



THE DIASPORA

Department of African American Studies • University of California, Berkeley

June Jordan

SPRING-SUMMER 2012

Poetry for the People Celebrates 20 Years

2012 Year-End St. Clair Drake Research Symposium

Facing and Fighting Transphobic Violence

The End of an Era: The Erskine A. Peters Dissertation Fellowship



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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

J Finley
jfinley@berkeley.edu

Co-Editor, Layout & Graphic Design

Glenn L Robertson
grobtson@berkeley.edu

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Glenn L Robertson, Brukab Sisay, Jennifer Weeks, Ronald Williams II

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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

Na'ilah S. Nasir

Professors

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

Associate Professors

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

Assistant Professors

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	Hardy Frye Professor Emeritus
Aya de Leon Director, June Jordan's Poetry for the People	Aparajita Nanda Lecturer

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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Ianna H. Owen

Words from the Chair

by Na'ilah Suad Nasir

It is with great enthusiasm that I embark upon the journey of chairing the African American Studies Department this coming fall. I hold a joint appointment in African American Studies and the Graduate School of Education, and my research focuses on issues of race, culture, identity, and learning for African American students. My position here at Berkeley is a part of the Haas Diversity Research Initiative (HDRC), and I co-lead, along with Professor Janelle Scott, the Race, Diversity and Educational Policy Cluster of the HDRC. I teach undergraduate and graduate courses on race and education. I got my Ph.D. from UCLA in Psychological Studies in Human Development in 2000, and taught at Stanford University from 2000 to 2008. I've been on the faculty at Berkeley for four years, but my history with UC Berkeley and with the African American Studies Department goes back much further than that. I was an undergraduate student here, as a minor in African American Studies. This department was transformative for me during my undergraduate years at Berkeley: it was an intellectual home; it was a place of learning and reinvigoration; it allowed me to understand myself and the world and the world more deeply. Professors like Roy Thomas and Barbara Christian humanized the academy for me.

This experience underlies my vision for continuing the mission and supporting the



*Incoming Chair
Na'ilah Suad Nasir*

critical work of the department. No doubt, there are huge shoes to fill as chair, and this year we have experienced great intellectual losses with three notable retirements. Professors Charles Henry, Percy Hintzen, and Robert Allen have all been foundational in the growth and thriving of the African American Studies Department and the African Diaspora Studies graduate program. Each of them has created foundational courses, and contributed significantly

to leadership on campus. But it is also a time for rebuilding and remembering; for finding more ways to support the work and growth of undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty, so that we can continue to call this department our home. I look forward to doing that work with my amazing colleagues and wonderful students!



Editor's Note

As the academic year closes, our department is going through transformation and growth. Three of our beloved professors are retiring. Professors Henry, Allen, and Hintzen will be missed by students and colleagues, yet their departure brings the opportunity for new perspectives and new leadership. As Charles Henry says goodbye as the Chair of the department, Professor Na'ilah Nasir will assume the role in the coming semester. We are pleased to welcome her and excited at how she will move the department forward in her new role. Professor Nasir, whose work focuses on race and education, began her academic career right here in the Department of African American Studies. How inspiring it is to see her career come full circle!

Besides a new department Chair, we will also see a number of other significant changes in our department. The St. Clair Drake Year-End Symposium, the brainchild of the late Professor VeVe Clark, will now be held mid-semester. Graduate students Essence Harden and Amy Wolfson, along with Professors Ula Taylor and Darieck Scott, organized quite a successful Drake this spring! June Jordan's Poetry For the People celebrated 20 years of activism, innovation, and community engagement this past semester, and we are very excited to how the program will evolve and grow over the

next 20 years! Additionally, the Graduate Representative position has been transformed to "Graduate Liaison," which better reflects the dialog between the graduate students and the faculty here in the department.

Finally, in this issue you will catch a glimpse of what's going on with a couple of our graduate students and recent graduates. Ianna Owen offers a heartfelt response to violence toward the transgendered community. Ianna's activism involves being present in moments of crisis and refusing silence. Also, J Finley offers an inside view of ethnographic research at the 1st annual Females in Comedy Association Convention. We offer congratulations to our recent doctoral graduates, Jasmine Johnson and Zakiyyah Jackson! Also, Kelley Deetz, who earned her Ph.D. in 2010, will begin a new job in the fall and we congratulate her too!



