On behalf of TRiO Veterans Upward Bound we would like to thank the Wharton Management 100 students for fundraising, planning, and organizing such an amazing trip. The veterans and Wharton students travelled by coach bus from Philadelphia to New York City on Saturday, November 14, 2015. Our first stop was visiting the historical Apollo Theater. We walked into the main theater, took pictures and then sat down in the first two rows to hear Billy Mitchell, also known as “Mr. Apollo”, speak about the history of the theater and his many decades of experience working there. Some of our students also had the opportunity to partake in an impromptu talent show on stage. They sung, danced, rapped and told some great jokes! Lastly, we were invited to tour the dressing rooms and see the wall of celebrity signatures.

After visiting the Apollo Theater, our next stop was a campus tour of Columbia University. We were welcomed by two students and one was also a Veteran, Sang. They talked about the history of the university and shared stories amongst each other creating memories that will last a lifetime. (continued on page 4)

Veterans Upward Bound Mission Statement

The TRiO Veterans Upward Bound Program, an educational opportunity program funded by the U.S. Department of Education, advocates for the learning experience of under-represented Philadelphia area military veterans. The program provides intensive pre-college academic courses and comprehensive supportive services to promote the academic development of veterans towards the pursuit of a post-secondary education.
Hello VUB Students, Staff, Friends and Colleagues –

I have often discussed “change” in the Director’s Corner of past Warrior Journal issues, and again I am focusing on this theme, but differently as I have in the past. It has been a challenging few months for those of us at VUB as we lost a friend, a co-worker, a teacher and for many a man who was like a brother, a father and a counselor. Edgar Allan “Mr. 10,000 Problems” Mitchell, Jr. started teaching advanced math at VUB in January 2006. There are few individuals, maybe none, who can teach math like Mr. 10,000 Problems! Students learned without realizing they were learning! He made learning math FUN!!! He energized the students and before they knew it they were solving higher levels of math and loving every minute! He exuded love.

For a short time Edgar took a break from VUB to do all the other 10,000 things he had on his plate: a teacher at a Philadelphia high school, Scout Master with his son’s Boy Scout troop, Christian and active church member, co-owner of his and his wife’s educational consulting business, a friend to hundreds – no, make that tens of thousands – and an amazing son, brother and husband to Dannet and their three children. Later, when VUB had a vacancy with the math instructor position there was no doubt who would be called to fill it – Mr. 10,000 Problems!

This has to be the most difficult kind of change – the loss of another. It is hard to wrap our heads around why a person at not even a month shy of his 46th birthday would be gone without notice, no illness, but instead with a sudden and unexpected pulmonary embolism. How do we adjust? How do we transition? How do we make any understanding of an amazing human being who was so caring and loving and full of life, yet now gone? We do it like this: We honor who he was by not giving up, we keep pushing ourselves to find and achieve our fullest potential, we love life and we love and care for others just as he had done, we follow his example. We exude love: love and caring for others, but also love of ourself. We don’t stop until our dreams are met. We shoot for the moon, and if we miss we know we’ll reach the stars. And somewhere out there in the stars, Mr. 10,000 Problems will be smiling.

Diane Sandefur
VUB Director
In Memorium
Edgar Allan “Mr. 10,000 Problems” Mitchell, Jr.
December 1, 1969 – November 6, 2015
The students toured Columbia's Butler Library and College Walk. It was a pretty amazing experience that they, too, were walking on the same campus President Obama graduated from.

The group’s next stop was visiting and paying their respects at the 9/11 Memorial and Museum. It was a tribute of remembrance and honoring the many lives lost. You can only imagine the emotions felt walking through these grounds.

The names of every person who died in the attacks of September 11, 2001 are honored in bronze around the Memorial pools. Paying homage to nearly 3,000 victims, the museum also recognizes the thousands who survived and all who showed extraordinary courage and compassion.

