



# THE DIASPORA

Department of African American Studies • University of California, Berkeley

**FALL-WINTER 2010**

**Born of Struggle exhibit**

**Visiting Faculty Profile**

**Meet the First Year Cohort**

**In Loving Memory of Carmen Nicole Mitchell**





## THE DIASPORA

*The Diaspora* is the newsletter of the Department of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Contributions are welcomed from UC Berkeley's faculty, staff, and students. We also invite submissions from guest columnists and scholars who may not be affiliated with the university. Articles may be edited for length, clarity, and style.

### Editor

Lia Bascomb  
lia13@berkeley.edu

### Layout & Graphic Design

Glenn L Robertson  
grobtsn@berkeley.edu

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## Department of African American Studies University of California, Berkeley

660 Barrows Hall  
Berkeley, CA 94720-2572  
Phone: (510) 642-7084  
Fax: (510) 642-0318  
<http://africam.berkeley.edu>

### Chair

Charles P. Henry

### Professors

William M. Banks (Emeritus) University of Kentucky	Michel S. Laguerre University of Illinois
Charles P. Henry University of Chicago	Margaret B. Wilkerson (Emeritus) University of California, Berkeley
Percy Hintzen Yale University	

### Associate Professors

Brandi Wilkins Catanese Stanford University	Darieck Scott Stanford University
Sam A. Mchombo University of London	Stephen Small University of California, Berkeley
Na'ilah Suad Nasir University of California, Los Angeles	Ula Taylor University of California, Santa Barbara
Leigh Raiford Yale University	

### Assistant Professors

G. Ugo Nwokeji University of Toronto	Janelle T. Scott University of California, Los Angeles
---	---

### Adjunct Professor

Robert L. Allen  
University of California, San Francisco

### Visiting & Non-Senate Faculty

Michael Cohen Lecturer	Robin J. Hayes Visiting Scholar
Aya de Leon Director, June Jordan's Poetry for the People	Aparajita Nanda Lecturer
Hardy Frye Professor Emeritus	

### Staff

Vernessa Parker Management Services Officer	Lindsey Herbert Undergraduate/Graduate Advisor
Stephanie Jackson Administrative Assistant	Glenn L Robertson Computer Resource Specialist

# THE DIASPORA

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## Contributors

Rob Connell  
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Arif Gamal  
Charles P. Henry  
Mario Nisbett  
the family and friends of Carmen Mitchell

Funmilola Oludimu  
Christopher Petrella  
Ronald Williams II



# *Words from the Chair*

By Charles P. Henry

On September 22, 2010 the African American Studies Department and Doe Library hosted a reception for the opening of a library exhibit on forty years of Black Studies at Cal. Highlights of the reception included remarks by Black Studies pioneers Hardy Frye and Daphne Muse and a spoken word performance by Poetry for the People director Aya De Leon. The exhibition is the product of the efforts of African American Studies librarian Jason Schultz, Professor Ula Taylor and many other staff and students. The exhibit itself chronicles the development of African American Studies decade by decade starting with a copy of the original proposal for establishing a Black Studies Program in spring 1968 through the development of the department's Ph.D program. Also featured in the exhibit are the works of African American Studies faculty and alumni. A part of the exhibit includes many of the distinguished speakers hosted by the department including James Baldwin, Angela Davis, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks and many others.

While the exhibit will close next semester, a more permanent reminder of the past was released at the opening – an anthology entitled “40 and Counting” edited by graduate student Ronald Williams II. This volume contains the proceedings of our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference last April including panels by department pioneers and alums. Profiles of key faculty members are included as well as contributions by faculty and staff. In reading the contributions it becomes transparent that the department has served as a safe and nurturing space for a whole new

generation of scholars. Yet, as the volume makes equally clear, the struggle continues.

Major trends over the last few decades have changed the way universities operate and therefore have consequences for Black Studies. One is a trend toward seeing education as an individual goal rather than a collective goal. California is an excellent example of the gradual de-funding of a public education system that was supposed to provide access to quality higher education for all residents of the state. Perhaps the crucial watershed in this process was the point at which expenditures for prisons exceeded those of higher education. “Privatization” of the university will exacerbate an already present divide between those disciplines that can attract external funding (think defense related research) and those that cannot (the humanities).

Another related trend is the increasing debt of students. Rising tuitions mean more jobs and/or more debt must be taken on by those students from less wealthy families. Large debt burdens often force students to choose a major with the greatest financial prospects rather than a major that might be more meaningful. The university itself has become more of a revolving door in which tenure-track appointments nationally have declined from 75 percent in 1975 to 45 percent in 2006. Not only does this reduce the loyalty and community related aspects of a university but it also threatens intellectual “counter-centers” such as Black Studies and Gender Studies.

At least three other trends more directly impact Black Studies. First is the decline in the number of African American students on our

nation's campuses in general and Berkeley in particular. Despite some creative efforts to maintain access for underrepresented minority students, the numbers remain below their pre-Proposition 209 levels.



A second trend is the increasing diversification of the Black student body. While this diversification is to be applauded, it can sometimes obscure the real decline in African American students—especially African American males. Finally, the retirement of the founding generation of Black Studies scholars will create an experience gap. While younger faculty are doing exciting intellectual work, the wisdom and activism of these senior scholars who sacrificed so much personally and professionally for the development of Black Studies will be greatly missed.





# The H. Michael and Jeanne Williams Endowed Chair of African American Studies

By Christopher Petrella

Despite the ubiquity of distressing reports over the systematic disinvestment in public education, generally, and at U.C. Berkeley, specifically, Dr. Charles Henry, department chair, announced in January 2010 that the Department of African American Studies had recently received its first endowed chair. Auspicious news like this is especially poignant during these financially challenging times.

Thanks to the efforts of Carla Hesse, Dean of the Social Sciences, and the generosity of Mike and Jeanne Williams, the Department of African American Studies at U.C. Berkeley has its inaugural endowed chair. The million dollar gift from the Williams family, writes Dr. Henry, "will be matched by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation to bring the endowment to \$2 million." The chair, of course, will be named after Mike and Jeanne. According to Dr. Henry, "Mike Williams graduated from Berkeley in 1982 and wrote his senior thesis in the AAS department on Richard Wright under the supervision of Erskine Peters." In addition to creating the endowed chair, the Mike and Jeanne Williams have established an endowment to support scholarships for UC Berkeley undergraduates in financial need. The endowed chair is the largest gift the department has ever received and will be held by the faculty member who is serving as the department chair. The endowment provides support, in perpetuity, to the University and will support African American Studies. Payout from the chair provides support for the University in three ways—for faculty salaries, for research support for the chairholder and for graduate student

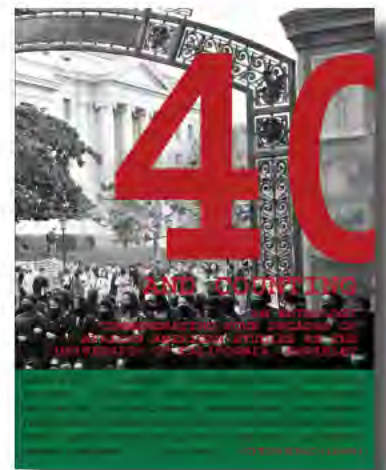


*Pictured are: Michael Williams, son Steven, wife Jeanne, Professor Charles Henry.*

support in the field of the chair holder. Such needs as research assistantships, colloquium support, and travel funds may be provided for with chair resources. The new endowed chair will benefit the Department beginning in academic year 2011-2012. When asked why the Williams' contribution and matching donating from the Hewlett Foundation is critical to the continued success of the department Dr. Henry remarks, "the payout from the chair will be of great assistance in providing support for graduate students. It will also be a major aid to the department chairs who often have to give up or sharply limit their research while serving as chair. [Chairs will now] have the research support to continue their scholarly work as they perform the administrative tasks associated with being chair."

We in the Department of African American Studies wish to thank Mike and Jeanne Williams and the Hewlett Foundation for their deep generosity. We would also like to thank Dean Hesse and Dr. Henry for their continued dedication to the goals of equity, diversity, and inclusion within our department and beyond.

*Christopher Petrella is a graduate student in the African Diaspora Ph.D. program at the University of California, Berkeley.*



*40 and Counting: An Anthology Commemorating Four Decades of African American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley* is available for purchase for \$25 (made payable to UC Regents). Please send inquiries to African American Studies, 660 Barrows Hall #2572, Berkeley, CA 94720.