*J Finley is a Ph.D. candidate in
African Diaspora Studies.*



2012 Year-End St. Clair Drake Research Symposium

By: Essence Harden

As the conference room filled and chairs quickly taken, the St. Clair Drake Year-End Symposium was surely on its way. This year's Drake presented by the African American Studies Department fell on May 2nd and had well over fifty people attended, representing several UC departments, scholars from outside institutions, and community members.

The morning began with talks by two graduate students in the department of African American Studies, Christopher Petrella Reggie Royston of African American Studies, followed by Felicia Viator of History, and Yusef J. Carter of Anthropology. Their panel "Defining Blackness in the Age of Hip-Hop, New Media, and Mass Incarceration," ranged in theme from Blackness as a project of modernity, Los Angeles gangsta rap, the prison industrial complex, and a deconstructive analysis of Kanye West and Jay Z's "Niggas in Paris."

The afternoon panel "Sex and the Image: Navigating Raced and 'Post Raced' Identities," included Ianna Owen of African American Studies, Jasminder Kaur of African American Studies, and Ali Weiss of History. This panel's



Jasminder Kaur

topics included print media and the Black female image, 19th century prostitution and Black women, and race/racelessness in the online asexuality community.



Ali Weiss

The day concluded with Professors Charles Henry of African American Studies and Michael Omi of Ethnic Studies discussing Professor Henry's newly edited collection with Professor Robert Allen of African American Studies, *The Obama Phenomenon: Toward a Multiracial Democracy* (2011).



Ianna Owen

Essence Harden and Amy Wolfson, both graduate students in African American Studies, coordinated the Drake along with Professors Ula Taylor and Darieck Scott. The lively and engaging discussions,



Seated at table left to right: Youssef Carter, Felicia Angeja Viator, Christopher Petrella, and Reginold Royston

participation from various UC departments, and wonderful attendance attest to the St. Clair Drake as bastion for community and scholarly engagement and the continued role of the symposium as an integral component of the African American Studies Department.



Professor Charles Henry

Papers presented at the St. Clair Drake 2012 included:

Christopher Petrella, UC Berkeley, Department of African American Studies
 “Demilitarizing the War on Drugs”

Reggie Royston, UC Berkeley, Department of African American Studies
 “Techniques of Blackness: New Media and Diaspora Studies in Conversation”

Felicia Angeja Viator, UC Berkeley, Department of History
 “‘Ya Better Bring a Gun’: Rap, Violence, and the City of Los Angeles”

Youssef J. Carter, UC Berkeley, Department of Anthropology
 “Niggas in Paris: Watching Thrones, Postcolonial Space, and Political Antinomies”

Jasminde Kaur, UC Berkeley, Department of African American Studies

“Multiple Aspects of Perception: Close Reading of A Contemporary High Fashion Advertisement that Deploys Tropes of Abjection”

Ianna Owen, UC Berkeley, Department of African American Studies

“Asexuality Online and the Reproduction of Race”

Ali Weiss, UC Berkeley, Department of History

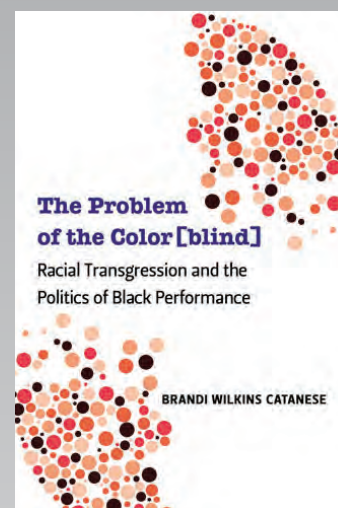
“‘We Lived Surrounded by Prostitutes:’ Black Concubines and the Southern Sexual Crisis, 1820-1865”



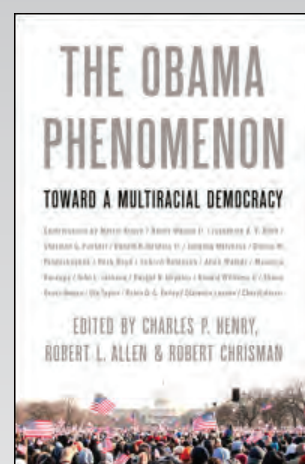
Essence Harden is a 1st year graduate student in the department of African American Studies.



