Winter 2012

Letter from the Chair

Where are the boundaries of the Black world? If we seek our answer in the research and pedagogies of the DAAS faculty, the response might well be: "The Black world is boundless." Human life was cradled on the continent of Africa, and black cultures, both ancient and modern, have influenced life ways on every part of the globe. The dynamics of racialization that mark the age of capitalist modernity (and indeed, post-modernity) were projected on and through black populations in Africa and the Diaspora, which have theorized as well as experienced varied meanings of race as a result. Due to a rich conversation among African Americanist and Africanist faculty in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Center for Afroamerican and African Studies embraced a comparative and diasporic framework that recognized the extent of the Black world and its connections long before most other Black studies units in the country. In 2010, the UM Regents approved the departmentalization of DAAS, a unit that now contains three (and growing) geographical areas of focus: Africa, African America (the U.S.), and the Caribbean (and increasingly, Latin America). Europe might well be added to our list of areas, since the work of DAAS faculty on blacks in Germany and Eastern Europe indicates an expansive new direction. In addition, a number of our faculty members are deeply engaged in transnational work -- studying black life across national boundaries and at the interstices of land and oceanic borders.

The diverse make-up of the DAAS faculty and our collective interest in dynamic, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and community-based research are core strengths of our unique department. Since its inception, CAAS/DAAS has been devoted to linking research, teaching, and community interests. This year we have sought to examine that commitment and to realize it more fully in the curriculum. Our Director of Undergraduate Studies, Megan Sweeney, and the founder of the Pedagogy of Action (POA) program in DAAS, Nesha Haniff, convened a workshop series involving experienced colleagues across campus and DAAS students and faculty to discuss issues, experiences, and protocols in community engaged learning. DAAS has recently been awarded a Center for Research, Learning and Teaching (CRLT) grant for the further elaboration of our engaged learning initiative.



Tiya Miles, Chair

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As the winter term comes to a close, DAAS is gearing up for our study abroad season. Creating study abroad opportunities in Africa and the Caribbean for our students has also been a long-standing curricular commitment in DAAS. We have a record number of study abroad programs scheduled for this spring — to South Africa (trips led by Professors Nesha Haniff and Damani Partridge), Tanzania (a trip led by Professor Nyambura Mpesha, profiled in this edition), and Ghana (a trip led by Professor Kwasi Ampene, who also serves as Director of the Center for World Performance Studies). In addition to taking undergraduate students abroad, DAAS has funded numerous Africanist scholars this year through our African Initiative (AI) and South African Initiatives Office (SAIO) fellowships. Under the direction of our Associate Chair for African Studies, Anne Pitcher, we have dedicated over \$90,000 to support 14 researchers. These fellowship recipients hail from countries such as Cameroon, Nigeria, and Sudan, and they work in fields that range from history and anthropology to public health and social work.

Our stellar, socially-conscious undergraduate and graduate students are taking advantage of the department's geographical and intellectual breadth and encouraging DAAS's commitment to community engaged teaching and scholarship at the local and global levels. I invite you to read about our students' accomplishments, our faculty's new research and numerous awards, and the story of a distinguished early African American alumnus, Dr. James Curtis, in this edition of the newsletter.

Warm regards,



An Interview with Professor Nyambura Mpesha, Lecturer III in DAAS

(Professor Mpesha was interviewed by DAAS Associate Chair Elisha Renne.)

Dr. Nyambura Mpesha (Ph.D., Kenyatta University, 1996), three time recipient of the Jomo Kenyatta Prize for literature for her children's books in English and Swahili, joined the DAAS faculty in 2009. Dr. Mpesha teaches Swahili classes and advises students taking Swahili and other African Languages. She will be taking a group of UM students to Tanzania this spring as part of the GIEU program. Dr. Mpesha will also be leading a Global Course Connection trip to Tanzania in spring 2013, which will be available to students taking her Swahili classes in the academic year 2012-2013.



Q: Could you please explain your background, how you explain it to students?

A: When I teach my Swahili classes, we basically start with introductions and I introduce myself. Normally I introduce myself as an East African largely because I don't know which country to claim. I'm born Kenyan and I'm married to a Tanzanian and my whole family, my children and my husband, are Tanzanian. I'm the only Kenyan, so I decided that I'm simply East African. Swahili is the language we use at home. My husband and I decided that since I'm Kenyan and he is Tanzanian, the only language that would make sense to us in our home was going to be Swahili. So our children speak Swahili as their first language.



Q: You could have decided to speak English, couldn't you? Isn't English the national language [in Kenya]?

A: Yes, but Tanzania has Swahili as the national language and Kenya has both Swahili and English as national languages. We started off in Tanzania and there English wouldn't have made sense. Besides, we felt that our children needed at least one African language to truly belong where they were, and Swahili has worked well for us, both in Kenya and in Tanzania. We lived in Kenya for several years before we came to the United States so our children have had a taste of both countries, Tanzania and Kenya.

Q: How did you start to teach Swahili? When did you start?

A: It's really interesting how I started teaching Swahili. Was it by default? My first stint of teaching Swahili was actually in a primary school in Kenya as part of my research on children's literature. So that's when I started teaching Swahili and I taught for some three years as I was doing my research—it was really a part-time thing for that particular school.

Q: So when did you come to the US to teach? Were you teaching Swahili when you first came here?

A: In 2001, we moved to Calvin College. I came to teach African and World Literature. I also taught African Women Writers and had the opportunity to take students to Tanzania for study abroad programs. Calvin College then decided that they wanted to start an African studies minor and one of the components was to be an African language, so that's how I ended up starting Swahili in Calvin College. I taught Swahili from 2006 up until the time I joined UM in the fall of 2009.

Q: Could you say something about your teaching of Swahili here at University of Michigan, the types of things you do in class?

A: What do we do in class? We do sing a little. One thing that I tell my students is that learning a language is really a humbling experience because you basically become a little child learning something for the very first time. And so we are not shy about hearing some of the children's songs because that is where the language is.



One of the things I do in the classroom, especially second semester elementary Swahili and in the Intermediate classes, I use some of the stories that I have written and the students get excited when I bring copies of my books and I give them to each one and we read the stories. They feel like they have achieved something when they can read the stories by themselves, which is why we need to think of ways to include some stories in the textbook materials we have because language is supposed to be fun.

