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The Prospector, February 7, 2011

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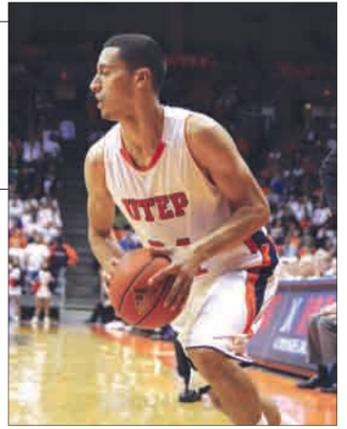
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The winter storm that occurred last week delayed the publication of The Prospector five days.

the assayer of student opinion prospector

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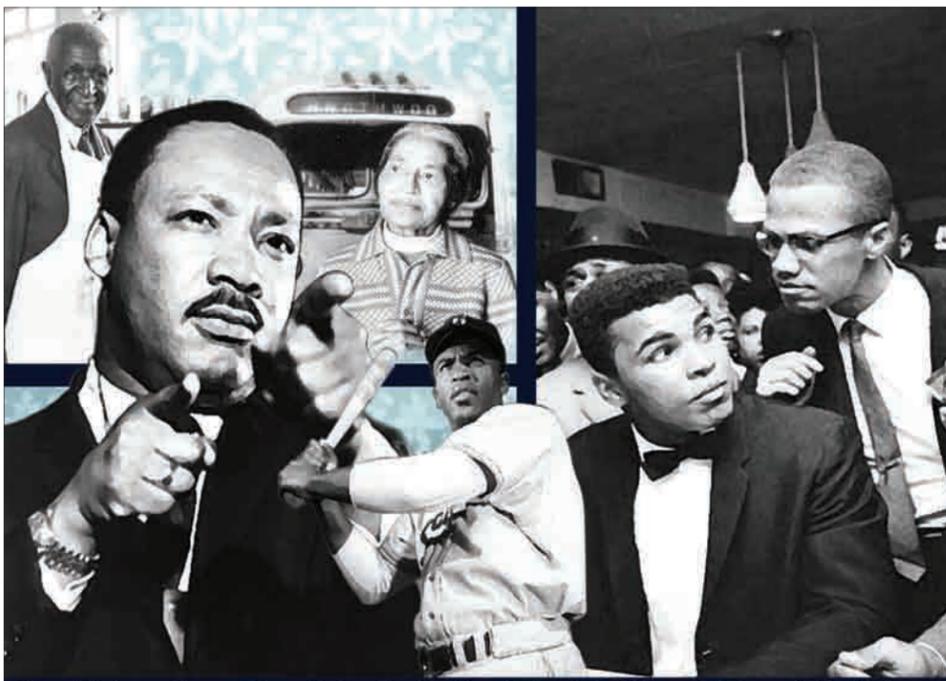
A winter storm hit El Paso and left UTEP covered in snow. The storm caused the campus and most of the local school districts to close down for three days. The storm also provoked rolling blacks out throughout the city.



DIANA AMARO / The Prospector

Black History Month

African Americans celebrate achievement



George Washington Carver • Martin Luther King Jr. • Rosa Parks • Jackie Robinson • Muhammad Ali • Malcolm X

ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH BURCHETT / The Prospector

BY JUSTIN ANTHONY MONAREZ

The Prospector

Seniors Christopher Whatley and Cynthia Keith walk freely onto campus each day – they don't worry about not being welcomed.

"It took figures like Martin Luther King to make big moves and big strides for our heritage for our rights," said Whatley, who is a senior history major and vice president of the Black Student Union.

The student's academic experiences are pleasurable to those of black students, who were among the first to be integrated into American south universities, during the civil rights movement.

Maceo Dailey, director and professor of the African American studies program, said huge progress has been made to level the playing fields because of desegregation during the civil rights movement.

"We ourselves have to do it," said Keith, English major and president of the Black Student Union.

In 1955, Thelma White Comach, a graduate from Douglass High School, one of the first black establishments in El Paso, was denied

admission to Texas Western, now University of Texas at El Paso, because of her race. She filed a lawsuit.

Before the suit reached court, she became the first black student to attend Texas Western, which was the first white Texas public school to integrate African American student.

Whatley said he recognizes the humble efforts and progress his community has made.

"They were always trying to better themselves so they can better the community as a whole," Whatley said.

Dailey said although the African American community has made strides, there are still disparities that affect the community. Impending issues of education, incarceration, health and employment are issues that still haunt the community, locally and nationally.

"There is always going to be ignorance, as long as there is ignorance, there's never going to be total equality," Keith said. "They made that big leap then it stopped. There are still more boundaries to pass."

In El Paso, Dailey said, African Americans are relatively comfortable as opposed to black

see HISTORY on page 3

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