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## Faculty & Staff News - July-August 1999

Prairie View A&M University

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# FACULTY/STAFF N • E • W • S

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"A Member of the Texas A&M University System"

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 7

JULY, AUGUST, 1999

## PVAMU Returns from Paris Air Show aboard Experimental Aircraft "Proteus"

By BRYAN H. BARROWS

President, Dr. Charles A. Hines, welcomes the return of the Sky Panther saying, "The participation of Sky Panther in the Paris Air Show is a hallmark event for Prairie View A&M University." The Sky Panther is a research project which was invited by Scaled Composites, Inc. (a private experimental aircraft design company) to fly aboard the "Proteus" on

known as the world's largest and most influential aerospace event.

The air show featured some of the best in experimental aircraft de-

says "The opportunity to participate in this flight is the result of strong collaboration between NASA and the excellent faculty,



"Proteus"

signs from manufacturers poised throughout the world and the 1999 event hosted over 300,000 visitors from 147 countries with 230 on-site aircraft displays from 46 nations.

The Sky Panther team is made up of two faculty members and two students from the PVAMU Center for Applied Radiation Research (CARR) who made the trek to Paris, accompanying a "testbed" they designed for an experimental pod onboard the Proteus.

"The Paris Air Show was definitely the biggest air event that I have ever attended. It gave us a firm appreciation of just how busy the world really is," says Dr. Richard Wilkins, deputy director of the CARR Center. Further, "We hope that more commercial entities will come to understand that the PVAMU CARR Center is able to provide premier research and testing for the aerospace industry."

Vice president for research and development, Dr. Willie F. Trotty,

staff and students in our Center for Applied Radiation Research." He further commented, "Through this collaboration PVAMU continues to build its expertise in radiation research and to contribute to the exploration of space."

The Proteus is an experimental special-purpose aircraft designed for efficient high altitude flight while demonstrating low noise, grace and stability. Proteus is designed to carry 2,000 pound class payloads to altitudes above 60,000 feet, remaining at that altitude for up to fourteen hours.

"We were chosen for this flight because we were doing science of interest to NASA, we have flight history and we have a self-contained payload that is of the size to be useful for testing on a variety of aircraft," comments PVAMU alum and research engineer, Harold Huff. Huff further says, "Having our ex-



Effiel Tower

it's premier showing at the Paris Air Show.

The Paris Air Show is the major experimental and commercial exhibit in the world presenting newly designed aircraft boasting sales of over \$25 billion this year. The air show hosts aircraft of all kinds from commercial, to military planes with all kinds of armament potential. It is

See AIRCRAFT page 2

# PVAMU Professor Honored

By **TIFFANY REEDER**

**P**rairie View A&M University Political Science professor, Dr. Jewel Prestage, was presented honorary degrees by two major U.S. universities in May of this year.

Dr. Jewel Lamar Prestage is a career educator who began teaching at Prairie View A&M University in 1954. In the same year, she made history as the first African American woman to earn a doctorate in political science in the United States. She has served as president of numerous scholarly organizations such as the Southern Political Science Association, the National Conference on Black Political Scientist and the National Association of African American Honors Programs. Prestage was twice elected Vice President of the American Political Science Association, the nation's leading professional organization for political scientist.

Dr. Prestage has lectured at more than 50 colleges and universities in the U.S., Europe and Africa and authored over four dozen scholarly pieces in journals, books and other publications. Her research has contributed to the development of public policy in voting rights,

women's rights, education, public administration, and voting behavior.

May 15, Loyola University of Chicago, awarded Dr. Prestage the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters for her guidance in the careers of hundreds of political science majors, numbers of whom have earned doctorates in the field. Spelman University presented Prestage with a Doctor of Laws degree, May 16, for her deep commitment to bringing greater diversity to Political Science and promoting activities concerning the professional development of African Americans and women.

Dr. Prestage served eight years

as the Dean of the Benjamin Banneker Honors College at Prairie View and as Chair of Political Science and Dean of Public Policy at Southern University.

As a wife and mother of five, Dr. Jewel Lamar Prestage has combined teaching and research with an active dedication to civic and community service and a well-rounded family life.