Q: Do you have ways of practicing speaking, little exercises that you use?

A: Yes, we do have exercises in the classroom where students are reading, doing in-class writing and reading what they have written to the class. Sometimes they engage in short writing and speaking exercises with partners, there are times when they are conversing among themselves, and there are times when they are conversing with me. They are required to present a group project at the end of the semester and just speak in Swahili as they make their presentations. They choose scenarios from the textbook, material that they have studied. They might choose to travel by bus, for example, or they might choose to cook something, or they might choose to go to the market—those kinds of scenarios, things that are relevant to the course they have had that semester. Some even go farther and do their own research and present something surprising so that the other students have something fresh to see.

Q: Could you say something about the GIEU (UM-Global Intercultural Experience for Undergraduates) trip you are taking?



A: The GIEU students are drawn from all disciplines and they are going to be based in Lushoto, Tanzania. They will be learning from three institutions there. One is a school for the blind, the other is a children's home, and the third one is a special education school. In the evening, I am hoping they will find time to interact with the community and with their families and hear some stories, hear some songs, and gather a bit of folklore. I believe that folklore is really the window or door to any culture. They are going to be living with families for about two weeks. At the school for the blind, which is a primary school, basically they will be helping with teaching of English, helping students who are struggling with English language and reading stories to students. They might also be involved in the making of crafts. The school for the blind is very good at teaching crafts. We are considering whether we want to introduce new crafts. They make mats and stools and things like that. There are some girls in the GIEU group who know how to knit so we wonder whether they might introduce knitting, especially as there is a children's home that would use

the knitted items. In the children's home itself, it is basically taking care of babies. The babies are newborns to one and one-half years old. Some are orphans, but some of them are not really orphans. Sometimes these children may have a very sick mother who needs some kind of assistance, so the child is brought there temporarily. If the mother is hospitalized and the family doesn't know what to do, they will bring the child temporarily. Recently, I found the school for the disabled, the one called the Rainbow School, doesn't have very young babies or very young kids, which is a good thing because it means that people are now more aware about taking care of children with disabilities. Currently, most of them are between seven and twenty plus years so they are actually learning to cope with life, especially the older ones. They are just learning how to study under special conditions....Some are physically disabled and others have other disabilities, mental disabilities.

Q: Could you say something about your own childhood in Kenya? How did you start to love to read?

A: I think mine is a long story. I was an only child for some time so every weekend, I went to visit my maternal grandmother who was a storyteller. That's where the story business comes in. She was a very good storyteller and I think it's because of her that I'm interested in anything related to literature. She taught me stories before I could read, so that when I started reading, obviously I could never get enough to read. So in my day, when I was going to school and books were few, I read whatever I could find. But I started writing my own stories. I wish I had them. My dad kept some of them, but eventually they disappeared. As I grew older and I moved on to high school, I realized that, you know, children

in schools didn't have much to read; even I didn't have enough to read. I think I read virtually every book that was in our library in high school, so I felt there was really a need for somebody to write books for children.

Q: How many books have you published?

A: I think the publications are forty-five, as far as I know. Some are retold folktales. For example, one book is based on a story I heard in Tanzania about a tree that could move and talk. A story you may know very well is about a hare fooling the big animals. I write about the experiences of kids. One book is a based on a number of folk tales put together. Others are based on single folk tales. W.D. Kamera was my former colleague in Dar es Salaam University, and we collaborated on a few projects together. One is a folk tale retold. Another is a folk song, but it's a folk song that has been recreated to be a story [see cover illustration, *Far, Far Away*, 2005].

Q: These are for sale in Kenya and Tanzania?

A: Yes, they all sell there. One book, *A Frog Does Not Jump Backwards*, is interesting. I was driving from home to Kenyatta University, and I heard this proverb from BBC, "A frog does not jump backwards." It's from Ghana, and I wondered to myself, why doesn't a frog jump backwards? And I couldn't get the explanation for that, so I created one. One of my latest books is on Zacchaeus. This particular publisher wanted to start a series of Biblical stories, so I retold the Zacchaeus story.

We read some of the books in Swahili classes. There is one book that I read a lot in class, it's called *Kitoweo cha Samaki* (Fish Stew). And here is another book [see cover illustration, *Pili Pilipili*]. One day, the route I followed to school, I think there was an accident ahead so I took a detour and I passed through a very posh part of Nairobi and I saw various homes with signs reading "Fierce Dog!", "Fierce Dog!" and then somewhere I saw a sign, "Fierce Cat!" I think that someone had a sense of humor and then I said to myself, "Ok, what would make a fierce cat?" So before I got to school I was singing this little song about the cat that was fierce, and then I wrote a little story about it. My students like it, but it's just nonsense. They say that if you give your dog *pili pili* [hot pepper], the dog will become very fierce, so I thought of the cat that ate *pili pili*.

Gallery DAAS Exhibition: "Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life"





In conjunction with the exhibition "Fluxus and the Essential Questions of Life" at the University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA), Fluxus artist Ben Patterson exhibited work and performed several solo selections in GalleryDAAS on Tuesday, March 13th. Fluxus is a group of avant garde artists who first became widely known in the 1960s, and Patterson is one of its founding members. Widely regarded as the seminal African-American performance artist of the 1960s, Patterson was invited to GalleryDAAS by DAAS faculty member David Doris, who also performed with Patterson. An artist whose work is improvisational and pushes the boundaries between performer and audience, Patterson is also a 1956 graduate of the University of Michigan's School of Music and was recently awarded the 2012 Wiesbadener

Kulturpreis for his contributions to the cultural life of Wiesbaden, Germany, where the first Fluxus performances were held fifty years ago. His performance in DAAS was generously supported by UMMA, History of Art, the Institute for the Humanities, and the Program in Creativity and Consciousness Studies.















