memphis "to stir up trouble" kept ringing in my ears.

Who were these people I supposedly knew who were ready to disrupt the city's infrastructure? My wild eyes could only register pain as the large men kicked, punched, and beat me with nightsticks

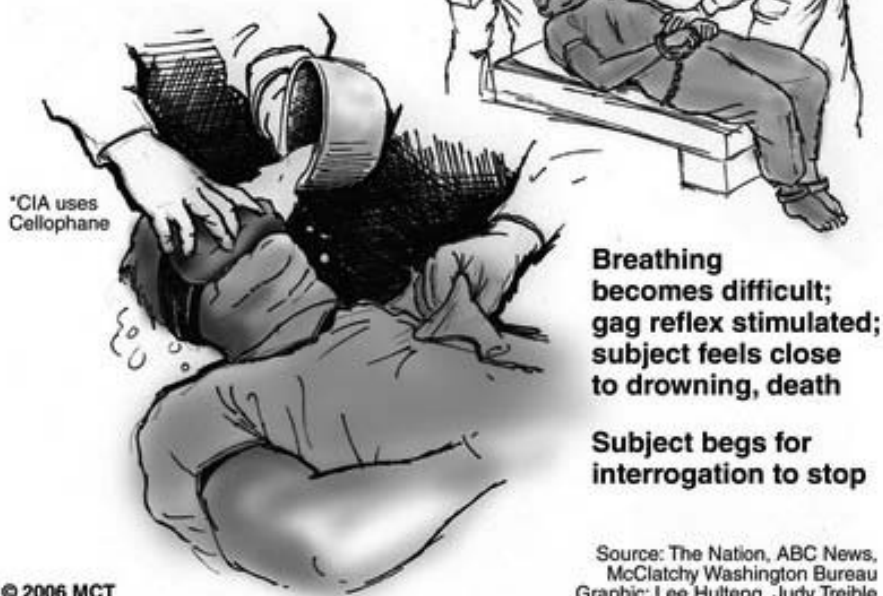


### What is water-boarding?

*Water-boarding is a harsh interrogation method that simulates drowning and near death; origins traced to the Spanish Inquisition.*

**Subject strapped down**

**Cloth\* held tightly over subject's face; water poured onto cloth, over face**



\*CIA uses Cellophane

**Breathing becomes difficult; gag reflex stimulated; subject feels close to drowning, death**

**Subject begs for interrogation to stop**

Source: The Nation, ABC News, McClatchy Washington Bureau  
Graphic: Lee Hulteng, Judy Treible

© 2006 MCT



because I was unable to speak coherently between my sobs of sorrow and moans for my mother. I went over in my brain the moment when I stuck out my thumb for one more ride and noticed it was a police car driving by. When they pulled over to talk to me, I knew to have my I.D. ready, but I never could have been ready for the pain and anguish they distributed upon me.

Recent victims of waterboarding must have felt the same excruciating, indescribable pain administered to me by seven Memphis police officers. Forty years later, I can only hope that when Canada put America at the top of the list for human rights violations, they were also talking about America's recent increase of police brutality against black men.

The legacy of Memphis police in 1968 may have influenced CIA torture methods. I am not sure what waterboarding victims in our own times tell their captors, but my experience tells me that nothing said under such forms of torture should be regarded as truth. I acted quite contrite as I admitted to being the vanguard for hundreds of Civil Rights workers heading for Memphis to be with King for acknowledging the number of black men drafted, wounded, and killed during the Vietnam "Conflict" (what a euphemism for war!).

Like relentless Stalinists, the policemen gave me a few hard,

calculated kicks with steel-toed boots in my back and ribs for making them exhausted from their beating. I promised them the names of protesters, when they were coming, and what they were driving. I could hardly speak from my busted lips, chipped teeth, and broken jaw, but I forced words from my mouth that sounded like what they wanted as long as they stopped their feverish beating to decipher what my cracking voice was revealing.

But I didn't know anyone, and I certainly didn't know about a conspiracy to take over Memphis. So I have since apologized for naming as co-conspirators Ralph Waldo Emerson, Hermann Hesse, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and any other author I ever read. I kept looking from face to face of my seven captors trying to plead with them individually by offering each a name. I worried that one would recognize these names and decide to kill me and dump in the river, like so many other black men who had been crucified in the South.

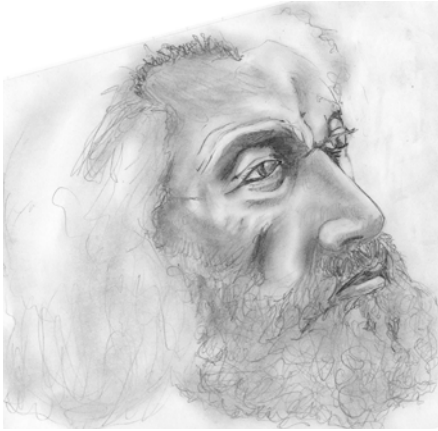
Then one of the white men with sweaty armpits shouted out, "I know the name of Faulkner but I can't remember where." My heart seemed to explode. I held my breath while biting my lip in preparation for the repetitive beating from well worn nightsticks. Then another cop said, "Wait a sec. It sounds like one of the names from our list of people to look out for."