## Born of Struggle: 40 Years of African American Studies at UC Berkeley





Housed in the Brown Gallery of UC Berkeley's Doe Memorial Library, this exhibit will be on display from September 22, 2010 through Monday, April 4, 2011



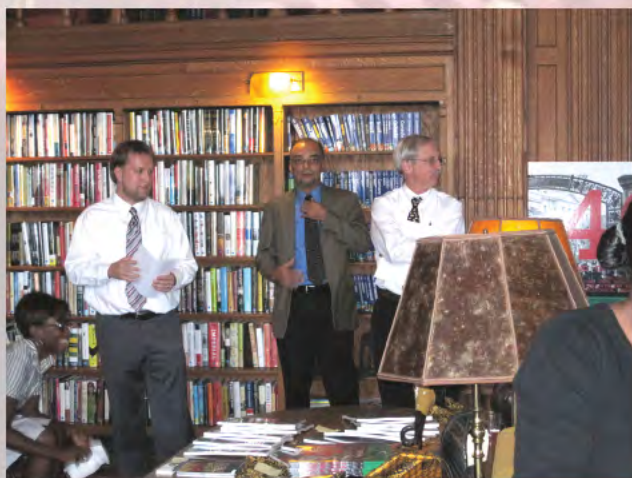
**Professor Ula Taylor was the emcee for the event.**



**Africana librarian Jason Schultz explains how the exhibit came to be.**



**Professors, students, and friends of the department enjoyed the opening reception of the exhibit held September 23, 2010.**



**Professor of English Nadia Ellis; Africana librarian Jason Schultz; Chair of African American Studies Charles Henry; and University Librarian Thomas Leonard.**



**a photo of the late Professor June Jordan.**



## Book Review:

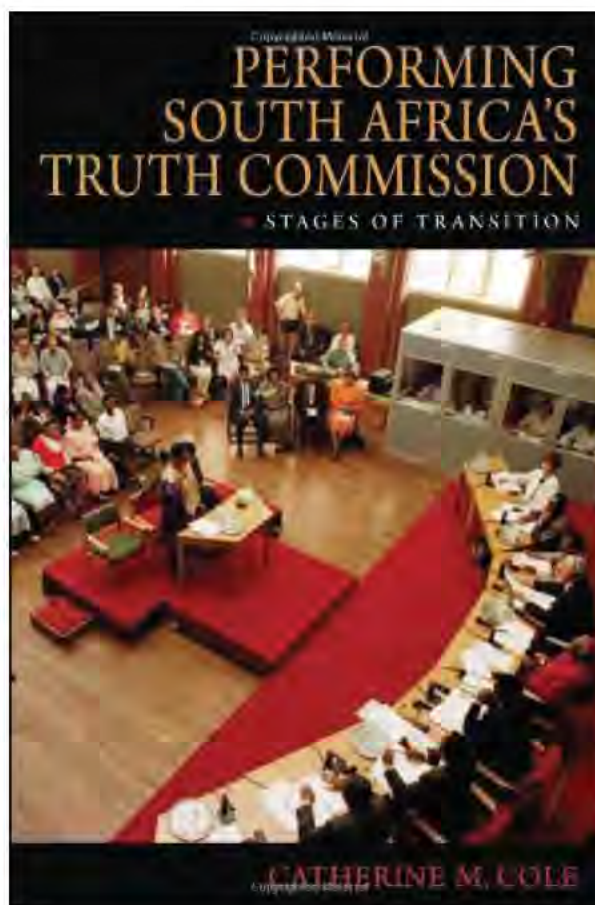
### Performing South Africa's Truth Commission: Stages of Transition

by J Finley

*Performing South Africa's Truth Commission* is a fresh and timely exploration of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). While there is a broad body of scholarship on the TRC, most of it emerges from the social sciences and tends to be quantitative, comparative, evaluative—focusing on its findings and outcomes, successes and failures. Catherine Cole's carefully researched and eloquently written study departs from the canon of outcomes-oriented literature, instead anchoring her examination of the public, performed dimensions of the TRC in the humanities.

Using the language of theatre and performance, Cole's primary materials for analysis are testimonies and interviews with members of the commission, those who interpreted the hearings, and people who testified before it. It is there, she believes where we are "more likely to understand South Africa, transitional justice, and the TRC in general beyond its Final Report."<sup>1</sup> *Performing South Africa's Truth Commission* values "shades of truth" found in the varying narratives of the TRC process over absolute theories of concepts like truth, justice, and reconciliation.

Essentially, Cole offers a powerful glimpse into of the real nuts and bolts of how South Africans experienced the TRC process—how it was literally scripted and acted out; how testimony was translated and interpreted in the hearings and on TV and the radio; and how the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy was performatively enacted through the TRC. Someone encountering theatre and



performance studies, or studies of transitional justice, or South African cultural history for the first time will have an easy time making sense of this multidisciplinary study because Cole is concise, yet potent in summarizing the significant theories within those disciplines. The language is not heavy-handed and there is minimal disciplinary jargon.

The main points of the text stress a) the centrality of performance in the law, specifically at transitional moments of state-making; b) the importance of understanding transition and reconciliation not as goals, but as deeply complex, conflicting, and unfinished processes in the "new" South Africa; and c) the necessity of making/keeping the archive of the proceedings and

mediated representations of them, a major part of public and scholarly discourse of the TRC.

*Performing South Africa's Truth Commission* is unique in its methodology, but also in its structure. The subject of the text is the theatrical dimensions of transitional justice in South Africa and the chapters are put together in a way that makes them read somewhat like a play. Although it took place fourteen years ago, as one reads one will feel like s/he is witnessing the TRC. The first chapter, for example provides the backdrop for the action that takes place in later chapters. Cole draws on the literature about transitional justice in societies that experience

mass human rights atrocities to provide a brief foundation about the innate theatricality of the law.<sup>2</sup> She uses chapter 1 to show in concrete detail the ways the TRC "staged and remade the past through a complex dynamic of watching, seeing, testifying, and bearing witness."<sup>3</sup>

The beginning chapter is compelling because it draws out the materiality of the TRC. Cole's interviews with commissioners show us how the stage is literally set upon platforms in townships where the hearings take place, how the cast of victim-testifiers was selected, and the unpredictable elements of personality, character, and emotional expressions that left many people wondering if the



TRC was “circus, ritual, drama, bioscope, [or] show.”<sup>74</sup> The chapter leaves the reader wondering though, how were the commissioners themselves chosen to participate in and administer the TRC?

Chapter 2 provides an even more specific background to the TRC, looking at three political trials in South Africa between 1956 and 1964: The Treason Trial, The Incitement Trial, and the Rivonia Trial. Cole uses chapter 2 to highlight the ability of embodied expressions like dancing, singing, and gesturing “to transmit memory over space and time.”<sup>75</sup> The Treason, Incitement, and Rivonia trials are framed as “theatres of power,” spaces where the political transitions *to* apartheid were enacted, and the latest incarnation—the TRC, is a re-enactment of sorts linked to those previous repertoires of enacting power, however, this time the transitions is *from* apartheid to democracy.

Chapter 3 is the most compelling and engaging “act” of the book, focusing in on the interpretive processes that took place in the public hearings of the TRC. Cole’s analysis of the TRC’s transcripts paints a vivid picture of how the people who participated in the TRC first-hand experienced the event. Analysis of the text and the ways in which they were reconstituted during the process of the TRC helps us understand the not so subtle difference between interpretation and translation. Her close attention to the testimony along with the embodied expressions that were as important as the words uttered, demonstrate Cole’s core argument that the hearings themselves are the defining feature of the TRC itself, a process where we get “a view into the interior realm of subjectivity under apartheid.”<sup>76</sup> This chapter pays close attention to the work of language interpreters, who were at the same time “protagonists and

mediators, actors and audience.”<sup>77</sup> Cole ushers the readers inside the translation booth—her interviews with interpreters lay bare their monumental task of rendering people’s testimony, often of grizzly human rights violations in the first person and in a language that might not be their first.

Whereas chapter 3 focuses more on the direct participants in the TRC, the victims who testified, the translators who interpreted their testimony, and the journalists who reported the event, chapter 4 is concerned with the vast majority of South Africans and the ways they experienced the commission—on TV or the radio. After watching in succession all 87 episodes of *TRC Special Report*, a weekly news digest of the TRC proceedings, Cole argues the mediated representations of the TRC via TV and radio, for all intents and purposes, were extensions of the TRC itself. The *TRC Special Report* represents a fuller exposition of the system of apartheid than the TRC’s *Final Report*, which Cole argues is an incomplete and rarely read text.

Chapter 5 “Dragons in the Living Room: Truth and Reconciliation in Repertoire, 2006,” explores the legacy of the TRC, specifically the ways in which artist Philip Miller interprets testimony from the TRC and works it into an artistic piece, *Rewind: A Cantata for Voice, Tape, and Testimony* in 2006. The closing chapter doesn’t necessarily close the curtain, but insists we continually return to the “rituals, performances, and representations [that] might animate stories from the TRC, either in aural or textual form.”<sup>78</sup>

Cole reminds us of the urgency of her project as she finally discusses the TRC in relation to the xenophobic violence that swept South Africa in May of 2008 where thousands of “foreigners” were displaced and several people lost their lives. Even while being

brief, Cole makes an excellent point that the xenophobia in 2008 was a re-articulation of apartheid-era violence with a new set of perpetrators and victims. This point begs us to keep in mind that massive acts of violence have embodied memories going back decades and centuries—forgetting, or refusing to remember the real experiences of that violence dooms us to continue inflicting the same kinds of damage over and over.

Even while the literature on the TRC is vast, *Performing South Africa’s Truth Commission* offers a substantial contribution to that canon, precisely because we hear new voices and perspectives. The methodological choice to analyze the TRC as performance gives us access to those new voices, an act on the author’s part, to place them in the public record. Cole’s use of “stage,” as the temporal and literal foundations of the TRC, makes it clear that racial reconciliation is *not* some grand ideal or a destination where we might one day happily arrive. It *is* a complicated process of human interaction that requires us to remember and forget at the same time the things people said and did—and do better.

#### (Endnotes)

- 1 p. xiv.
- 2 p. 27.
- 3 p. 6.
- 4 p. 11.
- 5 p. 29.
- 6 p. xxv.
- 7 p. 66.
- 8 p. 158.

*J Finley is a Ph.D. candidate in the African Diaspora Ph.D. program at the University of California, Berkeley.*



# Visiting Faculty Profile: Professor Robin J. Hayes

by Ronald Williams II

The Department of African American Studies is pleased to welcome Robin J. Hayes to its faculty as a visiting professor for the fall 2010 semester. Currently assistant professor of Ethnic Studies and Political Science at Santa Clara University, Hayes is a 2006 graduate of Yale University, where she earned her Ph.D. in African American Studies and Political Science. Prior to her 2007 appointment at Santa Clara University, Hayes spent one year as a postdoctoral fellow in the Department of African American Studies at Northwestern University and spent the last year of her graduate studies at Williams College where she was the Gaius Charles Bolin Predoctoral Fellow in Political Science.

