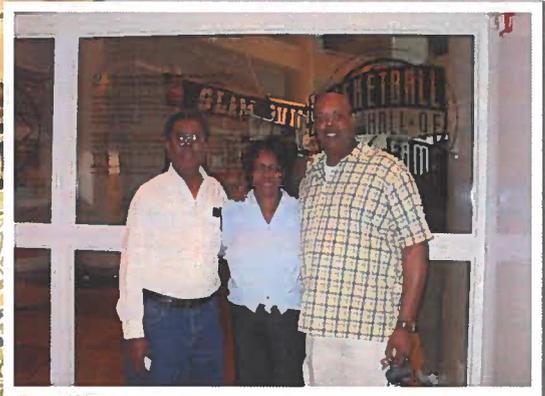
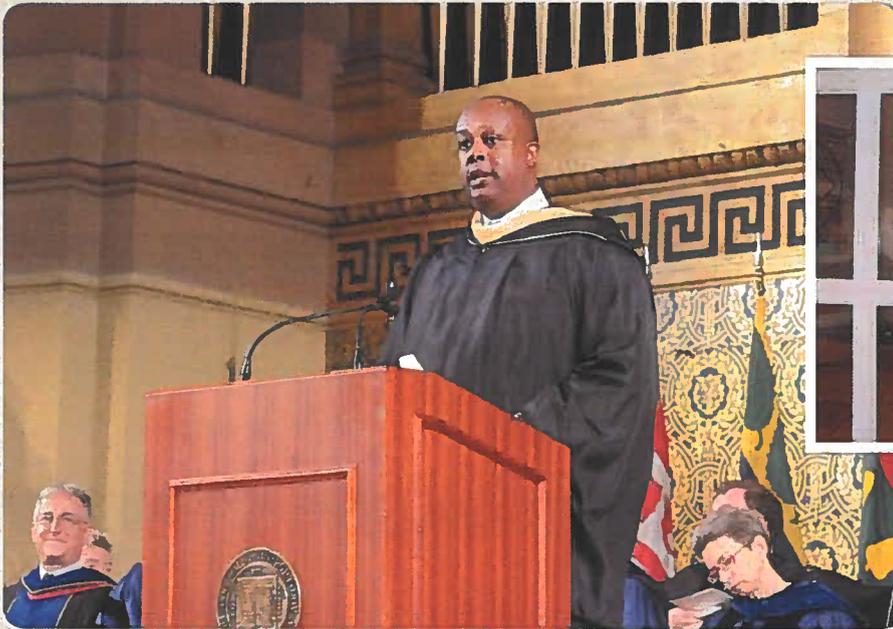


# LAST SAY SO HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER



**SPEAKING AT FRESHMAN ASSEMBLY AND WITH PARENTS AT THE BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME IN SPRINGFIELD, CONNECTICUT**

## Counting my blessings

Seasons Greetings! I hope this holiday newsletter finds you and your family well. I am blessed.

It's been an exciting year; despite the continued poor economic condition that affects all of us, or whether or not we have lost our jobs or have suffered a financial setback, we have much for which to be thankful. I am thankful that you are a part of my life.

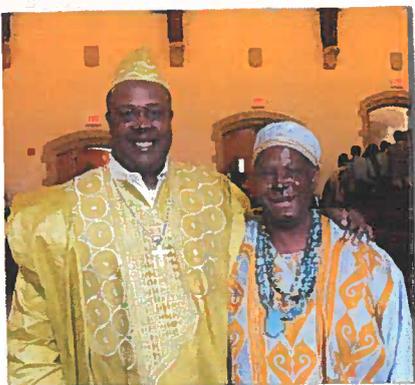
I have chronicled much of 2009 in photos, which I will feature in this newsletter. This year, like last, I have been fortunate to have met several interesting people, in whose personal journeys I have found inspiration to do better and to be better.

