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THE ANNUAL JOURNAL OF WILLIAM & MARY AFRICANA STUDIES

A Tribute to Jacquelyn McLendon:

A Legacy of Renaissance

The Leader, Collaborator and
Advocate

For Prof. Jacquelyn McLendon,
Who is 'Free at Last!'

For Jacqui

Also:

Professor Chinua Thelwell:
Interdisciplinarity as the Bridge of
Africa and its Diasporas

Dr. My Haley: Her Story, Her Roots

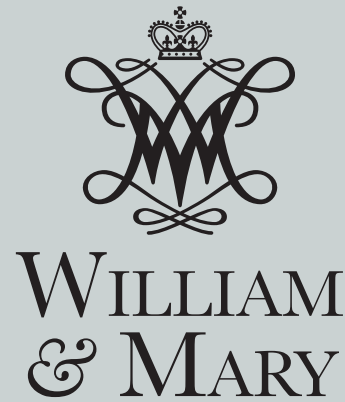
In My Own Words:
Dr. Brad Weiss, Anthropologist

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Professor of Economics Berhanu Abegaz: A
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KUUMBA STAFF

Editor: Francis Tanglao-Aguas,
Africana Studies

Graphic Designer: Rachel Follis,
Creative Services

Contributors: Marvin Shelton '15;
Terry Myers, English; Hermine
Pinson; Nancy Gray, English;
Victoria Olayiwola '15; Brad Weiss,
Anthropology; Anna Swanson '13



Welcome Our Kuumba!

It is indeed a humbling honor to welcome you to the debut of Kuumba as the Annual of Africana Studies at William and Mary. In restyling it as our Annual, we seek to celebrate in print the achievements of our community that emanates from the strengths of our program in Africana Studies and its history of creative scholarship and academic activism. We also have an online edition entitled, iKuumba, which allows us to keep the William and Mary community regularly updated of news and programming.

In this maiden issue, we pay homage to Professor Jacquelyn McLendon, the founding director of the Black Studies Program at William and Mary through a profile written by our main writer, Marvin Shelton, '15 as well as tributes from her colleagues. Marvin also interviewed Africana Mellon Fellow Dr. Chinua Thelwell who shares his research with students through his teaching. Our

▲ Francis Tanglao-Aguas,
Director, Class of 2015
Distinguished Associate
Professor of Theatre &
Africana Studies

articles of tribute conclude with our celebration of Africana Studies Director emeritus Professor Berhanu Abegaz who won the 2012 Arts & Sciences Award for Faculty Governance.

Kuumba is unique in the sense that it also contains much of the information and documents students need to peruse and complete in order to declare a major in Africana Studies. With this in mind, Victoria Olayiwola, '15, provides the reader with a sample of analytical and reflective writing she completed in our Africana course on diversity in plays and films. From our faculty "In My Own Words" column, Professor Brad Weiss discusses his teaching and research focal points. To further showcase our faculty's creativity, we present the poem "Theory," by our eminent poet Professor Hermine Pinson. It is our hope that prospective students and their parents may also benefit from these materials as they consider William and Mary as part of their future.

To conclude, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to the faculty of Africana Studies for their reverence and commitment to the program and its intrinsic vitality to diversifying and internationalizing the curriculum and faculty of William and Mary. Further, none of our achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support of our Dean Joel Schwartz of the Charles Center for Honors & Interdisciplinary Studies. We are also grateful to Vice Provost Steve Hanson of the Reves International Center for supporting our programming. Looking forward into the future, we are excited to collaborate with our new Dean of Arts & Sciences Dr. Kate Conley as we strive to sustain and advance the progress of Africana Studies at William and Mary. May we have many more years of kuumba together.

PROFESSOR JACQUELYN MCLENDON: A Legacy of Renaissance

By Marvin Shelton '15

A woman unshakable in her drive, Professor Jacquelyn McLendon battled against all odds to help bring Black Studies to the College of William and Mary. Believing that Black Studies are an integral part of any well-rounded student's college curriculum, Professor McLendon has advocated for the need for greater visibility for the program. It is because of both her strength and commitment to the program that it has transformed from a smattering of classes to the broad selection of topics represented today.



While Professor McLendon may teach on the Harlem Renaissance, the Black Studies program served as a renaissance she can call her own. She has built a legacy as a cornerstone of the flourishing Africana Studies program that will last long beyond her retirement this year.

During the early part of her life, Professor McLendon grew up in Cleveland, Ohio where she attended John Hay High School, a commercial school that prepared its students to enter the workforce. McLendon worked clerically as a stenographer for several years until she received a position working for the government in the Internal Revenue Service. She stated that, "I took courses periodically at the college level, but I didn't actually enroll [with an institution] until I had started a family."