Defending Dissertations in DAAS







Tayana Hardin (Program in American Culture) recently defended her dissertation, "Rituals of Return in African American Women's Twentieth Century Literature and Performance." Her work uses ritual and spirituality to probe the methodological and creative challenges that the African American past poses for African American women artists working in the areas of film, dramatic poetry, and concert and popular dance. Tayana credits her successful defense, in part, to the expert advising of her committee (Magdalena Zaborowska, Frieda Ekotto, Tiya Miles, and Robin Wilson) and the support of her family, friends, and DAAS staff. In Fall 2012, Tayana will join the Department of English at Rutgers University as a Postdoctoral Fellow in African American and African Diaspora Literature. (Pictured with Tayana in the center: her family and dissertation members. Pictured with Tayana on the right: Zakiyah Sayyed, DAAS Community Engaged Learning Assistant.)

Congratulations to the 2012 recipient of the Visual and Popular Culture Pre-Doctoral Award, David Green, Jr.

The Department of Afroamerican and African Studies is delighted to congratulate the 2012 recipient of the Visual and Popular Culture Pre-Doctoral Award; David Green, Jr.

David B. Green, Jr. is a PhD Candidate in the Program in American Culture and a member of the distinguished Edward Alexander Bouchet Honor Society. His dissertation examines Africa American lesbian, bisexual, and gay writers' engagements with discourses of freedom in the late twentieth century in America. Green has presented his research in various places in the U.S. and in Paris, France and his research has been



supported by generous grants funded by the University of Michigan's Horace H. Rackham School of Graduate studies, the Program in American Culture, the Phil Zwickler Research Memorial Grant at Cornell University, and the Audre Lorde Scholarship Foundation, ZAMI. Green also serves as an Executive Board member of the Students of Color of Rackham, SCOR, and the Alliance for Graduate Education and the Professoriate, AGEP. Green has also taught in a variety of disciplines that range from English and History to American studies and African American studies. He has a passion for teaching, and he tries his very best to deploy pedagogy as praxis for social justice. Green remains committed to the goals of using teaching, service, and scholarship in the name of freedom, democracy, diversity, and humanity.

The Visual and Popular Culture Pre-Doctoral Award was established in 2010 in honor of the former Dean of the School of Social Work, Harold R. Johnson and in honor of Senior Vice-Provost of Academic Affairs and Professor of Music, Lester P. Monts. These two scholars have worked tirelessly to support intellectual diversity at the University of Michigan. This award recognizes a University of Michigan graduate student on the Ann Arbor campus who has exhibited an outstanding understanding of cultural diversity through scholarship focusing on visual and popular culture.

DAAS High Achievers

Jordan Mulka and Michael Williams--the two DAAS majors or minors with the highest GPAs--won tickets to attend the 7th Annual African American Dinner at Zingerman's Roadhouse. During the dinner, Professor Audrey Petty from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign read an autobiographical essay called "Late-Night Chitlins with Momma," and she shared her father's stories about his Northern migration and coming of age as a cook, busboy, and migrant worker.



Michael Williams

Concentration: Afroamerican and African Studies, with a focus on the Americas/African-Americans, and a specialization in Urban Studies and Social Inequality.

Minor: Urban Studies

Research Interests: I am interested in exploring the politics of space and place and how urban and social policy as well as community efforts can be used to make more just and inclusive cities that reduce discrimination based on race and class. I am especially interested in the design and spiritual quality of public urban spaces and the role they can play in creating inclusivity and environments for individuals to engage, connect, and interact with one another.



Jordan Mulka

Concentration: Both African Studies and Political Science, with a special interest and emphasis on Afro-American Studies in both concentrations.

Research Interest: Broadly, my research interests include the identities of historically disadvantaged, marginalized, diasporic, and bi-racial individuals, and the sociological and psychological aspects that create, affect, and influence these individuals and communities in a contemporary context. I also am interested in inter-group relations, inter-group dialogue, and conflict resolution pathways.

Michael Williams, has been awarded the Raul Wallenberg International Fellowship as a participant in the Pedagogy of Action Program for Spring 2012. Michael will be traveling with 14 students to South Africa with Professor Nesha Haniff.

Congratulations Michael! We are extremely proud of you!

Student Spotlight





Student Spotlight

Full Name: Marsheda Patrice Olubunmi Ewulomi Major/Minor: English (Major), DAAS (Minor)

Year: 2012

GPA: 3.7

Where are you from? Lansing, Michigan

Motto: The future is not set in stone. Even if it was, break it and create a mold.

Extracurricular Activities/ Organizations: Campus Campaign Coordinator for Teach For America, Resident Advisor at South Quad

You wake up in ten years. Where are you and what are you doing?

I am most likely in D.C. working with national educational policy and curriculum development. I am also probably a traveling lecturer since I intend to have my J.D. and Ph.D. in Curriculum Development.

What do you plan to do with a degree in Afroamerican and African Studies?

I plan to do what I am doing, using it as a vehicle to think about social justice issues in our society. More specifically, I plan to work in education to address the opportunity gap and create a curriculum that teaches a more inclusive history and facilitates learning instead of memorization.

What made you have an interest in a major/minor in DAAS?

I wanted to write a thesis that allowed me the flexibility to do what I want by looking at an issue in a variety of ways.

Name someone who has had an impact in your life.

My father. I am definitely my father's daughter. I look like him, just better.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

Graduating knowing what I want to do for the rest of my life.

If you could have dinner with any person in history, who would it be? Walter Rodney while Michael Jackson performs in the background.

What do you like most about DAAS?

I love the individual attention and the knowledge that my professors believe in me.



Staff Spotlight

Since joining the staff as DAAS's Key Administrator in September 2010, Wayne High has certainly contributed to the department's powerful presence on campus. Wayne's responsibilities include budget management, faculty and staff considerations, and facilities issues. In addition to this impressive list of duties, he also serves as a liaison between the department and the College, interpreting University and College policies and working closely to develop strategic plans with the Chair and staff.

It's time to discover a bit more about the "man in the suit," who hailed from South Carolina to become a world traveler. What lies beyond his polished, professional, and always pleasant presence?

Wayne was interviewed by Elizabeth James, DAAS Program Coordinator, and Faye Portis, Executive Secretary to the Chair.

Recently, we gave Wayne the opportunity to share some of his thoughts with the DAAS Community. What do you see as your major role?

I'm a facilitator for both staff and faculty. I'm here to provide the tools necessary for their productivity.



