

Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs (HS-MACA)

SPRING 2012

Edited/Design by:
Sade Kosoko-Lasaki, MD
Channing Bunch, MBA

OMA...WHAT? “EXPERIENCE LIVING AND SCHOOLING IN OMAHA”



Kudos to HS-MACA

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education, (LCME) in a letter to Creighton's President, Timothy R. Lannon, SJ on February 16, 2012 States the following: "Creighton's Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs Office has contributed to institutional diversity through a variety of successful pipeline programs and activities for enrolled students' "....."

*The “O”**by**Sade Kosoko-Lasaki, MD, MSPH, MBA, FAASS*

Its spring time again and we are proud to celebrate the graduation of our diversity students. Many of our students are from states like Florida, California, and New Mexico etc. I remember when I moved to Omaha about 12 years ago, I was amazed that there were more African Americans living in the city than those out of state will imagine. Let me share with you some of the hidden secrets of this beautiful city called “O.”

“Recently, the Medical School was commended for its diversity pipeline created by HS-MACA. We are proud to be of service to our institution.”

The population in Omaha is currently 427,872 with 12% being African American. Omaha has so much to offer its residents, guests or transit visitors. Just click <http://www.visitomaha.com/> and take a look at the website, and you will be amazed!

Did you know that Omaha, Nebraska has exciting historic and heritage sites? Civil Rights Leader Malcolm X was born in Omaha at the University of Nebraska Hospital May 19, 1925. The Malcolm X birth site where his house once stood is located at 3448 Pinkney Street. A state marker has been added in place of his house that was torn down in 1965.

On 3202 Woolworth Avenue sits the President Gerald R. Ford Birth site and Gardens. Gerald Ford was born in 1913 and he was the 38th President and 40th Vice President of the United States. Located in Midtown Omaha was his fourteen-room mansion which was torn down after a fire in 1971.

The first African American to be elected to the Nebraska State Legislature was Dr. Matthew Ricketts. Dr. Ricketts was also the first African American to graduate with honors from the University of Nebraska College of Medicine. He was also credited with creating Omaha’s Negro Fire Department Company.

In this wonderful city is Creighton University, which has been credited by the world news and report as The Number One College in the Midwest. Recently, the Medical School was commended for its diversity pipeline created by HS-MACA. We are proud to be of service to our institution.

Enjoy your summer and thank you for spending four wonderful years with us in the big “O.”

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

— [Mark Twain](#)

History of North Omaha

by Mark E. Patten Sr., MPA



My name is Mark E. Patten, Sr. and I have lived most of my life in Omaha, specifically in North Omaha. Before I tell my story, I want to give you some background on the community that we affectionately call “North O.”

According to Wikipedia, “North Omaha is a community area in Omaha, Nebraska it is bordered by Cuming the South, Interstate 680 on the North, 72nd Street on the West and the Missouri River and Carter Lake, Iowa on the East as defined by the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the Omaha Chamber of Commerce.”

Located just north of Downtown, the North Omaha community includes some of the oldest neighborhoods in the city: Near North Side, Bemis Park, Saratoga and Florence. It is the site of the Mormon Pioneers' Winter Quarters, the Mormon Temple, the center of the historically significant African-American community and the birthplace of Malcolm X.

North Omaha is home to a wide variety of cultural institutions, events and activities that anchor the community. The Dreamland Ballroom was a historic venue that featured a wide range of national talent, as well as local legends including saxophonist Preston Love, who once said, "North Omaha used to be a hub for black jazz musicians, 'the triple-A league' where national bands would go to find a player to fill out their ensemble.”

North Omaha is home to several important annual events that help define and celebrate the community, its history and its future. Native Omaha Days is a biennial North Omaha cultural tradition, reuniting members of the city's African-American community. The Days are commemorated with a variety of events, including the Evergreen Reunion; named after a town in Alabama from where many family's ancestors migrated. Other annual activities include the Juneteenth Parade, to mark Emancipation, the Fort Omaha Intertribal Powwow, the Omaha Blues, Jazz & Gospel Festival, Florence Days and the Omaha North High School Homecoming, which includes a parade for the community. The Stone Soul Picnic is also an important annual event in the community.