With an initial intent of achieving success monetarily with the government, she enrolled at Temple University where she received her undergraduate degree in English literature due to her life long fascination with reading and writing. While working on her undergraduate studies, Professor McLendon met professors who believed that she "would do well in education" and who encouraged her to apply to graduate programs in order to teach; therefore, as she explains, "I kind of backed into getting a Masters and a PhD." She returned to Cleveland, Ohio in order to attend graduate school and to take care of her mother who was terminally ill at the time, attending Case Western University for her graduate studies. At Case Western University, she received her masters and PhD in English Literature, propelling her into the beginnings of a career in higher education.

Before coming to William and Mary, Professor McLendon participated in teaching and collecting tenure research at Hofstra University in Long Island, New York and Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts. "I was on a tenure track, and I was there for three years. I taught pretty much the same things there as I teach here [at William and Mary]:" early British literature and African American literature. She adds that the English professors at Hofstra, unlike those at Amherst and William and Mary, had to teach large classes of composition. After leaving Hofstra because of issues with the heavy course loads, large amounts of students in each class, and little time to do tenure and dissertation research, Professor McLendon went on to teach many of the same courses at Amherst.

While teaching and moving from one college to another, Professor McLendon still managed to complete her dissertation work and become a tenured professor at Amherst and William and Mary. "My dissertation work focused on the Harlem Renaissance, specifically on women writers during the period, especially Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset. I have written on other writers: Gwendolyn Brooks, Langston Hughes, and Alice Walker. However, my main focus was on Larsen and Fauset." Her first book was on Larsen and Fauset, and she received tenure from writing this book. She later wrote a variety of literary pieces, edited several pieces of literature, including a children's book on the biography of Phyllis Wheatley. Recently she published an entry in a database on American literature about African American literature from 1945 to the present. Currently, she is writing an entry in Approaches to Teaching American

Literature on approaches to teaching Nella Larsen that is under review of the Modern Language Association.

At William and Mary, Professor McLendon has been active in the English department, teaching courses in early British literature and African American literature. Perhaps her greatest legacy is her indefatigable work in bringing Black Studies to the college. As the director of the Black Studies program for ten years, Professor McLendon was instrumental, along with several other professors, in the development of the program. However, she stressed that, long before she was hired, several professors—like Joanne Braxton, Berhanu Abegaz, and Steven Indegua in cooperation with Joel Schwartz (in the Charles Center)—were intent on bringing Black Studies to the campus.

After being hired by the campus, Professor McLendon joined the movement for bringing Black Studies to the campus along with other faculty such as Professors Ken Price, Richard Lowry, Grey Gundaker, Arthur Knight, and Melvin Patrick Ely to name but a few. “We started with a May seminar in order to write the proposal, and we continued on for a good portion of the summer,” she explained. After the proposal went through the Education Policy Committee and receiving a little financial support from the Dean of Students’ Office and the Charles Center, the Black Studies program started with Professor McLendon as its director.

The program began on a rocky path with little space for classes, few students willing to take the courses, and no personnel policies; however, a few years later, the Black Studies program received its first major: Fanjanique Hurston. Eventually “we finally got a seminar room and one office in Morton once Geoffrey Feiss became provost.” In 2009, Black Studies merged with African Studies led by Professor Berhanu Abegaz to become Africana Studies with concentrations in African, African American, and African Diaspora Studies.

6 Questions for Professor Jacquelyn McLendon

What is the significance of Black Studies?

“Black history is a part of the world and America. People should know a broader range of history. It is an important aspect of history. The things that we teach [in Black Studies] are not meant to be separatist in any way. The reason it is a ‘separate’ program is because these are people who need to be taught and learned individually, particularly in a place like Virginia where we have a lot of historical records and documents that are involved in black history.”

Can we move more towards making Africana Studies a department?

“Yes, I think it could be a department. There was a time when students thought that Africana Studies was an easy program to do. I think sometimes, black students come in with the expectation of ‘well, I live this, so I should know this.’ It is not that simple. It is about learning history and culture and how things intersect. The courses are rigorous. However, it is important for all people to be able to know some of these things.”

What can you do with an Africana Studies Major?

“You can do just as much with this degree as you can with any other degree. Anywhere that you go, you are going to need some form of higher training that is required (i.e. graduate degree or on the job training). You cannot just get a high paying job with an undergraduate degree. This fact is the same with any degree. Several students continue their education after majoring in Africana Studies.”