Interaction with the staff is most fulfilling to me, as well as our accomplishments.

What do you think is unique about DAAS compared to other units?

In my opinion, it's our strategic vision and the strength of our interdisciplinary research that has positioned us to do unique things.

On a personal level, here are some responses Wayne gave to questions from the famous Proust interview used in Vanity Fair and on "Inside the Actor's Studio."

What are your rules to live by? – Abide by the Golden Rule; I do not ask someone to do something that I would not do myself; I like being able to give people the tools they need to be productive and grow. Then, move on to the next event/scenario.

What do you appreciate most in your friends? -Loyalty and frankness.

What is your main fault? -- High expectations.

What is your favorite occupation? – Although I've not done it as a formal occupation, I like having aircraft under my control (air traffic controller).

What is your idea of happiness? – Not needing the alarm clock to come in and do what is expected of me every day.

What is your idea of misery? – Disorganization and ineptitude, because they are good indicators of productivity.

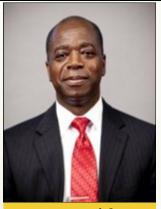
If not yourself, who would you be? – I can't see myself being someone else; I'm happy the way my life has turned out.

Where would you like to live? – Given that everyone has a goal, mine is to live like the birds, migratory with a house in Michigan and one down south.

What is your favorite bird? – Birds of prey (eagles, owls, etc.).

Who are your heroes in real life? – My father and grandfather because of their creativity and their resourcefulness, which they have shared with me.

What is your favorite motto? - Every day is an opportunity to excel!



Wayne High Department Manager



"Every day is an opportunity to excel! "

Events in the Lemuel Johnson Center

Poetry Roundtable







Poets Vievee Francis, Mary Leader, and Mark Turcotte talked about their work at a roundtable in the Department's Lemuel Johnson Center in November. The program was the first in the Department's new Living Poets Series and was a collaboration with the English Department's Zell Writers Series.

Teach Trane?



DAAS faculty member, Julius Scott, led an informal music salon and discussion of the music of legendary jazz great John Coltrane. Titled "Teach Trane?," the program examined the challenges of teaching a class about the jazz great whose music and artistic influences range from spirituality and religion to politics.

Q & A with Vusi Mahlasela



In January, the documentary "Amandla: A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony" was screened in DAAS, followed by a Q & A with Vusi Mahlasela, the composer of much of the film's soundtrack. Mahlasela also visited several classes during his time in DAAS. Sponsored in collaboration with the Center for World Performance Studies (CWPS), the screening was free and open to the public.

Professor Robin Means-Coleman Book Signing



On the spookiest day of the year, DAAS Associate Professor Robin Means-Coleman held a book signing for her latest book, Horror Noire: Blacks in American Horror Films from 1890's to Present. Given that the book signing was on Halloween, students were encouraged to wear costumes and were given complimentary bags of candy. Professor Means-Coleman read excerpts from her book and answered questions from the audience. Horror Noire presents a unique social history of blacks in America through changing images in horror films. Offering a comprehensive chronological survey of the genre, this book addresses a full range of black horror films, including mainstream Hollywood fare, as well as art-house films, Blaxploitation films, direct-to-DVD films, and the emerging U.S./hip-hop culture-inspired Nigerian "Nollywood" Black horror films.

Africa Workshops 2011-2012

Co-Organizers: Professor Howard Stein and Professor Anne Pitcher

The Africa workshop had another successful year of well attended seminars. The series was again cosponsored by the African Studies Center. The ten lectures represented an array of different disciplines from the social sciences and humanities. The year started with a wonderful lecture by Professor Jim Ferguson, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at Stanford University, on the new politics of distribution in Southern Africa. The last speaker, Peter Alegi, focused on the ramifications of the world cup held in South Africa.

Two speakers were cosponsored by the Africa History and Anthropology Workshop. We were able to organize two talks by scholars from African Universities, Kwesi Yankah of the University of Ghana and Severine Rugumamu of the University of Dar Es Salaam. Next year looks equally exciting, with a great line-up of speakers. We will launch the Africa workshop series for 2012-13 on September 18 with a lecture by Ron Labonte on the impact of globalization on the health of Africans. The lecture will be cosponsored by the Global Public Health Center of the School of Public Health. The list of the year's speakers are below.

African American and African Diaspora Workshop 2011-2012

Co-Organizers: Professor Sandra Gunning and Professor Xiomara Santamarina

During the 2011-2012 year DAAS inaugurated an African American Studies Workshop designed to foster cross-campus conversations among faculty and DAAS graduate students. The speakers comprised a mix of faculty from inside and outside the University, all of who were engaged in conversations about the methods and key issues in the field of African American and African Diaspora Studies. The wide range of topics included the emergence of Civil Rights in the North; modern poetic representations of the Middle Passage; African American women missionaries to Africa; and an introduction to the flourishing field of Urban Studies. In Fall 2011, as part of their coursework for the



pro-seminar AAS 601 (Introduction to African American Studies) students from the department's African American and African Diaspora Graduate Certificate Program attended these monthly presentations. Additionally, several DAAS faculty members brought their undergraduate students to the workshops, all of which made for lively conversations about the interdisciplinary methods and theoretical debates in the field. The 2012-2013 series promises to be another dynamic one, featuring speakers whose work includes a focus on gender, sexuality and black queer studies.

Zora Neale Hurston Lecture in the Humanities



Farah Jasmine Griffin, William B. Ransford, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, African-American Studies and the Associate Director of the Center for Jazz Studies at Columbia University



Robin Wilson, (School of Dance/DAAS), Farah Jasmine Griffin, (ZNH Lecture presenter, Columbia University) and Angela Dillard (Former DAAS Director)

On Tuesday, March 13, 2012, the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies offered the 2012 Zora Neale Hurston Lecture in the Humanities with the esteemed scholar Farah Jasmine Griffin from Columbia University. The talk, titled "Pearl Primus: Dancing Democracy, Dancing Freedom (1943-1953)," was attended by a large audience comprised of faculty, staff, and students from the University's campus as well as the local community. The event began with a biography of Zora Neale Hurston by undergraduate Briana Stuart, a member of Hurston's sorority, Zeta Phi Beta, followed by an introduction of Dr. Griffin by DAAS Director Tiya Miles. Dr. Griffin spoke about the legacy of the legendary artist Pearl Primus's contributions before an engaged audience who asked several questions following the lecture. A lovely reception followed where attendees continued to engage in lively discussion.