This newsletter also will feature family and friends who took me up on my invitation to visit New Haven. What a

fun summer I had giving the grand tour of New Haven, Yale University, and many other fun New England sights.

Finally, after two long years, I was able to sell my place in Vermont. As a result, I bought a new house (page 6). God is good, indeed.

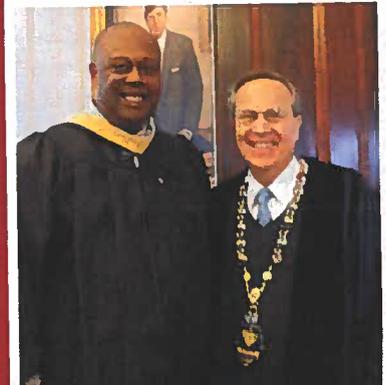
Blessings to you and your family during this holiday season. Read on. WMG



**WITH FRANCOIS AT CONCERT**

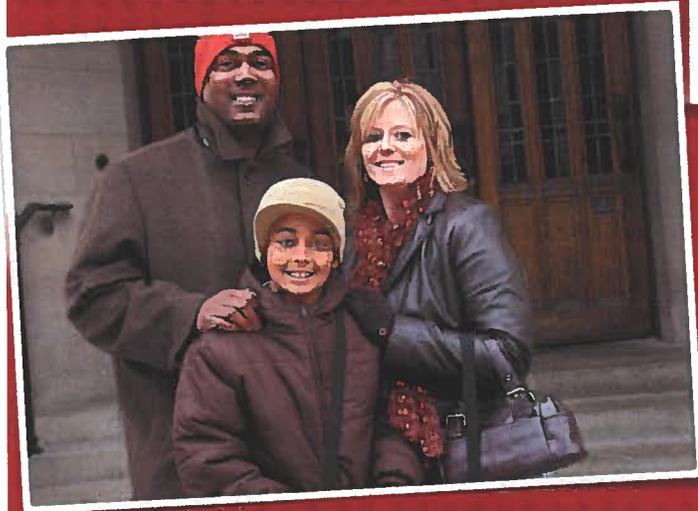
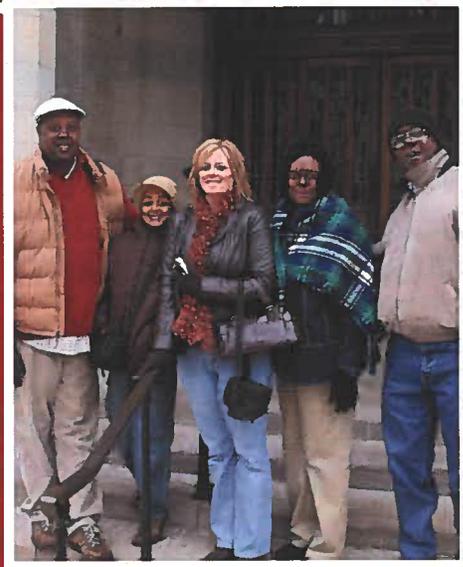
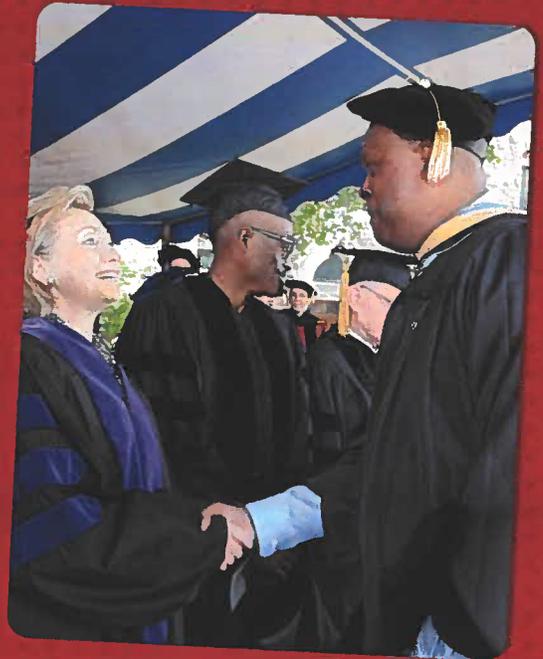
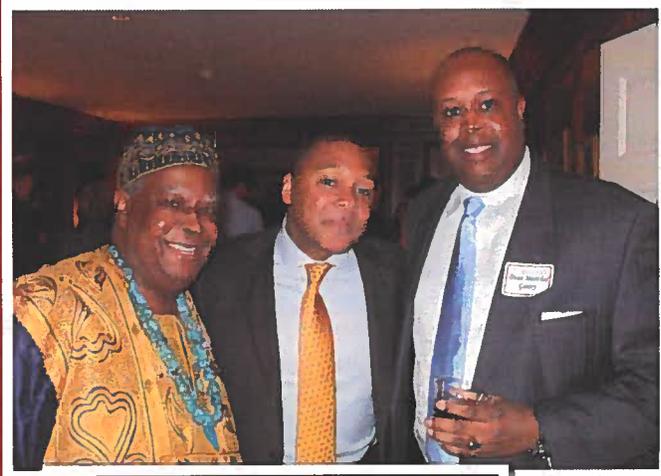