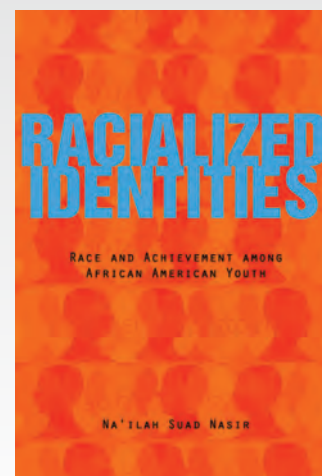
Faculty Book Announcements:



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ISBN-13: 978-0252036453



ISBN-13: 978-0804760188

"Facing and Fighting Transphobic Violence For Both the Living and the Dead: CeCe McDonald and Brandi Martell"

By: Ianna Hawkins Owen



The corner of 13th and Franklin in Oakland, California, has become a makeshift memorial site for Brandy Martell. Credit: Photo by A.M. (<http://transfeminism.tumblr.com>).

It is not easy to mourn the dead—it's an assignment without hope of closure. Nor is it easy to defend the living, but for other reasons. The living pose questions that we hesitate to answer: Whose bodies are grievable? Are our responses sustainable? How much do we have to give, for whom, and for how long? We do not sign up for shifts of pain, they spirit us away. But we do. We have a choice to show up in myriad ways—to make eye contact, to pack the court, to pick up the phone. We must not remember the dead at the expense of the living but instead balance our dedication to freedom.

Just three nights ago here in downtown Oakland Brandy Martell, a transgender woman of color, was murdered. There were a lot of people gathered at an emergency vigil on Sunday night at the site of her passing on 13th and Franklin. Friends,

community members, and family spoke and witnessed, shouted and cried. An Occupy Oakland street medic, who happened to be out late that night responding to another shooting (despite a curfew order), described trying to save Brandy's life with CPR and pressure applied to her bullet wounds while the police came late and stood idly by as she died.

Not having known Brandy or her friends, I showed up because, among other reasons, this happened in my neighborhood.



Brandy Martell. Photo courtesy of Tiffany Woods

The next day when I woke up, I read that CeCe McDonald's trial was just beginning. Having survived a racist and transphobic attack, she is facing not justice but two counts of "second degree murder" for defending herself. Today she has taken a plea and as her supporters there are things that we must do and things we mustn't do. We must respect her decision. Yet, we must not allow the state to gaslight her determination to live. CeCe still needs our support. She needs our energy and efforts not only as she awaits sentencing, not only if/as she moves through the system, not only in the days when she is free again. As the old saying goes, "the heart is a muscle the size of your fist," so long as it flexes within you, pray with it for Brandy, fight with it for CeCe, and speak from it with one another.

Are you hurting? We shall be free.

Ianna Hawkins Owen is a graduate student in African Diaspora Studies at UC Berkeley. In New York she organized with All City and the Audre Lorde Project. Her research interests include failure, desire, and abolition. This article was originally published in the Tikkun Daily blog.



June Jordan's POETRY for the PEOPLE



“Poetry for the People Celebrates 20 Years of Arts, Academics, and Activism”

By Aya de Leon

In December of 2011, Poetry for the People (P4P) began a season of celebration, honoring the program's 20-year history, culminating in a two-day conference/festival in March of 2012. The nationally acclaimed program, founded by the late poet and essayist June Jordan, has become an integral part of the African American Studies Department, surviving its founder by a decade, and continuing to bring a unique blend of arts, academics, and activism to the UC Berkeley/Bay Area community and beyond. The goal was to celebrate the legacy of the program's founder June Jordan, and commemorate the impact that P4P has had over the last two decades.

The Student Teacher Poet (STP) Final Reading in December 2011 was dedicated to the memory of June Jordan, and many of the STPs read emulation poems of Jordan's work. In March, the two-day celebration featured a reading of current and former STPs who have published collections, including Xochiquetzal Candelaria, author of *Empire* (2011), published by the University of Arizona Press to

critical acclaim. Other poets for the Celebration of P4P Alumni include Ariel Luckey, Terry Taplin, Sandra Garcia-Rivera, Milani Pelley, Shia Shabazz, Lateef McLeod, Dyanna Loeb, Ananda Esteva, Alicia Zakon, and, Javier Zamora, a current STP, whose collection, *Nine*

as other contributors to the textbook. The panel also featured Genaro Padilla, former head of undergraduate affairs at UC Berkeley and champion of the program during the early years, and an impromptu presentation by Adrienne Torf, Jordan's partner, collaborator,



Immigrant Years (2011), was published by Organic Weapon Arts Chapbook Series, and he was recently accepted to the MFA program at NYU.

