The Warrior’s Journal newsletter serves as a vehicle to highlight program events and student accomplishments, and provides an empowering forum for creative expression within the Veterans Upward Bound community.
Dear VUB Students, Staff, Friends and Colleagues –

Our students are quite familiar with what it means to have served in a position of honor and privilege. During their stay in the military they upheld the values of their country and made a difference for our nation and the world. They viewed their role as one of honor and privilege, and one where every effort to make a positive difference was approached.

Being in a position of honor and privilege is one where a sincere and humble approach is taken. Thinking that it is deserved and taking it for granted will be its demise. Appreciating it and valuing it will only strengthen the position and increase the possibilities associated with it.

Being in a position of honor and privilege is one that is upheld with honesty and integrity. It is embracing the principles of fairness, discernment, and candidness associated with the position that will sustain the position.

Being in a position of honor and privilege is one where patience, respect, and understanding are given to those whom we come in contact. Many of us, as VUB personnel, have come in contact with students who persist at VUB. It is essential for us to put ourselves in their shoes and attempt to have an understanding of where they are coming from. Yes, there is the rare student who tries to “get one over”, but there is also the student who is just having a very rough time in life and is desperate to make a change for themselves – he or she just does not know where to begin. Patience, respect, and understanding support this individual.

The VUB students have clearly succeeded at serving in positions of honor and privilege. We look at them and listen to them in an effort to find ways to learn and to grow. It IS an honor and a privilege to serve VUB and to bring thoughtfulness and sound judgment, patience, respect, understanding, honesty, integrity, sincerity and humility to the program.

Sincerely,
Diane Sandefur
VUB Director
My Life Before and After VUB
Sylvia Gist-Burns, VUB Student

Before:

When I got out of high school in late 1960’s, I entered a college preparatory curriculum before enrolling at Immaculata College for a year. I was hooked—hooked on academia! I had not yet married, so I had the desire and I had the time to dedicate to my studies. Prior to matriculation, five of us—five young black women, were selected for the college preparatory program because of our grades and school performances. We were also from low-income families. We were then the first black students to enroll at the all white female college. But there was an educational level difference, as I perceived the other students to be more advanced than me. We needed more support to complete our studies.

After one year at Immaculata College, I transferred to Temple University. It was close to home, and I changed my major to Art from Biology. I enjoyed both subjects, but I was growing particularly fond of art at the time. At Temple, I studied art at the Tyler School of Art before transferring to the Philadelphia College of Art.

I spent my next few years intensely studying Architectural and Interior Design. For a vast time, I studied drafting, modeling, perspectives, floor plans, elevations, renderings, specifications, site work, and presentations. When my husband returned from his tour of duty in Vietnam, we got married and had a daughter. I put my school dreams on the shelf.

Now:

My dreams of earning a degree were deferred until recently when I found the VUB program—my second chance to complete my goals, my second chance to finish college. This is so important to me now. Even though things have changed over the years, my dreams and goals are the same. I worked in the psychology field for 26 years, and now I want to get a degree to go with my experience. I want my own company and I will design it from the ground up, specializing in residential dwellings for the disabled, mentally handicapped, and elderly.

With VUB, my dreams can become reality! That is what the VUB program is all about. Truthfully, VUB is the best thing for me at the moment. It is assisting me and other veterans as we face the challenges of the modern day veteran. That is so important. VUB’s goal is my goal. We’re on the same page. I’m happy to have them now, because with them, I can fulfill my dreams.
Quarter Moon
Larry McCrae, VUB Student

Yesterday before I laid down, I walked to my window and
Looked out. There I saw a quarter moon.
I said, “Lord, I must be losing my mind,” because it looked like
God was smiling at me.
I turned and walked back to my room to get in the bed.
I heard a voice calling, “Come home son.”
I laid down and I could feel the pain leaving my body.
That’s when I knew that it wasn’t a quarter moon;
It was God smiling at me, saying, “Come on home son.”
I heard the birds and bees singing in harmony.
I felt my spirit lift up and the voices got louder.
I saw the light of God.
There it was, that quarter moon, with a big smiling face, saying,
“Welcome home my son. We’ve been waiting for you.
The pain is over now that you are home.
Now sit down beside me, you are one of my flock.
It wasn’t a quarter moon, it was I, smiling at you, my son.”

Do you love to write?
Ask your counselor about submitting an article, photo, original artwork, or poem to the next edition of the Warrior’s Journal.

VUB Student and “Quarter Moon” Author, Larry McCrae
Service and Sacrifice
Wendell Chavis, VUB Student

I am Sgt. Wendell Chavis, a retired combat veteran who served in Iraq during 2004 and 2005. My Platoon Leader, Lieutenant Samuel Console has recently written a book entitled, “Service and Sacrifice: Memories of Operation Iraqi Freedom with a Veterans Mental Health and Resource Guide.” This book gives the public a better understanding of the training and combat missions that our platoon participated in as well as the struggles that troops face when returning home after deployment.