At Santa Clara, Hayes teaches classes that reflect her research interests and expertise. These include courses on race and ethnicity in the United States, transnational political movements, and Black political thought and action.

During her stay at Berkeley, Hayes has been busily working on her book manuscript, *A Diasporic Underground: African Liberation and Black Power, 1957-1994*. Building on the research she conducted for her dissertation, this study *A Diasporic Underground*, employs data collected from interviews with activists who were involved in the anti-colonial movements in Algeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the People's Republic of Congo, Ghana, Guinea, South Africa, and Tanzania. Hayes

also interviewed people involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Organization of Afro-American Unity, and the Black Panther Party. Through this study, Hayes advances a theory of a "diasporic underground, which illuminates the mechanisms and effects of transnational engagement between Black Social Movements."



Hayes's other scholarly endeavors include a manuscript, *Unicorns and Black Presidents: College Student Memoirs of Race and Inequality*, currently under review. This project engages the narratives of students from several of America's most elite colleges and universities and highlights their individual struggles with race. Making an important contribution to contemporary discourses on race

and racism, the works comprising this manuscript point to the shortcomings of post racialism, multiculturalism, and civil rights but show how these modern-day attempts to blur issues of race serve as points of aggravation for people endeavoring to surpass the boundaries of race.

Closely related to this project is Hayes's work with the documentary film *Beautiful Me(s): Finding Our Revolutionary Selves in Black Cuba*. As producer, director, co-writer, and co-editor of this 45-minute documentary, Hayes's work has been shown at over fifteen screenings throughout the United States, and one in Ontario, Canada.

Other highlights of Hayes's work include her work as the curator of two digital libraries. The first, [www.beautifulmes.com](http://www.beautifulmes.com) serves as a "web-based educational resource about AfroCuban politics, history, and culture, and the historical relationship between AfroCubans and African Americans." Featured on this website are selections from *Beautiful Me(s)* and links to various resources related to the Cuban Revolution and African American Studies.

A second digital library currently in development is [www.diasporaunderground.org](http://www.diasporaunderground.org). Hayes describes this project as "a web-based educational resource about social movements, in the African Diaspora." It makes public her interviews and other work with the Black Panther Party, SNCC, and the African National Congress activists, and connects this data with links to relevant archival collections and primary and secondary source



materials designed to be of interest to researchers. The project represents Hayes commitment to making her research and work available for public consideration and consumption.

Prior to beginning her graduate studies at Yale, Hayes worked for four years as national coordinator for Pastors for Peace. A program of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, Pastors for Peace works to aid in the delivery of humanitarian aid to Latin America and the Caribbean. Here, Hayes oversaw the shipment of material aid to Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America and led human rights delegations to these places. Prior to her work with Pastors for Peace, Hayes worked as a Legal Clinic Supervisor at the Urban Justice Center in New York City. Here she helped to author grants and administer funding in support of programs for homeless clients as well as clients who needed assistance in realizing fair access to welfare benefits. Considering her long-standing interests in social movements, politics, and human rights, Hayes current role as a university professor is indeed fitting. In fact, her current projects fit neatly within her overall career trajectory.

*Ronald Williams II is a Ph. D. candidate in the African Diaspora program at the University of California, Berkeley.*

## The Revamped Erskine A. Peters Reading Room: Repent. For Our History is at Stake!

by Lola Oludimu



Stepping inside of the Erskine A. Peters Reading Room in the African American Studies department for the first time after the renovation was like a whim of fresh air. It looked and felt livelier than before. Previously the room was slightly bland and it needed work in the beautification area. The reading room is like a miniature library that holds books, journals, and other reading materials that relate to the African Diaspora—better known as the people that have some kind of African heritage. The space is also occupied by a couple of sofas, a coffee table and computers. A large desk resides at one end of the room where the worker of the room is available for any kind of assistance a visitor may need...or even for a spontaneous chat if the mood is right.

These shelves hold the essence of African Diaspora history. They carry the stories, autobiographies, biographies, monologues, self

expression, and inner anguish that come from a suppressed, degraded, and demobilized group of people. They are the testimonies of the trials and tribulations experienced by the Black race as a whole, the mountains they had and still have to climb, and the valleys that had to be crossed and still are being crossed. The collection presents the powerful strides Black people have taken to across the world, and their heartfelt leaps from sea to sea just to see themselves halted by the forces of the almighty Man, who gladly watches them land on uneven ground waiting for their detrimental fall.

It is a heartbreaking and hopeless sight when we try so hard to be heard and no one is listening. And yes, I am writing in a collective form because those that will be reading this are more than likely a relative of the African Diaspora family. Despite the continuous yelling and desperate cries we





This renovation is a new start, a rebirth, and a resurrection of this beautiful and powerful room. It holds these lonesome books that are not being touched and loved enough by the Black campus community. Instead of having the same students populate the reading room, let the numbers grow to an uncontrollable size. And to avoid hypocrisy, I too acknowledge that I am not a part of the choir.

This room is filled with books, journals, and a number of other reading materials that hold the life stories of the suppressed, degraded, and tarnished

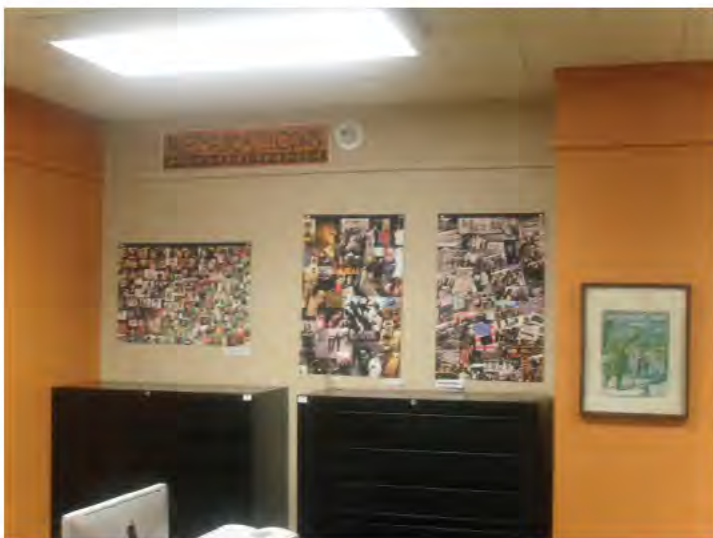
people that we know as the African Diaspora.

The writers of the African Diaspora who offer us the knowledge of these people's history, and even may have been the subject of abuse themselves, show a great deal of strength and willpower. This is shown in forms of autobiographies, biographies and other texts ranging from colonial history to the present day. These writers are owed a great deal of honor for their dedication and devotion to their work. We are capable of learning about their subjects because they have devoted a large amount of their time to doing research, which is a diligent process that requires motivation and determination. And just in case you were wondering who these

exclaim, our voices only fall onto the burning ears of the faithful choir, and onto the deaf ears of others. We continue to pour out our guts to those who already know of the ugliness, agony, and viciousness that was placed, is placed, and will be placed on us. The reading room is filled with a glory and admiration that few people know about because there is only a slow flow of visitors utilizing and appreciating it for what it is capable of: the transformation of our rotating world.



people are, just look across and down the hall from the reading room itself. Amazingly enough, we have professors who do this research in the midst of our space. Astonishing isn't it? To have them among our school community and not utilize them as a source of knowledge... which they evidently possess. In an effort to remedy this, let us start by visiting the reading room and picking up some of the reading material, or even just stopping by the reading room every once in while. I promise it will benefit you much more than it will satisfy the authors.





The choir has had its share in proclaiming and delivering the history and objections of the African Diaspora, but there needs to be an expansion of the diaspora community; on campus and off. This group of people that projects the struggles of the diaspora on a continuous basis is in need of a strong support lifeline. It is a difficult task for them to bring progress to our people when they do not have help from the people they are fighting for: us. As a collective, we must stop free riding and join in on the fight for the acknowledgment of our struggles. We need to have a real chance at conquering the world without prejudiced road blocks and we need the space for our minds to blossom with grace instead of being halted by biased stigmatism. For us to succeed, we have to be that level ground of support.



To be that level ground, we all need to know our history in order to teach and feed it to others. We must reclaim our space before we can extend our history to others. People need to know about us; people need to understand what our ancestors have been through; people need to know what we face everyday as a race and they need to know and respect where we come from. Let us raise our heads and repel the grittiness of the world. In due time, *our* history will be on the list for high school students to read

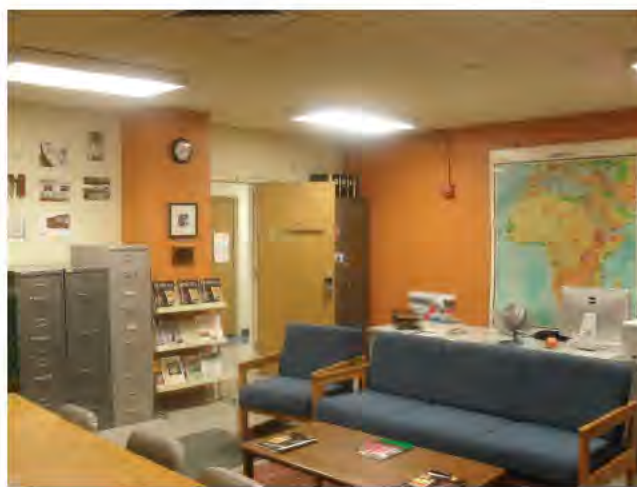
in their English courses, made into Blockbuster films, and far beyond our realm.