**AT MY FILM PREMIER**



**WITH YALE PRESIDENT**

# PHOTO MEMORIES FROM 2009



WITH WYNTON MARSALIS AND FRANCOIS

SHAKING HANDS WITH HILLARY CLINTON

WITH FAMILY IN FRONT OF MY OFFICE  
BUILDING AT YALE

GIVING A KEYNOTE SPEECH IN MEXICO  
CITY

TERRY, AMY, AND O'BRIEN IN NEW HAVEN

Happy Holidays! I greet you from Hamden, CT, where I now live. You might recall in last year's letter that I was lamenting the fact that after almost two years, I hadn't sold my condo in Vermont. Thankfully, this summer, I sold it, and was able to purchase a new home. I moved into it in October. Thank God for motivated sellers who lowered the price four times before I became interested in purchasing it, and thank God for low interest rates.

What a year it has been! For me, 2009 has been a year bookmarked by huge events that occurred in January and December. In January, Barack Obama, the first black President of the United States, was inaugurated; in December, we learned of the disturbing news concerning Tiger Woods. While these events viewed collectively are monumental in President Obama's case, and unbelievable, in Tiger's case, for me, the most interesting moments of my year took place during the months in between.

I was determined to convince some of you to visit me, and I made up my mind to spend my summer in New Haven and to take a "stay-cation." I even wrote in my last year's letter, "I now have plenty of room for visitors; many of you say you're coming for a visit, but I'll believe it when I see it!" After a summer full of guests, I now truly can say that I am a believer.

My dear friend, Marlon West (above), was the first visitor of the summer. Marlon serves as the Minister of Music for the Orange Grove Missionary Baptist Church, in Durham, NC. Marlon and I met in 1994 when I became a member of Orange Grove and of the gospel choir. He and I have shared many good times together. He also was a source of comfort during one of the toughest personal moments of my life. I've had the privilege of being part of two choir tours in England, and three choir tours at Middlebury College, all arranged and led by Marlon. Marlon is a Christian brother who is well-respected,



## MARLON WEST

MARLON WEST, A LONGTIME FRIEND FROM DURHAM, NC WAS MY FIRST SUMMER VISITOR. HERE HE IS IN NEW YORK CITY'S BRYANT PARK.



## TY BETKA

TY BETKA WAS MY SECOND SUMMER VISITOR. TY, A 16 YEAR-OLD, IS FROM NEBRASKA. HE CAME TO NEW HAVEN TO ATTEND THE YALE SUMMER FOOTBALL CAMP. HIS STAY AT MY HOUSE OVERLAPPED WITH MY PARENT'S SUMMER VISIT.



