Bernice King inspires Tamarack crowd

Indiana University Northwest’s long tradition of hosting powerful MLK Day events marched forward Jan. 18 with one of the most exuberant celebrations of civil rights ever held on the Gary campus.

Bringing the same impassioned oratory and unwavering commitment to the cause that made her father a international icon of liberty and justice, guest speaker Elder Bernice King spoke to an overflow audience about the inspiration behind Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words and works, and about how his cause remains our cause today.

But, to achieve the kind of results realized by MLK and other activists of his day, King insisted, today’s activists must understand the principles and tactics employed by that determined generation. Organization, methodology and clear, united leadership are essential, she said.

“That’s what’s missing now in terms of momentum,” King explained to an audience of 600 in Tamarack Hall Theatre. Another 100 listened and watched via remote broadcast in Savannah Auditorium. “We get things started, but there’s no collective organization. There’s no collective agreement. Everybody wants to be the leader.

“In order to have change, everybody has to come together under a collective plan and commit to it until you get the end result,” she said. “You can’t stop in the middle. And it takes a leader to be able to articulate a vision and to set that atmosphere.”

Common purpose, King continued, must be paired with collective planning and organization. Before her father and the protestors he led took to the streets for peaceful demonstrations, she said, they engaged in methodical preparation for the mistreatment they were sure to encounter.

“You don’t just call people together,” King said. “You can have a common purpose, but you’ve got to have a common methodology. They had to train people in the non-violent philosophy. They had to show people what happens when you get hit over the head, how to posture yourself and act in that situation. They simulated these trainings. This is what went on behind the scenes.

“That’s the other part of the momentum that a lot of our kids today do not understand,” she continued. “You have to believe in sacrifice and persistence. Things don’t come quickly.”

In a nearly hour-long speech that carried the spirit and tenor of a revival sermon, King, who is an ordained minister with Master’s of Divinity and Doctorate of Law degrees from Emory University, described for the audience the Christian underpinnings of MLK’s civil-rights work.

“In a real sense, Martin’s mission was a Christian mission, to inject the Word of God into the culture and transform the society to reflect the kingdom of God,” she said. “He always sought to find ways to apply theological understanding to the pressing issues of his time.”

King explained that, although her father is perhaps best known for his battles against institutionalized racism in the American South, the objects of his struggle were actually threefold: poverty, racism and militarism. His stance against the Vietnam War, she said, caused concern among other members of the movement, but MLK stood fast.

“He said that he could not segregate his conscience,” King explained. “He said, ‘I can’t fight for the desegregation of buses, of public facilities, in the South, but then segregate my own conscience.’ And so he understood that the war that was being pursued was a threat to the real war of poverty ... and that there were monies that were being diverted from the war on poverty and then put in to finance the war in Vietnam.”

King said it was MLK’s emphasis on poverty and economic injustice that led to his 1968 murder.

“That was what got him killed,” she said. “It was not black and white together. It was when he began to talk about the redistribution of wealth, and how we have to deal with the social injustices and the economic injustices of our nation.”

(From left) Office of Diversity and Equity Director Ken Coopwood and Chancellor Bruce Bergland listen as Elder Bernice King, daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr., speaks to a capacity crowd at Tamarack Hall Theatre on Jan. 18. King recalled the legacy and the tactics of the civil-rights movement and said today’s activists can learn from that generation.

Photo by Christopher Sheid/Northwest News
A team of educators from the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) at Indiana University Northwest will be among the participants at the acclaimed Relationship Centered Care Immersion (RCCI) Conference III in Indianapolis when it convenes this April.

The conference, sponsored by faculty and administrators at the IU School of Medicine (IUSM) in Indianapolis, looks at ways to improve the professional culture of medical schools by focusing on relationship-building amongst and between administrators, faculty and students, as well as other positive organizational changes.

Other attendees at this year’s conference, which will be held in Indianapolis from April 29 through May 1, include: the Harvard Medical School Institute for Professional & Ethical Practice; the Ohio State University College of Medicine; and the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, among others. CHHS will be the first such interdisciplinary entity to participate in the RCCI conference, which previously had included only medical schools.