Therefore, there cannot be any “winging” it or shouting “Black power” without knowing the significance and background of it. Also, one does not have to be an African American Studies major to step inside of the reading room or to fill their mind with the history that is so socially, politically, and economically relevant in America, but continues to be ignored. And those who are Afro majors and do not utilize the reading room can go ahead and stand, sit, and lie in shame...you know who you are. Visiting the reading should be on a *want-to-do* basis...not a chore.



The newly renovated reading room is open and ripe for you all to take that first step into it. The revamping of this room is a celebration of its historical content, but it also filled the simple need for new paint on the walls. The renovation has brightened up the room from its previous gloominess, and with the sanction of a restoration it invites you to come within. Stop by and read for thirty minutes, or stay for a lifetime to absorb the presence of the brilliant work that is hoisted up by the shelves and that is encompassed within the room. So, run and repent to a higher power and throw yourself into the mercy of the Erskine A. Peters Reading Room before it is too late. We are waiting!

*Lola Oludimu is a UC-Berkeley undergraduate majoring in African American Studies.*



# Untitled: African American Studies

by Aya de Leon

*this is dedicated to Carmen Mitchell and to all the brilliant black people whom we've lost in the struggle, and as my predecessor June Jordan put it, whom we've lost in "the terror and the hungering and the quandaries of our African lives on this North American soil"*

## 1976: West Berkeley

My fifth grade class troops down Franklin school hallway to learn black studies

I stand behind Lavell

eye his straightened hair

crooked teeth

back when Berkeley had plenty black kids on welfare

my mom got welfare too

before she bought our house in the flatlands

slept in the living room & rented out bedrooms to Cal students to pay the mortgage

*Rodney Williams is our guest speaker on black history and we need to give him our full  
—stop that LaVell—*

*full attention* says Ms. Ono

Mr. Williams wears a dashiki

has peanut butter brown skin with a bald head and glasses

like Isaac Hayes

he is teaching me about black history

about slavery

about Jim Crow who is not a person but a system

He reads Julius Lester's *Black Folktales* and the black kids in class laugh

when High John slaps that white girl

I laugh along but don't quite get the joke cause I'm Puerto Rican

on my mom's side but she looks white

Sometimes black people look like they wanna slap her

sometimes like they wanna slap me

sometimes you gotta laugh along so nobody gets slapped

## 1982:

At Berkeley High I take the black drama class

because we've got an African American Studies department

Mr. Austin talks a lot about *the white man*-- like there's only one of them

and you need to point him out in a photograph

*And which one is the lone ranger?*

*The white man*

Mr. Austin also says things that make no sense

like: *the black man is the original man--the strongest man in the world*

and he also says: *the black woman needs to stay in her place, behind the black man*

but if the black man is so strong, why is Mr. Austin always worried about it?

Still I like black drama because I get to be with more black kids than any of my classes

except social living and PE

mostly white kids in my algebra class with Mr. Kaaya who also teaches Swahili

but I take Spanish

I grow up in Berkeley with black studies in the background of my life

like morning fog that burns off by noon or trains that whistle at night down by the bay

Some days if the wind is right

I can also hear cheering from Cal football games

like ghostly applause



1984:

At sixteen I graduate  
apply to Cal but get waitlisted  
go to Harvard instead  
I emigrate from Peoples Republic of Berkeley  
Black girl lost Boston frost blast monstrous cost

Nothing makes sense at Harvard

The chair of the black studies department is

*The white man*

I thought black studies was Rodney Williams telling Lavell

he doesn't need that conk to straighten his hair because

our ancestors were kings and queens in Africa

Which is something else about black studies that doesn't make sense:

how could *everybody* have been kings and queens in Africa?

But when I go to study Africa at Harvard, they only have three courses in the whole college

no African languages

less than my high school!

1986:

Finally! Martin Luther King's birthday has become a national holiday

Today would have been Dr. King's 57<sup>th</sup> birthday!

On this cold January Sunday me and my roommates head to the Harvard dining hall for lunch

New England cuisine has four food groups                      sugar/salt/grease/starch

We spice up the meal by playing Stevie Wonder on a boom box to celebrate Dr. King.

*Happy Birthday to ya!*

*Happy Birthday to ya!*

*Happy--*

Suddenly *turn off that music!*

dorm administrator silences us

Later he stands at my cluttered dorm room door

stammering an awkward apology in front of a clothes drying rack with my

bras/underwear/stonewashed 80s jeans

*Didn't realize about the holiday...Thought you guys were just playing it for...some friend...*

*...I don't know*

How can you be standing in my private dorm room in plain view of my underwear?

How can you not know it's Dr. King's birthday?

Why do I feel worse after the apology?

Autumn in Cambridge with bright sun and fiery leaves on trees

a bunch of us linger outside the law school

after some race-related event

Mike, Shawn, Lanette, Barack and Rob

just chillin

I barely know them

just hungry to be around black people

At Harvard I learn that it will take more than SAT scores to succeed

So I proudly develop low-grade eating disorder and enter dysfunctional long-distance relationship

to cope with suffocating alienation

I visit home

walk up the hill to UC Berkeley's Black Graduation

enraptured with masses of blackness

Raye Richardson of Marcus Books



puff of crinkly hair twinkling with gray  
resonant voice booms out to black caps in Greek Theater  
*resist in the face of racism*  
*hold your humanity in the midst of hardship*  
I cry to hear her tongue speak words I have lost in east coast frost  
*this is African American studies*  
like an equation Mr. Kaaya could have taught me:  
scholarly excellence+black achievement+community=African American Studies  
vision of black graduates/black caps in the air silhouetted against Berkeley sky shores me up  
to face final years at Harvard  
move off campus  
graduate with honors

1995:

I drop the boyfriend and say affirmations  
While UC Regents drop affirmative action  
Learn to love my thick shape and eat for nutrition  
But the crowd's looking thin at the Black Graduation  
Meanwhile OJ Simpson creates media saturation  
So much bad news I turn off the television

2004:

I still don't have TV but keep hearing about this Obama guy during the democratic convention  
Obama-Obama-Barack Obama  
Emails about his speech flurry like Boston blizzards  
Funny  
he has the same name as that guy from Harvard Law School  
Not until I see a photo do I realize *it's the same guy*  
Never dreamed we could have a president I actually met once

Never dreamed that one day  
I could stand in Professor June Jordan's shoes  
direct Poetry for the People  
help students find lost tongue find words speak  
send student teachers guest speakers into Berkeley schools like Rodney Williams  
Also never dreamed that twenty years later  
I would sit as faculty on that same Greek Theater stage for Black Graduation  
where Dr. Raye Richardson spoke healing balm to my lost girl self

African American studies holds all this:  
Lavell doesn't need to straighten his hair  
Like kingdoms? – we had some impressive ones in Africa  
Non-black scholars—even *the white man*—can study our diaspora  
We got the Afro-Latino working group to illuminate my Hispanophone roots  
and we got strong black women scholars  
to clarify my high school teacher Mr. Austin's contradictions about gender

In African American studies  
Poetry for the People welcomes everyone wanna find that balm      that lost tongue  
    Laotian, Croation, Arabic, Spanish, Korean, Haitian  
speak healing spells to our own selves  
put all our underwear on display together  
resonant voices ring in the griot tradition of Africa  
in the Greek Theater or Zellerbach or the Morrison Room



And in these brutal and bleak times  
when so many of our people        in and out of these halls  
feel fragmented/shattered/dissected like a continent at a conference in Berlin  
for colored girls when the rainbow is not enuf        who can't seem to find that way out of no way  
we grieve for what we've lost and for whom we've lost and for all we've lost  
And then we will rise up from our grief and return to the work of searching and researching  
and tell the stories of our people  
back to the work of stitching ourselves and each other into wholeness along the way  
And although sometimes we may feel so alone, we are never alone because we walk in a tradition

And in the name of June Jordan and Reginald Jones and Barbara Christian  
and Vèvè Clark and Erskine Peters and Marlon Riggs and Albert Johnson  
Yes

in the name of June Jordan  
    and Reginald Jones  
        and Barbara Christian  
            and Vèvè Clark  
                and Erskine Peters  
                    and Marlon Riggs  
                        and Albert Johnson  
                            who urge us on with ghostly applause  
                            in the African tradition  
                            we welcome our guests  
                            we welcome our kin  
                            we welcome our ancestors  
                            back home

*Aya de Leon is the Director of Poetry for the People in the African American Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley. "Untitled: African American Studies" was commissioned for the opening reception of Born of Struggle: Forty Years of African American Studies at UC Berkeley which is on exhibit through April 4, 2011 in Doe Memorial Library.*



# Meet the First Year Cohort

**Christina Bush**

**B.A. English and History, University of Missouri – Columbia**

**M.A. African American and African Studies, Ohio State University**



Christina earned B.A.s in both English and History from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She also recently earned an M.A. from Ohio State University in African American and African Studies. During her time at Ohio State she served as an Outreach Consultant for the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing engaging issues of youth literacy in Columbus Public Schools. Her research interests include mis- and disembodied black masculinity, and how notions of racial and gender authenticity are mediated through consumption and commodification.

**Robert Connell**

**B.A. Environmental Studies (Political Science minor), York University, Toronto**

Robert Connell earned his Bachelor of Environmental Studies degree with honors and a minor in Political Science from York University in Toronto. His current research focuses on conflicts over resource extraction and sovereignty rights between Maroons and the Jamaican state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His corollary research interests include indigeneity and indigenous struggle, development studies, ethnic multiplicity in the African Diaspora, global environmental politics and ecological economics.