## MOM AND DAD

MOM AND DAD POSING AFTER ATTENDING CHURCH WITH ME. MOM AND DAD WERE MY FOURTH OF JULY VISITORS.

# LAST SAY SO HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

and I am but one of hundreds of people who seek his advice and wisdom.

My next guest was Ty Betka (page 3). I first met Ty in 2008 at Yale when he attended the Yale Gospel Choir concert held at the Afro-American Cultural Center, also known as the "House."

One of Ty's Christian mentors, named Daniel Ramamoorthy, was a member of and musician for the Yale Gospel Choir. Ty was sitting in the audience alone waiting for the concert to begin. I became curious to know why a young white kid was sitting alone at the "House." Ty told me that he was from Nebraska and that he was at Yale visiting Daniel, and that he and Daniel became friends when Daniel came to Nebraska to work at a Christian camp that Ty attended. Ty and I sat together at the concert. Once he returned to Nebraska, we stayed in touch by email and text messaging. One day, Ty's mother phoned and asked if I would be his host, so he could attend the Yale Football camp. I agreed, and last June, Ty arrived with his football gear and was a guest in my house for a week.

My mom and dad (pages 1, 2, 3, and 6) arrived for their second visit to New Haven near the end of Ty's stay, and they were able to get to know him. Ty and dad enjoyed talking about Nebraska Cornhusker football. Highlights of my parents' visit also included taking a train ride to NYC, shopping, eating dinner at a seafood restaurant at the beach, and taking a trip to take in the sights at the Mohegan Sun Casino.

The next visitor was my friend and traveling buddy, Onis Cheatham (page 5), who spent a long weekend with me. Onis and I first met at Middlebury

College where we were colleagues. She now works at Northwestern University. In 2004, Onis and I vacationed in California, where we explored the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. This summer, Onis and I had a fun time in New Haven. We took in an outdoor concert, where we saw Ashford and Simpson; we spent time in NYC's China Town, and we found a few wonderful restaurants to eat some good food.

My next visitor was my dear friend and confidante, Francois Clemmons (pages 1, 2, and 5). He's visited several times, but for this overnight visit, Francois came for the sole purpose of seeing one of his favorite pop culture entertainers, the incomparable, Ms. Beyonce Knowles, who performed at the Mohegan Sun Arena. I like Beyonce, but I'm not a die-hard fan. I believed that her show would be good, but it turned out to be better than good--it was fabulous. My opinion of her changed after attending her show.

I also received a very spontaneous visit from a Middlebury College friend and colleague, Darien Davis (page 7). Last year, Darien, his wife, and two boys, spent the year in Brazil, where Darien was doing research. Darien returned to NYC prior to his family's return, called me to say hello, and decided to jump on a train and pay me a visit. During Darien's overnight stay, he caught me up on his experiences in Brazil, we ate Cuban food, and we enjoyed a night on the town. I enjoy spontaneous experiences.

My longtime college friend, Mark Peeler, his wife, Maggie, their three children, Hope, Jenkins, and Max, and Tiffany, a friend of the family and former

Erskine College basketball player and employee (pages 5 and 7) all arrived in NYC where I traveled to meet them.

Mark is one of my best friends; among the friends that visited this past summer, he is the one I've known the longest (since 1982). I respect and admire him tremendously.

While we were in the city, Mark, his family, Tiffany, and I spent time in Times Square, saw the Statue of Liberty, and went to Ground Zero. We also spent time taking photos with some of NBC's Today Show team (Matt Lauer, Hoda Kotbe, and Natalie Morales). After a few fun days in NYC, the next few days were spent in New Haven, where we spent time and enjoyed the sun at Light House Point Beach, visited the Yale University campus, toured the Peabody Museum, ate a burger at the famous Louis' Lunch (known to be the first restaurant to serve hamburgers), and at the Original Frank Pepe's Pizzeria.