The following day included a conference with an opening panel on June Jordan's legacy, facilitated by Lauren Muller, Jordan's former GSI, and editor of *June Jordan's Poetry for the People: A Revolutionary Blueprint* (1995), as well

and the executor of Jordan's estate. The day-long conference featured additional panels and workshops on publishing, performance, arts careers, multi-racial poetry, and more.

The celebration culminated in a reading that included featured performer Patricia Smith, National Poetry Series/Pushcart winner and four-time National Poetry Slam Champion, as well as guest artists including



emcee Rico Pabon, and former STPs from various generations of P4P, including June Jordan's first class of student teachers. Both evenings were hosted by P4P Director Aya de Leon, and attracted packed houses of diverse audience members. As we wrote in the promotional material, "we invite Bay Area artists, activists, novelists, aspiring writers, slam poets, community builders, and poetry lovers. All are welcome and encouraged to come." All events were free, except the evening headlined by Patricia Smith. All proceeds were donated to support the program, and Patricia Smith's artist fees were part of the Cave Canem Writer's Circuit, and went to support the Cave Canem Foundation's work with African American poets. We also made a concerted effort to support disability justice, and had sign language interpretation available, as well as other accommodations to make the events accessible.

The celebration was highlighted in the May/June 2011 issue of the magazine *Poets & Writers*, and "Split This Rock," also celebrated June Jordan's Legacy in their biannual conference.

Poetry for the People began in the early 1990s, founded by the late June Jordan to pursue Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of a beloved community for all through poetry. The program's primary focus was to teach UC Berkeley undergraduates to write urgent, emotionally charged poetry to speak to the conditions of their lives and the political situation of the world. Under Jordan's leadership, the program became a thriving part of the African American Studies Department, as well as the greater Bay Area. P4P's outreach programs collaborated with schools, churches, community organizations and prisons. June Jordan passed away from breast cancer in 2002. Her writing produced 28 published books of poetry, essays, children's fiction and memoir, as well as the librettos for two operas.

Since her passing away, P4P continues as an important part of her legacy. June Jordan always welcomed people without UC Berkeley affiliation to take her class and become part of the student leadership. Professor Jordan passed away in 2002 from breast cancer. In the first five years after her passing,

the program was directed by former STPs Junichi Semitsu and Maiana Minahal during a period of challenge and transition. Since 2006, Director Aya de Leon has revitalized and expanded P4P's community partnerships. The conference had the following theme quote from June Jordan: Poetry for the People is "a political movement anybody anywhere can join, imitate, or improve...a literary movement no one can stifle or erase."

P4P wishes to thank The African American Studies Department, the Cave Canem Foundation, Patricia Smith, the Multi Cultural Center, the current STP class, and all the alumni, performers, and participants who joined in the celebration. And above all, thanks to June Jordan, for having the vision and creating a legacy that has become a permanent highlight of UC Berkeley and the department of African American Studies.



Aya de Leon is the director of June Jordan's Poetry for the People.

New Job:

Kelley Deetz



Earned her Ph.D. in African Diaspora Studies in 2010, will take a position in the fall of 2012 as Assistant Professor of History and Director of the Public History program at Roanoke College, in Salem, VA. Dr. Deetz will be in charge of creating the curriculum for their new Public History concentration. She is most excited about the museum aspects; she will be creating and directing a museum in the department of History, which will focus on local and African American history in the Roanoke Valley. This museum will combine oral history, primary sources and material culture to represent the richly diverse and uncharted narratives of central Virginia while giving the students hands-on curatorial experience. There is also a 19th-century plantation house and kitchen on the campus which she will also turn into a museum space. Congratulations and best of luck!



“An interview with Amy Wolfson, member of the African Diaspora Studies Student Collective and 2011-2012 Graduate Liaison”

by Greg Gordon



Q: Why the change in name, from Graduate Representative to Graduate Liaison?

A: After the very first faculty meeting I attended, I felt strange about my new position. I didn't feel comfortable speaking for all the graduate students, “representing” them as the title indicated, but from the get-go, the faculty asked me for graduate student input. I talked to Lindsey Herbert and Professor Robert Allen and we came up with the title “Graduate Liaison,” to indicate the function of this position—a connector between students and faculty; someone who sat in all the meetings (faculty, grad advisor and ADSC), took detailed notes, and could report with some accuracy what was being said. And the faculty wants our feedback on issues, so I was the designated person to email the students, gather feedback, and report back.