**Jarvis Givens**

**B.A. Business (African American Studies minor), University of California-Berkeley**

Jarvis Givens is a first year in the program and recent graduate from Berkeley's Haas Undergraduate School of Business, class of 2010. He is a big movie fanatic, particularly black films from the late 80s to mid 90s. Compton, California is where he was born and raised, and even though it is not that far away he doesn't seem to get back as often as he would like. His research interests involve socio-historical analysis of Black urban communities in the post modern civil rights era (1968 - mid 1990s), with a particular focus on the activity of Black males.



**Amy Wolfson**

**M.A. African and African Diaspora Studies, Florida International University**

**B.A. International Affairs and French, James Madison University**



Amy recently completed eight months of multi-sited fieldwork in Haiti and Miami and graduated with an M.A. in African and African Diaspora Studies from Florida International University. She received two awards for academic excellence and community activism. Her research focuses on international development and the racist representations and metanarratives that pervade aid networks. She examines how discourse and daily processes of development, and donor-beneficiary power relations permeate social spaces and influence the ethos, culture, and Black subjectivities in "failed" states.



# Meet Me in the Circle: the Second International Maroon Conference

by Rob Connell and Mario Nisbett

In June of this year, we attended Meet Me in the Circle: the Second International Maroon Conference in Jamaica, covering subject matter that is directly related to our fields of study. Rob Connell presented a paper entitled "Come Hell or High Water: Surinamese Maroons in the Globalized Economy," an expository essay detailing the deleterious impact of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century development projects on the Surinamese Maroons. The three day conference brought scholars from different parts of the world together with Maroons and other members of the Jamaican society in celebration of Quao Victory Day.

Nestled in the western reaches of the Blue Mountains, Charles Town in Portland Parish is a rural community of about a thousand Maroons primarily engaged in tourism and agriculture. The defining feature of Charles Town is the centrally situated Safu yard, the location of much of the conference activities, an open air courtyard of wood and palm leaves decorated by silhouetted paintings representing Maroon life and struggle. Portland Parish is famous for being the greenest, most fertile area of Jamaica, and the wildlands surrounding Charles Town exemplify this. Mountain peaks tower over the town, giving way to lush jungle ravines blanketed by fog. From this vantage point it is easy to see that the landscape of Jamaica's interior was one of the Maroons' best allies; this is the perfect terrain in which to fight a guerilla war.

One of the most important results of that war for the Maroons was the enshrinement of their autonomy within the wider Jamaican

polity, after forcing the British to sue for peace in 1739. Despite the existence of the treaty, the separate legal status of the Maroon towns (of which there are three more: Scots Hall; Moore Town; and Accompong) is currently a hotly

Maroon commander who presided over the Windward Maroon treaty negotiations with the British. The events surrounding Quao Victory Day highlight the continued significance of the struggle for Maroon autonomy.



contested issue in Jamaica, and has been since their very formation. The Jamaican government, in pursuing a policy of assimilation toward the Maroons, has been loath to recognize their treaty-stipulated sovereignty, a status that the Maroons are determined to preserve. Superficially, Charles Town looks much like many of its neighboring, non-Maroon rural communities; however, the Maroons clearly see themselves as a distinct culture within Jamaica, sharing a unique history.

The conference was timed to coincide with Quao Victory Day, a distinctly Maroon celebration commemorating the founding of the community. Quao was the

At the opening of each of the three days of celebration there were libations offered and callings to the ancestors to guide the proceedings. The internationally known Charles Town Drummers and Dancers provided entertainment and a glimpse of Maroon spiritual practice throughout the course of the conference. From time to time one of the participants in the ritual dancing would go into a trance, producing an atmosphere of greater intimacy and visceral connection with Maroon history and spirituality. Another central aspect of the three day celebration was the hearty and delicious Maroon cuisine, cooked fresh in the Safu yard. The fare consisted of cassava,



bammy, roasted fish, jerk pork, stew, rice and peas, boiled green bananas, cassava bread, ackee, fried sweet potato, yams, ginger drinks and coconut water. A further highlight of the Quao Victory Celebration was the coming together of many Maroons from different communities throughout the island, including Colonel Sterling of Moore Town, and Colonel Peddie from Accompong.

On the first day of the conference, Colonel Frank Lumsden, head of the Charles Town Maroon Council, took the conference participants on a hike up a mountainside to an abandoned 18<sup>th</sup> century coffee plantation. Along the way the colonel would describe features of the terrain that were economically or militarily important to the Maroons. For example, the fish in the river that flowed near the mountain were an important source of protein for the Maroons. Also, at particular points along the trail, Colonel Lumsden would describe the specific survival tactics and strategies the Maroons would employ in their struggle against the British.

Largely organized through the combined efforts of Dr. Frances Botkins of the English Department at Towson University, Colonel Lumsden and Charles Campbell, a Maroon elder, the Meet Me in the Circle conference featured fifteen panelists presenting their research over the span of two days leading up to Quao Victory Day and interspersed with the various festivities mentioned above. Echoing the multidisciplinary corpus of Maroon studies, the panelists offered examinations of Maroon life grounded in literary theory, historical analysis, development studies and performance pieces. The distinctiveness of the conference went far beyond the multidisciplinary composition of the panels, however, for the conference as a whole was designed

to incorporate the participation of the Maroons themselves. Campbell was particularly engaging with the panelists and audience, often highlighting discrepancies between the conclusions of academic research and the Maroons' own understandings of their history and culture and the incongruity between academics themselves. Colonel Lumsden reminded the conference that there were some things that cannot be captured by academia, such as the spiritual component of Maroon life, of which the Maroons deem to be of essential importance to their survival, in both the past and the present. Such things can only be learned through lived experience.

in Suriname in 2012 to coincide with the 250 year anniversary celebration of the signing of the first Maroon treaty in that country.

*Rob Connell and Mario Nisbett are graduate students in the African Diaspora Ph.D. program at the University of California, Berkeley.*



One the most fascinating aspects of the conference was observing the interactions between Salomon Emanuels, a Saramakan Maroon and scholar of cultural anthropology, and Colonel Lumsden. There were intense discussions about the similarities and differences between the Maroons of Jamaica and Suriname as well as the possibility for future cooperation between the two groups. Emanuels even suggested that the international Maroon conference should be held

# INTELLECTUAL TENDERNESS

by Arif Gamal

YOUR FATHER'S  
SCENT WAS  
UNFORGETTABLE  
A FRESHNESS ALL  
AROUND HIM LIKE  
THE GRASS AND  
WHEN HE SHAVED  
'OLD SPICE'  
AND THERE WAS SOMETHING  
IN HIS WAVY HAIR

HIS ARMS SO SMOOTH  
OF YELLOW COLOUR  
HIS HANDSOME EYES  
OF WARM LIGHT BROWN

WHEN HE CAME HOME  
FROM WORK  
YOU FOLLOWED HIM AROUND  
HE CHANGED HIS CLOTHES  
YOU HUNG UP  
CAREFULLY HIS  
SUIT AND  
FOLDED THINGS  
AND SET OUT THE  
DJELLABA HE WOULD WEAR  
AND TOLD A LOT  
OF STORIES OR  
WOULD HEAR FROM HIM  
NEWS OF THAT DAY  
AND HE LOVED  
HAVING YOU AROUND  
MORE THAN THE OLDER SONS

HE NEEDED  
INTELLECTUAL  
TENDERNESS  
YOU WERE THE ONE

AND IF TROUBLE CAME  
HE CALLED FOR YOU

YOU WERE FOURTEEN  
AND IN AN EARLY HOUR  
OF THE MORNING  
SOMEONE SHOOK  
YOUR SHOULDER ROUGHLY  
WAKING YOU FROM SLEEP  
IT WAS YOUR ELDEST BROTHER  
ASIM HE WAS BORN SEVERE  
AND WENT INTO THE MILITARY  
GROWING STRICTER EVEN

NOW HE WAS ENGAGED  
TO MARRY BUT THE FATHER  
OF THE FIANCÉE  
EXTREMELY RICH  
WAS SUDDENLY AT THE  
FINAL MINUTE AFTER A  
WHOLE YEAR OF ELABORATE  
PLAN MUCH OPPOSED  
FORBIDDING  
ANY WEDDING

AND THE FATHERS MET  
IN CONFLICT  
YOURS PROTESTING  
SUCH A VIOLENT  
CHANGE OF MIND  
WHEN ALL WAS READY

YOUR BROTHER WOKE YOU  
ROUGHLY SAYING  
THAT YOUR FATHER  
WANTED YOU  
AND TO EVERYTHING HE SAYS  
THE BROTHER WARNED  
YOU MUST ANSWER 'YES'  
SAY NOTHING ELSE

WHenever there was  
trouble then  
your father called  
for you  
the eldest brother  
was not close



YOUR SECOND BROTHER  
ADIL WAS ALL ABSORBED  
WITH STRENUOUS WORK  
IN MEDICAL SCHOOL

AND IT WAS SOMETHING  
IN PARTICULAR

FOR WHICH YOUR FATHER  
WANTED ONLY YOU  
HE NEEDED INTELLECTUAL  
TENDERNESS

YOU WERE FOURTEEN  
YOU WENT INTO THE ROOM  
YOUR FATHER SAT UP  
IN THE BED  
AND BECKONED YOU  
TO SIT NEAR HIM

HE COULD NOT REST  
HE TOLD YOU ALL  
THE DETAILS OF THE STRESS  
AND WHAT HE TRIED  
TO DO OR COULD DO NEXT  
YOUR BROTHER TOLD YOU  
'ONLY ANSWER YES'

YOU THOUGHT  
OF ALL THE THINGS  
YOUR FATHER SAID  
AND YOU BEGAN  
TO SPEAK AT LENGTH

YOUR FATHER LISTENED  
MOST ATTENTIVELY  
WHILE LEANING ON HIS ELBOW  
THEN YOU SMOOTHED  
THE PILLOW  
FOR HIM AND YOU SAID

YOU CAN'T CONTROL  
EVERYTHING

HE RELEASED A LONG  
LONG BREATH AND  
LAYING HIS HEAD UPON THE PILLOW  
FINALLY SLEPT.

