

UTS@40 Booth at the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival XI

Robin Graham
August 8, 2015



On Friday and Saturday (August 7-8, 2015) Robin Graham and Drissa Kone (pictured) set up a booth at the Blessed Culture and Sports Festival (BCSF), held at UTS Barrytown NY. The booth was part of ongoing efforts to promote UTS@40, the 40/40 Campaign, and to build awareness of UTS' academic programs.

Robin Graham is the Director of Advancement and Communications for UTS and Drissa Kone is Recruitment Officer for UTS Graduate Studies. Robin Graham said the BCSF event attracted many alumni and friends of UTS who came to enjoy the weekend. Several had children in the sports events, others came to help with catering, or simply because being in the atmosphere of numerous dynamic and courteous young people is so refreshing.

Graham was able to sign up several people to support the UTS 40/40 Campaign. He explained that UTS is asking alumni and friends to recognize the 40th anniversary of UTS, which held its first Convocation on September 20th, 1975. He asks for a pledge of \$40 per month for 40 months.

This gift recognizes the 40 years of investment made by administration, faculty and staff from 1975-2015, honoring their many achievements and also honors the success of the 1600+ UTS alumni who have gone on to make great contributions in the world.

UTS prepared them to leave their mark in a remarkably wide range of careers: church missions, student organization, social action, cultural spheres, martial arts, agriculture, real estate management, teaching K-12, college level education, law.... the list goes on and on. It is a testimony to the vision of the founder, Rev. Sun Myung Moon that theological education and the study of philosophy and world religions could provide the UTS students with a useful bridge for the many religious and cultural divides which thwart peace around the globe.

In this special anniversary year UTS asks alumni and friends to show their support and anticipate the next 40 years and the impact that UTS can make on society and the world through its educational programs and the many students who will benefit from being immersed in the deep reservoir of UTS's wisdom and experience: the wellspring which UTS has been tasked to shepherd, and to make available to the many scores of future students.

Giving \$40 per month for the 40 months will mean that the UTS alumni network can be more effective, cohesive and active. Several initiatives are already being launched over the next few months and alumni

are invited to participate and to invite colleagues and friends to join too. UTS Alumni is not an exclusive club, but rather a gateway to embrace many other talented and interesting people. The initiatives are in such areas as religion and peace, governance, marriage, and spiritual life.

Graham was asked whether it needed to be \$40 per month. In true British form, he said that, of course, people were not limited to \$40.... any number of additional zeros could be added to the monthly gift! In a more serious tone, he did say there is the option on the appropriate page of the UTS@40 page which will allow one to give more or less, but he prefers more.

Drissa Kone was at the booth to answer questions about the online continuing education courses which have been so well received in the last year. Plans are being made to expand the courses offered. An online curriculum is being designed to explore the major texts of the Unification faith and will begin in the Fall.

Kone is inviting people to consider a graduate degree at UTS. He said that many people do not know the value of the UTS degrees offered and how meaningful they can be either for career or for personal interest. He said that he knows of several recent graduates who are simply delighted with their immersion in what they had previously thought was the complex, arcane world of theology and religion. Kone said they have praised the UTS professors for bringing the courses to life, helping people to see the relevance of areas such as the history of religion, or of theological discourse and philosophical constructs to help make sense of today's issues and compound problems. Those UTS students have now graduated, well equipped with academic and professional tools which they can immediately use in their career path.

Asked if the BCSF was a good recruitment venue, Kone laughed, and said that most of the youth were focused solely on sport and the BCSF community. He added, however, that the presence of UTS with a promotional banner is never to be underestimated. Seeds are being planted, even among the youth. He added that there was the occasional "more seasoned" visitor to the booth who wished to learn more.