Q: Yes, we got a lot of emails from you.

A: Yes, yes I know I filled the inbox, but the faculty really want to know how we feel about the changes happening and want recommendations from us. I was called on at every meeting to speak up. Personally, I'm thrilled to be in a department where our opinions

are valued. And I can promise you, our opinions are taken very seriously because I sat in on the meetings while faculty discussed them. Changes were made and we were a part of that.

Q: You've mentioned changes; what changes specifically?

A: Well, the biggest change is in our faculty. We said goodbye to three professors, three beloved professors! And honestly, some of us are freaking out. They're irreplaceable! The consolidating of staff between Gender and Women's Studies, and Ethnic Studies is a real testament to the seriousness of these budget cuts. We're already a small department! With three less professors, how will we rank compared to other departments? You know it's all about numbers; majors, graduates, job placements, class enrollment. But what does that mean for us as a department in terms of our intellectual direction and development, our graduate program, and existence as a department? In light of Operation Excellence these are scary questions and several of us formed the Collective to tackle them together, lend support, mobilize.

Q: Yes we just voted on whether to vote to replace you and we also voted on required membership in the Collective. What's that all about?

A: Previously the position was obtained on a first-come-first-serve basis. I got it simply because I emailed Chris Petrella, the former Graduate Representative, before anyone else did. Considering how involved this position is now, how much communication goes on between the liaison, students and faculty, a more democratic process was necessary and this was decided by ADSC. While I didn't feel comfortable speaking for all the graduate students (unless it was on a specific “feedback requested” issue)

I did feel comfortable speaking for ADSC. We meet once a month and discuss a range of issues and take action. We met with Dean Hesse about the status of our new hire requests. We mobilized around the “austerity measures” and the Occupy Movement. Our ADSC meetings “sit between” the grad advisor meetings and the faculty meetings in a way. It's a time for us to take in all the information, talk it through, and figure out what we CAN do. We initiated the “vote on the vote”, and the issue of required ADSC participation. The position will be voted on at the end of each spring semester and the liaison is required to attend all faculty meetings, graduate advisor meetings, and ADSC meetings. It's a big job, but a great job for an aspiring professor who wants to see how it all works.

Q: Other than the retirees any other changes worth mentioning?

A: Well the Masters reading list was streamlined and reconceptualized. The St. Claire Drake Symposium will be moved to a different time of year, mid-semester seems to be the consensus. We have a new chair, Professor Nassir, and a new Graduate Advisor, Professor Raiford. And if there is a “rising star” as Dean Hesse says, a new professor we'd like to bring in for a year, remember to speak up! We'll have funds, so keep your ears to the ground.

Q: Who's your replacement?

A: I don't know yet but I hope they enjoy it. I learned so much! It was a great opportunity. What better way to learn how to be a professor than to watch those who are doing it?

Amy Wolfson is a second year student in African Diaspora Studies.

Notes from the Field:

“The 1st Annual Females in Comedy Association Convention”

By J Finley

In April 2012, I attended the 1st annual Females in Comedy Association (FICA) Convention in Los Angeles, CA, organized by 25 year stand-up comedy veteran, Hope Flood. I completed several ethnographic interviews and performed in a comedy showcase as part of my dissertation research. My project explores African American stand-up comedy in terms of its ability to describe, produce, and reproduce African American culture. Stand-up comedy is popularly known as a form of entertainment and leisurely enjoyment. However, my dissertation argues that when black women challenge, transform, or undermine negative representations in their routines, they enact a pleasurable politics of redress. The act of standing up in public and being paid to be heard—not simply seen—gives black women comedians a space to demand recognition of their humanity.

This was truly an exciting and enlightening convention. Hosted at the J Spot Comedy Club in Inglewood, around 70 women gathered over 5 days to attend workshops, seminars, and Q & A sessions lead by popular comedians who had plenty of knowledge and insight about the artistry, business, and community of stand-up comedy. Most of the women who attended the convention were women of color from all



across the nation from Seattle, WA to Jacksonville, FL. The convention was the brainchild of Hope Flood, a comedienne/organizer with more than 25 years experience in the comedy game. Flood is most well-known for her appearances on BET's *Comic View*. Not only did Flood perform stand-up in the 1990s, she was also a dedicated advocate for African American comedians who organized a strike of the comedians on *Comic View*, protesting the fact that they were not paid for their appearances, eventually winning them payment from the network. The FICA is somewhat of an extension of Flood's organizing efforts that began as a Facebook group with over 300 members. The convention was an effort that evolved from a virtual social networking hub to an embodied community of women comics.