*Arif Gamal teaches at the College of Marin and summer sessions in UC-Berkeley's African American Studies department. "Intellectual Tenderness" is an excerpt from his book Morning in Serra Mattu: A Nubian Ode.*



# *In loving Memory of Carmen Nicole Mitchell (1972-2010)*

*Oh, Carmen, you are loved and missed. And remembered...*

*To all who knew and loved her: She was truly a special soul. Uniquely kind, caring, talented, beautiful, and brilliant. Although she is physically gone, her spirit shines forever in our hearts and in the world. Thank you all so much for your condolences and beautiful words and thoughts about my sweet, loved beyond words, special human being and sister . . . It has been greatly appreciated and comforting to me and my family during this difficult time and we thank you all for that.*

*-Aundrey Mitchell*

*Honoring the life of my friend Carmen Mitchell. She was a mentor, community organizer, scholar, artist and educator, and so much more. She lifted up others through her leadership. She wrote about the potential of music to heal us as individuals and communities, and herself practiced this craft for us in the disco and over the airwaves. My life has been changed by her kindness, thoughtfulness and vision.*

*-Theodora Yang Copley*

*Carmencita,  
You are beautiful.  
You are love.  
You are peace.  
You radiate positive agency.  
You have blessed my life.  
Much love,  
Dawn*

*Carmen was a true warrior with a gentle soul. She was full of empathy and light, creativity and honor. We will miss you, sis.*

*-Chris Jenkins*

*Besides being a former GWP coordinator, she was a fierce warrior, bright and beautiful spirit, stunning academic, singer, advocate, and friend. We will miss you, Carmen!*

*-The Graduate Women's Project*

*The only thing that rivaled her smooth, rich and sonorous voice was her genuine, welcoming, unconditional and nonjudgmental smile. Carmen truly illuminated the lives of everyone who was fortunate to come into contact with her. The marvelous thing about Carmen is that she would probably felt the exact opposite-- that SHE was lucky to come into contact with such amazing people. I take comfort in knowing that her spirit remains with us and that her legacy continues in the lessons about life that she shared with us.*

*-Derrick Gaye*



## EULOGY FROM OCTOBER 9, 2010 MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR CARMEN MITCHELL

*My sister Carmen was born with wings. She was born to fly, to explore, to touch down upon the lives of others with her generosity of spirit, kindness, and love. She soared above adversity, and in turn, showed others how they might also do the same.*

*Yes, Carmen was born with wings. I remember the day she arrived; it was Thanksgiving Day and as the turkey was going into the oven, Carmen announced that she was ready to come out into the world. When she came home from the hospital she was golden and glowing just like a freshly baked pie. The sweet aroma of her being pervaded every inch of space wherever and whenever she was present.*

*There were 4 of us kids, my older sister Ivy, myself, my brother Guy, and Carmen. We were latchkey kids. We entertained ourselves with music, reading, art, and interesting homemade games. We also watched a lot of TV, played with a lot of matches, and laughed at the dinner table. Carmen never got into trouble as the 3 of us other siblings sometimes did. She would just sit and watch, giggling at our mischievousness. She was not about drama or discord. She was the peacemaker, the calming voice of reason and stability, all the while commanding a quiet strength unmatched by any metal.*

*After high school, Carmen attended Oberlin College. There she blossomed. She was interested and committed to expanding her realms of experience in the world, with people, and with herself. She was active in campus life, advocating for students, she had her own radio program at the college radio station. Most importantly, she was involved in the work of bringing issues of equality and social justice in regards to gender, race, and economic status. It was during this time that she became a Mellon Mays Fellow.*

*Oberlin helped her develop a unique awareness of culture and cultures outside of her own. This was the spark that lit her ever purposeful quest to know and to understand others not just for the sake of knowing, but to be able to affect change and to contribute to the betterment of society and all of its people.*

*After graduation from Oberlin, Carmen continued on. She did so many things, touched so many lives. She interned as a mentor for underprivileged children in Oakland, CA, she was a union and community organizer, and she worked for the organization Democracy Now in New York City. Carmen was also pursuing one of her deepest passions, music. She had begun the work of documenting the underground music cultural scene of house and club music. This evolved into an in depth study of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, and inclusiveness. She was redefining the traditional definition of ethnomusicology to one which reflected a more contemporary cultural sense which was cross referential, inclusive rather than exclusive. She adopted the DJ name of Princess Tam Tam after the legendary icon Josephine Baker. She attended UCLA for a masters degree in African American studies with an emphasis in Ethnomusicology. This passion took her places all around the world to such places as London, Germany, and Japan.*

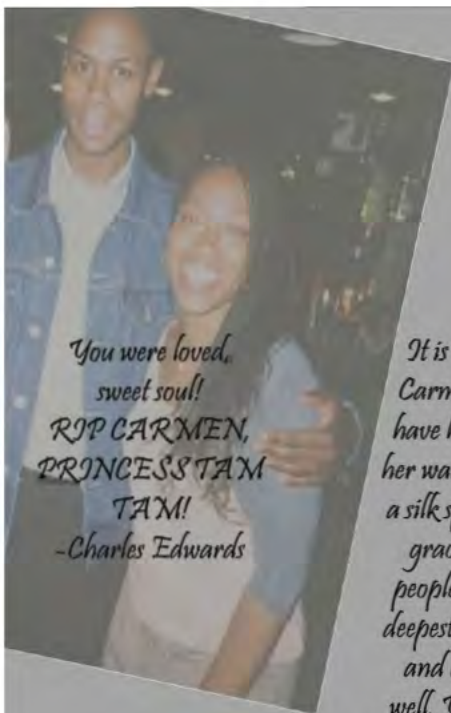
*The list of Carmen's accomplishments are numerous, from the papers that she wrote and presented, the conferences she attended and organized, the interviews she conducted, to the musical talent that she brought forth and participated in with her own beautifully creative voice.*

*Carmen Nicole Mitchell was born with wings and she used them well, but she always made time for others and she made sure that she was connected. Connected to family, friends, colleagues, and the causes of the people. She was always there for you with her gentle, calm spirit helping you to see the good in all situations. She is and always will be our Thanksgiving.*

*Thank you Nick (Carmen),  
Rest sweet soul in peace and love.*

*-Aundrey Mitchell*





You were loved,  
sweet soul!  
**RIP CARMEN,  
PRINCESS TAM  
TAM!**  
-Charles Edwards

*Que descanses en paz Carmen. We will miss you.  
Your uniqueness touched us all.*  
-Jeanette Hanna-Ruiz



Long live Princess Tam-Tam,  
The Ballistic Afronaunt,  
Shaquanda Girl!!!! Carmen we  
love you and you will be missed!  
-Leigh A. Willis

It is rare that one comes across a woman such as  
Carmen. I consider myself extremely fortunate to  
have had the privilege to be in her presence, receive  
her warm smile, and dance to the music she spun like  
a silk spider's web. She was the embodiment of love,  
grace, strength, music and light. We are better  
people for having... known her and loved her. My  
deepest and sincerest condolences to Carmen's family  
and loved ones. Rest in Peace Princess and sleep  
well. You will be sorely missed, but never forgotten.  
-Rashida Bryant

Carmen, thank you for being the  
person to make me laugh and feel  
strong during some very crazy times.  
I'm glad we had them, and I will  
love you forever.

-Robin Amador

I think about your warm  
heart, beautiful voice and  
cute laugh. I will miss you.  
-Kaho Abe

I am shocked and devastated to hear about the  
passing of a dear friend and colleague...sending  
you love Carmen Mitchell, always and always.  
-Yomaira C. Figueroa

What can I say to such a beautiful and inspiring  
lady! I just found out about your passing and  
I'm greatly saddened!!! I will never forget you  
Carmen!!!! You will TRULY be missed!!!  
-Sherene Rodriguez

Rest in peace.  
You live on in our  
hearts.

-Alexandra Sasha  
Graifman

You will live long and beautiful  
in our memories Carmen. But  
you will be terribly missed. Rest  
in peace.

