

# The GRIOT

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**Colorado State University**

## *Welcome From The Director – Bridgette Johnson*



Wow...so much has happened during our lifetime and so much history has gone unnoticed by some of us. I ask that you pause and think about those who have paved the way for you and I.

I also ask, as you begin this new academic year, that you think about what you will leave for others who decide to attend Colorado State University. How will you give back? What will be the legacy you leave for those who will come after you? I truly believe if we begin with the end in mind, we have a greater chance of accomplishing more!

There are so many opportunities for new and returning students alike. I encourage you to take advantage of those opportunities while balancing your number one priority at CSU – your academics!

Our mission in the Black/African American Cultural Center is to support you in your academics, so use us as a resource. In addition to that, we are also here to support you with your career and personal goals.

We will provide cultural enrichment and leadership development opportunities; however, as you know, your ultimate responsibility while at Colorado State is to graduate!

As you read through this newsletter, you will see we have already started off with a bang and I ask that you think about how you can get involved to make your time at CSU more memorable and meaningful.

Have a great semester and we look forward to seeing you in the office and at programs!

–Ms. B  
Bridgette Johnson  
Director

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## *John Amos Symposium*

*Chynna Fayne*



*Photo courtesy of: Colorado State University.*

This month I had the honor and pleasure of getting to attend a Diversity Symposium with lead speaker John Amos. John Amos is a world renowned actor who has starred on multiple television sitcoms as well as movies. It was a wonderful experience because most people never get to experience what actors and such are like outside of their job.

I enjoyed hearing about his road to stardom all the way up to meeting Oprah Winfrey. I admire Mr. Amos simply for his humbleness, sense of gratitude, humility, and his tenacity against all odds to still work hard for his dreams.

Oddly enough I had always compared him to the character he played in Coming to America and all though the two still have similarities I love the fact that Mr. Amos seems to cherish the value of education and hard work. I appreciated his realness and the fact that he can now laugh about the things maybe he messed up at doing.

Overall I enjoyed myself and I will forever remember Mr. John Amos's life story and the affect that it had on my life not only as a college student with a dream but as a future business woman.

## *Ramapalooza*

*Stephaun Gaddis*

Ramapalooza was held in late August for all students to unite in the annual Ramapalooza at Colorado State University. With all facets of students welcome, the event was jam packed with people excited to reunite with their peers after a long summer break.

Following the school cook-out, students had the opportunity to take part in this ram pride event and meet new friends as they congregated at the event. Campus Activities staff had high hopes in their project this year to gain more involvement from students, as well as entertain them with endless fun!

This year, due to the LSC's renovation, Ramapalooza was held inside the CSU Rec Center. The space was a great venue for such an event.

These new rams got to experience just what CSU has to offer when it comes to fun as they took part in many of the activities. Some of activities held were: mechanical bull ride, inflatable soccer, poker tables at Casino Night, caricatures and body art, inflatable items, great music and performances, and crafts.

The night also had tons of food and prizes... many, many prizes!! Many students who attended got the opportunity to meet the incoming class of 2017 as they filled the center. Overall, the night was a very good kickoff for this year. It encouraged students to always stay active in their community on campus.



*Photo courtesy of Google.*

## Meet Duan Ruff

Torshan Thomas



**What's new in B/AACC? Our Assistant Director Duan Ruff, for one! Stop by to find out what he's all about!** Duan Ruff is a CSU alumnus and is married with four children living in the Fort Collins area. When Duan was a student here he participated in both playing football and running track. Duan has an expertise in the area of program development, fundraising, and teaching. Before becoming a part of B/AACC's family, Duan worked at Mullen High School in Denver, where he served as the Director of Student Activities and taught business and mathematics.

1.) What are the major changes you've seen from when you were a student at CSU to now being a staff member at the University? The growth of the campus is an obvious change as there are many new buildings, better food in residence halls, and enhanced campus events. Yet, the biggest difference is the heightened commitment to diversity and social justice. The inclusive environment here has improved exponentially and opportunities for success are here for anyone and everyone who chooses to attend CSU.

2.) How has your experience been working at the B/AACC office? The experience has been phenomenal! I am truly appreciative of the opportunity to work with so many great students and staff. I am continually being challenged to improve upon myself and I have learned something new every day from a student or staff member. It is that daily growth that has truly defined my experience to this point.

3.) What are your plans for retention of students who have self-identified as black or African American? My plans are to fulfill the mission of the BAACC office. In addition to the mission, I plan to make myself available to assist students in a variety of capacities in their efforts to find success in college. I will also provide support through programming and give students a plethora of resources on campus to utilize to be successful. Finally, I will add to the BAACC office atmosphere that is inclusive and inviting to everyone and provides the students with a "home away from home."

4.) What programs or things have you implemented to keep the B/AACC office mission thriving? This early on, my focus is to observe, learn, and evaluate the programs that are already in existence. Once I evaluate them, I can begin to enhance them if necessary. I am already working to enhance the Albert C. Yates Leadership Development Institute so look for some exciting news about that program.