In order to get ahead in life, I believe you must listen and learn from all of your experiences. During my deployment, I was sometimes able to interact with the Iraqi civilians and children. I realized how much our help meant to them. My time in Iraq taught me to work as a team with my fellow soldiers so that we could all be able to return home safely.

After returning home from Iraq, I sought out services from the VA immediately, and I have been treated at the Philadelphia VA Medical Center ever since. The VA has helped me to recover from the physical and mental symptoms that I experienced related to combat. The VA has also helped me to become more active in my community, including participating in sports and educational programs. If you know of a veteran who still needs help, I would recommend that you encourage them to visit the VA.


Veterans Upward Bound Memorial Scholarship Fund

One way of making a positive difference in the life of a VUB graduate is to award scholarship monies that will help fund their college education. The TRIO Veterans Upward Bound Program at the University of Pennsylvania offers two scholarships annually in the memory of VUB participants, Stephen Garlanger, and L’Salle Harvey. Stephen Garlanger graduated VUB in 2000. He immediately began attending the College of General Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Steve passed away in July 2005 after a lengthy illness. For the last five years Steve and his wife conducted the POW/MIA missing man ceremony at our annual graduation. His wife now continues this tradition and also presents a scholarship in his name. Finally, L’Salle Harvey was a student with VUB during the Summer ‘06 cycle. He was tragically murdered on the streets of Philadelphia in August, 2006.

To make a tax-deductible contribution to either scholarship fund, please mail your check to: “The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania”, Attn: Diane Sandefur, Director of VUB, 220 S. 40th St. Suite 260, Philadelphia, PA 19104
Veteran and Best-Selling Author Wes Moore Visits VUB Literature Students

After a speaking engagement at the University of Pennsylvania Bookstore, Author/Veteran/Activist/Scholar Wes Moore travelled across campus in the rain to speak with the VUB students. Although he had a flight to catch early the next morning, Mr. Moore was generous with his time, speaking with the students and staff, answering questions, signing books, and posing for photographs late into the night. Mr. Moore encouraged everyone to earn their degrees and give back to their communities. He thanked everyone for their service and challenged the students to commit themselves to improving the lives of others. His recent work, “The Other Wes Moore,” was read, discussed, and written about in the Literature 200 course this past semester.

About Wes Moore

“Wes graduated from Valley Forge Military College in 1998 and from Johns Hopkins University in 2001 with a bachelor’s degree in International Relations. He completed an MLitt in International Relations from Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar in 2004. Wes was a paratrooper and Captain in the United States Army, serving a combat tour of duty in Afghanistan with the elite 1st Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division in 2005–2006. A White House Fellow from 2006–2007, Wes served as a Special Assistant to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Following his time at the White House, Wes became an investment professional in New York at Citigroup, focusing on global technology and alternative investments. In 2009 he was selected as an Asia Society Fellow. Moore was named one of Ebony magazine’s “Top 30 Leaders Under 30” for 2007 and Crain’s New York Business’ “40 Under 40 Rising Stars” in 2009.

Wes is passionate about supporting U.S. veterans and examining the roles education, mentoring and public service play in the lives of American youth. He serves on the board of the Iraq Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) and founded an organization called STAND! through Johns Hopkins that works with Baltimore youth involved in the criminal justice system. Wes was a featured speaker at the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver. Seeking to help other young people to redirect their lives, Wes is committed to being a positive influence and helping kids find the support they need to enact change. Pointing out that a high school student drops out every nine seconds, Wes says that public servants—the teachers, mentors and volunteers who work with our youth—are as imperative to our national standing and survival as are our armed forces. “Public service does not have to be an occupation,” he says, “but it must be a way of life.”

from http://theotherwesmoore.com/about-the-author
ABOVE: Student Anthony Harrell with his counselor, Todd Derby.

BELOW: Students Donna Pinkney and Terry Lee on a college visit, shortly before stopping at Larry’s Steaks for lunch.

RIGHT: VUB Students walking to the subway en route to St. Joseph's University and the Barnes Foundation. Pictured from left: James Harrison, Donna Pinkney, and David Jones.

LEFT: VUB Director Diane Sandefur with Author and Veteran Wes Moore in LIT 200 class.


ABOVE: Student Anthony Harrell with his counselor, Todd Derby.
An IRON Soldier
SGT Norman Madsen, VUB Student

IRON SOLDIERS, the best equipped and the best trained, IRON SOLDIERS, who fight for families and freedom, soldiers that put their lives deep inside their hearts and souls, IRON SOLDIERS, best equipped and best trained, far away they come from east, south, north and west; so that the rest can have Peace on Earth.

IRON SOLDIERS, they are Rangers, sappers, medics and cooks; they are mechanics and they are radio operators; they are the IRON SOLDIERS that fight for freedom and Peace on Earth, with their families buried deep in their hearts and God at their lips to guide them through safely and through the hard times.

So hail the IRON SOLDIERS, the best equipped and the best trained, they fight with their souls deep in their heart, till it’s time to go, some will change, some will stay the same; but some will never make it back, so their memories will lay in every heart for they will be in better places.

So roll on IRON SOLDIERS, best equipped and the best trained, to bigger and better things stay paratus...

~IRON SOLDIERS~