

In Print

Alumni

MALAIKA KING ALBRECHT '89 (M.A. '93), *Lessons in Forgetting*, Main Street Rag Publishing Co. Albrecht's first book of poetry is about her mother's Alzheimer's disease. Reviewer Scott Owens writes: "These poems take the reader through the ups and downs of dealing with Alzheimer's in such an honest, unblinking fashion that they read almost as a single heart-wrenching, joy-keeping piece." Albrecht is the founding editor of Redheaded Stepchild, an online magazine that only accepts poems that have been rejected elsewhere. www.mainstreetrag.com

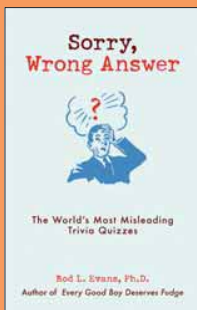
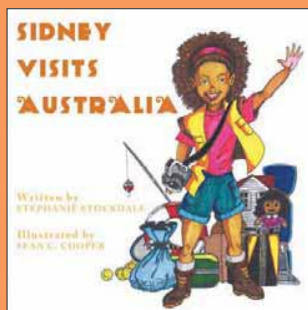
ROBERT COSSEL (M.S.Ed. '07), *Master of the Strings*, Xulon Press. Cossel describes his first book as a Christian fiction novel. It's the World War II era, and all have felt the Nazi sting. Sole survivors from their village, Albrecht and his granddaughter, Annalise, escape to Brooklyn only to discover that Poland isn't the only place Jews aren't welcome. Other characters in the book include Dr. Morgan, who survives the war, but at the cost of a leg, and returns home to face family tragedies, and Tommy, the pride of the Irish, who learns the way of the streets after losing his parents. Their paths intersect, and as they dare to cross the lines of race, class and religion, they create a path of healing. www.xulonpress.com

ROD EVANS '78, *Sorry,*

Wrong Answer: Trivia Questions Even Know-It-Alls Get Wrong, Penguin Group. A collection of often surprising answers to misleading trivia, Evans' book debunks many commonly held assumptions. Did you know, for example, that German chocolate cake did not originate in Germany, but was created by Sam German? Or that Venetian blinds were invented in Japan? How about the Missouri town where Mark Twain was born? If you said Hannibal, where he grew up, you would be wrong. As Evans notes, the book offers "ample ammunition" for deflating the egos of those who think they know it all. www.penguin.com

AMBER MEARDY GRADY '81, *Brilliance: Unleash the Power of Your Authentic Core*, Williams & Kessler Publishing Inc. A professional spiritual teacher, Grady writes, "Life can pull you in so many directions; it's easy to lose sight of what's truly important. If you find you're being pulled off your path again and again and can't quite figure out why, then this is your opportunity to begin a new way of life that is refreshingly real and genuine." Author Barbara V. Pratt notes, "I have read a gazillion self-improvement books and ... you have something very different here!" www.thebrilliancebook.com

JANUARY GILL O'NEIL



'90, *Underlife*, Cavankerry Press. This is the first poetry collection by O'Neil, who is a senior writer/editor at Babson College and pens the blog "Poet Mom." Poet Denise Duhamel writes: "The poems ... offer masterfully complex portraits of childhood - both through the speaker's memory and observations of her own children. She writes equally well about sex, marriage, rural life, and the suburbs with candid observations and evocative imagery." www.cavankerrypress.com

RICHARD OWENS (M.A. '73), *Knightime*, PublishAmerica. From the Civil War to World War II, Owens takes readers on a daring and romantic adventure. A startling new discovery leads Professor Josh Chamberlain in search of new truths about the Battle of Gettysburg. Then, in another twist of fate, he follows the trail of history to France, where he learns about a previously unknown attempt to assassinate Hitler. Along the way, Josh encounters characters and events from the Civil War, New York draft riots, the Battle of Dunkirk and the French resistance. And he discovers a family heirloom believed lost at Gettysburg - a pewter knight - that wends its way with him across the Atlantic.

www.publishamerica.com
STEPHANIE STOCKDALE '97 (M.A. '99), *Sidney Visits Australia*, Author House. This children's book, illustrated by SEAN COOPER '95, features a girl who loves visiting new lands. Geared to kids 8 and under, it begins in Norfolk and takes the reader on an adventure-packed trip to the Outback, where Sidney and her mother see kangaroos, koalas and crocodiles, and meet Australian Aborigines. An engaging read, the book also comes with a surprise ending. www.authorhouse.com

