

## **Minister shares experience in civil rights movement**

**by Natalie Johnson - Wednesday, February 16, 2011**

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/8986/minister-shares-his-experience-in-civil-rights-movement/>

A half century ago, Rev. Aaron Johnson was among the black college students who dared to sit at whites-only lunch tables. Dressed in a jacket and tie, he sat with his fellow Shaw University classmates at a Raleigh lunch counter, only to have hot soup thrown in his face before police clubbed him and dragged him to jail.

Johnson's experiences as a son of a rural North Carolina sharecropper have shaped his work in social justice at the local, state and national levels.

On Monday, Feb. 28, Johnson will share his story with UWO and greater Oshkosh community, during a presentation from 11:30 a.m. until 1 p.m., in Reeve Memorial Union Theatre.

As a Baptist pastor, Johnson has advised three North Carolina governors on race relations, established progressive policies as that state's first African-American secretary of corrections and helped launch a massive prison evangelism effort.

The UW Oshkosh campus visit, which includes a discussion moderated by African-American Studies Program Director Norlisha Crawford, is sponsored by the Black Student Union, the College of Letters and Science Dean's Office and the Roseanne Hoefel Diversity Fund.

Johnson will speak about his life as depicted in his memoir, "Man from Macedonia: My Life of Service, Struggle, Faith and Hope," written with UW Oshkosh alumna Deb Cleveland '91, of Oshkosh.

Johnson's story brings readers face-to-face with the Ku Klux Klan, President Ronald Reagan and a death-row inmate in his final days.

Cleveland also is the author of "Hugs from Heaven: Portraits of a Woman's Faith." Her work has appeared in "Woman's Day" and other magazines. In October, she took part in a UWO Alumni Authors event, as part of Homecoming 2010 festivities on campus.