What are future steps that the college can take to help Africana Studies grow?

“I hope that administration will one day make it a responsibility to have Black Studies added to the GER curriculum in order to see that the program thrives. The students really need to see that their school values the major. Students don’t want to major in a program in which there is no value or space given to it. I just feel that it takes ‘brave’ students to do this sort of thing [this program]. If the program thrives or not depends upon the dedication of a number of professors committed to it. Joan Gavalier, Leah Glenn, Ann-Charity Hudley, Michael Blakey have come later but they have been invaluable to helping the program thrive. It has never been a one-man show. However, we still need a place where students and faculty can come together and meet. I think that Professor Francis Tanglao-Aguas will be a great director in that regard because he has a way about bringing people together.”

What are some of your future plans?

“I will be retiring June 1, 2013. I will be returning in the fall semester and teaching part time for the next couple of years, if all goes according to plan. I am really interested in blended learning, so I hopefully can incorporate that in my teaching. I am also interested in green issues, sustainability, and knitting.”

What do you feel is your biggest contribution to the college?

“My biggest contribution would be with black studies. I have also held writing workshops on my own [they are not connected to the English department at all]. I have also been on just about every major committee in the department.”

JACQUI MCLENDON: The Leader, Collaborator and Advocate

By Professor Terry Meyers, English

Jacqui and I worked most closely together during the six years I was Chair and she was Associate Chair of the English Department (1995-2001), and I’m delighted to contribute some memories of those years and of her invaluable contributions to the Department.

To say that I was conflicted about taking up an appointment as Chair would be an understatement. Despite all my admiration of my colleagues and their prowess as teachers and scholars, and despite having confidence in the departmental Handbook that clarified all kinds of points of possible conflict, I’d seen too many people get chewed up in the tensions that come with any administrative responsibilities. We were a department of strong personalities, and in some cases that strength was allied with an admirably-developed and much-exercised rectitude that I’d seen wear down chairs more capable in administration than I surely was.

And we were a big department, then the largest in Arts and Sciences, and larger even than the School of Education and the Law School, which each had an established layer of deanlets and deanlings to help the Deans. English had two secretaries, one especially capable, but no further administrative support.

In weighing whether to become Chair, I spent an intense week arguing with myself, pro and con, back and forth, up and down, never quite coming to a resolution one way or the other; but, finally, over time, deciding to give it a try. But I had in mind that I could bail out at any point—indeed, I decided not to move into the traditional office of the Chair since I thought I might be there only a matter of weeks and it would be a hassle to move again into some office I might not like as much as the one I was then occupying.

One factor was especially influential in my decision, and that was an offer by David Lutzer, then the Dean of the Faculty, that he would support the new chair of English by providing a modest, a very modest stipend, for an Associate Chair. That made a difference to me, especially, I thought, if I could convince Jacqui to take up that position (I think I was able too to cobble together the new title with other departmental responsibilities that led to a course reduction as well, still very small recompense for all that Jacqui was to undertake and to help me and the Department with).

I hadn’t known Jacqui well before I asked her to be Associate Chair, but from what I’d seen of her I saw someone, who apart from her professional accomplishments, just seemed imbued with a lot of common sense and with a sense of humor. She was, I thought, someone who could and did laugh at the vagaries and absurdities of the academic life (which I say, of course, without admitting any absurdities in the academic life and most certainly not at William and Mary).

I think Jacqui was surprised when I asked her to serve the Department

as Associate Chair. I can’t remember now if she needed or wanted time to think about the offer—my recollection is that she did—but I do remember how heartened I was when she accepted.

I didn’t have in mind any particular responsibilities to delegate to Jacqui—she was the first Associate Chair of the Department and in helping to revise the Departmental Handbook after the position came into being, I asked to have it described as it still is, with “duties ... determined by the Department Chair.”

That flexibility was enormously useful since my hope, intention, and practice were to turn to Jacqui for help and support in all kinds of ways. And I did, most especially meeting with her regularly to talk over every kind of situation that develops in the daily administration of a large and complicated department. Jacqui was invaluable, a fount of common sense and pragmatism that got me and the Department over all kinds of questions, from dealing with particular crises faced by individual members of the Department to discussing and helping to sort out larger issues.

Among this multitude of daily consultations and invaluable support, let me single out one that I think was of special moment in the history of the Department. The pressures in those days for faculty to publish were increasing and there was evident in everyone’s life, I thought, a consequent strain to do well all that we should. When I had arrived at W&M, the teaching load was regularly 4/4, reduced about 1972 to 3/3 by Carl Dolmetsch in recognition of increasing publication expectations (one person whom I’ve talked to and who taught here briefly in the late 40’s told me that research and publication were disdained here then, looked down on and even discouraged—he left, quickly).