BROOKS TENNEY '52, *The Ten Thousand Things: Adventures and Misadventures on China's Silk Road*, Trafford Publishing. Reviewer Cheryl Gravelle sets the scene in this "techno-thriller": "Take an interesting hero beset by personal problems, drop him in an exotic locale with a beautiful woman, and give him an almost impossible mission. Tenney again uses this formula to craft a real page-turner." Set along China's ancient trade routes, the novel examines development activities for unmanned aerial vehicles through the eyes of selected American youth led by an Asian studies professor on a mission for the U.S. Air Force. www.trafford.com

Paying it Forward

By **Brendan O'Hallarn**

Growing up in Norfolk, Toykea Jones'

parents told her she could be anything she wanted to be. It was all a matter of effort. Though divorced, Alisa and Darryl Young worked extra hours so Toykea wouldn't have to take a part-time job, and could concentrate on her studies.

"Their goal was to make sure that I had a better life than them," Jones said. "Both of them pushed me to go to college."

A graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Norfolk, Jones earned scholarships to pay for her undergraduate chemistry degree at Old Dominion - including the 2004-05 Hampton Roads Sanitation District Scholarship - then took out student loans to pay for her master's in environmental engineering.

"Even when I attended ODU, my parents made a way so that I could focus on my schoolwork, and didn't have to work," said Jones, who received her degrees from the university in 2003 and 2005.

The "investment" by her parents has paid off. Jones is now more than a year into a rewarding job as an operations team leader in the consumer sector of Johnson & Johnson (J&J) in Los Angeles. More importantly for Jones, the life lessons instilled by her parents have prepared her for a lifetime of giving back.

And at 29, she's well under way. She recently created the Toykea S. Jones Endowed Scholarship in Engineering at ODU, which will be awarded annually to a sophomore engineering student with good grades, from one of the area's local public high schools.

"I want to give back to a financially needy student - someone who is where I once was back in 1999, someone who wants to do something with their life, but just needs a bit of help," Jones said.

Jones was hired by Johnson & Johnson right out of college, after making contact with the company at a National Society of Black Engineers job fair in Boston. She entered the Engineering Leadership Development Program, which recruits and trains the next generation of technical leaders for the company.

It's a two-year program with three eight-month rotations. From ODU, Jones moved to California, to New Jersey and back to northern California, finally settling in Los Angeles at the end of her program.

"Every time I moved, I changed the type of engineering job that I did, plus did 250 hours of training," Jones said.

At the end of the process, Jones became an operations team leader, with more than 30 employees reporting directly to her, plus an even larger number of temporary workers. It was intimidating at first, especially when Jones found out how much younger she was than some of her subordinates. But now, she feels very comfortable in her leadership role.

Jones said her ODU degrees have served her well so far. "My experience, concentrated in the pharmaceutical and consumer sectors, has given me strong project management, regulatory compliance, technical and leadership skills," she added.

She hopes that her career at J&J is merely a starting point to an exciting work life, and a lifetime of making a difference. She currently mentors young students, and hopes one day to create a nonprofit organization that supports underprivileged youth going to college.

As the first person in her family to receive a college degree, Jones has proven inspiring to her own family as well. Since her graduation from ODU, her father and two cousins have returned to college. "Each of them later told me I played a significant role in motivating them, and I couldn't be more proud," Jones said, adding that she is grateful for the support and positive influences she has received from her family.

"Since before I graduated, I've always been doing things to try and give back, because so many people have been in my corner, rooting me on, trying to stay supportive. And my parents have always told me you have to give back," Jones said. "My community involvement is a part of me, it's who I am."

Jones said ODU was the perfect place for her to go to school. She could stay close to home (she's very close to her younger brother), but still have a degree of independence. "I actually stayed on campus, but could drive home to see my mom and brother any time I wanted," Jones said.

More importantly, she said, "My perception was that ODU cares about their students, and they're going to be in your corner, and want you to graduate."

"All of my friends who came to ODU, we all graduated. Every single one of us. I got accepted to other schools, but chose ODU. And am I ever glad I did."



Photo: Jenell Webb