Growing up in North Omaha gives one a unique viewpoint on the world. I attended Howard Kennedy and Mt. View Elementary Schools, Nathan Hale Junior High, Creighton Prep High School for a year and graduated from Central High School. I started my undergraduate studies at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland and finished at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Later I earned my Masters in Public Administration (MPA) from the aforementioned institution.

North Omaha is a very special place in my heart because this is my hometown. It is a great place to raise children and to learn about the world in a place where the neighbors still look out for each other. Now don't get me wrong there are still a lot of problems here, just like anywhere else. If you want the true pulse of my community, then go to local track meet on Saturday afternoons or drive around Sunday morning to see all the church parking lots packed. I have lived, worked, volunteered, coached and raised my kids here because I feel this is one of the best places in the world.

“North Omaha is a very special place in my heart because this is my hometown; and it is a great place to raise children; and to learn about the world in a place where the neighbors still look out for each other.”

Why Omaha?

By Channing Bunch, MBA



Last fall, HS-MACA provided Creighton University professional school information to undergraduate schools in Colorado, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia. As we travelled around the country, many of the students wanted information on Omaha and why Creighton would be a good fit for them. There are three main questions students continued to ask; “Where is Omaha located,” “Why Omaha” and “Are there any African Americans or diversity in Omaha.”

For those future students reading this article, we will dispel your myth of Omaha, Nebraska. First of all, Omaha is not located in Oklahoma it’s in Nebraska which is located in the central part of the country. The state is south of South Dakota, East of Colorado, West of Iowa and North of Kansas. Yes, we do have some corn fields in some areas, but the city is mostly urban with suburban areas. Citizens of Omaha enjoy family oriented entertainment like picnics in area parks, lakes and rivers. Other entertainment that comes through Omaha are concerts, fairs and most notable the College World Series, 2008 and 2012 Olympics Swimming trials, NCAA March Madness and other professional events. Omaha houses the second best Zoo in the country (Henry Doorly). Omaha is the home of Union Pacific one of the oldest railroad company in country, Malcolm X’s Birth Site & Community Center, El Museo Latino, Joslyn Art Museum’s “Jazz On the Green,” and Mutual of Omaha better know in the early 60’s and 70’s as “Mutual of Omaha Wild Kingdom with Marlin Perkins”.

The next most asked question is “Why Omaha?” We want to inform you that Omaha is both, a big and small city at the same time. At its core Omaha is a family oriented city; and that is what students will receive. The residents of Omaha are nice and polite; concerned for the development of their children, and provide opportunities such sports, dance and educational activities to assist in their development. Bellevue Public Schools, Omaha Public Schools, Omaha Westside Public School, Millard Public Schools and Papillion Public Schools offer superior high school education. Which translates into a high percentage of students going to college and receiving bachelor, master or doctoral degrees; it is truly the best place to be. We want to inform you that you will only be here for a few short period of time, but it’s an opportunity for you to develop as a person and a professional.

Finally, “Are there any African Americans or diversity in Omaha?” For those interested in the diversity of Omaha we have that too. It may not be as profound as Atlanta, Chicago or any city on the east coast but we are proud of what we have in Omaha. In 2010, the Greater Omaha Economic Development Partners documented in the chart below the diversity in Omaha and these local percentages reflect the national percentages for racial and ethnic in the United States.