This year's event was cosponsored with the Center for the Education of Women Frances and Sydney Lewis Visiting Leaders Fund, the Jazz Department, the Program in American Culture, the University Library, the Departments of English and History, and IRWG.



Farah Jasmine Griffin speaking about choreographer, dancer, activist, anthropologist, Pearl Primus (pictured on screen).

AAS 458 Students Hold Skype Session with Civil Rights Pioneer

On November 3, 2011, students from AAS 458/CICS 401 "Nonviolence" conducted a live video interview, via Skype, with civil rights legend the Reverend Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr. With Reverend Lafayette speaking from Tuskegee University in Alabama, and the DAAS students hunkered down in an empty classroom in the Chemistry Building, the interview focused on Lafayette's early efforts as the SNCC field director in Selma, Alabama, beginning in 1962.

Perhaps more than any other single individual during the Civil Rights era, Lafayette had been directly involved as a young activist in many of the movement's most pivotal moments. Trained in the Reverend Jim Lawson's workshops



on nonviolence, Lafayette became a key figure in the Nashville sit-in campaign. He was one of the founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Raleigh in 1960 and was a Freedom Rider in 1961. And three years before "Bloody Sunday" and the climactic showdown on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Lafayette launched what proved to be SNCC's crucial campaign in Selma.

Taking part in the interview with Reverend Lafayette were DAAS students Lisa Chen, Kasey Cox, Zoe Berkery, Becca Wadness, Elise Aikman, Lara Burt, and Sarah Raby, all of whom are enrolled in Dr. Scott Ellsworth's seminar. The Skype interview was Reverend Lafayette's first.

Congratulations to the DAAS Summer Course Development Award recipients

Professor Stephen Ward

Course Title: "When Did You Fall In Love With Hip Hop? The History and Evolution of a Culture"

Professor Karyn Lacey

Course Title: "Race and Employment"

Course Title: "Race and Housing"

Professors Anne Pitcher & Howard Stein

Course Title: "The Political Economy of Development in Africa: Perils and Prospects"

The award will enable each of these faculty members to devote time and energy toward designing and planning a new 200-level course that departs from the courses that they usually teach in DAAS. These courses will promote students' active and engaged learning, such as opportunities for community involvement, engagement with archival materials, or cooperation with a local institution or organization. These courses will address our current students' interests in education, health, politics, structures of inequality, popular culture, and service learning.

DAAS 495 Race and Law....We Fought the Law...

As a fun approach to learning, Professor Martha Jones and her Fall 2012 DAAS 495 students wrote, performed, and recorded a song detailing all of the information they covered throughout the semester.

Here are some of the lyrics: Race law stories, my invention, I teach the law, what fun, I teach the law, what fun.

Teaching DAAS seniors keeps me on the run, I taught the law, and I won, I taught the law and I won.

Butterwood Nan left a legacy, Said she was an Indian. Granddaughters claimed that they were free,

They fought with law and they won, they fought with law and they won.

Hiram Revels was a Senator, Refused his rightful seat by some. Dred Scott seemed to close the door,

But he used the law and he won, he used the law and he won.

Plessy was sent to a separate car, His struggle had just begun. High court ruled race was a bar,

He fought the law, but Jim Crow won, he fought the law but Jim Crow won.

Wong Kim Ark returned from school, Claimed to be a citizen. Border agent said stay out's the rule,

Wong used the law and he won, Wong used the law and he won.

Ossian Sweet bought a bungalow, Neighbors tried to make him run. Shotgun fire was a fatal blow,

He faced the law, but the law won, he faced the law, but the law won.

Scottsboro boys falsely accused, Feared they'd never see the sun. ILD various tactics used,

They fought the law, but who won, they fought the law, but who won?

War agents held the Japanese, Korematsu tried to run. Claimed to be loyal down to his knees,

He tried the law, but the state won, he tried the law but the state won.

Andrea Perez found herself in love, Her man was not a Mexican. Clerk said no, what you thinking of!?

She raised the law, and she won, she raised the law and she won. It's sad to say our semester's done, We studied law, and we won, we studied law and we won.



An Interview with Dr. James Curtis, U-M Alumnus and Philanthropist

You attended Medical School at the University of Michigan. When did you graduate? And what was your experience like on this campus at that time?

In September of 1943, when I entered the U of M Medical School, I was a private in the US Army. The Defense Department had taken over all medical schools in the country. My first year entering class had 175 students, only eight of whom were women. A few of the men, 35, were in the Navy and lived in a fraternity house which they took over; the great majority of us were US Army privates. All of the Army men lived in the Medical School dormitory for men, the Victor Vaughn House. This was the first time any black student had lived in that dormitory (apparently the Defense Dept. had insisted on it). Racial discrimination and segregation in student dormitories was practiced generally in all public as well as private colleges and universities in that day. Furthermore, I was the only black student in the first year entering class. The sophomore, junior, and senior classes all had two black students—this was the unannounced but well known quota for black students in the medical school. Usually there was one from the state of Michigan and the other one either came from one of the other states in the union or was a black student from Africa or the Caribbean. Believe it or not, this made the University of Michigan the least prejudiced among all of the nation's leading medical schools, public or private, since those schools usually admitted only one every few years or not at all.



World War II ended at the end of my junior year, and I completed the last year thanks to the generosity of the GI Bill. In an abrupt return to prejudice as usual, the University of Michigan put all of the black men out of the Victor Vaughn House, returning to its former ways. One of my faculty members said that he knew a young white family near the medical school that was looking to rent their second floor set of rooms to students. A day later, he gladly informed me that he had discussed it with them and they would welcome me and the two other black men in the class just behind me. What was social life like at the University in those years? It was great, despite the racial discrimination: black women stayed either in private rented rooms or apartments, or in large private dormitories. One popular dormitory had an interracial composition and a distinctly leftist orientation, which made it a great favorite. Every weekend there would be one or several parties at the homes of blacks who lived in Ann Arbor. While there was no segregation at the Michigan Union, we were not free to patronize the local beer halls other students attended. We had our own favorite all-black tavern. Black sororities and fraternities were also in swing; in my sophomore year, I became a member of Alpha Phi Alpha.