I was elated to learn that my family would travel again to see me during Thanksgiving--this time by minivan. My brother Terry, accompanied by his wife, Amy, and their son, O'Brien, and my mother and father (their second visit to Connecticut this year), made the long 16 hour trip to Hamden. My oldest nephew, Taylor, couldn't get out of school, so he arrived a few days later by airplane. My family spent six days in Hamden. We visited the Yale Bowl (football stadium), went to campus to meet some of my colleagues, took the train to NYC, shopped, and ate lots of delicious food, prepared mostly by my mother. My mother and Amy also helped decorate my Christmas tree, the first tree I've had in years. I enjoyed

# LAST SAY SO HOLIDAY NEWSLETTER

my family's Thanksgiving visit to Hamden. I believe they did, too!

As for me, my third year at Yale is going well. I sometimes have to work long hours, make difficult decisions, and juggle many issues at the same time. Overall, I am happy, and I enjoy the rapid pace. Each day has its challenges and rewards, but the thing that makes my job worthwhile is that no day is the same. I also enjoy surprise visits, like when filmmaker, Spike Lee, stopped by my office to say hello (page 7). I didn't know him prior to his visit to my office; now I consider him an acquaintance.

Elizabeth Alexander was chosen by President Obama to recite her poem, *Praise Song for the Day*, at his inauguration (page 7). Elizabeth is a professor at Yale. She was on leave when I arrived at Yale in 2007, but when she returned at the end of my first year, she made it a point to welcome me.

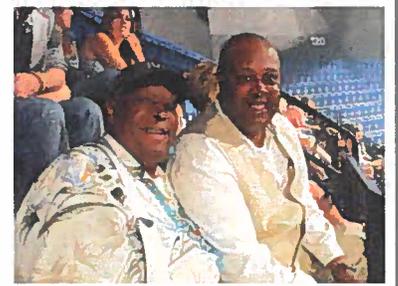
She and I are pictured at a gala celebration of the 40th year anniversary of the Afro-American Cultural Center at Yale. I'm also pictured with Lani Guinier, the first tenured African-American Harvard Law School Professor (page 7). She also was President Clinton's failed nominee for Assistant Attorney General. Professor Guinier was the keynote speaker at the gala. She is brilliant.

I was fortunate to be able to take the video footage I'd take from my travels in East Asia and create a documentary, which was premiered last February at the Off Broadway Theatre, a Yale University performing arts facility. More than 60 of my colleagues attended. My film was well-received, and I am thankful to Kelly McLaughlin, who did all the hard work on the project. Yale students who are interested in studying languages and culture in China, Japan, or Korea are

## GOOD TIMES



ONIS CHEATHAMS



AT BEYONCE CONCERT



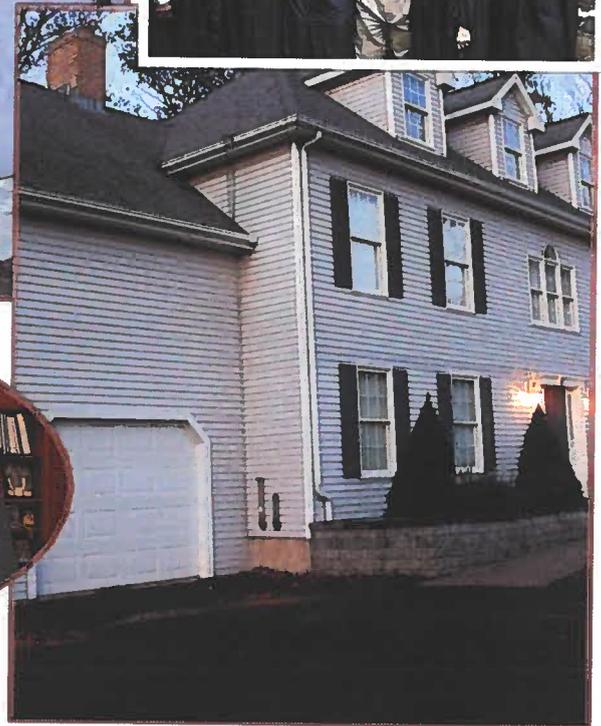
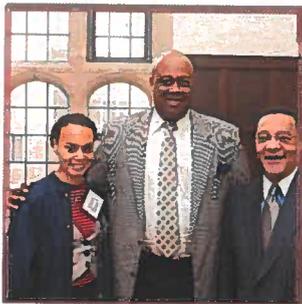
MAGGIE AND HOPE