2010 Race/Ethnicity				
	Greater Omaha		City of Omaha	
Total	865,350	%	408,958	%
White	714,090	82.5%	298,815	73.1%
Black	68,021	7.9%	55,950	13.7%
American Indian or Alaska Native	5,177	0.6%	3,391	0.8%
Asian	18,618	2.2%	10,014	2.4%
Some Other Race	37,150	4.3%	28,193	6.9%
Two or More Races	22,294	2.6%	12,269	3.0%
Hispanic Ethnicity	77,508	9.0%	53,553	13.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino	787,842	91.0%	355,405	86.9%

Source:
U.S.
Census
Bureau,
Decision
Data

Living in Nebraska

By Joseph Michaelsen, MBA



Having grown up in the great state of Nebraska, I feel at home in Omaha. I grew up in Columbus, NE, a town of about 21,000 and 75 miles west of Omaha. Some of my first memories of Omaha were coming to the College World Series as a kid. It's the NCAA Division I Championship that calls Omaha home every June. It's one of Omaha's finest traditions that I enjoy celebrating every summer. The atmosphere around Omaha, especially downtown near the new ballpark, is electrifying for the two week tournament. From all the visiting baseball fans, the beer gardens, the beer tents, the tailgating and of course the baseball games, there's no problem finding something to do in Omaha during the CWS.

I got my first real taste of living in Omaha when I moved here to attend a boarding high school. I then attended the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. After four years of college I moved back to Omaha and have been here since. Though I really enjoyed my four years of living in Lincoln, I'm glad to be back in Omaha. Being an alumnus of the University of Nebraska and a Nebraska native, my love for Husker football can be seen during the fall. My Saturdays in the fall are consumed with college football, specifically Husker football. I love the support that Omaha, and Nebraska as a whole, shows for the state's football team. It is apparent if you our out on a Saturday in the fall, as everyone wears red.

"Nebraska is known as "the good life," as can be seen on signs when driving into the state."

The city of Omaha is representative of the state of Nebraska as a whole, where we have strong Midwestern values. Omaha is a great place for students and young professionals to begin their careers, as Omaha is city that continues to grow and prosper. Nebraska is known as "the good life," as can be seen on signs when driving into the state.



My Time in Omaha

By Junior Univers, Graduating Medical student



Omaha Nebraska! I remember those words and the perplexed expression on my mothers face vividly, the day I told her I was heading to Omaha for the next leg of my education. It was a look of confusion and utter dismay, all she could think of was how far away I would be and the long winters I would endure. My siblings were around and they too were quick to jump on the “lets bash Omaha” bandwagon, what’s out there besides corn and steaks they asked? To be fair I couldn’t answer that question, but what I could tell them is that when I visited Omaha briefly on my interview day that the people I met seemed to really care about my future plans and assured me that they could help me achieve my goals. Those words didn’t seem to make the news of my moving to the middle of nowhere any easier for my mother to swallow, but as she always have she told me that if this is where God wants you then go. Indeed not more than a month later I was all packed up and ready for what would later seem as the never ending drive from West Palm Beach Florida to Omaha Nebraska.

“I remember those words and the perplexed expression on my mothers face vividly the day I told her I was heading to Omaha for the next leg of my education.”

As I embarked on this next chapter of my life and had an eternity to spare on the drive I couldn’t help wonder if I was making the biggest mistake of my life. I was born in Haiti and immigrated to the United States at the age of five so truth be told Florida was all I knew. I did all of my schooling in Florida and when I decided to go to college it was only natural for me to attend the University of Florida. It felt wrong leaving all that I had known to go someplace that I knew very little about, but it was the path that would lead me to my goals and so I followed. As the never ending trip drew near to a close I remember driving through Iowa and seeing nothing but open fields as far as the eye could see and couldn’t help but wonder what was I thinking! As I approached Omaha I saw the skyline and let out a deep sigh of relief and a smile replaced what I could only imagine was a look of sheer panic.