Anyway, Jacqui and I talked about trying to reduce the load to 3/2 and concluded that it could most likely be done. I asked her to chair a committee to examine the question and to make a recommendation, which she did—there were complexities, as one might expect, in a department with faculty serving in various roles, including joint appointments and the like. But Jacqui’s care and attention guided the committee through all those shoals and we were able to make the reduction, first provisionally and then later permanently. I should mention in this regard too as an instance of Jacqui’s sense of fairness and equitable treatment that when I resisted the notion of a universal reduction—for all tenured and tenure-eligible faculty—Jacqui gently talked me out of the position. Part of me still finds it challenging to justify a reduced teaching load for faculty who, in today’s parlance, are not “research active,” but Jacqui had a broader view here than I did.

I couldn’t have stayed as Chair for the six years I did without Jacqui’s help, and I’d hoped over the years since that Jacqui would become Chair of English. But she was too smart!

FOR PROF. JACQUELYN MCLENDON, WHO IS 'FREE AT LAST!'

by Professor Hermine Pinson

I tell my students, "When you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game." —Toni Morrison

I can imagine my colleague, Jacquelyn McLendon saying something like that to her students. In fact, her lived life, whether teaching or collaborating on a book with a colleague, or studying up on the provenance of a particular flower for her nature writing course enacts Morrison's quotation. To borrow another Morrison quotation, Jacqui is indeed a "friend of my mind." She has truly been a boon to me and my family in the twenty-one years we have taught at the College of William and Mary. In these pages, I want to recite a older tribute and add more recent reflections. When in 2007 McLendon stepped down as Director of Black Studies after having co-founded the program and "womanned" the helm for ten years or more, we gave her a tribute at the William and Mary Alumni House. Herewith, is the major part of an introduction that I gave for our tribute to Jacqui. It's as applicable today as it was then.

Jacquelyn McLendon directed the Black Studies program for the first ten years. As part of the team of faculty across the disciplines who shaped the program, developed policy for it in May Seminars and defended it in Arts and Sciences meetings, Dr. McLendon (or Jacqui as we like to call her) kept us on course in so many ways. In a word, Jacqui persisted. Prof. Joan Gavalier has said, "Jacqui carried the Black Studies Program through its beginning stages with both a clarity of purpose and a gentle spirit." I unequivocally agree with Joan's assessment.

It is characteristic of Jacqui to take people under her wing. According to Prof. Ann

Charity, "Jacqui has been a wonderful mentor to new faculty. She has taken time out to model what it is to be a great professor and has a wonderful sense of humor! Prof. Iyabo Osiapem says, "I just want to thank Jacqui for reaching out to me even before I got here. We went out to lunch sometime in the spring of 2007 and I felt like this was where I wanted to be, because if I could have a colleague like Jacqui, why would I want to go anywhere else?"

Prof. Melvin Ely has said of Jacqui's leadership, "We academics swim in a sea of smart folk—and bright people can be mercurial. Not Jacqui. For a dozen years, she has maintained a laserlike focus on the progress of Black Studies at the College. Never a detail overlooked, never a task left undone, or taken up belatedly, or partly accomplished—even as Jacqui kept our ideals and our mission constantly in her mind and heart. She has been the indispensable woman of Black Studies."

Jacqui and I arrived on campus in the same year, 1992 and over the years, I have benefited immeasurably from her guidance and unfailing support. She is a fine scholar and a dedicated teacher whose students seek her out for advice on their course plans but also on their life plans, because they trust her counsel.

Finally, Jacqui balanced her teaching duties, committee assignments (departmental and College-wide), and her responsibilities as director with a grace and dexterity that made a difficult and often challenging role look easy. Thanks, Jacqui for everything!

This should give you some idea of the respect and high esteem with which Jacqui is held here at the College and in the wider academic arena.

If I remembered the countless ways in which Jacqui has been a staunch friend to me, I'd take up too much time and become not a little sentimental. Instead, in addition to the foregoing tribute, I'd like to briefly elaborate on her significance as a scholar and a teacher. Jacquelyn McLendon's scholarly work, over the past quarter of a century has consistently provided illuminating readings of the texts of women writers, particularly her ongoing focus on the novels of Nella Larsen and Jessie Fauset, the novels of Toni Morrison, the poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks, and the life and poetry of Phillis Wheatley. In addition to her own books and essays, as one of the section editor for Pearson Library on American Literature, she took on the task of editing a major textbook, choosing texts that, in effect, shaped the second half of the twentieth century African American canon in significant ways that good literature anthologies do.