When I arrived at the first session "Meet Me In the Ladies Room, Cause We Need To Talk," comedienne Luenell (of *Borat* and most recently

Think Like a Man) was already on stage, patiently answering questions from younger comics about everything from how to select a stage name to whether or not African American women degrade themselves in some of their comedic material. Even though the first session lasted more than 4 hours, there was so much exchange of information and affirmation that the time flew by! Thea Vidale, the first African American woman to have her own show on network television in her own name (*Thea*, ABC 1993-94), reflected on her abusive relationship with her ex-husband and the effects it had on her comedy. Her story was more than a story, more like a teachable moment about how to relate to your audience. "My husband popped me upside the head; your husband popped you upside the head—we have things in common." Miss Laura Hayes, who became popular as the cooking co-host of *Comic View* in the 1990s and who hosted the legendary *Queens of Comedy* (2000), spent some time

talking about the importance of women comics working with one another, “We can all be different and be a collective.”



Pictured with J Finley is Gospel Comedienne Jennifer Weeks of Jacksonville, Florida

Over the next two days, there were several workshops and seminars that were meant to help comics develop their brands, understand the business side of stand-up comedy, and provide honest perspectives on what it means to be a professional comic. “The Bizness of Show,” a seminar headed by Hope Flood, provided useful information about writing contracts, dealing with promoters, and the investment and sacrifices that go into stand-up comedy as a professional career choice. Popular comedian Shang (BET’s Comic View), who has over 1 million email addresses and a marketing strategy that enables him to advertise his shows more widely than most self-promoting artists, gave a seminar on marketing and promotion. One of the most anticipated events of the weekend was Miss Laura’s mystery “Who Got Next?” workshop. After viewing a film

produced by Hayes that showed some hilarious and previously unseen backstage footage of the *Queens of Comedy* (2000) tour, we engaged in a workshop that tested our improv skills. Before the convention, we were instructed to bring an object that fit in a purse (which one, I’ve got so many!?) and we were randomly chosen to go onstage and describe our object in the role of a random character.

Unfortunately, I wasn’t chosen. I had brought my fake tooth and I was going to portray Rodney King (that weekend was the 20th anniversary of the LA riots).

The most exciting and edifying experience of the FICA convention was the comedy showcase. Participant observation is a tricky business. For the majority of the convention I was assiduously taking notes or conducting interviews, except during the comedy showcase. I felt like an interloper and I struggled with my place in this community of women artists that I was no doubt a part of. Up until that point, I’d only performed stand-up at open mics or in college classrooms. A showcase, unlike an open mic, requires more preparation and is more stressful because the whole point in showcasing talent is that some important person might “discover” you. At a showcase you are supposed

to bring your funniest material and perform it as perfectly as possible—a showcase is not the time or place to “work out” your new material.

There were two showcases each night with each comedian getting five minutes of stage time, divided by the headlining show, which on my night was performed by Thea Vidale. I was slated for the late 10:30pm show, in the middle of the lineup. I was nervous. But I had made friends at the convention and one of my oldest friends from college came to cheer me on. As I stepped on the stage my heart was pounding, but I slid up to the microphone and played coy asking the crowd “How yall doing, are you awake?” After warming the crowd up with my first two jokes, I gave everything I had to my last joke, hoping to leave an impression. Boom! I was in the kind of zone where the joke performs itself and I got a great laugh from the crowd that felt surreal and dizzying. Stepping off the stage, I was less a researcher, more like a comedian. I had done shows before, but there is something about getting a laugh from your comedian peers that makes the idea of “J Finley, the stand-up comedian” all the more real. If you want to catch my comedic stylings, I’ll be at an open mic near you...

J Finley is a Ph.D. candidate in African Diaspora Studies.

“The End of an Era: The Erskine A. Peters Dissertation Fellowship”

By Lia Bascomb



Erskine Peters left a legacy across the country from Paine College in Augusta, Georgia where he excelled as an undergraduate, to Oberlin and Princeton where he completed his graduate work, to UC-Berkeley and the University of Notre Dame where he taught. As an English professor he was well respected for his scholarship, but he was most appreciated for his collegiality, his dedication, his mentorship, and his ability to bridge various communities within and outside of academia.