Weeks before the semester started I wanted to explore and see what all Omaha had to offer so naturally I went to the one place that everyone speaks about, Henry Doorly Zoo. From the moment I got here all I heard talk of was how amazing that Henry Doorly Zoo was, in the back of my mind I laughed saying how sad that all they have to brag about is a zoo. It is wise not to speak everything that comes to your mind because if I did I don’t think I would have had the stomach to eat all of those words. The zoo was amazing! It was nothing like I had expected, this zoo was in essence a theme park. I learned that day that there is much more to Omaha than I had given it credit for. It’s crazy to think that I laughed when people told me that I needed to visit the zoo and now when I’m interviewing applicants for the medical school it is one of the first things that I tell them that have to experience.

My time here in Omaha has gone by fast and the people that assured me that they would help me reach my goals did just that and so much more. Dr. Kosoko-Lasaki, I want to thank you for being the stern mother figure that I feared to disappoint, for being the mentor who expected nothing but the best from me, but most of all for believing in me when even I had doubts. To Channing Bunch whose door was always opened to me, thank you for being such a good friend and mentor. I want to thank the entire staff of HS-MACA for taking me in and making me feel so at home. In most cities it is the attractions and weather that keep you here in Omaha, it is the people that make you want to stay. To all those that have made my time here such a blessing I thank you. It is hard to imagine, but I will be sad to say goodbye to Creighton. Omaha has given so much from someone who expected so little from it, I’m glad that I made that never ending journey to Creighton. I just learnt that I “matched” in General Surgery in University of Tennessee School of Medicine. I look forward to the next phase of my life.

Experiencing, living and going to school in Omaha

By Jessica Alford, PreDental



Moving to Omaha, Nebraska and attending Creighton University was by far the biggest and scariest decision of my life, however it has also proven to be one of the best decisions I have ever made. I was born and raised in a small city, just north of Atlanta, Georgia, called Athens. Despite moving around a bit during and after college, I never lived outside of the state of Georgia. I was content and in my comfort zone there, only a car ride away from most of my family and friends. Nevertheless, I was not coming any closer to achieving my goal of becoming a dentist and I needed a change. In order to fulfill my goals, I felt that I needed to concentrate my efforts through a program that offered support and structure that would help me reach my full potential.

A couple years after I graduated from college, an opportunity presented itself which required me to move to Omaha, for Creighton's Pre-Dental Post-Baccalaureate program. I knew this was exactly the opportunity I needed. However, I was terrified at the thought of moving half way across the country to the Midwest; a culture I had never experienced before. Almost immediately after moving here all my fears and reservations disappeared and I felt like this was the place that I was supposed to be and that I was fulfilling the plan God had for my life. I instantly found a church home that I love, Eagles Nest Worship Center, that is a reflection of Jesus' love, word and good deeds, which encouraged me to improve my personal relationship with Jesus. I have made life-long friendships within my classmates, especially Tiffany and Andrea, who have supported me, studied with me, laughed with me and prayed with me, throughout our journey in Omaha and will continue to do so for years to come. I have met professors, administrators and the HS-MACA staff, who have welcomed me into the Creighton family and ensured my success. Through these people and opportunities I understand now why life brought me to Omaha, Nebraska.

"I was terrified at the thought of moving half way across the country to the Midwest; a culture I had never experienced before."

Going to school in Omaha, at Creighton, has helped me become a more focused and well rounded student. I have an unlimited amount of support and numerous people who genuinely want to see me succeed. The campus is quiet and beautiful, which cultivates a great atmosphere to study outside during the spring. I was graced with the opportunity to mentor a high school student as well as be mentored by a dental student which has proven to be a rewarding and gratifying experience.

Living in Omaha has fostered new and exciting experiences. This past winter I encountered my first "real" winter. I was marveled at the idea of shopping for all the winter weather essentials such as boots, coats, scarves, hats, ears muffs, etc. During one of the many days it snowed, I was able to build my first snowman and repeatedly sleigh down the hill beside my apartment. My classmates and I have established a great hangout spot, Roja Mexican Grill, in which we frequent often. I attended a Luau for the first time in my life on Creighton's campus, and was enamored by the amazing food and great performances.