“We believe this is a prestigious and competitive international selection from among the top medical schools in North America,” said Patrick Bankston, Ph.D., who is interim CHHS dean and assistant dean and director of the IU School of Medicine—Northwest. “It furthers our goal for IU Northwest’s CHHS to be recognized as a national leader and resource in innovative collaborative health and human services education.”

The CHHS delegation to the RCCI conference will include: Bankston; Assistant Professor of Social Work Manoj Pardasani, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor of Nursing Susan Rouse, Ph.D., RN; and Associate Professor of Nursing Linda Delunas, Ph.D., RN.

The RCCI program is built around the idea that students learn how to interact with patients, colleagues and other health professionals by observing and participating in the social environment of their medical schools. The goal of the RCCI initiative is to create a social environment that reflects and reinforces in daily practice the moral, ethical, professional, and humane values that are already expressed in a medical school’s formal curriculum.

“It is no secret that we need to do better in establishing a culture of understanding and respect among all members of the healthcare team to achieve the best care for our patients,” said Delunas, who also serves as faculty assistant to the chancellor at IU Northwest. “As a nurse, you don’t have to be in the profession long to understand why this is a problem. That is why we applied to send a team to Indianapolis to learn techniques that we can use in training our doctors, nurses, social workers and allied health professionals to become the best they can be in working together for patients.”
NIPSCO, IU Northwest make an entrance
Utility company contributes toward new illuminated entryway at 33rd Avenue

Officials from the Northern Indiana Public Service Co. came to Indiana University Northwest on Nov. 27 to formally present the university with a $25,000 donation toward the construction of the school’s new illuminated entryway at Broadway and 33rd Avenue.

The entryway, which was completed earlier this fall, consists of two large stone platforms, one north and one south of the intersection at 33rd Avenue, each bearing the university’s name in metal lettering. Atop both platforms sit decorative metal torches complete with nighttime illumination. The entryway is intended to give IU Northwest a more distinct visual identity at its location at 3400 Broadway.

After his presentation of the $25,000 check to IU Northwest Chancellor Bruce Bergland, NIPSCO President Mark Maassel explained that his company contributed toward the entryway because NIPSCO believes in supporting higher education and seeks to partner with entities that work to benefit Northwest Indiana.

“This is clearly something that IU Northwest had stressed to us as very important to the future of the campus, to create an identity and a sense of a true collegiate atmosphere,” Maassel said. “From our viewpoint, what’s important is helping not only in the educational development here in Northwest Indiana, but also really working with those like IU Northwest who are trying to do things to advance the region.”

Bergland thanked Maassel and NIPSCO for their continued generosity toward the IU Northwest campus community.

“NIPSCO has been a very strong supporter of the university ever since I’ve been here, and this is just another example of their support,” the Chancellor said. “They’re a good community citizen, and so their effort to help us develop our institution is in keeping with their commitment to the community.”

The entryway was designed by Hobart-based Fred Collins Architects, Inc., and constructed by Hammond-based Gil Behling & Son, Inc. Bergland said this latest project in the university’s ongoing campus-beautification effort gives IU Northwest a more defined visual image to visitors to the campus and the community.

“The important thing about that entryway is that it says to the community, and to our university family, that we’re making a statement, that there is a real and significant institution located here,” Bergland said. “It’s not only beautiful, but it marks the entrance to the university and does so in a dramatic way.”

University to consider zero-based budget plan

Department heads who have always suspected that their budgets might be out of whack may soon have the chance to find out. Indiana University Northwest is currently considering a zero-based budgeting process that would rebuild university budgets from the ground up.

Although no final decision has been made, the prospect of a zero-based budget process for IU Northwest is serious enough that Vice Chancellor for Administrative and Fiscal Affairs Marilyn Vasquez led multiple information sessions on the matter before the winter break. Vasquez explained that the current budget system functions on an incremental level, adjusting unit budgets up or down on a percentage basis in accordance with rising or falling revenue.

But that system does not provide for any comprehensive reworking of a unit or department’s budget based on shifting enrollments or other factors, Vasquez said. It simply begins with the previous year’s base budget and revises it slightly.