Right: The Memorial features two enormous waterfalls and reflecting pools, each about an acre in size, set within the footprints of the original Twin Towers. The Memorial plaza is one of the most eco-friendly plazas ever constructed. With more than 400 trees surrounding the reflecting pools. Its design conveys a spirit of hope and renewal and creates a contemplative space separate from the usual sights and sounds of a bustling metropolis.
The final stop on the New York City trip was dinner at the Hard Rock Café in Times Square and to see Wicked on Broadway at the Gershwin Theatre. The students had been working hard by reading, discussing and creating PowerPoint presentations of “The Wizard of Us: Transformational Lessons from Oz” by Jean Houston in their Literature 200 class. The book focuses on finding the hero or heroine within yourself and it paralleled messages of the Broadway play. It was both an educational and fun way to learn outside of the classroom. Before the play began they sang and danced in their seats from the tunes that blasted through the speakers at Hard Rock. The funds for the Broadway play were provided by a grant from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council.
Veteran’s Day 2015

VUB Celebrating Veteran’s Day at the 1st Philadelphia Parade and at UPenn
On Sunday November 8th, a group of VUB students participated in Philadelphia’s first Veteran’s Day Parade. The parade marched through Center City, down Broad St and ended at Independence Hall. Mayor elect Jim Kenney expressed his gratitude saying:

“It’s important to honor people who won’t talk about their own service, who won’t revel in what they’ve done. True veterans and true heroes never talk about what they’ve done, and I think that people my age and younger need to have some understanding and respect about the sacrifice that they made.”

This Veteran’s Day marked the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII, the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War, and the 25th anniversary of Operation Desert Storm.

With more than 200 organizations, marching bands, youth groups and military units in attendance, the love and support that Philadelphia has for its veterans was shown on that day!
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 three scholarships annually. The scholarships support TRIO VUB Graduates to offset their college expenses. Every VUB recipient of the scholarship funds is a deserving and successful student.

In the Fall of 2015 April began her studies at Temple University where she is majoring in Hospitality Services and Tourism. By 2020 she expects to begin her first career position or start her first year of graduate school. VUB staff nominated her for a $500 PA TRiO Scholarship in the adult category. She, with the VUB Director and Counselor accepted the award at the annual PA TRiO Scholarship Banquet in Lancaster, PA.

Congrats April! We are so proud of you!
VUB Scholarship Winners

Here are some pictures of the VUB scholarship winners.

Trina Barfield—Community College of Philadelphia
Stanley Fisher—Community College of Philadelphia
Anthony Green—Camden County College
April McCrae—Temple University
Paul Volz—Community College of Philadelphia
Mia Wade—Peirce College

Congrats to you all, and keep up the great work in college!
Wharton Mentor Program

This past November, a team of Wharton Management 100 students launched a VUB Mentoring Program. Through tireless outreach and a lot of hard work, the group was able to connect our students with VUB alumni and professionals around the community. We would like to thank the Wharton class and our volunteer mentors. You all are making a difference in the lives of those who have sacrificed so much! We greatly appreciate everyone’s hard work, encouragement and support.
On Wednesday January 13, 2016, over 25 Philadelphia area colleges and resource programs gathered in Houston Hall for the VUB College and Resource Fair. The event was informative and provided students with an opportunity to talk to admission counselors and get their questions answered. Some of the schools included: Rosemont University, Peirce College, Temple University, Drexel University, West Chester University, Community College of Philadelphia, Manor College and many others.
On Wednesday, March 30th, students of Veterans Upward Bound enjoyed a cultural and educational day. We started with a tour of Community College of Philadelphia. The Admissions Department did a wonderful job of explaining to our veterans the many degree programs CCP has to offer at an affordable cost.

The next stop of our day was at Marrakesh Restaurant. Marrakesh is an award winning restaurant offering an authentic Moroccan experience that our students will never forget. We enjoyed 7 amazing courses of food in a room filled with carpeted walls, vibrantly colored pillows, incense burning and dimmed lights to help set the ambience of Morocco. This followed the semester theme of African influences in America.

Our final stop on the trip was at the Arden Theater to see the play “Two Trains Running” by August Wilson. The play takes place in an African-American neighborhood in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1969. It explores the civil rights movement, a world that is rapidly changing around them, the attitudes towards race and the oppression of black women during that era. The students in Literature 200 read the play and UPenn Professor Herman Beaver, an authority on August Wilson’s play’s spoke to all VUB students during a literature class about this play.
On Thursday April 7th, a group of VUB students attended Career Day at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We toured through several departments at the administration building, learning about the safety of foods we eat, how foods are grown and made and the clothes we wear.

Built in 1768, the Johnson House is one of Germantown’s oldest homes. The owners of the home, Samuel and Jenner Johnson were Quakers, promoted their anti-slavery beliefs during this era and offered their home as a station on the Underground Railroad. They provided food, clothing and shelter to an untold number of Africans searching for freedom. Historians believe William Still and Harriet Tubman visited the Johnson House.