Living and going to school in Omaha has been inspiring and encouraging. I know that I am in the right place. Yes, I miss my family and friends back home but the new relationships and bonds that I am forming here are just as meaningful and motivating. I'm excited to see the many opportunities and experiences that my time in Omaha, Nebraska will bring me.

Experiencing, living and going to school in Omaha

By Matthew Sugimoto, Premedical



Warren Buffet and Omaha Steaks – the two things non-Nebraskans really know about Omaha. According to Hollywood, I live on a 20-acre farm and am relegated to a perpetual life of boredom; I can't recall how many times I've been asked if I enjoy cow-tipping. Combine the frigid, windy winters of Chicago with the humid summer heat of Atlanta, you have a place I call home – Omaha. On the surface, Omaha has everything going against it. I mean, you know you have a problem when you argue with Kansans over whose state lies at the center of the country. But Omaha is much more than corn, football, steak and The Oracle of Omaha. To anyone that was born and lived in Omaha for an extended period of time, you know what I am talking about. Although many are reluctant to admit it (my post baccalaureate classmates), Omaha grows on you. You just have to dig below the surface and live Omaha yourself.

I was born in Omaha, when Omaha was “Omaha”. I am by no means bragging. You should feel sorry for me - it was everything Hollywood portrayed. My house was only one of two in the subdivision, cornfields WERE everywhere and the only fun we had on the weekends was basketball or play on our “playgrounds” – dirt mounds where new houses were being built. We didn't even have a McDonalds out west. West Omaha has changed much in the past two decades – we now have a Chipotle! Growing at a seemingly exponential rate, it is home to the Millard Schools and many other equally impressive academic institutions. Besides the many golf courses, the construction of Village Pointe Shopping Area along with Oakview Mall, gives one many options for fun. East Omaha has seen an equally impressive resurgence. In the past few years, downtown Omaha has seen the construction of the CenturyLink Center, TD Ameritrade ballpark, Midtown Crossing and a revival of the Old Market area.

Living in Chicago for a few years, I realized how much I truly missed Omaha. Omaha has come to embody everything I know and love – a small town with a large town feel. Not to mention, I don't have to fight to the death for a parking spot. My college classmates would always ask me:

“Where are you from?”
 “Omaha”
 “...is that in Illinois?”

I never minded they didn't know where Omaha was located - I wouldn't expect to, if I wasn't born here. To anyone that is reluctant to come here, Omaha is an up-and-coming city. The downtown area has seen a boost in urban development. Concurrently, city limits are continually spreading further west as suburban development increases. Omaha will be the home to the College World Series for many years to come and I still find myself visiting the nationally-renowned Henry Doorly Zoo; especially the swamp exhibit because it scares me to death. Although it doesn't have the glitz and glam of a city like Chicago, it appeals in many other ways. Omaha is unique in that it can be clearly viewed as two separate entities – west and east Omaha. I grew up on the west-side in a largely suburban area but commuted 20-30 minutes east for high school and now the post-baccalaureate program at Creighton. Besides having to wake up earlier, I wouldn't trade it for anything. Each has its inherent advantages and disadvantages but that shouldn't stop you from enjoying what both have to offer.

Although the face of Omaha has changed considerably in the past two decades, one thing has and always will remain the same - the people. Not only have I met some amazing people here at Creighton but just take a trip down to the grocery store or local mall and you'll notice what I'm talking about. Nebraskans embody the ideals of Midwestern hospitality. I believe this is what truly draws me back to Omaha and I plan to stay here for many years to come. And to set the record straight, soft drinks (Coke, Diet Coke, Pepsi, etc) are called “pop.”

“Warren Buffet and Omaha Steaks – the two things non-Nebraskans really know about Omaha.”

Congratulations Post-Bac 2012 Class



Back Row

L-R—Valarie Pierre, Matthew Sugimoto, Daniel Lara, Bradley Trinidad, Allen Mayon, Jr.

