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History: Scholar to give lecture

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 to Raise a Village." The think tank will address issues such as cultural diversity training and the overrepresentation of African-American and minority groups in the juvenile justice system.

"The issue of minority overrepresentation [in the justice system] has been well articulated. We should not get lost in data or the need for another study. It is time to challenge ourselves to do better," said Dr. Michael Lindsey, a nationally recognized expert on the subject and the presenter of the think tank.

Gov. John Kitzhaber has been invited to Friday's session.

There will be a screening of the John Singleton film "Rosewood," which is based on a historical incident involving the destruction of a self-sufficient black community, Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. in 100 Willamette. The film will be followed by a lecture by Quintard Taylor, head of the history department and an African-American scholar, said Yvonne Stubbs, co-director of the BSU.

Haki Madhubuti, a poet, educator and black activist, will lecture

Calendar of events

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17:
What: John Singleton film "Rosewood," followed by discussion with Quintard Taylor
Where: 100 Willamette
When: 5:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18:
What: "How to Raise a Village" think tank begins with "Educators' Day"
Where: Ben Linder Room, EMU
When: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

What: Think tank discussion for professors and students
Where: Lane Community College, Forum Building, Room 308
When: 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19:
What: Think tank continues: "Justice Sys-

tern Day"
Where: Ben Linder Room, EMU
When: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20:
What: Think tank continues with "Community Leaders' Day"
Where: Gerlinger Hall Lounge
When: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

What: Think tank discussion for law students and professors
Where: Room 229, Law School
When: 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22:
What: Haki R. Madhubuti, 1998 African-American History Lecture
Where: EMU Ballroom
When: 4 p.m.

on Sunday, Feb. 22, at 4 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom. He will address issues involving education, family and the importance of historical awareness. Madhubuti, who has published 22 books, including "Claiming Earth: Race, Rage, Rape, Redemption," also worked with Louis Farrakhan during the Million Man March in 1995.

"[Madhubuti] talks about the situation of blacks in society, how we got there, and how we can improve our lives," Washington said.

Other campus events include a reading of African-American poetry by University Professors Edwin Coleman and Dennis Greene on Feb. 26 at 6 p.m. in the Museum of Art.

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Learning: New software helps students

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 better, but I'm a little stubborn.

"I learn differently and that's OK."

The University has no numbers about retention of learning disabled students. But Gerdes guessed they stay in school in a higher proportion than students without disabilities.

They have to work harder, make more of a commitment and motivate themselves more than other students, she explained.

"The students tend to be more committed," she said. "They're working harder. Many really want to do it on their own."

Still, dealing with a disability can be frustrating. Students need to carefully balance their schedules. They need to plan every paper and reading assignment, and they can't afford to cram for a test the night before.

The University hires about 100 students each term to take notes for students with learning disabilities. The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services talks with professors to get modified exams or books on tape. Study assistants write assignments that students dictate to them.

Students have also turned to technology to complement their studies. Computer programs that recognize voice commands can write papers. Book scanners read articles, notes, assignments and texts out loud.

None of this takes the place of motivation.

"They're going to have to work harder than their peers. Period," Gerdes said. "It feels very unfair, but it's reality."

Ken Elkind places his Pentium laptop on a table and flips it open. The Microsoft Windows '95 page pops up as the computer whirs to life.

"Let me tell you about the technology," Elkind says as he opens a program from Kurzweil Educational Systems.

Elkind, 31, is a University graduate student earning a degree in secondary and special education. He reads at the rate of a middle school student.

Elkind has overcome his disability with organization. He collects syllabi on the first day of each

class, then maps out the entire term on a calendar. He sticks to that calendar religiously.

He's worked with Kurzweil Education to develop the programs he shows off on his laptop. They're meant to make learning easier for students with disabilities.

The program comes to life on Elkind's screen. Each line of text is highlighted in yellow; a green cursor follows a synthesized voice:

"The sun did not shine ... It was too wet to play ... So we sat in the house ... all that cold wet day."

A color copy of the page from "The Cat in the Hat" dominates the screen. A children's book today could be a complicated zoology text after that. The program can read any scanned text or any text typed into it.

Elkind also uses a program called Inspiration that allows students to diagram their essays instead of outlining. It works best for those students with reading and writing disabilities who are better visual learners.

"These are some of the toys I carry around," Elkind said. "They're not bad at all."

University students are usually responsible for approaching the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services, Gerdes said. The University evaluates their disability and determines what help it can give them.

At least 10 students each month come into the office thinking they have a learning disability. They usually don't. Many are looking for an excuse for poor performance in class.

Others, though, do have disabilities that weren't discovered in high school. The University conducts several private tests designed to compare the student's learning ability with his or her intelligence.

Schools are now much more ready and willing to recognize a learning disability, Gerdes said. The University had only one student in 1985 with a documented learning disability.

Students with learning disabilities were once discouraged from attending colleges or weren't identified as learning disabled in high school. They often faced igno-

rance or misunderstanding once they reached college.

One professor, for example, told a student with a learning disability that mentally retarded people shouldn't be in school.

Things have changed. People with learning disabilities now attend the University's law school and teach as faculty. Professors almost always accommodate learning disabled students.

"There are people all around us that are struggling with this all the time," Gerdes said.

Adkisson still has trouble reading, although he did learn the word "the." He gets a headache if he tries to read more than a paragraph of text.

His parents eventually turned to an old spelling book to teach him to read. They would read him a passage and then ask him to read. Instead, he memorized the passage and repeated it.

His parents caught on when he "read" a page ahead of where he was.

He has accepted the fact that he learns differently and has learned to overcome it. He took a Talented and Gifted entrance exam orally in junior high and tied for the highest score. He studied Biblical Greek in high school.

He drives home twice a week, where his parents help him study and read his assignments to him.

"Homework is kind of a family event at my house," he said. "My mom still reads to me before I go to bed sometimes. It's just psychology, instead of Dr. Seuss."

Very few people in his classes know he has any kind of learning difference. They might notice he's not around when tests come up — he takes them outside of class. Professors don't usually call on him to read a passage.

But his mother still asks him how to spell words sometimes; his girlfriend forgets to help him with the menu when they go out.

"I even forget about it sometimes," he said. "I catch myself buying a book sometimes and thinking, 'How am I going to read this?'"

"I might not do something the same way as other students, but I get it done. Everyone has something that holds them back. That's all it is."

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