-Tsitsi Ella Taji

Carmen, you were my friend and my  
laughter. You were much loved by anyone  
who met you. You will be terribly missed.  
I am proud to have known you.  
-Andrea DeAngelis

I too, just recently found out about Carmen's passing. It truly  
hurts my heart. She was an inspiration and a very kind soul.  
She was a dynamic woman. She will be missed.  
-Angela Camille

I am very saddened to hear  
about Carmen's death. She was  
one of the kindest persons I  
have met. A kindness that is so  
rare in this world.  
-Lisa Dettmer





Dearest sweet Carmen. I'm shocked and saddened, but mostly I'll miss you. I'll miss your bright smile, kind eyes, and wise words so much, girl.  
- Yenhoa Ching

Carmen, I can't believe your sweet smile & warm embrace are gone from this earth. I pray for you to reach your spiritual home & that you continue to shine your bright down upon us. We love you, we miss you & we will never forget you! RIP my Dear Carmen!  
- Jj Arévalo

Beautiful laughs we shared, will miss you,  
Love, Jas

Much love to a beautiful woman with an incredible passion for justice. I will always remember your smile.  
- Diem Nguyen

RIP Carmen. You were taken away too soon. Your smile lit up a room and you brightened everyone's day. -Laura Young

Much love to a woman with such a warm heart and comforting smile. May you rest in peace Carmen  
- Jessica Hope

Carmen...you are not with us anymore. I'm so saddened. I can still remember clearly that the time we met at the first and the last. You always had a beautiful smile and I loved it!!  
RIP Carmen.  
-Chiho Fujii

Missing your sweet smile and beautiful spirit. Love to you and those you leave behind.  
- Rachel Ghoston Donaldson

Carmensita, thank you for being an amazing individual and for all that you have given and will continue to give to this world. you will be missed. your energy, your vibes, your beautiful smile will forever live in us. sending you and your family much love.  
-Cat Gutierrez

Dear Carmen, I am in shock and so saddened to hear that you are gone. I will always remember your bright smile. My thoughts are with you and your family.  
- Young Yoo

You had such a radiant smile, Carmen. Thoughts are with you today.  
-Em Arpawong

RIP Carmen! I can't believe that you aren't with us anymore. You always knew how to make people smile because your smile was so infectious. You will truly be missed, by people from not only in your hometown, but from all over the world. We love you girl!  
-Becky Wassel





Dearest Carmen, I regret not writing and catching up with you when I had the chance...will never forget the impact you had at Oberlin and in my heart ♥ V Van Nguyen with love

I feel so lucky to have spent time with Carmen at Oberlin, in class, WOBC, third world coop...she was such an incredibly beautiful person. I still can't believe she's no longer in this mortal world. Wishing the family much strength and patience. Will never forget her.

-Gouhar Nayeem Rizvi

She was so kind to me and great during my days at Oberlin. She and I shared the love of music in common.  
-Minitria Elisabeth Slade

Though saddened greatly, Carmen, your life was so full and meant so much to so many people. We didn't see each other after college much but during that short time, you became one of the women who went into my file of Women I Hope to Emulate Someday. And that was in college. Thank you so much for who you are.

-Cathy Elliott

The Oberlin family is sad.....dear, dear Carmen. -Janene Brunson

Dearest Carmen: I am deeply grateful for having crossed paths in this lifetime with you. You know, you were one of the very first people I met at Oberlin, before we enrolled? Remember, we got invited to that special People of Color Orientation when we got accepted?? LOL!! That was awesome! And then getting to know you ...throughout the years: your incredible artistry, creativity, social activism; your warmth, kindness, and authenticity; your honesty and hilarious sense of humor; ahhhh!!!! Man, I remember having heated discussions at TWC, and you would come in midway at dinner and just BLAM: laid it OUT! You spoke the truth, girl, always and ALL WAYS => Yup. And then seeing you here and there over the years since Oberlin, on the east coast, on the west coast.... birthdays and baby showers in NYC; celebrating Obama in Berkeley.... Thanks for everything you've given to us here; you are such a special soul. Love you.

xoxox Alison

I remember when I first saw Carmen at Oberlin and wondered-Who is that amazing lady? She was talented, kind and genuine, someone most folks could learn from. She made a lasting impression on everyone who had the good luck to make her acquaintance, or cross her trailblazing path. Rest in Peace Carmen, you are dearly missed  
-Kayla Williams .

It really saddens me to see a person I was so fond of leave us so quickly. I have to admit it just reminds me of our vulnerability and the need to cherish this gift to the fullest. I cannot get into her page but I send Carmen and my other obie friends the most sincere best wishes.  
-Love, Camilo

I just found out about Carmen's passing while visiting friends in Oberlin this weekend. I was devastated to hear the news. We have lost a gentle, loving and fierce spirit and friend. DJ'ing and working at WOBC with Carmen were some of the highlights of my time in college. I send my deepest sympathies to her family.

-Meg Coward



*Rest in Peace Friend!!! You  
will be surely missed on this side.*  
- Gniesha Y. Dimwiddie

*Love always, Carmen.*  
- Jennifer M Lum

*Rest in peace Carmen.  
Thank you for the beauty  
that you brought to our  
lives. We will miss you.*

- Tacuma Peters

*Rest in peace Carmen. It was a  
blessing to have known you*  
- Atif Aziz

*RIP Carmen... you will be  
missed! xx*  
- Julia Machajski

*Dearest Carmen,*

*When I started my year at Berkeley, you were one of the very first people to welcome me to the department. Do you remember? You told me about the great time you had in the city where I grew up—Berlin. We were laughing a lot because you definitely met Berlin in some different ways, and I disagreed with you about some points. We actually had a great time comparing your Berlin with mine. And then you signed up for my course, and I loved having you with our small group.*

*And you were not just part of the course, but of my life on the sixth floor. You often walked by my office door and greeted me with the biggest smile. I can still hear your "Hi Heike!" Your smile, your warmth, and your welcoming personality were with me throughout my entire year at Berkeley and were definitely one of many reasons why my year at Berkeley was so beautiful.*

*You were actually supposed to be part of our group in Berlin during the summer for our hip hop research, but things did not work out then.*

*Shortly before I left Berkeley, we met one last time, and you told me about your conditions. You were so hopeful at this time that all this would only be temporary. I promised you that we would stay in contact and that I would fly back for your exam. And we did stay in contact during these months after my departure, but all your e-mails by then had lost the hope that I had still seen when I left. When Stephen called me in Germany and told me about you, I was only partly surprised. And many questions started then too.*

*Whatever the reason, dear Carmen, I will always remember your wonderful personality and your smile. Thank you for all the good times with you. And I know that the peace you were missing in the end is with you now.*

*With love,  
Heike*

*Rest in Peace Carmen...*  
-Xavier Livermon

*Rest in Power*  
-Shaun Ossei-Owusu

*Your spirit lives on. Rest in peace.*  
-LaToya Beck

*Rest in peace Carmen...*  
-David Davis

*I'm glad to have met you. You will  
be missed. Rest in peace, Carmen.*  
-Rick Tuazon

*Carmen.. I really like you. I will  
never forget you. We are good  
friends eternally.*  
-Chieko Wakamatsu

*A truly vibrant and inspiring person.  
Carmen you will be missed.*  
-Natasha Green



Bodiless now, may / you rest demonless wrapped in / ancestors' star light

-Kara Alexis Young

Peace and love to you  
and your family!

-Samuel K. Chung

I was blessed to call you friend.  
Rest in peace, sweet spirit. You will  
be deeply missed. My thoughts and  
prayers are with your family at this  
difficult time.

-Limmie Pulliam Jr.

I love you my dear  
friend. I feel blessed to  
have known you in this  
lifetime. Rest in peace  
and love my friend.

May the ancestors  
continue to bless you  
on your journey. 'ofa  
atu si'i tokoua/ much  
love dear sistah

-Fui

... although it was far too short, I'm grateful for  
the time we had with you. To your family, I am  
so very sorry and wish you strength during this  
time. Carmen was extraordinary.

-Amy Evans

Rest in peace Carmen. Condolences to your family.

-Nina Spensley

To Carmen's family,  
know there are infinite  
threads of sorrow and  
celebration being woven  
now for your beautiful  
sister, daughter, gift of a  
woman. May they help  
wrap you in comfort.

-Rebecca Renard

The god of dirt  
came up to me many times  
and said so many wise and  
delectable things, I lay  
on the grass listening

to his dog voice,  
crow voice,  
frog voice; now  
he said, and now  
and never once mentioned forever,

which nevertheless has always  
been, like a sharp iron hoof,  
at the center of my mind.

One or two things are all  
you need to travel over the  
blue pond, over the deep  
roughage of the trees and  
through the stiff flowers of  
lightning—some deep memory  
of pleasure, some cutting  
knowledge of pain

Love you, Carmen.

-Yen

Carmen, i hope where you  
are there's great music and  
delicious food 24/7. i'll see  
you there later. much love.

-Irene J Nexica



Dearest Carmen,

I wish I could tell you how you impacted my life in the short time I knew you. When you gave me a space to teach about being a DJ to women, you plowed the field for all seeds of young women DJs that have already sprung forth. As these women teach other women, you have rippled through us the love you had for music and the respect you had for its power. Thank you. And I will have you with me when I, and other women DJs pack the dance floor and bring people to rejoice!

Always Love, DJ Rosa la Rumorosa, Rosa Hernandez

heart. broken. New Media queen, sis in technology thinking & love. Brown skin lovely.