The next thing I remember was being thrown onto a crowded jail cell's sticky, dirty floor with inmates shouting to the guards that I belonged in a hospital. As they looked over at me with unmasked pity and sympathy, I tried to mumble "please, no police" because I was in no hurry for them to finish the homicidal job they started. When an old prisoner with callused fingers tried to prop me up to drink putrid water, I remember saying, "No, thanks, Mr. Bojangles," before I passed out again.

I woke up in a hospital bed with the sunlight streaming down on my shackled, cask-encased arm. Seeing me regaining consciousness, a black nurse dressed in blinding starchy white rapidly walked across the ward floor to my bedside. As a bulky white police guard looked on, the nurse whispered in my ear, "Martin Luther King is dead." Now death was also stalking me, and I started to hyperventilate.

My experience at age 14 in 1968 leads me to conclude at age 54 in 2008 that no torture is justifiable. No one has the right to harm another human being. Information obtained through such barbaric 12<sup>th</sup>-century methods cannot be trusted to be the truth. The amendments of 1789 to the Constitution through the Bill of Rights denounce personal violation at home. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights should extend those morals abroad.

## Some Thoughts on Reading (Sketches by Stanley Sallay, Class of 2007)



"Once you learn to read, you will be forever free."

— **Frederick Douglass**

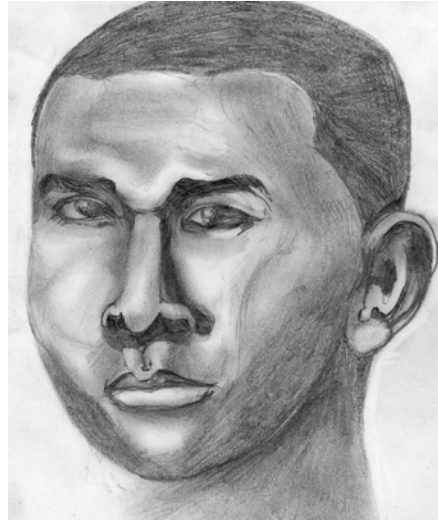
"The things I want to know are in books. My best friend is the man who'll get me a book I haven't read."—**Abraham Lincoln**

"The man who does not read good books is no better than the man who can't."—**Mark Twain**

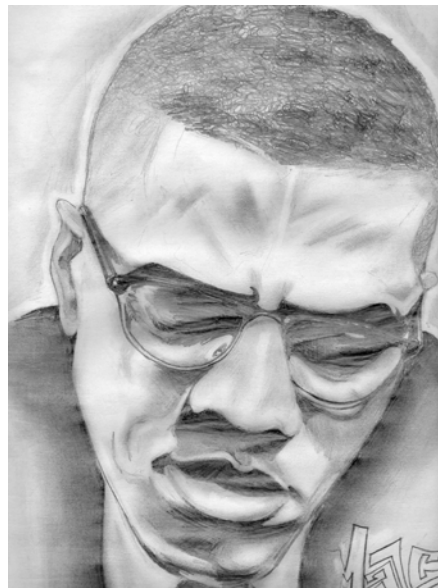


"Books began to happen to me, and I began to believe in nothing but books and the world in books."—**Langston Hughes**

"The impulse to dream was slowly beaten out of me by



experience. Now it surged up again and I hungered for books, new ways of looking and seeing."—**Richard Wright**



"My alma mater was books, a good library . . . I could spend the rest of my life reading, just satisfying my curiosity. The ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive."—**Malcolm X**

"There is more treasure in books than in all the pirate's loot on Treasure Island."—**Walt Disney**



"Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his deep and continuing needs, is good for him."—**Maya Angelou**



"If there is a book you really want to read but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."—**Toni Morrison**

"The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."—**Dr. Seuss**

## Sonnet Contest

***Cash prizes will be awarded for the best sonnets turned in on January 21, 2009.***

***Your sonnet must have 14 lines of iambic pentameter arranged in either a Shakespearean or Petrarchan pattern of rhyming. You may write on any topic, and your sonnet may be humorous or serious. If you can't think of a subject, try writing a sonnet about our Odyssey class or learning in general.***

***Winning entries will be included in the Oracle.***

A **sonnet** is a lyric poem consisting of a single stanza of fourteen iambic pentameter lines linked by an intricate rhyme scheme. There are two major patterns or rhyme in sonnets written in the English language:

1. The Petrarchan (named after the fourteenth-century Italian poet Petrarch) or Italian sonnet falls into two main parts: an octave (eight lines) rhyming abbaabba followed by a sestet (six lines) rhyming cdecde, cdcdcd, cdccdc, or some variant.
2. The Shakespearean or English sonnet falls into three quatrains and a concluding couplet, rhyming abab cdcd efef gg.