When Dr. Peters died in 1998, many communities lost a beloved scholar, mentor, and friend. Understanding the loss that the academy had suffered, his colleagues at the University of Notre Dame established a Dissertation Fellowship in his name. Seeking to institutionalize the support that Dr. Peters offered graduate students in general

and black graduate students in particular, the Erskine A. Peters Dissertation Fellowship began in 1999, commencing a new stage of Dr. Peters legacy.

The fellowship helped to bring talented black graduate students into the professorate by giving them time and resources to focus on dissertation writing and professionalization as they entered the job market. Fellows spent a year in residence at Notre Dame working with a faculty mentor, the Fellowship Committee, and each other.

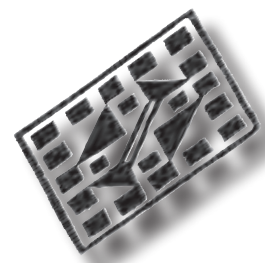
Traditionally the current fellows would hold a symposium in March the same weekend that finalists for the next year would be interviewing on campus. During the Peters Fellowship weekend, finalists had the opportunity to build a network of scholars across institutions and academic fields regardless of whether or not they ultimately received a

fellowship, and current fellows would have the opportunity to meet and mentor younger scholars.

In light of the Notre Dame's decision to end the program, this year's Peters Fellowship weekend looked a little different. March 29-31st of 2012, twelve cohorts of Peters Fellows congregated on Notre Dame's campus in order to celebrate, remember, and honor the legacy of Erskine A. Peters and the fellowship that bore his name. The young scholars that filled Eck Visitor's Center that weekend stood as a living testament to how extraordinarily successful the fellowship program has been. It was the first time that all of the fellows had the chance to meet at once, but the celebration was bittersweet knowing that the program was ending.

As part of the last cohort of Erskine A. Peters Fellows at the University of Notre Dame, I would like to say thank you to Dr. Erskine A. Peters for his vision, to his colleagues who helped to keep his legacy alive, and to all of the Peters Fellows who continue in a tradition of scholarly excellence.

Lia Bascomb is a 2011-2012 Erskine A. Peters Dissertation Fellow and a candidate in UC-Berkeley's African Diaspora Ph.D. program.



Congratulations to

Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Ph.D.

Congratulations to Zakiyyah Jackson on earning her Ph.D.! In general, her research investigates the racialization of the human-animal distinction. My dissertation examined key Black Atlantic literary, visual, and performance texts that I argue both reveal the pernicious peculiarity of the dominant definitions of “the human” as well as uncover conceptions of humanity, paradigms of relationality, and epistemologies that reject, alter, or expose the nexus of race and species. Zakiyyah has a two year Carter Woodson postdoctoral fellowship at UVA, after which she will be an Assistant Professor of English at George Mason University.



Jasmine Elizabeth Johnson, Ph.D.

The African American Studies Department is pleased to congratulate Jasmine E. Johnson on earning her doctoral degree, and her acceptance of the 2012-2013 Postdoctoral Fellowship in the African American Studies department at Northwestern University. Her dissertation *Dancing Africa, Making Diaspora: The Performative Dimensions of African Dance* is a stellar example of the doctoral program’s intellectual agenda of exploring identity construction, and engaging the life, culture, and social organization of persons of African descent.

Ivy Mills, Ph.D.

Ivy’s work investigates constitution of gendered subjects through hierarchies of caste, race, piety, kinship and class in Senegal. Her dissertation “Sutura: Gendered Honor, Social Death, and the Politics of Exposure in Senegalese Literature and Popular Culture,” explores the politics of “sutura” a Wolof concept that can mean virtuous discretion, modesty, privacy, or protection (both divine and communal). She argues that “sutura” mediates the ungendering and loss of human legibility entailed in Senegalese figurations of social and moral death.



