

Life After Concordia: Charles Martin

By Evan Palenschat

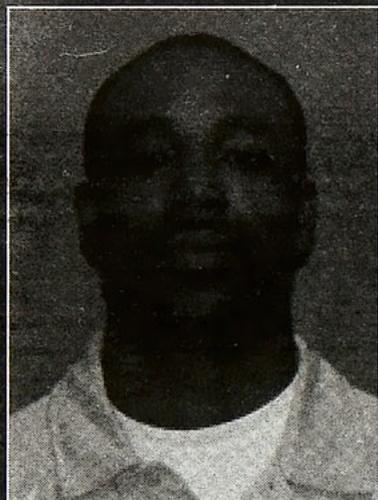


Photo courtesy of www.csp.edu/admissions

Charles Martin can't seem to stay away from Concordia University, St. Paul. He graduated from the university in 2004. Last year he worked as an undergraduate admission counselor. Since August of 2007, he began work as assistant director of alumni relations. No matter what title he holds, Martin finds great joy in talking to students and building relationships across

the University.

Concordia was not Charles' first choice for his undergraduate degree. He initially attended the University of Dubuque in Iowa (2000-2002).

"I wanted to play football, and I knew I'd play my first year at Dubuque," said Martin. He actually played for two years. However, he realized there was not much to do in the small town. Looking for a change, Martin transferred to Concordia in 2002. He earned a scholarship for football his senior year but opted to run track instead.

During his time on the track team, Martin held records in the 55 meter dash and the 200 meter dash. He was also part of a record setting 4x100 and 4x200 meter dashes teams.

Athletics was not the only thing in which Martin excelled. He also participated in UMOJA, student mentoring and campus ministry.

When Martin graduated in 2004 he didn't know what he wanted to do. He ended up moving back home to Florida and managing one of his father's lawn and pest control stores. Martin said, "The money was

good, but I didn't like it. It was long hours and I wasn't used to managing people."

Looking for a change, the new graduate started to look for a job. Having done some work in admissions at Dubuque and enjoying it, Martin applied at a Concordia University, Chicago.

Charles remembered the process moving very quickly. He applied in October of 2004, had an interview in November and started the job in December.

Martin worked in Chicago for almost two years when he heard, "through the grapevine," about an opening here in St. Paul. He was excited about continuing his work here and also adding his energies as assistant coach to the track and field team.

In his new alumni relations position, Martin acts as the server administrator for the online alumni community. This is a social networking tool, similar to Facebook, that keeps alumni in touch. He also sets up events for returning alumni, mainly the golden reunions celebrating 50 years since graduating Concordia. Martin was also deeply involved in this summer's National Youth Gathering in Orlando.

Further, Martin helps organize events like "Put me in Coach," which raises money for our sports teams.

Martin has also recently been engaged to Leah Ferber who graduated from Concordia with a degree in Art last year. Their wedding is set for February 9th and will be held at Concordia's Graebner Memorial Chapel.

If you'd like to stop and visit Martin, his office is located in the white house directly east of the Center for Hmong Studies.

Look for more alumni profiles in future issues of The Sword this year!

Woodard Plays Douglas for a Weekend

By Lance Meyer

War...Social Security...Gay Marriage! The same overwhelming issues continue to be in the media's spotlight these days. Politicians, already fighting for nominations and votes, are constantly bombarding Americans with the same redundant strategies for getting out of Iraq, plans for restructuring social security, and desires regarding gay marriage legislation that they've heard time and time again.

The debates held earlier this month in Hastings, Minnesota, however, gave people an opportunity to escape for a weekend the political battles of today. Outside the LeDuc Historic Estate on Main Street in Hastings, a reenactment of the 1858 Illinois United States Senate debates offered quite a different agenda of issues for the people who came out for the festivities. "There was a good turnout both days, and the audience was great," said Concordia University history professor, Dr. David Woodard.

Woodard and Lakeville School District Educator, Tabé Akin teamed up this year to bring a new aspect to Hastings' annual Civil War weekend. Playing Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln respectively, the two friends and former Fort Snelling co-workers were finally able to put their talk into action as they brought the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates to life. "We had been talking about doing something for more than three years, and we finally just decided to do it" said Woodard.

Both Woodard and Akin really like the Civil War time period and had each read the debates in the past. So, all that was left to do was order the cloths and get a gig. Once dressed up in their suits, bow ties, top hats, and suspenders, Woodard and Akin fit their parts beau-

tifully. "The cloths worked out great except for a few problems with my suspenders throughout the weekend, but that's expected," said Woodard who looks forward to being able to use the cloths for other reenactments in the future.

Aside from the fun of dressing up though, the main point of the reenactment was to give people a better understanding of how influential the 1858 debates were to Lincoln's later election as President and the issue of slavery that would drag the United States into civil war. Lincoln and Douglas participated in seven debates throughout Illinois in 1858, all with somewhat the same structure. In Hastings, Woodard and Akin presented a thirty minute reenactment made up of selections from the original three hour long debates.

In the debate, the two 19th Century History buffs staged a young-beardless Lincoln who was practically unknown at the time against a short-stocky Douglas who was already considered a giant in politics. Woodard and Akin first gave a historical introduction and then debated, as if they were in the borderline state of Illinois in 1858, the issues of slavery, states' rights, and western expansion. "People listened closely to the debates at this time," said Woodard referring to 1858. "The words were really well said, and the language was exceptional."

Following the debates, Woodard and Akin stepped out of character and gave the audience a chance to ask questions. Along with the debate, this opportunity gave people a chance to not only get a sense of the kind of debate that was used and the issues that were prominent, but they were also able to learn much more, for example, who transcribed the debates and how many people attended them.

"Overall the weekend was a lot of fun," said Woodard who hopes to perform the debates more in the future. Woodard added that he can see him and Akin becoming more familiar with the scrip and being able to perform the debates without notes. The two have already decided to visit some schools this coming winter, and Woodard also hopes to possibly bring the reenactment to Concordia's amphitheater sometime down the road.

It really doesn't matter where or for whom Woodard and Akin make their next performance, however. Whether it's to the students at Lakeville High School, the members of the history club here at Concordia, or another community somewhere in Minnesota, it is certain that people will be excited to hear a debate on something other than war, social security, and gay marriage.



Woodard and Akin as Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. Photo courtesy of Dr. Woodard