But back to Larsen, always back to Larsen, McLendon's most recent book is her edited anthology of essays under review, *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Nella Larsen* for the Modern Language Association's series, *Approaches to Teaching World Literature*. She has recruited a wide variety of Larsen scholars, from the well known to newly emerging scholars. Even while teaching a full load and participating on department



▲ Prof. McLendon with the Black Studies faculty and staff in 2007. Standing L-R: Mei Mei Sanford, Leah Glenn, Jacqui McLendon, Anne Charity Hudley, Rob Vinson, Ann Repeta. Seated L-R: Joan Gavalier, Hermine Pinson, Francis Tanglao-Aguas, Dee Royster

and college-wide committees, she has seen this complex and work-intensive project through to completion, a project that promises to further shed light on the literary contributions of a brilliant writer whose representation of a historical moment in American history, particularly the Harlem Renaissance, has broadened our understanding of important cultural and political dialogues in American letters, in her configurations of racial and gender identity in the early years of American modernism.

McLendon's most recently published essay explores comparative epistolary strategies in the Larsen's *Passing* and E.C. Williams' *When Washington Was in Vogue*, and demonstrates not only their "structural unity" and "thematic continuity" with works by contemporary black writers here and in the broader diaspora, including Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, but the continuing relevance of identity and consciousness, even in what some have erroneously termed a "postracial," if not a postmodern era.

And while she pursues her major research interests in a transatlantic collaborative venture on the correspondence of Nella

Larsen, McLendon has branched out into a new area of research and teaching, nature writing, literally leading her students and other willing followers, including members of the Williamsburg community, into the rural environs of Surrey, VA to experience environment-friendly farming and to assist at least one farmer in improving her land. I'm thinking in particular of the greenhouse she and her students began building on the farm of a William and Mary affiliate.

Jacqui has been, during my twenty-year acquaintance with her, a strong teacher who communicated to her students her own love of literature and literary theory, but revealed to them its beauty and utility using a pedagogical approach that incorporated the traditional as well as the latest educational trends, not because they were trendy but because they worked. In the vernacular of the students, "don't get it twisted," McLendon loves "close reading"; she revels in explaining the intricacies of Henry Louis Gates' "Signifyin(g), the proto-feminist ideas of Sojourner Truth or the more modern articulations of the feminist unconscious. However, she is "old-school" enough to

still be a stickler for knowledge of and proper use of grammar and syntax, for a demonstration of knowledge of a strong paragraph structure. She has always maintained, and rightly so, that being a good reader was the first step toward being a good writer; and writing well is probably a good indicator of being a good critical thinker, the by-word of every syllabus. Students love and respect McLendon for her constancy, her integrity, and her honesty. Translation: McLendon does not inflate grades. The grade you make is the one you earned, and that knowledge should be good news for anxious students who have been known to bluntly ask, "What does it take to make an A in this class?" On a more serious note, McLendon continues to advocate for students, to counsel them, to follow their progress outside of class. On more than one occasion, she has been publicly recognized for her dedication and excellence in teaching.

I know McLendon will continue to write, and although I suspect she will not miss the drudgery of grading papers, she will miss teaching, but not too much. She will always have other fish to fry, so to speak. And that's the beauty of Jacqui's lively intellect and adventurous spirit. In the last five years, she has taken up knitting and water aerobics (she might have also gone back to yoga!), not as preparation for retirement (although they make great pastimes), but for the challenge of engaging in creative activities that introduce new skills, and keep her mind and the body sharp, while literally broadening her human resources. Countless times I've said that Jacqui remains my mentor and model for embracing life's joys and working through its challenges with a can-do spirit; taking people as she finds them, at least until she can get them up to speed; teaching and learning in equal measure; loving her life and sharing her love, wisdom, knowledge, and experience with those she can. Here's to you, Jacqui!

FOR JACQUI

by Professor Nancy Gray, English

The first time we talked, I was brand new to campus and had wandered into the main office of Tucker Hall after most people had left for the day. Voices were coming from one of the faculty offices, so I looked in. You and Hermine were intently chatting, but were kind enough to welcome me into the conversation. I think it was at least two hours later that I finally tore myself away. We've been talking ever since.

I don't think I can really express how glad I am of the gift of your friendship. It has sustained me – not to mention entertained and comforted me – for these many years. I love your humor, your intelligence, the creativity with which you approach your work, and well, just the way you live your life. But really what it comes to is the sheer grace of your presence. I feel lucky to have gotten in on it. It may even be worth doing time in the 'burg if I get to have you for my friend.