“You’ve got a base budget that may not be reflecting where you’re really at,” Vasquez said. “Your enrollment may have gone up dramatically. You may be serving a whole lot more students than you had in the past, but your base budget hasn’t changed.”

Vasquez also suggested that the current budget system does not create incentives for units to save money, since any savings are rolled into the overall campus budget. That’s why, at fiscal year’s end, departments often use remaining funds rather than report them as unspent. Vasquez said it might be advantageous for IU Northwest, as part of any budget restructuring, to allow units to retain a portion of any savings realized.

“If you’re responsible for what comes into your unit and what you’re spending, and you get to keep it ... you’re paying a lot more attention to what’s coming in and what’s going out,” she said.

The concept behind zero-based budgeting is that each unit basically starts from scratch and builds its budget based on its needs, goals and commitments. This can yield a more accurate picture of what each department’s budget should be, Vasquez said.

“It does give you a chance to get a better understanding of the costs of the organization, because you’re looking at your priorities and what they cost in the budget,” she said.

Because zero-based budgeting is time-intensive and paperwork-heavy, it might not be the kind of process the university wants to use every year, Vasquez said. But, with Outcome 5 of the university’s Strategic Plan calling for IU Northwest, by 2010, to “demonstrate fiscal responsibility and flexibility in collaborative ways to sustain excellence in its programs and its services, and to respond to new opportunities for funding or programming in support of the Vision,” the vice chancellor said it’s important for the university to take steps to meet that goal.

“What I would like to see happen is for us to do zero-based budgeting once, to get the base budgets the right size,” Vasquez said, noting that the decision ultimately lies not with her but with the campus. “We’ve been doing incremental and other things for so long, it’s hard to know (what that is).”
Eisenstein’s book argues that Christians not inclined toward political intolerance

Strong research often yields fascinating results that resonate well beyond the parameters of the initial study. For Marie Eisenstein, Ph.D., assistant professor of political science at Indiana University Northwest, the surprises came from members of the four focus groups she interviewed as part of her study on the relationship between political tolerance and Christianity.

Each focus group was comprised of congregants from one of four Lake County, Ind. churches. The study, the results of which form the basis of Eisenstein’s first book, “Religion and the Politics of Tolerance: How Christianity Builds Democracy” (Baylor University Press, 2008), was aimed at determining whether Christianity in general, or specific, religiously informed viewpoints in particular, bear any relationship to political tolerance or a lack thereof.

These focus groups, along with other, quantitative study methods employed by Eisenstein, clearly indicated that political tolerance or intolerance, at least as defined by Eisenstein for purposes of her research, are not more prevalent among Christian groups, or among those who hold specific views on social-moral issues such as abortion and homosexual marriage, than they are among those with secular viewpoints.

In other words, despite the common perception about supposed political intolerance among conservative evangelical Christians, in particular, Eisenstein’s research revealed that they are no more or less likely than others to hold politically intolerant attitudes.

“Empirically speaking, there is nothing about holding particular issue attitudes that translates into tolerance or intolerance,” she said. “There was just no effect on it. Intolerance – nobody has a market on it. On both sides, there is always somebody who is going to be intolerant, somebody that does not want to allow somebody else’s freedom of speech because they don’t agree with what they’re saying.”

But Eisenstein’s focus groups offered additional insights into what other issues concern a broad cross-section of America’s Christian citizenry. Chief among them, Eisenstein said, was illegal immigration.

“I brought them in because I was trying to steer them toward issues of religion and politics and political tolerance, and when they had their free time to bring up anything they wanted, they went right to illegal immigration,” Eisenstein said. “And it took me by surprise. I thought for sure it would be these hot-button social-moral issues.”

Eisenstein’s focus groups, which met in early 2006, represented four segments of American Christianity: mainline Protestants; black Protestants; evangelical Protestants; and Catholics. All four, she said, professed strong concern about illegal immigration.

The black Protestant group, she said, expressed anger over the oft-quoted bit of conventional wisdom that says illegal immigrants take the jobs that “other Americans don’t want.”