5.) Tell us 3 things defining Duan Ruff that you'd want a complete stranger to know about you? My super power is love, I am blessed with a beautiful wife and 4 great children, and I practice yoga daily

I have had the pleasure of getting to know Duan and I have nothing but good things to say about him. He offers a strong male role within the office and not only embraces that role but challenges himself to be a better role model. Duan's presence dominates the room with good vibes, energy, open arms, and an accepting heart. Around the office we like to call him "Wikipedia" because he has so much knowledge in a plethora of areas. He not only offers his knowledge but he'll give you some of the deepest and inspiring food for thought that will challenge what you thought you knew. In a short period of time, Duan has found a way to incorporate pieces of himself into the new office. Duan Ruff is a great addition to our team and we are expecting nothing less than amazing work from him. So come on in and help welcome Duan back on campus and see what he has to offer you!

## Ice Cream Social

Maya Lovelace

“Ice scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!” The Ice Cream Social and Resource Fair hosted by the Black/African American Culture Center was a great experience for students new to the campus and most importantly a great place to network and make connections.

Offices such as the Resources for Disabled Students, Women Gender and Advocacy Center, Health Center, Financial Aid, Study Abroad, and Africans United were there interacting and informing students about the services their offices provide.

Since it was my first time attending the annual fair, I was able to speak with the different organizations that were there. I was able to walk away with new information regarding events held on campus such as opportunities to fellowship with religious groups and where I needed to go if I had questions regarding Women Advocacy.

The Ice Cream Social and Resource Fair allowed students to meet new people and get to know CSU’s campus; while enjoying free ice cream and music, courtesy of DJ Nunez. Overall, the Ice Cream Social was a great event to bring in the new academic school year.

## Rocky Mountain Showdown

Raquel Robertson

Every year thousands of Colorado State University students and fans of the RAMS look forward to the football team playing the Colorado University Buffs at Sports Authority Field. With the game being played in such an amazing location, students are given a different experience outside of their usual football field. The experiences students get from attending the games really do vary. For the most part students seem to enjoy attending the game. While interviewing Jeffery



Jenna Muniz shown on the right

Smith, who is currently a junior at CSU, I noticed the excitement in his responses. He was very excited for his first Rocky Mountain Showdown experience with his friends. Jeffery said, “It



Jeffery Smith shown in the middle

was my First Showdown and the experience was literally breathtaking from all the cheering and chanting. After the loss it was so sad because I was expecting a win since we won last year and we played a good game overall.”

Another student I interviewed was Jenna Muniz. Her experience was a little different because this was her third time attending the Rocky Mountain Showdown.

“This year was the best yet! Since my friends and I are seniors we decided to take a stretch escalade limo to the game. There were 26 of us and it was a lot of fun. I was bummed that we didn’t win my final year here, but at

least we weren’t losing too bad until the end,” said Muniz. It was also interesting to talk with a football player because their view of everything is different than the students who are in the crowd watching and cheering. The football player I had the chance to interview was Kapri Biggs. He is currently a sophomore at CSU and after talking with Kapri this is some of what he had to say.

“This was my first time playing in the Rocky Mountain Showdown. I watched the game last year and I saw the hatred and the rivalry. Then to actually step on the

field and play was crazy, it was so loud and you couldn’t hear the person 3 feet away from you. The game was an awesome experience that I wouldn’t change for anything. It was one of the best things I have ever been a part of and I’m excited to go and take one from them next year already.”

I enjoyed talking with each one of these students about their experience at the game. I think it’s important that every student attends at least one game and sits in the student section. The tickets are fairly priced which encourages students to go.

This is an event that thousands of students look forward to each year and is something that will continue to happen. GO RAMS!



Photo courtesy of Colorado State University.

## *Rights of Passage Retreat*

*Diondre Morales*

During the first weekend of September, the Black/African American Cultural Center held its annual fall retreat for first year and transfer students. This is, hands down, the best way to help with the transition into the beginning of the school year.

Before attending CSU, I never had an opportunity like the one I have now, to be involved with people from an African-American background. Although I was already working in the office for a few weeks before the retreat and started to get more comfortable with the rest of the staff, I worried about if the rest of the students attending the retreat would accept me.

I was happy to see I was worried for nothing and I greatly benefitted from this amazing experience. Despite the early departure for Estes Park, there were so many smiling faces looking forward to having fun and learning new things about one another, that is exactly what we did.

Through the relationship building activities such as crafts, archery, zip lining, the relay race, and through the deep conversations about who we are, we were able to build connections as African-American men and women are on campus.

Our last two activities of the retreat put things into perspective for me; the lives we live today are nowhere near as tough that our ancestors lived. Because of our ancestors, we now have many opportunities and the choice to take those opportunities; we shall not waste what was so hardy earned. During our last activity is when I knew that I found my support system.

We are all pulling for one another to succeed throughout the rest of our lives and believe that each of us will. The retreat has allowed me to feel more comfortable among my peers. We went up to Estes Park as new students, some of us barely knowing each other, but we left as a family, sharing an amazing retreat experience together. Thank you for this opportunity!