We've shared so many lunches and heart-to-hearts – I'm counting on that to continue, no matter where we both end up living. Who knows, we may even get to Taos again one of these days. Quatorze Juillet, the high desert, amazing sights, and most excellent company. The conference was pretty memorable too – yes, my meltdowns over our writing workshop, for one thing. If it hadn't been for you calmly listening to my rants, who knows what I might have done? I decided on the spot that you just might be saint material. But more to the point, that conference was the first time I heard you read your writing out loud – a bit of a memoir-in-progress with a very big impact. I mean, I knew you had a way with words, but this was something beyond that – it gave me that *frisson* lovers of literature get when they hear something truly moving and truly good. And I wasn't the only one. More please. I want to be first in line at your book signing.

I have to say a word or two about Max. The day I got to go with you when this amazing little cat-like dog came into your life is one of my favorite memories. Who could resist the little bugger? He even charmed everyone at PetSmart when we stopped there for supplies. And you know I'm not the biggest fan of animals in fancy-dress, but I have to confess that Max in his Santa outfit makes a pretty cute picture. Mostly, though, it's just a pleasure watching the joy you take in being his person and hearing your Max stories.

There are countless other moments I could mention, but I'm going to stop here. I've concentrated on the personal even though I admire the professional you at least as much. We are all so much richer in mind and spirit for the work you've made part of what we know and do, not just here, but all over the country and internationally as well. That and friendship too – what bounty! When I think back over my time at William and Mary, the picture is a good one in very large measure because you're in it. I can't imagine this place without you and without the difference you've made to so many lives. I'm not sure you know how truly remarkable you are. Thank you for being you and for being my friend.

—Nancy

PROFESSOR CHINUA THELWELL: Interdisciplinarity as the Bridge of Africa and its Diasporas

by Marvin Shelton, '15

Chinua Thelwell, the Mellon Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor of Africana Studies has carved an interesting path to arrive at the College's doorstep. From his early days eavesdropping on the erudite discussions of his parents and their diverse colleagues, to his days as a graduate student studying black face performance. Thelwell has always pursued knowledge through unconventional outlets. Now, Chinua imparts his wisdom by teaching a seminar on the culture and history of hip-hop, a refreshingly innovative and diverse addition to the curriculum.

Professor Chinua Thelwell grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts where he graduated from Amherst Regional High School in 1999. After high school, he went on to minor in Africana Studies and double major in Sociology and American Studies at Tufts University. "Africana Studies was unfortunately not a major at Tufts when I went there," recalls Thelwell, "therefore, I could only minor in it." From Tufts University, Professor Thelwell went straight into graduate school in the American Studies graduate program at New York University. Professor Thelwell cites his decision on choosing American Studies as a graduate program being directly influenced by his identifying as Afro-Asian. He explained that he wanted to study both African American and Asian American history, and American Studies seemed to offer an equal degree of study with both histories. Professor Thelwell's initial interest was in writing about political poetry; however, he soon became enticed by the representation of race, an interest that he carried over into graduate school from his undergraduate studies.

"I learned about a black face minstrel company who had been traveling around the world and disseminating what we now know to be a very racist form of culture, and I was fascinated to see what countries the performer went to. I learned that minstrel performers traveled to Japan, Trinidad, India, Jamaica, and of

course South Africa, which is the country I decided to study for my dissertation." Professor Thelwell's dissertation work focused on black face minstrelsy as a popular culture export to South Africa. He explained that he was able to travel to South Africa several times in order to do research working with the archives there and collecting material for his dissertation. Soon after his collecting research and writing about it, Professor Thelwell defended his dissertation, and it passed with "Distinction." He presented his dissertation chapters at several conferences, winning the runner up position for the "Best Student Paper Award" in 2009 at the American Studies Association Conference.

Before completing his PhD, Professor Thelwell received a pre-doctoral fellowship for teaching at Allegheny College in Pennsylvania. The pre-doctoral fellowship gave him the opportunity to finish his dissertation work. "A lot of advanced PhD students don't get the opportunity [to finish their research under a pre-doctoral fellowship];" therefore, Professor Thelwell's achievement was rare and prestigious. After receiving his PhD, Allegheny College hired Professor Thelwell as a visiting professor under a two-year contract. He worked in the history department at the college before coming to The College of William and Mary as a Mellon Fellow.

How did your early life impact your undergraduate and graduate major decisions?