“They were hopping mad,” Eisenstein said. “They made it quite clear that nobody came to their community and asked them about the jobs they ‘don’t want.’ They said this was nonsense, and that they want jobs and need jobs.”

The Catholic group expressed concern about the added strain that illegal immigration places upon the Catholic charitable system, Eisenstein said. Mainline Protestants and evangelical Protestants voiced concerns similar to those brought up by the other groups. The intensity, and general agreement, of these opinions went against Eisenstein’s expectations.

“That blew me away more than anything else,” she said. “And it had nothing to do with political tolerance. But there was such agreement among four diverse religious groups, and then between the whites and the blacks, that they were all mad about illegal immigration.”

As to the original question of political tolerance, Eisenstein explained that a narrow, quantifiable definition was needed to make an empirical assessment possible. For her book, Eisenstein used the definition that is most common to political-scientific discourse.

“It’s all in how the word ‘tolerance’ is defined,” she said. “Because this is an academic book, obviously, it had to be well-defined so it could be measured. From a political scientist’s point of view, when we’re studying political tolerance, we do not define it by issue-attitude position, which is ‘Do you agree or disagree with abortion?’ or ‘Do you agree or disagree with stem-cell research?’ Political tolerance is about willingness to extend civil liberties to those with whom you disagree. And the big three are speech, petition and assembly.”

What Eisenstein discovered was that respect for the democratic ideal and belief in free access to the marketplace of ideas is just as strong among Christian citizens in America as it is among secularist citizens.

“Across all four of those groups, none of them thought of the political marketplace as something that they want to hold and stop others from coming into,” Eisenstein said. “They were very conscious of the fact that not all of their religiously informed issue-attitude positions were commonplace or accepted by the mainstream. They truly believe that this is a democracy and they should be able to participate in it and advocate for their views, and they fully accepted and understood that they were going to meet resistance.

“They really are socialized just like everybody else to accept a certain set of American values about the free exchange of ideas in the political marketplace,” she said.

Eisenstein noted that all of her focus groups expressed some dissatisfaction with how Christianity is portrayed in the news media and in popular culture. Many of the people she spoke to felt like they were the ones at risk of being marginalized in the public arena because of their religious views.

“Each group had some particular instance they were able to cite in which they felt they were being attacked at large within the mainstream media,” she said.

Eisenstein didn’t rely solely on focus groups to support her research. She also conducted a phone survey of 600 respondents in which she gauged the relationship between their religious affiliation and issue attitudes and their political tolerance. She also conducted a survey of IU Northwest students.

Whatever the media’s portrayal of the state of religious belief in America today may be, Eisenstein said, her research convinced her that religious faith itself is not waning but instead remains a powerful force in people’s lives and in the political landscape.

“Belief is still alive and well, and it contributes to the influence of politics in religion,” she said.
Institute’s newest leaders praise program

The Institute for Innovative Leadership (IIL) at Indiana University Northwest ushered its 17th class of graduates across a bridge to the future on Thursday, Jan. 31, giving the eleven students who had completed the program a leadership seal of approval.

The ceremony, which took place in Savannah Center Auditorium, was the culmination of two semesters of challenging leadership training for the following IU Northwest students: Despina Amanatidis, of Highland; Cynthia Brasovan, of Crown Point; Carol Castaneda, of Crown Point; Gina Connolly, of Hammond; Leslie Dallner, of Merrillville; LaToya DuBose, of Merrillville; Mary Gingrich, of Valparaiso; Ephphatha Malden, of Gary; Maryth Samuel, of Gary; Carla Stanley, of LaPorte; and Tomiko White, of Merrillville. Each graduate made a few remarks during the ceremony.

“This program has been beneficial to me in many ways,” said Castaneda, an IU Northwest alumna who is currently pursuing her M.P.A at the university. “The Institute for Innovative Leadership has challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and to take a few necessary risks in order to evolve as a leader.”

The leadership program at IU Northwest is designed to challenge participants to utilize their existing skills and talents in the development of their leadership abilities. IU Northwest alumni and business and community leaders from across Northwest Indiana participate in this process as coaches and mentors, giving the students the benefit of their years of experience and training. Students attend hands-on workshops designed to improve such important skills as public speaking, written communication and motivational tactics, among others.