-Lisa Marie

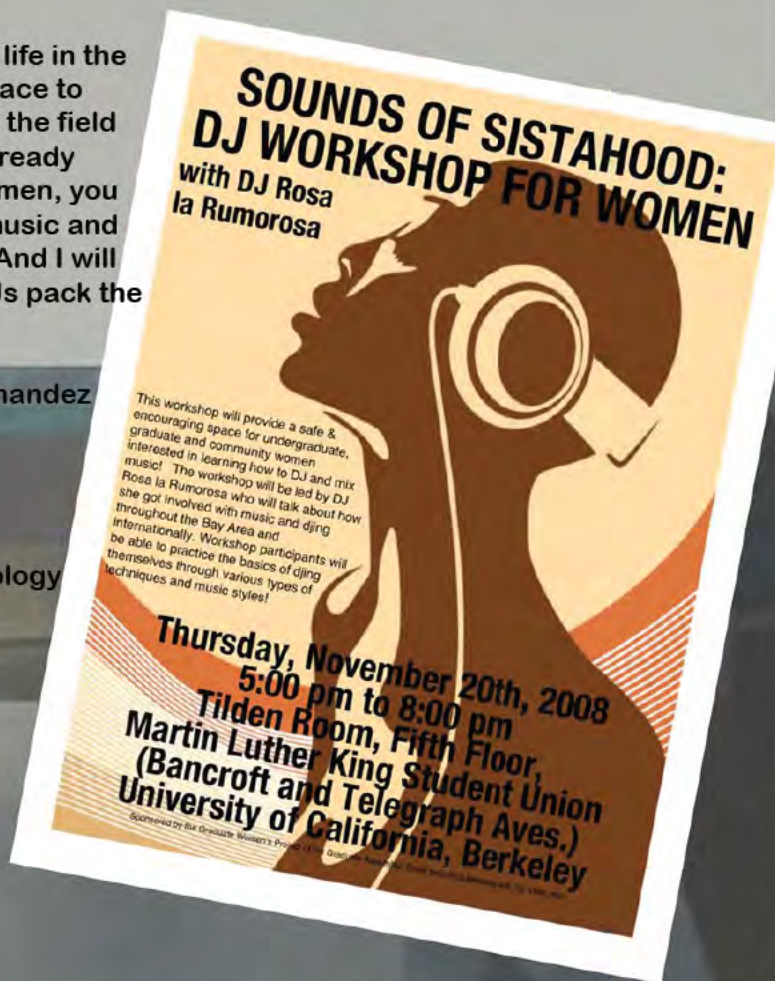
My Digital Diva. We will miss your quiet storm & guiding light. Dance in Peace.

-Reggie Royston



You told everyone who met you hear the world in colors we never knew existed. Thank you Carmen. -Kiese Laymon

A testament to Carmen's beautiful brain and heart: [www.divadelight.org](http://www.divadelight.org). 'Diva Delight' is a subjective mediation mixed with personal thoughts and abstract speculations on house music and house divas. -Irene J Nexica



Now Spirit Radio has a new voice. A new angel of love on the ones-and-twos. Our ancestors, Those Who Have Traveled, are all lighting the ...dance floor up to the beat of Princess Tam Tam's soulful sounds, or waiting on the walls to engage in some intergalactic post-colonial discourse, shared in the mellifluous, honey and soul-dipped cadence of a true DIVA.





Very grateful for her intellectual contributions and innovations... I am grateful for her research and brilliance she shared.

eBLACK STUDIES WORKSHOP 2008

We miss you Carmen  
- Ryan Rideau

Carmen, we love and miss you on the sixth floor of Barrows Hall. Your smile, beautiful eyes and kind gentle spirit will never be forgotten.

-Lindsey Villarreal Herbert

I was just thinking how I missed hearing "hey girl" when I'm on the 6th floor. Miss you  
- Vielka Cecilia Hoy.

Carmen, we will not forget you. Thank you for being that smiling presence at the Ida Jackson House Welcome Party who talked softly and calmly with me about my work and my life amid the bustle and confusion of that first week of settling in. Although I knew you only briefly, I can tell by the way your friends and other colleagues mourn your passing that you really lived. There can be no prosthesis for your loss.

Thank you for living.

--Omar Ricks, TDPs doctoral student,  
former Manville resident

Carmen your spirit touched everyone who came in contact with you. We will miss you and cherish our memories of you, rest in peace.

Roshlyn Sandy

As one of my first & dearest friends @ cal, you always made my day & reminded me everything was always going to work out.

Your spirit & voice are with us. Much love!

-Norene Rose Ybarra

The work she left behind will be an endless reminder of how incredible she was.

-Kayla Williams

Hi Carmen,

You've inspired me with your gifted intellect and radiant smile, in particular. I want to thank you for encouraging me to invest in and nurture my body as well. I'll never forget our weight-lifting sessions at the YMCA and at the RSF, and how secure and confident I felt amidst a jungle of sweaty male bodies and heavy black machinery...knowing you were by my side. You're such an ass-kicker. Thanks so much, and I'll carry your lessons with me for the rest of my life.

Love you so much.

-Jen

Carmen. So very very sad to know that you're gone.

I will miss seeing you around.

-Ronald Williams II

Carmen- You will be greatly missed! It has been a true pleasure being a part of your life at Berkeley. Your incredible spirit, thoughtfulness, warmth, intellect, creativity and support to all the lives you have touched will be greatly missed.

-Natan Tuchman

I was so dismayed to hear about Carmen Mitchell's death. We finally got coffee together in the Spring after meaning to for several months. She was so friendly, witty and charming. Please send my condolences to her family and friends.

Best,

Akasemi Newsome,  
Ph. D. Candidate, Political Science

Rest In Peace, Carmen.

We will miss you.

-Mario Nisbett

Miss you Carmen. I will never forget everything you did for me.

-Lora Nunn

Carmen left behind a legacy....

We miss you CARMEN!!

-Malaika Silcott

You will be missed lil sis...no words can convey the emotions and feelings. rest easy.

-Black Gsa-Alumni



Princess Tam Tam. How do you speak about a peer who schooled you as much as a teacher, but did so with the grace and character of a genuine artist. Damn. It's beyond words. Perhaps it's really in the music.

-Diepiriye Sungumote Kuku-Siemons

Thanks for being so strong in Japan and having such a clear understanding of what you wanted; it was always so impressive. You never seemed confused about what was really important. My family enjoyed meeting you at Christmas that one time; sorry for such a "white" X-mas in suburbia but you were so good about it, lol...

-LeAnn Lewis

Carmen you were one of a kind. Always original, always real, always soulful. you will be missed. Rest in peace.

Sibi Lawson-Marriott

Just thinking about you. How you decorated your room in Carminanilist all white. How you would turn into Princess Tam Tam or Shaquanda Girl as the hours grew late. Our trip to Vegas together, so many years ago. Your vast knowledge of music, of soul divas, your humor, your cute little voice. I am so sorry I lost touch over these years. I am so privileged to have had you in my life.

Stacy Tolchin

heartbroken after learning that you're no longer with us, carmen. i still remember the chilly morning that i met you at work in osaka.

we'll miss you dear friend. rest in peace

-Jeremy Tai-Tai

Carmen, I am so saddened that an incredible spirit such as yours was taken away so soon. You were a genuine person and so beautiful inside and out. I remember when we first met in Osaka. I was so happy that another black girl was working at Nova lol. I know that you have touched the lives of many many people because that's the kind of person you were and you will truly be missed. Rest in Peace

-Cocoahontas Harper

Carmen, your light was so bright, caring, and soulful! Even though you're no longer here with us in this world,

I know it will continue to shine.

-Yeri Caesar-Kaptoech

Have a peaceful next journey Carmen...I won't forget our time in Osaka.

-Gita Roshni Narayan

Princess Tam tam, I so loved hanging out with you at the 280 bar in Sakuragawa.. and staying up late having chu-hi in the park! xxx Peace be with you. Mwah

-Brent Mclean

She was such a wonderful person with an amazing soul. i saw her two years ago at winter music conference in miami and she was the same as i knew her from college. big huge smile, soothing voice, and still pushing soulful house music. i am to have known her and blessed to have her influence on my life. i know she had the same effect on everybody else she knew.

princess tam tam, you will be missed!

-Opurwiche Miller

Hey girl, thanks for the memories. I'll always think of you with a smile. And thanks for leaving us the sweet legacy of your beautiful voice and music. ... Miss you, Carmen.

Rest in peace, dear friend

-Jade Sasser

You will be missed greatly. I still remember you pretty face, and you always said "girl" in your sentence and I always liked that. but I will remember hanging with you in osaka friend.

-Rachel Mallinga

Remembering you querida Carmen for the amazingly beautiful spirit that you are...until we meet again...

-Rudy Guevarra





*On the evening of Wednesday October 20, 2010 friends and colleagues of Carmen Mitchell congregated at UC Berkeley's Graduate Assembly to celebrate her spirit. Surrounded by the food, music, and people that she loved, attendees came together for a moment of community, strength,*



*Business office love  
- elisa*



*I miss you  
Much love, Ula*



*You were and always will be a legend  
- Kris*



*Love  
-Angel*

*Felt stronger and things more possible  
with you somewhere nearby— Thanks  
for your strength.  
Alisa*





## *Congratulations to*

**Justin Gomer**  
on completing the  
Qualifying Examination in  
African Diaspora Studies  
and advancing to candidacy  
this Fall



## **Editor's Note**

Thank you to all the contributors and readers of the *Diaspora*. Our 2010 Fall-Winter issue is dedicated to the spirit of remembrance.

Over the past two years the students, professors, and friends of the African American Studies department here at UC-Berkeley have embarked upon a series of celebrations and reflections. As the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the various struggles for Africana and Ethnic Studies programs, publications such as Dr. Robert Allen's *Black Awakening in Capitalist America* and *The Black Scholar Journal* have come and gone, we still continue to celebrate the victories of the past four decades.

Within these celebrations we also remember all of the people who have given their spirits to these struggles and whose legacies we carry through our own work. Scholars such as Dr. VèVè Clark, Albert Johnson, Erskine A. Peters, Barbara Christian, June Jordan, and Carmen Mitchell live through the work we as a department continue to do. Remembering them as we move forward with our scholarship and our lives allows us to preserve their legacies while growing as a department and as a field. Their names are featured on the doorways and programs of our department, but their legacies extend far beyond the walls of the university.

As we welcome a new cohort of Ph.D. students to the department and celebrate Justin Gomer's passing to candidacy we hope to continue the spirit of remembrance, reflection, and celebration. We rest on the shoulders of those who came before us. Let us hold on to our intellectual traditions as we take the field in new directions through our own innovation.

—Lia Bascomb  
Editor





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AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

DEPARTMENT

HOURS: M - F, 9-12 p.m. & 1-4 p.m.

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