TAYLOR AND O'BRIEN ON THE TRAIN TO NYC



# FAMILY AND FRIENDS



**"LIVE LIFE FULLY WHILE YOU'RE HERE. EXPERIENCE EVERYTHING. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF AND YOUR FRIENDS. HAVE FUN, BE CRAZY, BE WEIRD. GO OUT AND SCREW UP! YOU'RE GOING TO ANYWAY, SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY THE PROCESS. TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM YOUR MISTAKES; FIND THE CAUSE OF YOUR PROBLEMS AND ELIMINATE IT. DON'T TRY TO BE PERFECT; JUST BE AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF BEING HUMAN."**  
**ANTHONY ROBBINS**

Top left: Breakfast in Hamden with family. Top right: Posing with colleagues. Bottom left: Posing with PBS journalist, Tony Brown and friend, author Dana Rondel. Bottom middle: A visit from Spike Lee. Bottom right: My new home. My address is: 6 Chatterton Woods, Hamden, CT 06518

shown excerpts of the film.

In May, I was invited home to be the keynote speaker at the annual NAACP scholarship awards banquet, and was asked to speak on the topic, "A Change Has Come." This year marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the NAACP, so I was honored to have been asked to play a role in the celebration.

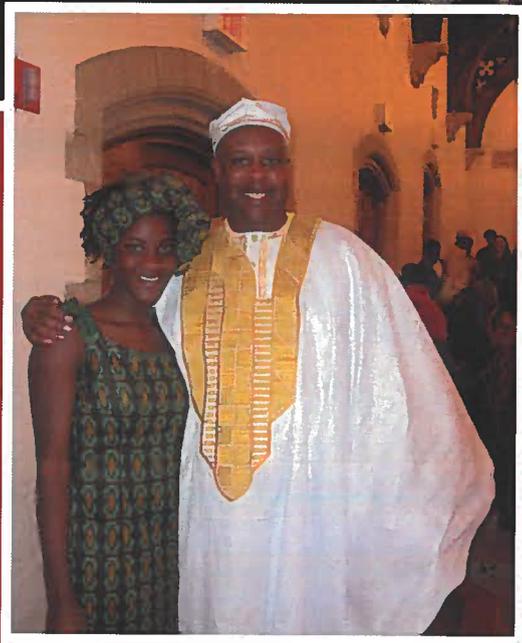
Last month, I was invited to travel to Mexico City to speak at the 2nd International Congress on Higher

Education. I loved Mexico, and I found it culturally stimulating.

I continue to work on my novel. I've completed eight chapters, but I have a long way to go before finishing it. I have no real plans to publish it; it's a "bucket list" project, and I'm enjoying the creative process of writing.

That's all for now from Last Say So Productions. May God bless you richly, and may the joy of the season give peace to your heart. Love, MG

# MORE PHOTO MEMORIES



TOP LEFT: WITH ELIZABETH ALEXANDER, PAMELA GEORGE, AND MARIA RAMOS

TOP RIGHT: WITH LANI GUINIER

MIDDLE LEFT: WITH UNDERGRAD IVY ONYEADOR AT YALE AFRICAN STUDENTS ASSOCIATION FASHION AND CULTURAL SHOW

MIDDLE RIGHT: DARIEN DAVIS

BOTTOM LEFT: MARK PEELER WITH SONS, JENKINS AND MAX, AND FRIEND, TIFFANY AT LOUIS' LUNCH