But the leadership program at IU Northwest does more than just give its students nuts-and-bolts skills for leadership. It also helps them develop the right mindset for leadership by boosting their confidence and enabling them to develop the attitude needed to lead others.

Amanatidis, who is an M.B.A student at IU Northwest, said that, for her, the learning process began during her interview for the program. The IIL program is very selective, and students must be nominated for inclusion.

“I remember George Miga (IIL coach) asking me a question that I’ll never forget,” Amanatidis said. “George asked me, ‘If you have a choice between helping a homeless lady down the street, helping a friend who has some ethical issues, or helping yourself get a promotion, what would you do?’

“Well, I thought to myself, there has to be more to this question than what it seems to be. My first thought was, if I say myself, they’re going to think I’m selfish. So I started asking some questions to probe at what this question really was about. And the bottom line is, if I do forward myself and get that promotion, then not only am I helping myself, but I am also positioning myself to help the homeless lady and help my friend with the ethical issues. That showed me strategic planning, right in my interview.”

Charlotte Reed, Ed.D., who took over as interim director of the IIL last summer after the departure of longtime program director Keith Kirkpatrick, said the leadership program seeks to address one of the primary goals of higher education: the development of caring, capable leaders to help address the important issues that face today’s society.

“We at IU Northwest see ourselves every day as building leaders,” Reed said. “But the Institute for Innovative Leadership is an especially important component of what we try to do. We try to train people to become the leaders of Northwest Indiana, and, really, of the country.”

Reed took a few moments to honor IIL member and graduate Crystal Jelks, who also worked at IU Northwest in the ILL office until leaving for another job opportunity earlier this year.

“Crystal has made working with the Institute a joy,” Reed said. “Her leaving was a big loss to this university and to this Institute.”

Jelks, who completed the program three years ago, said the IIL’s past, present and future graduates represent the best that IU Northwest has to offer.

“We have about 5,000 students on the campus, and what you see today is the cream of the crop,” Jelks said. “These were the diamonds in the rough when they came to us. Some of them were in various stages of transformation, but I think that by the end of this process everyone has accomplished the same goal.”

Reed and others also gave credit to Kirkpatrick, whose work and dedication on behalf of the program helped it to evolve into a highly respected development program with sterling results for its participants. After the ceremony, Kirkpatrick complimented the grads on their achievement.

“The people who graduated continue a tradition of very great leadership, and of people whose lives are really changed by this program,” he said.

Many of the participants in the IIL leadership-development program occupied leadership positions before beginning their training. Carla Stanley, an IU Northwest M.B.A. student from LaPorte, is a registered nurse and the manager of the cardiovascular and neurological IMCU units at The Methodist Hospitals’ Northlake Campus.

“What you see here are mothers, employees, managers, students,” Stanley said of her fellow graduates. “We all came into this program looking to be better leaders. And I have truly gotten that out of the leadership-development program. I have learned everything from budgeting to finance to improving my public speaking to being calmer in the face of employees.

“No university should be without a leadership program,” Stanley concluded. “I think I have learned as much in this leadership program as I have learned in my coursework for my graduate degree.”

Leadership graduate Tomiko White makes a point during the Institute for Innovative Leadership’s Jan. 31 graduation ceremony. White was one of 11 graduates honored for completing the two-semester leadership-development program.
Brock sees bright days ahead for UTEP

When Rochelle Brock, Ph.D., director of the Urban Teacher Education Program in the Indiana University Northwest School of Education, joined the campus community in Fall Semester 2007, she brought with her a sense of excitement about the program and a vision for what it might achieve in Northwest Indiana’s urban community. Brock said her enthusiasm for UTEP wasn’t tempered in the least by the 20-year-old program’s funding and enrollment challenges. She credited UTEP’s sterling reputation in the educational community for giving her a strong base for a renewal effort.