You worked for many years at Harlem Hospital. What was it like to be a professional in the New York African American community in the 1950s and later?

Not only did I witness these wonderful transformations, I also played a major role in my twelve years as Associate Dean of the Cornell University Medical School. When I arrived there in 1968, they had graduated only12 black students in the approximately 60 years of their founding—and 6 of these had come from Africa. With the help of devoted faculty and students, I was determined to turn the school away from its past. By the time I left in 1980, the classes were all 10 to 15 percent minority students, and I had personally seen almost 100 blacks graduate. During those years, I served on the Board of National Medical Fellowships and was Chairman of the Board for several years. National Medical Fellowships raised money from major foundations and corporations to provide financial aid scholarships to minority students enrolling in all of the nation's medical schools. I regard with pride my work in helping to open up the nation's medical schools to more minority students and to women. In 1973, the University of Michigan Press published my first book outlining the beginning stages of this national effort, titled *Blacks, Medical Schools, and Society*. My second book, *Affirmative Action in Medicine: Improving Health Care for Everyone*, was published in 2003. It documents the social benefits of affirmative action, as shown by random samples of 2000 minority medical school students and a matched sample of 2000 nonminority medical school students who graduated during the early 1970s and thirty years later were practicing in specialty fields in various states.

From 1982 until 2000, I served as Director of Psychiatry for New York City's Harlem Hospital, which was at the time one of the teaching hospitals for the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. Harlem was one of the largest of the 17 municipal hospitals, with an almost 95 percent black patient population. Our 66 inpatient psychiatry beds, our 20 beds for patients being detoxified from alcohol or other drugs, our emergency room, and our large outpatient clinics for patients from preschool age to adolescence, adults, and geriatric patients, including a service where we visited elderly patients in their homes when they were too disabled to visit us, made us one of largest clinical services of any hospital in the city. Our psychiatry attending staff numbered about 32, with an equal number of psychiatrists in training; our nurses were several hundred, and our social workers, psychologists, and counseling staff as well as administrative support staff were also several hundred in number. When I applied to become Director, the Department had had no Director for 5 years because the search committee had been unable to find a candidate meeting the qualification and standards to satisfy Columbia University; the leadership of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, which controlled the municipal hospital system; and the Harlem Hospital Community Board, which had to give community approval and support. Because I completed my psychoanalytic training at Columbia, was well known to many of their faculty, knew many members of the Hospital staff, and had significant friends in the Harlem community, I was accepted. Despite the frustrations of perpetual fighting for sufficient funds to run the department, it was one of the strongest programs in New York when I retired after 18 years. Unfortunately, the programs of service and training continued to decline in quality and in the year 2011, Columbia University ended its affiliation with Harlem Hospital Center.

My wife, Vivian Curtis, also flourished in her professional career: for almost 25 years she was Director of Social Work for Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, largest of the New York City municipal hospitals. All the schools of Social Work in the metropolitan New York area sent their students to do field placement under the supervision of her Social Work staff, and she held adjunct faculty appointments at all of these schools and was responsible for a total professional and administrative and support staff of approximately 400 people. During those years, we were deeply involved in the churches in our community, and with social groups and persons who shared our social, political, and artistic interests. Among our first and closest friends were Jacob Lawrence and his wife Gwen, several top musicians, and several leading politicians. My retirement in the year 2003, and my move back to my home town of Albion, MI, were in response to my wife's terminal stages of illness with Alzheimer's Disease. She passed away in 2007. We had been married 61 years. Beginning in



1996, while my wife was still functioning well and after two years of retirement, we had both decided to make a major donation of our estate to the University of Michigan after our death and the death of our sons. We both came to this decision with a conviction that in order to fulfill our ambitions and dreams to bring about a better life for people like us who had come from humble origins but had enjoyed some measure of success, we had to join forces with strong social institutions that were also committed to that same mission.

You are an avid art collector and philanthropist. What led to your love of art? And what moves you to give gifts of art to other people?

Since its beginning, even before and certainly after the Civil War, the University of Michigan has not only been a world class university, but has also shown how a great public university can help lead our nation and our world into being a force for developing the full potential of all people to become more completely human and humane. We therefore donated our large collection of African Art and other artwork by African American artists to the University of Michigan Museum of Art, which served as the stimulus to dedicate a special gallery highlighting this work. Another donation to the School of Music, Dance, and Theatre will provide scholarships to promote graduate study in the area of African American contributions to this national and world legacy. The School of Social Work has renamed its research center in our name and has received scholarships to graduate study and research to meet the special needs of disadvantaged communities. The College of LS& A and the Department of African and African American studies have also been the beneficiary of art and funds to promote their educational goals.

Can you share with us some final words of wisdom?

Both my wife and I had the good fortune early in life to realize that it was essential to develop a philosophy of life, a set of values to guide the conduct of your life, rather than "go with the flow," which means go with the status quo. There are those persons and institutions even in this present day that would turn back the clock and wipe away all traces of affirmative action, the New Deal and the GI Bill of Rights, and even the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the Constitution. You must choose a set of values on which you can be proud to stand, or others will choose your values for you. As Polonius advised his son Laertes: "This above all: To thine own self be true, and it must follow—as the night the day—thou cans't not be false to any man"

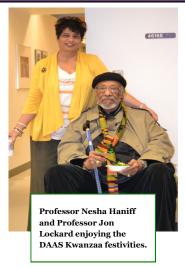


Holidays at DAAS

Kwanzaa 2011







The DAAS annual pre-Kwanzaa celebration is always a great time. Our very own Elizabeth James provided the attendees with the history and story behind the Kwanzaa holiday. A special thanks goes to our Student Services Coordinator; Katherine Weathers, for this year's delicious soul food spread and the beautiful decorations. The DAAS Staff, along with the help of faculty members, also participated in the Adopt-A-Family initiative, providing Christmas gifts for a family of four in the Washtenaw County area. We are already looking forward to this year's celebration!