Our last stop of the day was LaSalle University. The admissions department provided a great tour and spoke about the 60 undergraduate degree programs offered. They also talked about financial aid and the admissions process.

The staff at each of these organizations listed above, created a wonderful learning experience for all of us. Thank You!
HUMANITIES:  AFRICAN ROOTS, AMERICAN VOICES

Over the Spring 2016 Semester VUB at UPENN focused on the influences of African Roots on American Voices. To accomplish this exploration and experience, and with the support of a grant from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, VUB accomplished the following:

The Literature 200 Class, instructed by Karen Leone, read and discussed the play “Two Trains Running” by August Wilson. The play takes place in an African-American neighborhood in Pittsburgh, PA in 1969. It explores the civil rights movement, a world that is rapidly changing around them, the attitudes towards race and the oppression of black women during that era. We were fortunate to have UPENN Professor Dr. Herman Beavers, an expert on August Wilson, lead a discussion and share his knowledge with all VUB students about race in the 1960’s and presently, as well as a discussion on August Wilson. The VUB Students and Staff were able to attend the performance of “Two Trains Running” at the Arden Theater. (Also see page 12.)

Also over the Spring 2016 Semester and supported by the grant from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council, the VUB Laboratory Science Instructor, Richard Kydd, held a weekly one-hour Jazz and Blues Info Session. He presented the evolution of jazz and blues by following the various decades of August Wilson’s writings, from the 1900’s to the 1990’s. After presenting students with a history of jazz and blues he introduced them to the music of Duke Ellington, Nina Simone, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Etta James, Carmen McRae, John Coltrane, Lena Horne, Louis Armstrong, Nancy Wilson, Nat King Cole, Ray Charles, Count Bassie, Sarah Vaughan, Shirley Horn and other prominent jazz and blue’s artists. Mr. Kydd, the son of Tuskegee Airmen bomber pilot, George H. Kydd, is an avid music fan and has even donated jazz and blues cd’s to begin a music library!
Over the course of the semester VUB students and staff continued to expand their knowledge of the influence of African Roots on American Voices. Because of the grant from the Pennsylvania Humanities Council VUB students and staff were able to attend several performances at the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg Theater. The theme over the 2015-2016 Academic Year at the Annenberg Theater has been African Roots – American Voices. The performances often sparked discussions about current social issues.

- Dance Theater of Harlem
- Daddy Mack Blues Band
- Dr. Lonnie Smith
- Celebrate the Great Women of Jazz and Blues
- Juan de Marcos & The Afro-Cuban All Stars
“I’d rather remain ignorant to hate and prejudice and thought to be stupid, Than to be stupid enough to participate and proven to be ignorant.”

- Ken Lawler
VUB Student

THEY SAY THAT WAR IS HELL,
THAT DEATH HAS A PUGNANT SMELL,
WE LEAVE HOME ALL FINE AND DANDY,
TO GO AND DIE FOR SOME CANDY,
WE LEAVE OUR FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES ALONE,
TO GO TAKE SOME TYRANT'S THRONE,
IN NAM THEY USED BABIES AS BOMBS, NOT JUST BECAUSE THEY DISRESPECTED MOMS,
HEY SAY THAT WAR IS HELL, THAT DEATH HAS A PUGNANT SMELL!!!

-Ken Lawler

Let Veterans Day Be

I am a disabled veteran. I served overseas in the Vietnam War era, from 1973 to 1975. When I came home, I had to fight to get help from my country. Today, I am still fighting for my life because of drug and alcohol problems resulting from post-traumatic stress disorder. I also have physical disabilities and live in a veterans' recovery home.

Every day, more things are being taken away from veterans. And now someone is asking for the one day we have to honor the living and the dead. Have we not given enough?

I am 61 and trying to live my life one day at a time. Thank God for the Veterans Upward Bound program at the University of Pennsylvania, which provides free precollege courses, and the Fresh Start Foundation's recovery home for veterans.

If anyone tries to take the one day we have to honor the living and the dead, I will stand on every corner, knock on every door, and write to every newspaper until they leave Veterans Day alone. If elections are going to be on a holiday, it should be Presidents' Day.