“When I came on board and would meet people in the community and tell them I was the director of UTEP, the majority of the people knew about UTEP,” Brock said during an interview with Northwest News. “It was never like, ‘Oh, God, you’re in that program?’ It was always, ‘Oh, great, that’s a terrific program.’ The teacher who lives next door to me went through that program, or something like that. So there was still a very positive connection between UTEP and the three school districts it serves.”

Brock gave her predecessor, Charlotte Reed, Ed.D., who is now executive director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, credit for maintaining UTEP’s upstanding reputation in the community.

“I knew that there were going to be challenges. I need to find grants; I need to find money for the program,” said Brock, who came to IU Northwest from Georgia State University and, before that, Purdue’s Lafayette campus. “But I’m not fighting a bad reputation. Once a program has a bad reputation, it’s hard to turn things around. I don’t have that problem. Charlotte Reed just did a wonderful job in the program and is highly respected throughout the community.”

Brock received her Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from Penn State and an undergrad degree in social science from UC Berkeley. Although this is her first directorship of an urban-education program, Brock has past experience in the field.

“I’ve done bits and pieces of the program in past jobs, where I’ve either been teaching or, when I was at Berkeley, my work study position (placed me) with a campus organization that worked in urban schools in San Francisco and helped with counseling and preparing kids for the SAT,” Brock said.

“When I was at Georgia State, I supervised student teachers and teaching interns. What I’m doing now kind of brings all of my past experiences together.”

Aside from the search for grants, which Brock said are essential to UTEP’s recruitment and outreach, the program’s greatest battle might be the struggle to change students’ perceptions about what it means to teach in urban classrooms. Brock said she expects UTEP to host a series of public presentations this year that will address the myths and the realities of urban education.

“A lot of the stuff out there about urban education is myths and assumptions about the violence in the schools and about the different things you’re dealing with,” Brock said. “There are issues and problems in urban education, but there are issues and problems in suburban education and in rural education. I think a lot of what these students are thinking are assumptions based on what they see in the media. The presentations would be about urban education, urban health issues, culturally relevant pedagogy, and different ways of teaching.”

Although UTEP’s enrollment has registered beneath the program’s target number in recent years, Brock said the numbers don’t worry her. The program is only designed to host 15 students in each cohort, with a new cohort beginning each year. Brock said she has signed up eight students for the latest cohort, and her eventual goal is to fill two cohorts per year, one each semester.

Brock said she wants students in UTEP who are committed to urban education.

“I don’t want people in the program who do not have a passion for urban education and who don’t want to make a difference in this world,” Brock said. “We don’t want to get people in the program who are just (there) because they know that by going through the program they would get first dibs on interviewing in (urban schools).”

Brock praised UTEP’s strong relationship with the Gary, East Chicago and Hammond school districts and said she plans to recruit more UTEP students from there. She noted, however, that the whole concept of “urban education” is changing.

“Academics can’t agree on ‘urban.’ Some people say urban is income. Other people say urban is minority. Other people say urban is being in the heart of the city,” Brock explained. “But sometimes, with gentrification, being in the heart of the city means being in the midst of a lot of rich yuppies, and minority and low-income people are sort of pushed to the outskirts. I think our definitions have become very fluid, and people don’t really know what urban is.

“I think it has to be specific to the area that you’re talking about,” she said. “So when we’re talking about urban in Northwest Indiana and Gary, East Chicago and Hammond, we are talking about low-income. And we are talking about a minority-diversified population. Definitely, you don’t want low-income, minority people in this little enclave. They spread out, and districts have to be aware of that and address those needs. They can’t keep doing the same old thing, because they have a different population of students.”

Brock said that service learning would continue to be an important element of UTEP, so that students can gain experience not only in the classroom but also in the communities where they may one day teach.

“It’s called service learning in education, but I call it social justice,” Brock said. “I like that terminology much better, because it means you’re going out in the community and you are making a difference. You are working in a homeless shelter; you are working in a soup kitchen; you are working in a women’s shelter. You are helping to build houses. You are getting into the mix of things, and, to me, that’s social justice. And I’d like UTEP to be a big part of that.”
Assibey-Mensah is new SPEA interim director

As a result of a unanimous vote by the school’s faculty and staff, Associate Professor George O. Assibey-Mensah, Ph.D., has taken over as the new interim director of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs. The appointment was effective Jan. 16. Assibey-Mensah takes over from Associate Professor Karen Evans, Ph.D.