Valentine's Day 2012













What better way to celebrate a day of love than to have your caricature drawn and partake in sweet goodies? This year's DAAS Valentine's Day celebration took place in the Lemuel Johnson Center, where students were able to have their caricature drawn by a professional caricaturist. This event was a huge success, and again we thank our Student Services Coordinator, Katherine Weathers, for her hard work and planning efforts.

Engaged Learning

SEMESTER IN DETROIT LIVE. LEARN. WORK. ENGAGE.

Semester in Detroit engages U-M students in substantive, sustained and reciprocal relationships with the people and communities of the City of Detroit. Combining a semester-long residence in the city with rigorous academic study and a comprehensive community-based internship, SiD students become deeply involved in – and committed to – the life, challenges, and promise of Detroit. By living, learning, and working in the city, our students partner with community leaders in transformative work, and in the process they themselves are transformed.

http://www.lsa.umich.edu/sid

Early Application Deadline Note: Two students will be selected from all who apply by the early deadline for \$1,000 scholarships.	May 11, 2012	
Early Applicant interviews (by phone if needed)	May 14-25, 2012	
Notification of early admittance into program	Week of June 4, 2012	
Final Application Deadline	October 26, 2012	
SID Detroit Immersion Weekend (*required)	November 9-11, 2012	







Get your girls outside this summer at ECO Girls' Camp Bluestem, a 5-day overnight camp at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan's Biological Station near Pellston, Michigan. Campers will explore our natural environment and the ecological diversity of urban and rural Michigan through a range of fun and educational experiences.

Camp Bluestem provides girls ages 10 to 13 with a full schedule of field trips and hands-on activities to foster environmental awareness and stewardship, cultural education, self-confidence, and leadership skills. Discover Douglas Lake, dig in to nature writing workshops, learn to grow and cook healthy food, and so much more. It's a great opportunity for your 4-6th grader to get active, make new friends, learn about the world around her, and enjoy the outdoors.

Camp Bluestem runs June 25—29. Lodging for all campers is on University of Michigan's campus in Ann Arbor and at University of Michigan's Biological Station. Transportation provided. Meals are vegetarian friendly.

For more information about Camp Bluestem: An ECO Girls Summer Experience, either fill out our contact form or contact Beth James at (734) 764-5517. Cost is \$350. Scholarships are available.

You can find the online application at http://www.environmentforgirls.org/camp-bluestem.php ,you may request a paper copy of the application by calling Beth James at (734) 764-5517.

News and Announcements

Hypersexuality and Headscarves Race, Sex, and Citizenship in the New Germany Damani J. Partridge

"Partridge shows how being included in the body politic can be a form of social control and exclusion. . . . " - Sander L. Gilman, Emory University

In this compelling study, Damani J. Partridge explores citizenship and exclusion in Germany since the fall of the Berlin Wall. That event seemed to usher in a new era of universal freedom, but post-reunification

transformations of German society have in fact produced noncitizens: non-white and "foreign" Germans who are simultaneously portrayed as part of the nation and excluded from full citizenship. Partridge considers the situation of Vietnamese guest workers "left behind" in the former East Germany; images of hypersexualized black bodies reproduced in popular culture and intimate relationships; and debates about the use of the headscarf by Muslim students and teachers. In these and other cases, which regularly provoke violence against those perceived to be different, he shows that German national and European projects are complicit in the production of distinctly European noncitizens.are made manifest, and often challenged, on the silver screen.

Two of the seven faculty members to be rewarded the 2012 Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award are some of DAAS very own.; Professor Stephen Ward and Professor Dorceta Taylor. These two faculty members were acknowledged for their dedication to developing cultural and ethnic diversity at U-M. They received the 2012 Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award from the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Professor Stephen Ward, associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies and associate professor in the Residential College, LSA, was cited for his work as faculty director of the Semester in Detroit (SiD) Program. In SiD, U-M students live at Wayne State University, work as interns at a Detroit-based community or cultural arts organization, and take Detroit-focused classes offered by U-M faculty.

Professor Dorceta Taylor, professor of environmental sociology, SNRE, and professor of environment, LSA, is recognized for lifelong achievements promoting diversity through service,

research and teaching.



Hypersexuality

and Headscarves



DAAS Associate Chair, Elisha Renne is one of three U-M faculty members to be awarded the prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship for 2012-2013. For her distinguished achievement and exceptional promise for future accomplishment. Dr. Renne is one of 181 fellowships the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation awarded Thursday to individuals from nearly 3,000 applicants.



Since its establishment in 1925, the foundation has granted more than \$298 million in fellowships to more than 17,300 individuals.

Associate Chair Renne has also been awarded a major grant from the Graham Environmental Sustainability Institute for their project: Integrated Assessment of Water Sustainability, Infrastructural Inequity, and Health in Small-Scale Gold Mining Communities in Ghana."

At the 25th Annual MLK Symposium, two of DAAS own were honored for their contributions to the King memorial: Professor James Chaffers, professor emeritus of

architecture and a senior design juror for the project; and Professor Jon Lockard, a faculty member in DAAS, who served as artistic consultant.

Both James Chaffers and Jon Lockard were awarded with the MLK Spirit Award and King/Chavez/Parks Award.



Congratulations to Professor Nesha Haniff, who has been awarded an Excellence in Education Award in LSA.

Professor Haniff was also appointed to the editorial board for the Journal of Poverty Alleviation and International Development.



Congratulations to Professor Frieda Ekotto, has been awarded an Institute for the Humanities Fellowship for 2012-13 for her project: "Vibrancy of Silence: Women Loving Women in Sub -Sahara Africa."



Congratulations to Professor Adam Ashforth on being awarded an Institute for the Humanities Fellowship for 2012-13 for his project: "The Trials of Mrs K, and other tales of the quest for justice and security in the shadow of AIDS in Africa."



Congratulations to Professor Lori Hill has been awarded an NCID Faculty Fellowship for 2012-13 for her project: "Access to Higher **Education for Disadvantaged Students:** Advancing an Agenda for Transformative Research and Increased Diversity in South African Educational Institutions."