—From *A Glossary of Literary Terms: 8th Edition* By M.H. Abrams and G. Harpham

Here are two sonnets: one written by Emma Lazarus in the Petrarchan form, and one Kegan Carter (Odyssey '04; Oracle designer) wrote about "Procrastination." Her sonnet uses the Shakespearean form.

### The New Colossus By Emma Lazarus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glowed world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she  
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

### Kegan's sonnet

Procrastination will be my demise.  
Although I try to always plan ahead,  
My thoughts, my actions fail to compromise  
Deterring me from work that I now dread.

I'd love to study Edgar Allan Poe  
Or take some time to learn a minuet  
But pressing issues always seem to grow;  
I conquer some, while some are left in debt.

Alas! My Spanish homework's overdue  
Earth History is not that far behind  
My yoga teacher thought that I withdrew  
Creative Writing? Well...no, nevermind.

Take pity on my fourteen credit state,  
And don't judge me if you procrastinate!



## Meet an Odyssey Graduate: Brian Benford

Brian Benford (Odyssey Class of '07) is now a Social Work major at the UW. Prior to Odyssey, Brian served as Program Director at the Madison Neighborhood House Community Center and as alderperson for the City of Madison. He founded the Madison Fatherhood Alliance, an organization which promotes positive parenting, and is himself the father of four.

At the UW Brian has been honored with two scholarships: The Marilyn L. Getscher Scholarship from the Returning Adult Student Office, and a \$2500 Wiscontrepreneur scholarship in recognition of "innovative and creative thinking." After he completes his studies at the UW, Brian says he would like to create a non-profit organization, modeled after the settlement houses of the past, to create opportunities and provide support for youth, families, and underprivileged adults as they strive to reach their full potential.

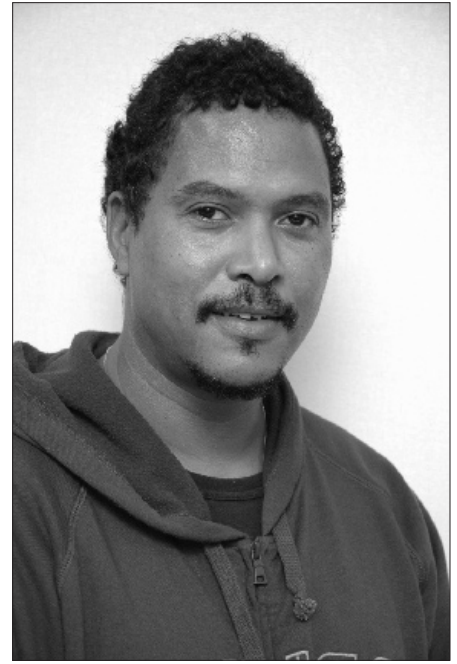
In his Odyssey graduation program entry for May 2007, Brian noted, "The Odyssey class has kindled in me a renewed interest in learning. During the year we read classic works and had opportunities to explore the historical context in which these works were created. . . . Being part of this class has been life altering."

Today Brian says it can be tough sometimes to be a UW

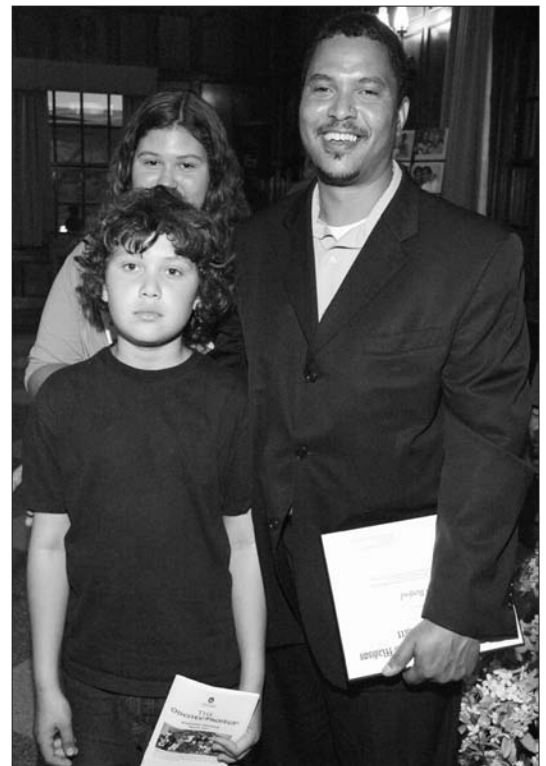
student, but he is keeping up the fight. He writes, "To my elation and pride, I will be of Junior standing after this semester. I'm sincerely hoping to finish with a BSW (Bachelor's in Social Work) with the hopes of going on to grad school to pursue a MSW (Master's in Social Work), where I could continue in community organization, politics, and teaching young social workers the skills they need to help their selves and others. The Odyssey Project has played and continues to play a huge role in me reaching my full potential. The Project has empowered me by giving me the opportunity to return to school with confidence and conviction."