Assibey-Mensah is in his 14th year at IU Northwest. He takes over SPEA before IU’s SPEA system is set to break up into separate programs at the university’s campuses. The primary challenge facing the IU Northwest program, he said, is to maintain its academic mission while expanding its influence, especially in Northwest Indiana, through outreach, partnerships and the like, with community constituents.

“As of July 1, SPEA at IU Northwest will no longer be a part of a system school. We will be on our own,” said Assibey-Mensah. “It’s up to us to continue carving our own niche in Northwest Indiana, in particular, and the world at large.”

Assibey-Mensah, who teaches public-management courses, admitted that leaving the classroom for the administrator’s office wasn’t easy, especially when he heard some of his students talking about withdrawing from his classes if he left.

“When I made the announcement in class that I might be leaving the classroom, I heard some of them saying they might withdraw,” he said. “I said, ‘No, you shouldn’t withdraw. That will delay your graduation.’ I told them that I would still be around. Sometimes they call me or come by to ask me a question about a concept or something academic. I may be out of the classroom, but I am still around for you because I serve you.”

Despite his love for teaching, Assibey-Mensah said the unanimous support of his colleagues inspired him to accept the position and its attendant challenges.

“I just could not turn it down,” he said.

“We need to fill a void before it becomes a vacuum.”

Ken Schoon named Munster’s Citizen of the Year

Professor of Education Kenneth Schoon, Ph.D., is well known at Indiana University Northwest and throughout Northwest Indiana as a man who is dedicated to his university, to his community, and to the entire Calumet Region. On Jan. 26, it was Schoon’s devotion to his home community of Munster that brought him recognition.

In honor of Schoon’s 25 years of volunteer service to Munster, and particularly in recognition of his two-year chairmanship of the Munster Centennial Committee, the Munster Chamber of Commerce named Schoon its Citizen of the Year at its 53rd Annual Chamber Dinner. The honor, Schoon said, was entirely a surprise.

“They notified my wife, because on the PowerPoint they had pictures, baby pictures and things that she was able to get,” Schoon said. “My son was going away to school this semester, and he knew about it before he left. Word got around, but not a soul told me.”

Schoon attended the event as a representative of IU Northwest, which sponsored a table. That was he was seated next to Chancellor Bruce Bergland when his name was announced made the moment more special.

“I asked him if he knew ahead of time, and he said he didn’t,” Schoon said. “I was very surprised, and very pleased.”

Schoon has taught at IU Northwest since 1969, when he joined the campus in a part-time capacity while also teaching high school. He joined the faculty full time in 1990 and became associate dean in 1999. Last year, Schoon received IU’s George W. Pinnell Award for Outstanding Service in honor of his contributions to science education.

In Munster, Schoon has served on municipal boards and in organizations like the Lions Club and Munster Historical Society.

Schoon has also written a book, “Calumet Beginnings: Ancient Shorelines and Settlements at the South End of Lake Michigan.” For Munster’s centennial, he also contributed to a heavily illustrated book, “Munster, Indiana,” featuring photos and essays about the town’s history and development.

IU Northwest Notes of Distinction

William Allegrezza, Ph.D., lecturer of English, presented a workshop at the Chicago Public Library in November. Allegrezza also gave a poetry reading at Lewis University in Romeoville, Ill. His latest book of poems, Filament Sense, was accepted for publication by Ypolita Press.

Bob Mucci, Ph.D., associate professor of anthropology, had the article “Let Them Eat Bugs” appear in the December issue of Anthropology News, a monthly publication of the American Anthropological Association. The article discusses Mucci’s experiences in using food as a subject in teaching students about culture and cultural diversities.

Tim-Chris Lin, Ph.D., assistant professor of economics, has been notified that his article, “The Impact of Human Capital on Economic Development,” has been accepted for publication in The Indian Development Review, which is a refereed journal that is indexed by the Journal of Economics Literature.