News and Announcements

Professor Lorna Goodison,

Associate Professor in DAAS, was awarded a Cultural Medal of Honour by the Creative Production and Training Centre (CPTC) for her contributions to Jamaica, the Caribbean, and the world. The award ceremony, titled "CPTC Jamaica 50, 2012," was held at King's House and consisted of speeches, video vignettes, and musical numbers that honored the eight recipients of the award.



Congratulations to Sandra Gunning, whose proposal for a program of events on African Diaspora Sexualities, developed in collaboration with **Professor Nesha**Haniff, has been awarded generous funding by the Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWG)!





Congratulations to Professor Kelly Askew,

whose documentary film, "Poetry in Motion: 100 Years of Zanzibar's Nadi Ikhwan Safaa," premiered at the Panafrican Film Festival in Los Angeles on February 15th and 19th, 2012. The documentary was also screened at the Sauti za Busara Music Festival in Zanzibar on February 10th.



Congratulations to Katherine Weathers, Student Services Coordinator, and Professor Stephen Ward for receiving the

Cornerstone Award, which is given annually to a member of the University of Michigan faculty or staff. The award recognizes the unique ways in which each winner has enhanced the academic and social progress of African American students at the University of Michigan.





Congratulations to Professor Martha

Jones, who has been selected for research support from the LS&A Associate Professor Fund. Martha and her collaborator, Hannah Rosen, are also recipients of a Collaborative Planning Grant from IRWG.



Congratulations to Professor Martin Murray, who has been awarded a CICS International Security & Development Fellowship.



The Department of Afroamerican and African

Studies was recognized for its commitment to the community at the NAACP Image Awards held at the University of Michigan on March 25, 2012. DAAS work-study students Ashley Bryant and Auriel Bell were presenters in the award ceremony.





Congratulations to Professor Amal

Fadlalla, who has been awarded the LS&A Associate Professor Fund and the Human Rights Award from the International Institute.



Congratulations to Professor Vincent

Hutchings (DAAS Faculty Associate, Political Science), who has been elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.





AI/SAIO Grantees

African Initiatives Research Grants are grants and fellowships for current U-M graduate students interested in African Studies; they are recommended by a current U-M faculty member.

South Africa Initiatives Office (SAIO) Grants support current U-M students to travel, study and conduct research in Southern Africa and conversely fund students from South African institutions to study and do research at the University of Michigan.

Kristen Anderson

Dept.: Social Work Research Country: South Africa

Andrew Gurstelle

Dept.: Anthropology Research Country: Benin

Christopher Tounsel

Dept.: History Research Country: Sudan

Charles Gueboguo

Dept.: Comparative Literature Research Country: Cameroon, Mozambique, Nigeria

Benedito Machava

Dept.: History Department Research Country: Mozambique

Peter Larson

Dept.: Public Health/Epidemiology Research Country: Malawi/Kenya/Tanzania

George Njung

Dept.: History Country: Cameroon

Anne Compton

Dept.: Anthropology Country: Ghana

Smadar Brack

Dept.: Anthropology Country: Italy, Ghana

Brady G'Sell

Dept.: Anthropology and History Country: South Africa

Ryoko Sato

Dept.: Economics Country: Nigeria

Kelly Kirby

Dept.: Anthropology Country: Senegal, US Senegalese Diaspora

Atef Said

Dept.: Sociology Country: Egypt

Nana Sefa

Dept.: Public Health Country: Ghana

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Black Student Union names award after DAAS Program Coordinator Elizabeth James



Elizabeth James (DAAS Program Coordinator) and Black Student Union members present the first ever EJ Award to U-M Student Kalisha McLendon.

On April 15, 2012, the Black Student Union introduced one of its newest awards at its Annual Celebratory Banquet: the Elizabeth James Award, named after our very own DAAS Program Coordinator. The Elizabeth James Award honors one student who has inspired others with his or her high academic achievement and tireless work at making the university better. The presenters stated, "Anyone who knows Beth understands that after being in her presence, one is suddenly overcome with spiritual satisfaction... Throughout her years here at the university, Beth has been committed to minority communities, especially on issues that affect the African American and Native American communities. No matter what your



Elizabeth James (DAAS Program Coordinator) and EJ Award recipient Kalisha McLendon.

concentration or past experience is, your undergraduate career isn't complete until you've been in the presence of the greatness that is Elizabeth James." Beth was also featured in the February 6, 2012 edition of the University Record newspaper in the Staff Spotlight section.



DAAS Work-study Ashley Bryant and DAAS Student Services Coordinator Katherine Weathers at Black Student Union Awards



U-M student Kalisha McLendon accepting the Elizabeth James Award.



The Elizabeth James Award

DAAS Administration

Tiya Miles, Chair

Elisha Renne, Associate Chair

Anne Pitcher, Associate Chair for African Studies

Megan Sweeney, Director of Undergraduate Studies

Executive Committee (officers above, as well as) Martha Jones, Paul Johnson, & Amal Fadlalla

Regents of the University

Julia Donovan Darlow, Ann Arbor Laurence B. Deitch, Bingham Farms Denise Ilitch, Bingham Farms Olivia P. Maynard, Goodrich Andrea Fischer Newman, Ann Arbor Andrew C. Richner, Grosse Pointe Park S. Martin Taylor, Grosse Pointe Farms

Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor Mary Sue Coleman, ex officio

Newsletter

Brandi McCants, Editor

Meg Sweeney, V.Robin Grice, Faye Portis, Elizabeth James, and Katherine Weathers; Editorial Support Unless otherwise indicated, photos taken by DAAS student Assistants Ashley Bryant, Auriel Bell, Joshua Duval, & Steven Morrow.

Yes, You Can Support DAAS!

Gifts to the Department of Afroamerican and African Studies help us support a full range of activities, such as conferences, study abroad, brown bags, exhibitions, and many other special events. Your gift can also help support research, teaching, the DAAS Library, and the new DAAS Gallery. Finally, the Department helps student organizations, provides graduate and post-graduate fellowships, and sponsors visiting scholars. If you are interested in helping to support the mission of DAAS, please contact the U-M Office of Development at 734-647-6000. Use the address and form below if you'd like to mail a contribution directly to DAAS.

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