Front Row

L-R—Tiffany Clark, Kelsey Kokubun, Aaron Kim, Jessica Alford, Adrian Sandoval, Andrea Armstrong, Chinakasiobi Mbata

HS-MACA would like to welcome new employees



Jennifer Kubila is the Program Coordinator for the Health Careers Opportunity Program's Saturday Academy, as well as a Program Planner for the Center for Promoting Health and Health Equality. She earned her undergraduate degree in International Studies from Michigan State University and a Masters of Education from National University. Jennifer's professional experience include several years spent living in Ghana, Africa. During her time in Ghana, she was responsible for educating international students and creating health education programs for local children. Jennifer enjoys hobbies such as going to the movies, travelling and collecting vintage maps. She is married and has one child, a 2 year old daughter, Jacquelyn.



JaQuala Yarbrow has recently joined the Creighton community as the Outreach Coordinator. She serves as the Health Careers Opportunity Program assistant coordinator for the Middle School Program in accordance with the Middle School Learning Initiative. She also serves as the Glaucoma Outreach Program Coordinator providing vision screenings to many in Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and South Dakota. She is currently a premedical student pursuing a degree in nursing. She enjoys traveling, writing, research and is a mother of a 4-year old daughter, Hushai.



SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

Juliana Colette
Adeoluwatimilehin Omobola Olufeko
Qi Wang

Toni-Ann Hylton
Kaiyra Salcido

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Rachel Austin
Maryam Gbadamosi-Akindele
Kyle Register
Junior Unvers

Antonio Betanzos
Onaona Gurne
Armando Rodriguez

SCHOOL OF NURSING

UNDERGRADUATE

Erin Bruggeman
Norma Calzada
Amanda Gunhus
Mary LaCrosse
Virginia Soto

Melanie Tuamoheloa
Elizabeth Garcia
Monica Ibarra
Sarah Portillo
Audriana Talmadge

GRADUATE

Amanda Smith

Ann Marie Wieseler

SCHOOL OF PHARMACY AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

CAMPUS PHARMACY

Valerie Gonzales
Beau Labez-Tapang
Kyle Torres

Daniel Gonzalez
Rogelio Saladrigas
Lekeisha Winters-Williams

Distance Pharmacy

Samuel Appiah
James Hall
Jennifer Ortiz

Colleen Collins
Anita Mosley

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Stephanie DeRosa
Valerie Johnson
KeOnna Williams

Meaghan Flanagan
Susan Sanchez

PHYSICAL THERAPY

Alicia Johnson

Maria Martinez

Health Sciences Multicultural and Community Affairs, (HS-MACA)

Sade Kosoko-Laaki, MD, MSPH, MBA, FAASS

Associate Vice President and Professor
402-280-2332
sadekosoko-lasaki@creighton.edu

Tracy Monahan, MBA

Senior Administrator
402-280-2971
tracymonahan@creighton.edu

Brett Briggs

Associate Coordinator for Glaucoma Initiative
402-280-3964
brettbriggs@creighton.edu

Jennifer Kubila, M.Ed.

Program Planner, CPHHE
402-280-2907
jenniferkubila@creighton.edu

JaQuala Yarbro

Outreach Coordinator
402-280-3833
jaqualayarbo@creighton.edu

Channing Bunch, MBA

Assistant Director
402-280-3029
cbunch@creighton.edu

Jeffrey Lang, MS

Academic Success Counselor
402-280-2940
jeffreylang@creighton.edu

Mark Patten, MPA

HCOP Program Supervisor
402-280-2174
markpatten@creighton.edu

Joseph Michaelsen, BA

Assistant Coordinator, COPC
402-280-3925
josephmichaelsen@creighton.edu

HS-MACA Mission Statement

To promote Creighton University Health Sciences as a recognized leader in the training and development of a multicultural healthcare workforce that serves to reduce health disparities in the underserved and diverse communities through research, culturally proficient education, community interaction and engagement.

Health Sciences-Multicultural and Community Affairs, (HSMACA)

2500 California Plaza
Omaha, Nebraska 68178