50 years later, former BUS President shares memories of service, advice to new generation of student leaders

In the spring of 1968, what had been a resistance movement of Black students at Kent State University officially became a registered university student organization.

That organization was named Black United Students, affectionately referred to as “BUS.” It’s still standing and active at Kent State, and celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

The Kent State University Black Alumni Chapter and the university will celebrate and acknowledge 50 years of hard work, leadership, courage and resilience of BUS during homecoming weekend, Oct. 5-7. Among the many former BUS executive board members being honored will be Duane Cox (c/o ‘75), a Cleveland native and attorney who served as BUS President in 1972-’73.

Cox passed on a legacy of service to his son, Matthew, as well. Matthew Cox (’06) also served as BUS president in 2006. The senior Cox shared his memories of BUS service, as well as some advice for today’s Black student leaders, with Black Flash.

Black Flash: What was the campus climate and environment like during the years that you served as BUS President?

Duane Cox: Black consciousness was the prevailing thought. Our concern was Black representation in the professor ranks and greater Black student recruitment. The climate at the university was student activism, from opposition to the Vietnam War to social justice for Black Americans.

BF: What were some of the programs that your administration put forward to advance Black student success and progress at Kent?

DC: BUS program success involved fighting for the Institute of African American Affairs and the Center for Pan African Culture being recognized as a college at the university with full accreditation of its degree programs.
BF: What was one of the most memorable achievements or moments of your tenure as BUS president?

DC: We had many memorable achievements. The opening of the IAAA Building (now the Oscar Ritchie Hall) with funding to develop the theater, the building art work, the photography room, and what is now the E. T. Moore Gallery. All this was done under the directions of Dr. Edward Crosby (former chair of the Department of Pan African Studies) and his staff. The most lasting moment was the tutorial and lunch program for children, which was developed by Minister of Education Arthur Thomas, now deceased.

BF: What advice would you offer to today's Black student activists to be successful in today's tense racial and political climate?

DC: My advice for students of the movement is to maintain your consciousness, remember that we are decedents of slaves, and make no alliance with left or right unless it benefits the interest of Black United Students.

Alumni and students can meet Cox and other BUS alumni and see rare photos that tell the story of BUS over the last 50 years at the exhibit opening for BUS 50th Reloaded: Photography of Lafayette Tolliver, Tim Moore and Others. A reception will be held from noon to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 6 at the Uumbaji Art Gallery in Oscar Ritchie Hall. Visit https://www.kent.edu/cas/event/bus-50-reloaded-photography-lafayette-tolliver-tim-moore-and-others for details.
Homecoming 2018: Tailgates, football and celebrating student activism

Join KSU Black Alumni for a weekend of fun and honoring 50 years of Black United Students

Kent State University will celebrate its 100th homecoming Oct. 5-7, and the KSU Black Alumni Chapter will be there, reuniting with fellow classmates at social events, a tailgate and a special tribute to the 50th Anniversary of Black United Students.

Here’s the rundown of homecoming events hosted by the university and the Black Alumni Chapter.

Friday, Oct. 5

KSU Black Alumni Friday Night @ 5 Points, 6 to 9 p.m., 5 Points Grill, 239 Richmond Rd., Richmond Heights, Oh

Saturday Oct. 6

Breakfast at the “Rock” (front campus), 9:00am to 10:30am
Homecoming Parade, 10:00am to 12:00pm starting at or around the “Rock” – Parade Grand Marshall: WJW Fox 8 Anchor and c/o ’79 KSU alum Wayne Dawson
Welcome Home Party, 11 a.m., KSU Alumni Center, 350 S. Lincoln Street, Kent
BUS 50th Reloaded: Opening Reception, noon-4 p.m., Oscar Ritchie Hall
KSU Black Alumni Tailgate, 1:30 p.m., Dix Stadium
KSU Golden Flashes vs. Ohio University Bobcats, 3:30 p.m., Dix Stadium
Diversity Scholarship Celebration, 7:30 p.m., Kent State University Hotel and Conference Center, 215 S Depeyster St., Kent
KSU Black Alumni Old School Meet Up, 7 p.m. – midnight, Longhitano’s Gallery Pub & Grille, 1225 W. Main St., Kent

For more information about homecoming events at KSU, visit https://www.kent.edu/homecoming/alumni.
Meet the officers of the Black Alumni Chapter of the Kent State University Alumni Association

The 2018-2019 Black Alumni chapter board members and their roles. We’re proud to serve you!

Silas Ashley ('74), President
Educator and Attorney (Retired)

Kenneth Atchinson ('89), Vice President
Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science, Baldwin Wallace University

Terri Shavers ('92, '11), Fundraising, Scholarship & Student Recruitment
Forensic Clinical Supervisor, Community Support Services

Melissa Brown ('94, '98, '07) Special Events – Day of Service
Director of Rehabilitation Services, Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare and Adjunct Nursing Clinical Instructor, Kent State University

Kellea Tibbs ('97) Special Events – Homecoming, Alumni Networking & Membership
Assistant Director for Campus Relations, Ohio University Alumni Association

Jinida L. Dorsey ('94) Publicity/Newsletter Editor
Senior Associate, Dorsey & Company Strategic Consultants to Management
Get involved!

Click the Black Alumni Chapter logo below to stay up to date on chapter and Alumni Association events and programs.

Visit us on Facebook @ https://www.facebook.com/KSUBlackAlumni/