Brian hopes to encourage the new class of Odyssey students each year to stay motivated. The week before he graduated from the Odyssey Project, he wrote a letter to share with future students:

*Each class left me empowered to learn more. I have to be honest when I say that I couldn't wait for Wednesday nights to roll around. No matter how dead tired I was, no matter how much work needed to be done at home or on the job, when I walked into the Harambee Center for class I felt exhilarated. In my life I have had many opportunities to share wonderful experiences*



*with fantastic people. Being part of the Odyssey class has been the most rewarding educational experience I've ever had. Taking this journey with my classmates has been priceless. I will never forget this Odyssey, and I wish all of you in the new class a great journey."*





## Meet the Donor: Book Sharer Carolyn Sumner

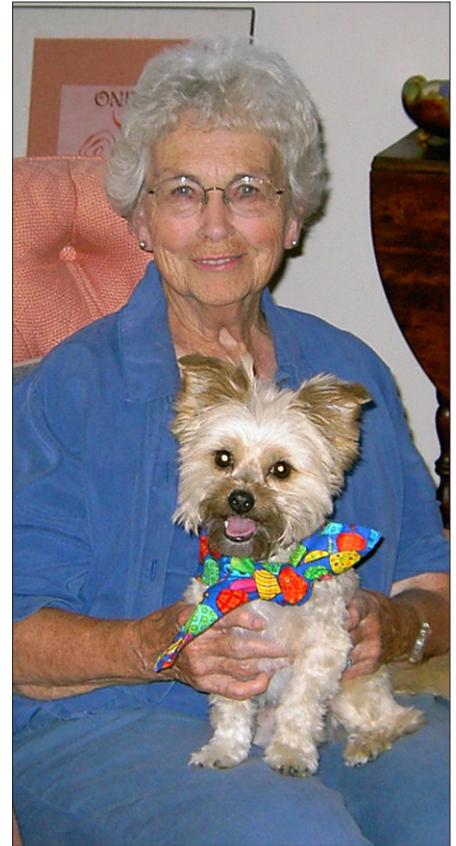
“Reading opens up the whole world to you,” Carolyn Sumner says. As an Odyssey donor she not only has made gifts of money and food but also recently purchased 35 beautiful new books to give to children of this year’s Odyssey students.

As a child, young Carolyn treasured receiving gifts of books from her mother and older sister. “I spent a lot of time alone as a child, and books gave me such pleasure. Up in the attic I would pore over the *Book of Knowledge*.”

After graduating from Madison West High School in 1943, she attended the U.W.

majoring in Anthropology. She moved to Evansville and raised—and read to—her four children while her husband ran a weekly newspaper. A school official saw how much she loved children and books and encouraged her to go back to college to earn a Master's degree in Library Science. That new training gave her the chance to serve as an elementary school librarian in Evansville for 23 years.

Carolyn Summer now is 83 and has five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. She treasures a letter she received from a grandson starting to attend classes at the University





of Minnesota: “Grandma, I can’t thank you enough for introducing me to all those good books.”

As a widow, she moved back to Madison and found herself wanting to share her responses to books with others. She joined Emily Auerbach’s Tuesday Morning Booktalks at the downtown Madison Public Library, reading nine novels in the fall and nine in the spring. Each year she enjoys debating the merits of literary works with a group of fellow booklovers. She laughs and notes, “I didn’t expect to find myself talking so

much, but I just have to share my opinions, too!”

Through the book group she learned about the UW Odyssey Project and how it enables more adults to read great literature: “Oh, I think it is wonderful, an absolutely spectacular project. I’ve wanted Oprah Winfrey to put it on her program. I picture the student [Annette Bland ‘06] I heard reciting Langston Hughes’ ‘Mother to Son’ (‘Life for me ain’t been no crystal stair’), followed by a shot of the class.”

For Odyssey children this holiday season, this retired

librarian chose a wide variety of books, including *Goodnight Moon*, *A Snowy Day*, *The Patchwork Quilt*, *Just-So Stories*, *The Hatchet*, *The Golden Compass*, and numerous biographies of figures such as Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton, George Washington Carver, Harriet Tubman, Marian Anderson, John Henry, and Sitting Bull.

“I try to give books to everyone,” Carolyn Sumner explains. “If I could buy 50 times that many books, I would do so.”



Jacob Lawrence’s *The Library*