

Jan. 29, 2007

To the OSU Campus,

I was pleased to attend the grand opening last week of the OSU Center for Africana Studies and Development, located in the Wes Watkins Center.

The center is an important addition to our campus and is a reality thanks to the leadership of Associate History Professor Amilear Shabazz and the inspiration of student Patrick Saisi, as well as the support of Peter Sherwood, dean of Arts and Sciences; Cornell Thomas, VP of diversity; and Jim Hromas, director of international education and outreach.

It will offer curriculum, provide research, facilitate study abroad opportunities in Africa, and benefit OSU in many other ways...

On the same day the Africana center opened, the campus celebrated the 100th anniversary of Morrill Hall, one of our most beautiful and historic landmarks. It was named in honor of the Morrill Act that created our nation's land-grant colleges. The ceremony also marked the presentation of Morrill Hall to the English department, which will be the exclusive occupant of the building beginning in the fall...

Congratulations to Gary Webb, associate professor of sociology, on the \$700,000 NSF grant he and two fellow researchers from other institutions received to examine how first responders used creativity, flexibility and improvisation following 9/11 and the Oklahoma City bombing...

As a follow-up to the hugely successful visit of Edward O. Wilson, I am delighted about the upcoming appearance of Michael Ruse, professor of philosophy and zoology at Florida State University and the author of many books, including *Mystery of Mysteries: Is Evolution a Social Construction?* Dr. Ruse will speak at 7 p.m. on Feb. 6 at the Wes Watkins Center...

In closing, the beautiful coffee-table book we produced to celebrate the state centennial is available at the Student Union Bookstore. "Oklahoma State Portraits: Celebrating the Centennial of Oklahoma Statehood" looks at OSU's contributions during Oklahoma's first 100 years of statehood. Proceeds from the book will help fund the renovation of Old Central. I hope you will pick up a copy...

David Schmidly