Jeffrey A. Mitchell, VUB Student | Published in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Editorial Section, 11/14/2015
A Seaman’s Life

Boats and bait,
Smells that take your breath.
Crews of young men,
With plenty of fish to clean
Waves and raging waters,
Heavy winds right through it.
No thanks ever given,
To a man that makes his home on a sea.
He leaves home and hearth,
Always away from home.
Leave home from home. Leve thoughts of
having a family and a wife
Making his life on the open waters,
That is the way of a seaman's life.

The Drunk

He did it again Went out and got wasted
He knew he shouldn't have
But that was the only time he is happy
He knew he had to work
He just didn't care
He overslept the next morning
Now he is in trouble
He just don’t know how much
He got to work late
Still smelling like booze
Slept it off some
But still tipsy
He needs help bad
But is scared to ask for it
So many people are willing
But he thought he was fine
Last night was the last straw
He finally realized
That he is a drunk
Q & A With Dr. Herman Beavers

By: Johnathan Washington

Profile of Dr. Herman Beavers: Graduate and Undergraduate Chair of the Department of English. Holds a duel Appointment in the Department of Africana Studies, and teaches courses in Africana Studies, American Literature including courses in Southern Modernization, and 20th Century African American Poetry. Has been tenured at the University of Pennsylvania since 1989, and had published essays on the great American Playwright August Wilson.

Good afternoon Dr. Beavers, I am Jonathan Washington a student enrolled in the Veterans Upward Bound Program (VUB). I studied the play Two Trains Running by the great African American Playwright August Wilson in literature class, and had the opportunity to see a production of his play at The Arden Theater. I was also present in class the evening that you visited, and eloquently lectured on August Wilson and his series of plays.

Q Can you tell me a little about yourself, and what interested you in teaching classes on Africana Studies, 20th Century African American Poetry, and African American Theatre?
A I teach about the stuff I want to know, and the stuff that is reflective of my own experience, as someone that came out of a Black community. My parents, family and friends are all people that live in, and are from the south. I went to Pittsburgh in the summers to visit my grandmother and relatives. Having that experience presents students with a richness of Black life. See, classes I teach are to help understand the 360 degrees of Black people. I value my experience in such a way that I don’t need white people to validate my experience. I don’t mind making students uncomfortable, black or white.

Q In August Wilson's play Two Trains Running, what do you believe is meant by two trains running, and what message is August Wilson trying to convey to his audience in the title?
A The play comes from a blues song. Sometimes the place that we need to be, there are limited ways to get there. Two Trains Running, the train of optimism, hope and faith. Which one will you choose to be on.

Q What was your initial attraction to the play of Two Trains Running?
A The fact that it’s set in the late 60’s. It’s a recognizable timeframe of when I was born. Part of my family is from Pittsburgh, a place that I spent childhood and young adulthood, and seeing a lot of stuff described.

Q In the play we only see action in the restaurant nothing outside. Why is that important in the production? If at all?
A The restaurant is the anchor point. It’s a place people feel tied to and gravitate to everyday. Holloway, he has nothing else to do. People go for food, food that people want to eat. They go for spiritual and emotional subsidence. It’s indicative of the ways Black communities integrate craziness and disturbance into its fabric. The restaurant is an anchor where people circle back around to it.

Q Holloway is the voice that advocates for Aunt Esther, how does he affect the other characters in the play?
A He persuades them that there is another way to deal with your problems. You can deal with it by yourself or with Aunt Esther. She brings his parts back together. If someone in the community has the power to do that reach out to them. Holloway's “protocol” is one you can follow to address your problems, the things that allude Black people. If you don’t follow “protocol” things aren’t going to work out your way.
Q What was the significance of Sterling and Memphis visiting Aunt Esther? And why did Aunt Esther always request that her customers throw her $20 fee into the river?
A Memphis is in the service industry stewardship. He gave his land up. Aunt Esther let him know he will not be a whole person until he got on one of those trains to go and get it. Aunt Esther gives a sense of purpose. “I’m gonna get mine”. Aunt Esther requested that her customers throw $20.00 into the river because it represented throwing $20.00 into the world. What good are you putting in the world? It’s not about what you’re taking out. Sterling ended up in jail for stealing, but Aunt Esther knows nothing is ours. You don’t own anything. With a limited amount of time, what are you going to give to the world?