Congratulations to

Robert J. Connell and Jarvis Givens
on completing the Masters Degree in
African American Studies this Spring



Robert J. Connell



Jarvis Givens

Congratulations to

Reginold and Maxine McKinney de Royston
On the birth of their baby girl
Gloria Ifeolu McKinney de Royston



Thursday, November 10, 2011
7:43 AM
5 pounds, 10 ounces
19 inches

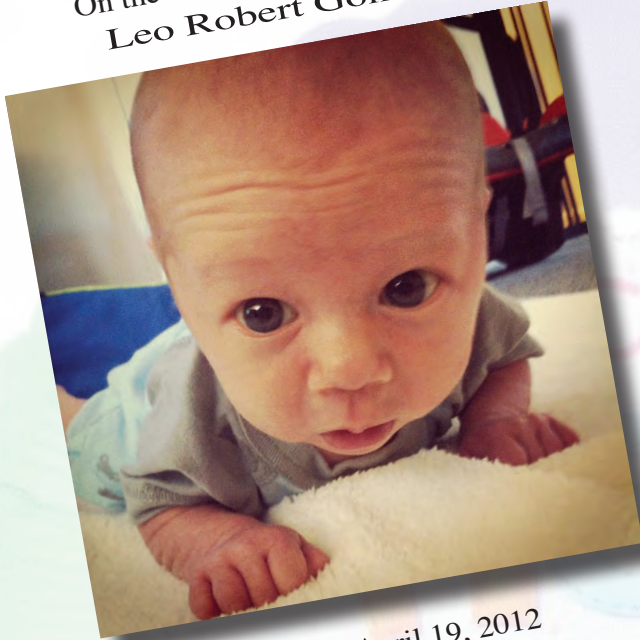
Brandi and Joseph Catanese
On the birth of their baby girl
Liliana Jay Catanese



Friday, February 24, 2012
7:53 AM
7 pounds, 14.5 ounces
18.3 inches

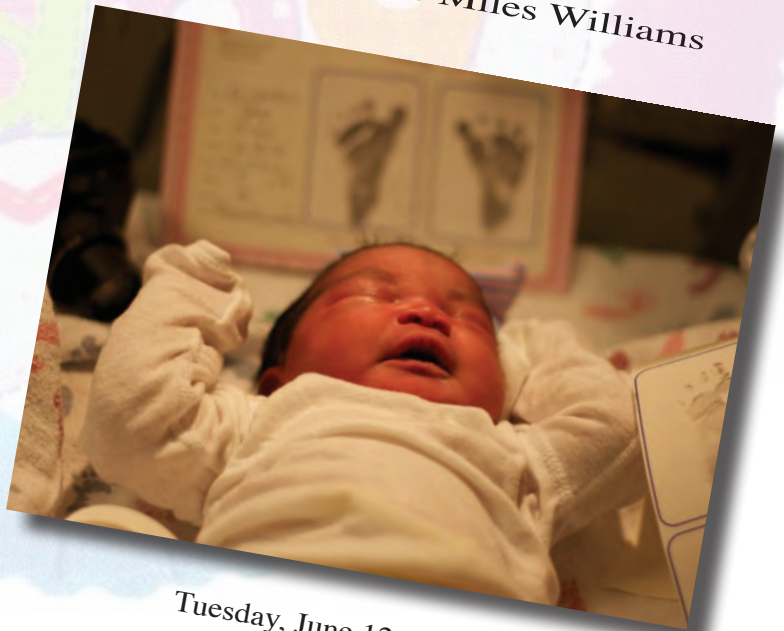
Congratulations to

Justin Gomer and Adrienne O'Brien
On the birth of their baby boy
Leo Robert Gomer



Thursday, April 19, 2012
7:53 AM
7 pounds, 14.5 ounces
20.5 inches

Ronald and Nikki-Nicole Williams
On the birth of their baby girl
Zora Josephine Miles Williams



Tuesday, June 12, 2012
7:53 AM
7 pounds, 14.5 ounces
18.3 inches

schedule of classes

fall 2012

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES 139 P 004 LEC
"THE BLACK CHURCH IN THE AGE OF WHITNEY AND OBAMA:
POWER, POLITICS, PROSPERITY OR PRAISE?"
MWF 11-12 PM, 118 BARROWS
COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 00643
UNITS/CREDIT: 3

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES 112A P 001 LEC
"POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD"
TuTh 4-6 PM, 830 BARROWS
COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 00619
UNITS/CREDIT: 4

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES 159 P 003 LEC
"BRAZILIAN FILM AND LITERATURE WITH ZELIA BORA"
Tu 2-5 PM, 50 BARROWS
COURSE CONTROL NUMBER: 00658
UNITS/CREDIT: 3