Adrian Garcia, Ph.D., associate professor of Spanish, presented his paper, “The Best of Both Worlds: Designing and Utilizing a State-of-the-Art Language Classroom/Lab at Indiana University Northwest,” at the Worldwide Forum on Education and Culture in Rome, Italy, in December.

Ana Osan, Ph.D., associate professor of Spanish, delivered the paper “De Eva a Lilith, y de Conde a Luca: La revisión del mito de la Caída en la España del siglo XX” (which translates as “From Eve to Lilith, and from Conde to Luca: Revising the Myth of the Fall from the Garden in Twentieth-Century Spain”), on July 12, 2007, at the XVI Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas, which took place at the University of Paris-Sorbonne Paris IV, in Paris, France.

Susan Rouse, Ph.D., RN, assistant professor of nursing, has been invited to present her abstract, “Development of Strategic Plan for Forecasting the Resolution of Faculty Shortages,” at the 12th annual Research and Evidence-Based Practice in Health Care Conference at the University of Southern Indiana in April.

Bala Arshanapalli, Ph.D., professor of finance, was named a Lifetime Member of the Society of Innovators in November 2007. The Society was established in 2005 by Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana — Northwest in partnership with ArcelorMittal, Horseshoe Casino, Krieg De Vault, and The Northwest Indiana Times. The Society’s mission is to celebrate innovators and innovators in Northwest Indiana. Arshanapalli was nominated by Nancy Johnson, executive director of the Legacy Foundation, for his role in the development of the Wall St. on Broadway Trading Floor at the IU Northwest School of Business and Economics.

Jean Poulard, Ph.D., professor of political science, was elected Michiana Shores Town Council President Jan. 8. Poulard is a longtime council member in the LaPorte County community.
The business expo will focus on professional and business opportunities for women in Northwest Indiana.

Monday, Feb. 25

Town Hall Meeting/Black History Month Dinner – 3 p.m. in Savannah Auditorium. IU Northwest will host a town hall meeting to discuss IT copyright issues with faculty and staff. Those who attend will receive a ticket to a Black History Month Dinner in Moraine Student Center beginning at 4:30 p.m. A second Town Hall meeting on the same topic will be held Tuesday, Feb. 26, at 9:30 a.m. in Savannah. Faculty and staff members who attend the morning event will receive a free ticket to a Black History Month luncheon in Savannah Gym C beginning at 11 a.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 26

IU Northwest Go Red for Women Lecture and Reception – 5 p.m. in Savannah Auditorium. In recognition of Go Red for Women, the America Heart Association's awareness campaign for heart disease and its impact on women, the IU Northwest College of Health and Human Services presents a presentation by health expert Robert Kushner, M.D., professor of medicine at Northwestern University. He has authored multiple books on fitness, nutrition and obesity, and he will discuss steps women can take to reduce the risk of heart disease, the country’s top killer of women. A reception will follow.

Thursday, Feb. 28

Women's Business Expo – 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Moraine Student Center. Nationally renowned storyteller Gerri Gribi will be the keynote speaker for this event and will deliver a presentation entitled “A Musical Romp Through Women's History.” The business expo will focus on professional and business opportunities for women in Northwest Indiana.

Black History Month Presentation: Mary Frances Berry – 6 p.m. in Savannah Auditorium. Mary Frances Berry, professor of history at Penn State University, will highlight IU Northwest’s celebration of Black History Month with a moving presentation on the state of civil rights today. Berry served as assistant secretary of education under President Jimmy Carter, who later appointed her to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She was fired by President Reagan for criticizing his civil rights policies, but Berry won reinstatement in federal court. She later served as chair of the commission from 1993 until 2004. IU Northwest is pleased to present this important Black History Month event to the campus and community. A book signing will follow the event.

Monday, March 10

Weekend MBA Open House – 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. in Dunes Medical/Professional Building. The School of Business and Economics will host an open house for anyone interested in joining the Weekend MBA for Professionals Program. Refreshments provided.

Monday, March 17

Big One-Dollar Book Sale – 9:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. through Thursday, March 20, and until 1 p.m. on Friday, March 21, in Moraine Student Center. More than 10,000 titles available.