

Class of '93 gift for Ritenour surpasses original goal

The group raised \$82,000 more than expected in memory of a classmate killed by a falling tree branch outside Willard Building.

By CAROLINE A. BANGE
Collegian Staff Writer

When the Class of '93 Gift Committee formed, its members probably never imagined the impact their project would have on the University one year after most of them graduated. Fund-raising efforts for the

Ritenour urgent care department, dedicated last week, surpassed the committee's original goal of \$30,000 enormously. More than 2,500 members of the class donated a total of \$112,000 to construct the unit. The 1994 senior class raised about \$115,000 to expand Pattee Library. The class dedicated its gift in

memory of fellow classmate Valerie Christein, who died Sept. 8, 1992 after being hit by a falling tree branch outside Willard Building.

Although the urgent care department opened for student use last January, official dedication and opening ceremonies were held Thursday morning. Dr. Peggy Spear, director of University Health Services, said the ceremony was "more for me an occasion really about giving and caring" than merely the opening

of a new department in University Health Services.

Since its opening, the new unit has served an average of 80 to 150 people during every eight-hour day. Accessible from Pollock Road, the urgent care department is open to all University students, with or without an appointment.

The unit consists of six private exam rooms, a minor procedures room, a large room with three relatively private cubicles for consultation and appointment scheduling, two separate staff

conference areas and a 15-seat, television-equipped waiting room.

The waiting room is the only part not yet finished, but is expected to be by the end of the month.

Jim Ryerson, former chairman of the Class of 1993 Gift Committee, was present for the ceremony.

"The seniors realized that their parting gift would help students for years to come," he said.

"The gift is functional, will

have a long-lasting impact and meets the real needs of students for accessible, on-campus medical care," Ryerson said.

Carol Christein, Valerie's mother, also attended Thursday's ceremony, traveling from Fairfax Station, Va., for the event. Carol Christein said she had to be there for her daughter.

"The gift is a really nice gesture," she said. "Valerie will always be remembered at the university she loved."

Black students have added pressures to deal with at University Park

By JENNIFER SCHATZMAN
Collegian Staff Writer

Adjusting to college life can be difficult for everyone, with the seemingly hidden buildings and late dashes to 8 a.m. classes, the term papers and the long reading assignments. Even just fitting in can be a challenge.

Combine all that with the added pressure of being one of a small number of black students at University Park and the transition gets harder.

"It's a bit of cultural shock for students of color who come here," said V. Arlene Cheatham, a counselor at the Multicultural Resource Center. "They may be the only African American on their floor or in their class and that might be a little unsettling."

Dianna Sinckler (freshman-communications) has had to deal with a sort of cultural shock. Sinckler, who is from the Bronx, N.Y., a community where there are many more minorities, said she chose Penn State because it had a good reputation and the School of Communications is well-known.

"The low number of African Americans did make me hesitant to come here," she said. "But it's inevitable that you have to work with different kinds of people — I know I'm getting an early start."

Marie Middleton (senior-broadcast cable) knows what Sinckler is going through. She said she also felt a little uneasy when she was a freshman.

"It was harder for me to adjust to Penn State because coming from an inner city, being black, it was hard for me to find

people to identify with," she said. "There was always a lot of pressure to join some sort of a group, to find somewhere to fit in."

When Middleton was a freshman in 1990, there were 1,238 black students out of 38,779 total students at University Park. Last year, there were 1,027 black students out of 37,588 students at University Park.

Minority enrollment increased University-wide by 113 students for 1993-94. Total black student enrollment declined University-wide by 71.

Christy Rambeau, University assistant news bureau manager, said this drop in enrollment reflects many factors, including declining graduation rates for all high school students.

Severe staffing problems have also

limited efforts to recruit black students, she said. This problem is now being addressed to help increase enrollment of black students at the University.

The Multicultural Resource Center and other on-campus groups have tried to help minority students feel more comfortable at University Park.

"We offer a lot of outreach programs to new freshmen and transfer students so they know that our office exists for them," Cheatham said.

The center also puts students in touch with other people on campus who make sure they are comfortable and successful academically, she said.

Sinckler has already taken advantage of the programs sponsored by the center and minority organizations on campus, including a minority ice cream social at

the School of Communications, a block party given by the sororities and a reception given by the center.

"They were really helpful to me because I met a lot of other black students," she said.

These organizations help minorities meet other students from similar cultural backgrounds, Cheatham said. But considering the small number of black students at University Park, minorities still have difficulty meeting each other.

Carla Coleman (senior-rehabilitation services education) encourages other black students, particularly freshmen, to get involved with campus organizations.

"One thing that I regret is not getting more involved as an African-American female at Penn State," she said.

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