"I come from an activist family. My parents were very interested in politics and issues of race and racial inequality. My father is an immigrant to this country, a Jamaican immigrant. In the 1960s he became actively involved in the civil rights movement. He knew a lot of the figureheads in the movement, and he was a part of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). My mother was also an activist. She was more of an art activist [drama, theater, and art]. She is a director for plays, and she also ran her own theater company. Growing up, there were always books and always intellectuals coming through to talk about issues. There was always a critical discussion going on about the state of the country and about what could be done to make things better. I learned from an early age that a better future has to be imagined before it can be realized. This is one of the main contributions that intellectuals provide, we try to imagine what that better future might look like.

What are some of the struggles that you have faced in your career thus far in relation to tenure research, race, or teaching challenges?

"I don't think that my racial identity has played a role in making my professional career any harder. In terms of struggles,



▲ Chinua Thelwell, Brad Weiss, Jody Allen, Dr. Haley, Neil Norman, and Francis Tanglao-Aguas

I think that the struggles I have faced are the same struggles many professors have faced: trying to juggle a teaching load with research and publications. I have had to learn how to allocate my time wisely so that I am able to teach well and get my publications done. The exciting thing about the post-doctoral fellowship is that I have a lighter teaching load as compared to working as a visiting professor or a tenure track professor. I have a significantly lighter workload [at William and Mary] than I had at Allegheny College. Therefore, the post-doctoral fellowship has been good for me as far as having more time for my research."

What is the Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship?

"The post-doctoral has been around in academia for a long time. It is supposed to give a recent PhD an opportunity to work on his or her research and have funding to do so, expanding the dissertation into a book manuscript that can be published with an academic publisher. The Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship is a little different. It is considered a "teaching" post-doctoral fellowship, which means it gives the post-doctoral fellow an opportunity to use his or her teaching as a means to support his or her research. The teaching and the research are supposed to come together. You teach more classes than a traditional post-doctoral fellow; however those classes are directly

applicable to the research that the Mellon Post-Doctoral fellow is doing. So I am teaching classes here, and, theoretically, those classes are supposed to help me generate ideas for my research while also being good classes for students to take. There is a mutual benefit between student and professor."

What is your opinion on Black Studies and how do you feel that it is significant to this and any institution?

"I think that it is important to acknowledge the historical context in which Black Studies emerged. It emerged in the 1960s because a lot of college students began protesting. They were influenced largely by the civil rights movement. They were protesting because they wanted a curriculum that was not a Eurocentric curriculum. The classes that they had available for them seemed too Eurocentric. There was no study of African or African American history. The students wanted an academic program in which the stories and history of African dissent can be learned about and have space on a college campus. It is also important to know that there would be no need for Black Studies if the traditional disciplines were not marginalizing African history and people. In the present moment, one way we can continue to pay homage to the civil rights movement is by making sure that Black Studies [or African, African American, or

diasporic studies] continues to thrive in the twenty-first century. In terms of why I believe students should take Africana Studies courses, I believe that, if you are interested in Africa or the history/culture, then that is a reason to take the classes. But there are also professional reasons as well. Africana Studies students go on to work in a number of fields, such as civil rights law, education, public history. There are a substantial amount of opportunities for individuals with a Black Studies or Africana Studies major."

What is your stance on the mobility of Africana Studies for this campus?

"First, I have only been at this school for a couple of months. I don't have the same historical knowledge of the struggles of the Africana Studies program here that some of the senior professors have. It is true that there are issues with space, but this fact is true for every academic institution. I think that we are going to lose a lot when Professor McLendon leaves. I hope that the college will be able to hire a tenure track professor who will be able to teach the topics that she teaches and who will be able to contribute to the program. The fact that the program has a Mellon Post-doctoral fellow is significant as well. The new director, Francis Tanglao-Aguas, has new ideas of how to expand the program and get more faculty and staff. I am very optimistic about the position of the program at William and Mary. Again, much of this is new to me, however."

What are some of your future plans in academia?

In terms of future plans, I want to be a tenured professor. I am going to be publishing books as well. I am working on my manuscript: *Colonial Blackface: Ethnic Impersonation and Blackface minstrelsy in South Africa*. I am also working on another book, an edited collection on the New WORLD Theater.

WI am currently trying to get these books published. Also, I want to publish some of my chapters on South Africa in different academic journals. Lastly, I am always trying to improve in terms of becoming a better teacher.



DR. MY HALEY: Her Story, Her Roots

By Victoria Olayiwola, '15

On Valentines Day, 2013, Africana Studies was graced with the presence of Dr. My Haley, the scholar, novelist, collaborator and wife of the late Dr. Alex Haley. She had come to talk to Africana Studies students about her past with husband, mentor and collaborator Alex Haley as well as the future--her latest book *The Treason of Mary Louvestre*. What struck me most was that she chose to stress the strength and inspiration of women in her and Alex's lives.