*Dr. Jewel Prestage*

## AIRCRAFT Continued from page 1

**perimental pod onboard Proteus demonstrated the aircraft's usefulness as a science platform for high altitude research."**

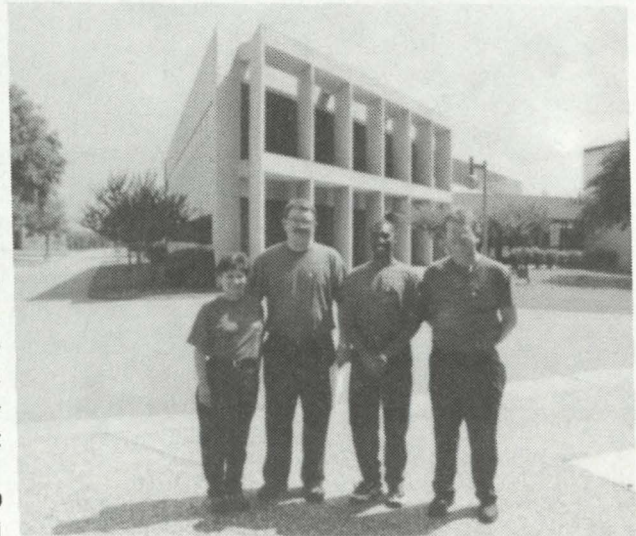
Proteus, by flying at 48,000 - 60,000 feet, is subject to extremes of temperature and radiation that places a greater demand on the avionics (electronics) systems of most aircraft.

Burt Rutan (CEO and brother of famed Voyager pilot "Dick Rutan"), Michael Melvill (vice president and general manager) and Doug Shane will also present Proteus' flight test details at a Society of Experimental Test Pilots Symposium in Beverly Hills, September 24.

PVAMU's Center for Applied Radiation Research is funded by the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA). The Center is unique in addressing radiation prob-

lems in electronics and photonics from the atomic system level and life sciences from the cellular domain to human physiological effects. The Center works in conjunction with collaborators from NASA, universities and colleges, government labs and industry.

For more information on the PVAMU/NASA CARR Center or its research potential, call Dr. Wilkins at (409) 857-4606.



## Faculty Staff News

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## PVAMU Math Professor Honored in National TV Documentary

### "The Man from Woodville"

**P**rairie View A&M University professor of mathematics, Dr. Freddie Frazier, is being honored in a made-for-television public affairs documentary on his life. The "not-for-profit" TV documentary will air on a variety of public access, educational channels and commercial stations nationwide. (Times to be announced locally.)

Veteran newsman and video producer, Ed Shannon, and director/editor, Johnny McGowan, are producing the special TV documentary. Shannon, of ES Productions Inc., was nominated for an Emmy Award two years ago as a result of a documentary he made spotlighting the PV Trailriders.

"The Man from Woodville" traces Frazier's humble beginnings in the cotton fields of East Texas, where he learned the rudiments of mathematics in the

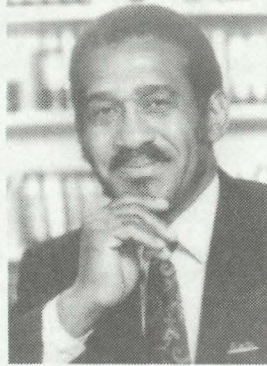
most unusual of circumstances.

Dr. Frazier's philosophy is, "Anyone who knows his right hand from his

left hand and can count ... can learn mathematics." For 32 years, he has inspired students in the PVAMU Math Department and the College of Engineering, making strenuous efforts to go "above and beyond the call of duty".

"The Man From Woodville" will be aired Saturday, July 31, Time Warner Cable Channels 17,66,82 & 96 and Saturday, July 31 Optel/Access Channels 7 & 9. For more info. call (409) 857-4217.

Dr. Freddie Frazier



## PVAMU Hosts 16th Annual Pre-College Institute

By TIFFANY L. REEDER

**O**n Sunday, June 13, 121 students arrived at PVAMU and checked into their residence hall before having their first meal and social gathering of the PCI program. Monday morning consisted of an early breakfast followed by various exams. Tuesday's agenda was their first day of academic classes.

PCI, Pre-College Enrichment Institute, is composed of two-week workshops designed to encourage, explore and enhance students interest by broadening their career knowledge in the employment market and other disciplines. The institute consisted of five academic components; ARTEC, BASIS, HELP, MITES and SCOPE.

ARTEC, Architecture Enrich-

ment Concepts, was provided to raise student interest in architecture as a profession. BASIS, Business for Academic and Scholarly Inclined Students, is a component designed for students who are interested in the college level study of business disciplines. Helping Establish Leadership in the professions (HELP) was developed for students interested in the liberal arts such as social work, education, sociology, human sciences, journalism, and law. MITES, minority Introduction to Engineering and Science, is a component targeted towards highly competitive students exploring careers in engineering, technology, computer science and mathematics.

## Cooperative Extension Program Hosts Teen Health Symposium

By TIFFANY REEDER

**T**he Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program hosted its annual Teen Health Symposium Friday, July 15. The symposium was held at the Braeswood Hotel in Houston. Teenagers from Harris, Waller and surrounding counties participated in this year's event.