Q What does Hambone’s character represent, and why do you think that he was not fairly compensated for his work? What was the significance of his death?
A Hambone represents the casualties that occupy Black communities. He represents persistence, going after a wage, a “ham” he earned and worked for. His death signifies the passing of the Black community. When you lose someone like a Hambone, it becomes easy for an outsider to take the community, the Black community. If you have 50 Hambone’s you can’t take over.

Q What does Aunt Esther mean when she tells Memphis, "if you drop the ball you gotta go back and pick it up?"
A If we put up a fight we may not get better results, but it’s better than just laying down. We as human beings are involved in some sort of process of return. Unless we take that seriously and follow it through we cannot be whole people.

Q At the end of the play that our group saw, the last scene was not as forceful as it could’ve been. It appeared that the ham that Sterling broke the window of Lutz’s meat market and cut himself stealing, when he brought back to the restaurant to place on the table for West to put into hambone’s casket, it slipped out of his hand and fell on to the table. My question, how should that final scene have been portrayed, and what did the ham represent?
A This is the only play of August Wilson that I can think of that doesn’t have a strong ending, or words that resonate with us. The last scene is described differently in the stage directions than how the actors actually portrayed it. Plays are local and we don’t know if the actor improvises parts. One character is bleeding from his face and hand for another character. Wilson’s characters are African people. Putting things in the casket for the person to take to the next life is a traditional statement.

Q What is the most important idea the audience should take away after seeing the play Two Trains Running?
A Until we become invested in the idea that it’s not just about us. You put good into the world because it’ll find somebody, and enhance and improve their life. No one falls through the cracks. How do you do that when everyone is going for self? How do we fill in those gaps? An understanding of the way’s personal responsibility intersects with our communal responsibility. That sometimes those things have to lay on top of one another. People get more and more invested in a community for their personal agendas.

Q If August Wilson was alive today and doing a production of Two Trains Running what do you think the setting would be, and would Hambone’s character be wanting a ham or something else?
A A place of community support and unconditional love where one can feel safe. Outside of the church, not sure. How do Black people occupy space? And occupy space where they feel empowered.

Q What impact or influence do you believe August Wilson's winning two Pulitzer Prizes, for his plays Fences in 1985 and The Piano Lesson in 1988, had on the African American community during the 1980s, If any?
A No impact, besides August Wilson being from the Hill District, growing up to become a Pulitzer Prize winning play writer. We felt like he was ours, like we owned him and he was committed to putting us in front of ourselves in ways we recognized.

Q August Wilson felt that the African American community is inextricably linked with the recovery of the future, so what do you think he was asking when he posed the question "can you acquire a sense of self-worth by denying your past?" (He didn't think so).
A Black folk, African Americans, so much about ourselves and our past that we don’t know.

Q Do you believe it to be a coincidence or by design that Aunt Esther at the age of 349, was born in 1619, the year Africans were first brought to America?
A Totally by design. Their experience dates back to when Africans were first brought to America.

Dr. Beavers I would like to thank you for taking time from your very busy schedule, to afford me the opportunity to interview you on one of the plays of the great American Playwright, August Wilson, and for your thoughtful and valued responses.
I honestly enjoy Broadway productions. First of all, because they are expressing their talents and that is the artists purpose of being on stage. They all were dynamic I am proud to say. I think some stood out, you know, the loud men and women, and they carried their own weight well. I’m sorry I don’t have names to elaborate on any particular persons, however, they were all dynamite. The ending, I want to say, really shook my world. I never, in a million years, thought I would see a ballet done to any James Brown selection. That meant it takes all kinds to them, I suppose. That production was my very first ballet and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Dance Theater of Harlem has shown me some entertainment I didn’t know I could enjoy so. If they were saying as an ending; with the thump of music and the female pointing, with her finger, that that, I most certainly will take that, and wish to take some more. The only thing about that evenings’ production was; what was supposed to be obtained by the youthful audience with the men’s closeness. I remember on routine; they were expressing a personal nature of seemingly two gay males. There were children in the audience and they aren’t stupid or senseless. I think that was distasteful for that reason. I also say to each his or her own, so Love! I greatly applaud the Dance Theater of Harlem and God Bless you.

– Derrick Mitchell, VUB Student

The Dance Theatre of Harlem was founded in 1969 and was the first African American classical ballet company. Since its founding, the theatre has grown into a multi-cultural dance institution with an extraordinary legacy of providing opportunities for creative expression and artistic excellence.