



Jonelle Ocloo

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worked at improving her language skills. And Ocloo joined the university kendo team. A samurai martial art, kendo is similar to fencing but with bamboo swords. "I had never done kendo before," she says, "but the coach was open to foreigners and wanted to expose the students, who were mostly very shy, to them. He assigned people to teach me during each practice." Much of the university's social life revolves around teams and clubs, and Ocloo went skiing and fishing with her teammates, her college family. By the time she left Kanazawa, she had advanced enough to participate in a tournament. "But I did lose," she offers, "although the team won."

The Japanese were interested in her as a foreigner and secondarily as Ghanaian or American, although when asked where she was from, the self-contained trailblazer explained both her connections. The daughter of teachers of the deaf—her father is a professor at Gallaudet College, her mother works at the Louisiana School for the Deaf—Ocloo was born in Accra and came as a very young child to the States. She has returned to Ghana often to visit family

and friends. "I was the first African many of these people had met," she explains, unruffled, "and so they were always eager to tell me, 'Well, you know, Japan deals with Africa.' As a result, I learned a lot about Japan's relations with Africa." Her senior thesis on Japanese trade with South Africa during the apartheid era and the country's foreign policy, which, she asserts, "does not put much emphasis on human rights issues," is an outgrowth of her experience.

Japan, Ocloo thinks, "can look American on the surface, but the American-type items they have are really very Japanese." Western dress is merely the outer layer, and the rage for some Western-style traditions is misleading, observes Ocloo. "A Western-style wedding with a white dress is very fashionable now. The bride may dress up, go to a church-like setting with a minister, but then the real ceremony is Shinto."

On the W&M campus, the Monroe Scholar has lived at Reves International Center, rooming with physics major Bridget Harrison and imbibing the heady atmosphere of a dorm-full of international relations enthusiasts. "We have people

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For a 22-year-old, Greg Werkheiser has already had a close-up view of the power at the top and the powerlessness at the bottom. During the summer of 1995 he worked at the White House as a speechwriter for Hillary Rodham Clinton. He downloaded messages from the chief of staff each morning and talked to his boss at least every other day. But before he arrived at 8 a.m. for his long day drafting and rewriting political messages, he caught a bus to O Street and spent an hour-and-a-half cooking and serving

breakfast at a homeless shelter. Two or three evenings a week, when he didn't have to work till midnight, he trekked the few blocks away to tutor homeless children at Northstar.

"I was emotionally drained, and physically I didn't come out too well," Werkheiser says, "but working at the White House was one hundred percent worth it." He wrote some 50 speeches, often working on eight at any given time. The communications advance staff would prepare a packet for each of the First Lady's upcoming appearances with as much information as possible, and Werkheiser would have a week or so to write. "We crafted the remarks as best we could within the time constraints," he explains, "then showed the material to Mrs. Clinton and revised whatever she wanted." Recommendations from people at William and Mary and from a previous Washington summer as an aide for the Congressional Management Foundation plus the fact that he was willing to work long hours for low pay got Werkheiser the opportunity. The early morning sessions at the shelter and the tutoring "kept my ego in check," he says.

He came away with a "new respect for the power of oratory" and the potency of words, and also a delightful tale of standing next to tall, stately Janet Reno at the President's birthday party. "They passed out kazooos," the bemused college student says, "and there was the attorney general tooting away. I felt like Forrest Gump morphed into those scenes with famous people."

Already a consummate politician himself, Werkheiser developed his interest in law and oratory in high school and has come into his own at W&M. From Kresgeville, Pa., a rural village in the Pocono Mountains, he was fortunate in high school to catch the interest of mock trial coaches Eric Schneider and Robert Catina, teachers who have garnered state-wide attention for their skill at bringing law into the classroom. "They were incredibly influential in raising my personal expectations of myself," says Werkheiser, who captained the nationally ranked trial team for three years. Equally fortuitous was the good friend, nephew of former College provost Melvin Schiavelli, who preceded Werkheiser to Williamsburg and persuaded him to visit. "Not many people from my high school go to college and those who do go to Penn State. The provost was key in convincing me to come," he asserts.

Accepted to the College and offered a partial scholarship, Werkheiser realized his resources wouldn't cover out-of-state tuition and expenses. Thanks to his grandmother, who "let off steam" about his plight in her small neighborhood restaurant, an "angel" backed the young man. Muses Werkheiser: "He was a complete stranger who just happened to be sitting at the counter. He sent me a large check every year, and after he died last year his brother, although he certainly wasn't obligated, sent one for this year." The stipulations: Put yourself in a position to do this for someone else, and leave the college a better place than you find it.

Once at William and Mary, Werkheiser established a hectic routine: paid jobs 15-20 hours a week freshman and senior years and at various times in between, president of the student body as



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a junior, founder of The Virginia Student Coalition Inc. and the W&M chapter of the NAACP, president of the campus Young Democrats, active campaigner for half a dozen national and state candidates, and community volunteer. He is particularly proud of the Coalition, formed and co-run with a George Mason University senior, through which students educate Virginians and lobby state legislators as advocates for higher education funding. "We students are most able to see the true cost of cuts. We know when the professor-student ratio goes up and when the equipment we need isn't available," he states. "It's not just our future, but the students who come after us who will be the beneficiaries of a better system." He cites per pupil expenditures and tuition fees and the excellent ranking of his university—fifth in the nation, in terms of efficient use of

resources. "William and Mary," he says emphatically, "is doing much, much more for less." Werkheiser's recipe for participation in politics is clear: "If you have your facts straight and you know how to work within the system and if you work hard, there are few barriers."

Werkheiser is humble about the debt he owes for the world opened to him. His parents work multiple jobs to keep their two sons in college and their support and sacrifices are acknowledged with love. So are the opportunities, "greater than I ever expected," extended by people at W&M. "My life has been changed fundamentally for the better by my experience here. The limited hopes I had for the future have given way to a passion for making it mine." ✪

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