## *Rights of Passage Retreat*

*Chynna Fayne*



Going on the Rights of Passage Retreat was one of the greatest opportunities that I have ever taken advantage of! I enjoyed doing activities that I had never done before like, going to Estes Park, Archery, bon fire, and **making s'mores over a fire.**

I think that one of the strongest things that happened while staying up there was when we had our girl talk. It was so nice hearing other

**people's views on things and somewhat coincidental that some of the things they felt or were going through, I was feeling or going through as well.** When night came it was so much fun kicking back in our rooms and telling funny stories and hearing about the different backgrounds that people came from.

Overall my most memorable activity was the faith walk. Being blindfolded and having to depend on the people around you to help guide you through unknown areas was something I had never done before, but I appreciated the fact that it was similar to the trek we will make and are making through college.

I heard people saying negative things in my ears and some of those things I had even thought to myself, but to hear the encouraging words of, **"Keep going", "Don't stop", and "You can make it", made it all the worthwhile.** It was an amazing feeling knowing that I had someone I could lean on or count on when I got weak.

To sum up my experience I was so honored to have been a part of this momentous event and I will cherish every moment of it for the rest of my life. I look forward to all of the future rights of passage events and activities, and I am so happy that I am a part of this wonderful group of people.

## Meet the Black/African American Culture Center Staff



*Erica L. Boyer*

Major: Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism

One thing you're most excited about this year: Being a peer mentor!

Interesting Fact: I'm an animal lover!



*Maya Lovelace*

Major: Psychology and Human Development and family studies

One thing you're most excited about this year: I'm excited for the 20th annual Step Show and most importantly having quality time with my mentees

Interesting Fact: I intern for the manager of DIA



*Grace Stamps*

Major: Double majoring in Fine Arts with a concentration in painting and journalism

One thing you're most excited about this year: Finally finishing up all my AUCC courses

Interesting Fact: I'm a born and raised vegetarian



*Stephaun "Mack" Gaddis*

Major: Mechanical Engineering

One thing you're most excited about this year: Meeting new people and working out

Interesting Fact: I love food!



*Raquel Robertson*

Major: Ethnic Studies minor Business Administration

One thing you're most excited about this year: I am looking forward to keeping the students engaged in the programs we throw for them especially with the LSC being renovated. This year has already got off to a great start with doing so, so I'm looking forward to the progress continuing.



*Chynna Fayne*

Major: Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice

One thing you're most excited about this year: I am most excited about being a CSU Ram!!

Interesting Fact: I am new to the Black/African American Culture Center!



*Diondre Morales*

Major: Political Science

**One thing you're most excited about**

this year: Connecting more with everyone in the Black/African American Culture Center

Interesting Fact: I come from two ethnic backgrounds and identify as both Hispanic and African American



*Alexandra Norris*

Major: Human Development and Family Studies

Concentration:

Early Childhood and Adolescence

Minor: Criminology/ Criminal Justice

**One thing you're most excited about this year:** I am most excited to work with all of the new and smiling faces, and have a successful year of programming for beneficial and important programs! (Like Rites of Passage, GPS, and so many more)

Interesting fact: My baby sisters are twins, we are all Aries, they were born on April 1st, and their height is over the 6'0 ft. mark.



*Marissa Rudd*

Major: Vocal performance

**One thing you're most excited about this year:** I'm looking forward to making connections with all the new students on campus, growing as an office, and the sophomore LDI retreat!



*Kim Washington*

Major: Double major in Apparel Design and Merchandising and Human development and Family Studies

**One thing you're most excited about this year:** I am most excited about to be on the Exec Board of United Women of Color and for all the wonderful things happening with United Women of Color

Interesting Fact: I plan on going to Bora Bora one day!

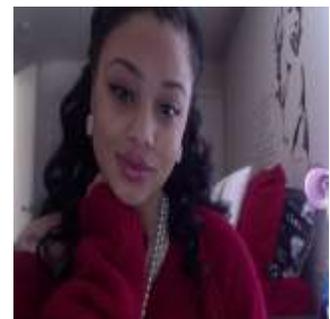


*Suprina Williams*

Major: Business with a concentration in management

**One thing you're most excited about this year:** I am most excited about making new connections with current and new students.

Interesting Fact: I am a fruit addict.



*Torshan Thomas*

Major: Psychology Major.

**One thing you're most excited about this year:** Working and Connecting with the G.P.S kids.

Interesting Fact: I have a snake named Butters.

# October 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	2	3	4	5
6 <i>Homecoming Pageant @ 6 p.m. LSC Theatre</i>	7	8 <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	9	10 <i>Volleyball Game (Pink Out) @ 7p.m., Moby Arena</i>	11 <i>Homecoming Parade @ 4 p.m.</i>	12 <i>Homecoming Football Game @ 1:30 p.m.  — Volleyball</i>
13	14	15 <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	16	17	18	19
20	21	22 <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	23	24 <i>Volleyball Game @ 1 p.m.</i>	25	26
26	28	29 <i>Real Talk @ 4 p.m.</i>	30	31		



**Colorado State University**

**BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN  
CULTURAL CENTER**

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