The purpose of the Teen Health Symposium is to help youth, ages 13-19, improve health habits and develop positive life skills through health awareness. The theme for this year was "Healthy Teens, Healthy Choices and Healthy Communities". The symposium was formatted in forums that discussed anger management; impulse control; problem solving; teen suicide and abusive relationships. The topics focused on how to use behavior and social skills when faced with potentially volatile situations. Male and female participants were divided into groups; "Brother to Brother" and "sisters Speak from the Heart". Each group discussed gender-related issues. A featured part of the symposium was the luncheon with guest speaker, U.S. Representative Sheila Jackson Lee.

Donnie Pennywell-Rolls, health specialist with the Cooperative extension program is the coordinator and planner of the yearly conducted Teen Health Symposium.

### PVAMU Commencement Exercises

Speaker: Glenn O. Lewis  
Saturday, August 14, 1999  
10:30 a.m.

William "Billy" Nicks Health & Physical Education Building

# PVAMU Researcher Works to Improve Wetlands

By TIFFANY REEDER

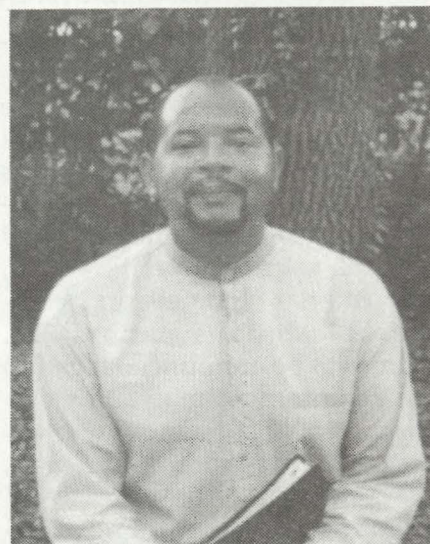
**D**r. Richard Griffin of the Agricultural Department at Prairie View A&M University is working to improve the processes utilized to identify wetlands. Griffin and his team, William Anthony and Jesse Trevino, have been taking a "hands-on-approach" in their research. By observing the changes that take place throughout the entire wetlands, not just the soil, the team feels that they gain valuable insight as to how wetlands function. They hope to develop improved guidelines that regulators can use to differentiate which sites are wetlands.

Griffin's observations of change

in plant species, land use by cattle and/or other animals, provide valuable information for their research. An innovation being explored by Griffin's research team includes looking for color variations and the presence of oxidized rust.

Dr. Griffin also serves on a national committee setting national standards for wetland identification. The committee consists of representatives of the U. S. Department of Agricultural Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Agricultural Research Service and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

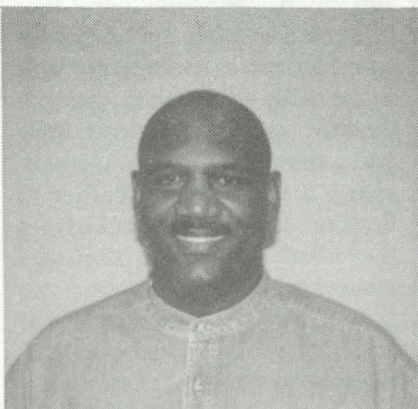
•••



Dr. Richard Griffin

## For Your Wellness

By Reuben L. Wright, Health and Human Performance Department



Dr. Reuben L. Wright

### Did you Know???

\* African Americans comprise the largest minority group in the United States. In the 1990 census, African Americans numbered 30 million or 12 percent of the total U.S. population. During the 1980's, the African American population grew three times as fast as the Caucasian American population (13% vs 4%). The Bureau of the Census projects that the African American popula-

tion will grow at a faster rate than the Caucasian American population into the 21st century, but this rate of growth will decrease over the next several decades. Hispanics are expected to replace African Americans as the largest minority group early in the 21st century.

\* The top three causes of death from chronic disease among African American women aged 45-64 years are ischemic heart disease, lung cancer, and breast cancer. The rate for ischemic heart disease is almost twice the rate for either lung or breast cancer. Ischemic heart disease is also the leading cause of death among women 65 years old and older, and stroke and diabetes outrank lung and breast cancer as the second and third leading cause of death. The death rate from diabetes for African American women 45-65 years is three times the rate for Caucasian American women the same age. Additionally, the death rate from diabetes for African American women 65 years and older is twice the rate for Caucasian

American women of comparable age.

\* The leading cause of death among African American men aged 45-64 years are ischemic heart disease, lung cancer, and stroke. The rank order for African American men aged 65 years and older is the same as that for men in the 45-64 age category. All rates are much higher among men in the older category: five times higher for ischemic heart disease, and stroke and three times higher for lung cancer.

• For African American men and women 45-64 years old, ischemic heart disease and lung cancer are the leading causes of death. For both sexes, 65 and older, the two leading causes of death among men are ischemic heart disease and lung cancer; the two leading causes of death among women are ischemic heart disease and stroke.

Send questions, comments or suggestions to: reuben\_wright@pvamu.edu

\*(Source: Chronic Disease in Minority Populations, CDC: 1994)