She spoke of her grandmother and how strong and inspirational she was, for her grandmother was a woman of great substance and purpose. She mentioned that Alex's grandmother Cynthia was also a great source of inspiration--inspiring Alex's long journey to find the roots of his identity, an epic story he later chose to dedicate most of his life to research and write about.

Besides these women, I found My Haley to be a strong woman herself. She was a woman who chose to "rise, rise, rise." She had to work several jobs to get a sound education, she also had to educate herself understand how to write essays and had familiarized herself with the general unspoken rules found within a university/college setting.

She gave one account of a time when she had no money and needed shoes. Her mother bought shoes for her but they were two-and-a-half sizes too big, which made it hard for her to walk normally; every step she was taking she had to pick up the shoe with her feet or else they would fall off. This anecdote encapsulated the character of My. She was a woman with a goal in sight and she had no intention of falling by the wayside. She may not have had all the opportunities afforded to her that we all bask in, but yet had steadfastly decided that she would continue in her studies to achieve her goals and secure her dreams.

She told of how touched she was by Alex Haley's story when he came to her university to give a lecture she attended. The power of his words made all, whether rich or poor, white or black, religious or atheist feel connected. Her message was one that reverberated his words. No matter how low, poor, weak or downtrodden one may be, there is always the opportunity of reinventing oneself.

Her words confirm we can all feel a connection to each other whether we share a past or not. With the stories she has helped to co-author, she feels that it is all our story. She said it is important we know of our own past so we stop ourselves making

the same mistake again. For there is power in knowing who you are, your past and the meaning of your name.

I know of my own past because my mother, another strong woman, made sure me and my siblings were aware of it. I am thus connected to the past of "Roots" not only because I am Black, for I am of the view that we can all feel connected regardless of race, but because my mother made it her duty to educate us of it. On a trip to Nigeria in my mother pointed out to us a field where sugarcane was being grown. She said to me and my siblings, "Look, this is where the slaves would work and the white man would put padlocks on their mouths to stop them from eating the sugarcane."

When my parents heard about *Roots*, they made me; my younger sister and older brother sit down and watch the whole thing. They called it in "educating us on our past", and it didn't stop there. My mother heard there was *Roots: Next Generation* and *Alex Haley's Queen*. We all have watched most of it, if not the whole thing.

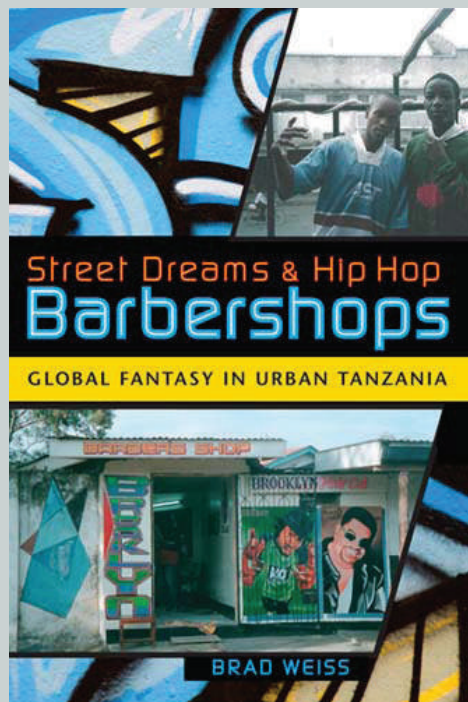
Our education did not end with slavery. From there my mother went on to educate us about the problems of South Africa, we watched "Stephen Biko", "Sarafina!", "Mandela" and other documentaries on the plight of the Black South Africans. Even though I am British and of West African descent-so none of my direct ancestors were taken to the New World neither do any of my blood relatives come from South Africa-the fashion in which I was brought up has made me identify and empathize with the black people's plight.

Beyond lines of race, what remains true is that we all can in some way relate with the deeds of the past. We need to strive to understand it from both sides-the slave's side and that of their masters-in order for us to come together, lay down the past, begin the healing and reconciliation process and move on united.

IN MY OWN WORDS: Dr. Brad Weiss, Anthropologist



▲ Dr. Weiss with friend Sidi in Tanzania



I'm Brad Weiss Professor of Anthropology at the College of William & Mary, in Williamsburg, VA. I received my Ph.D. in 1992, from the University of Chicago. In my research, I have undertaken a number of different ethnographic and historical projects, from a study of urban Tanzanian popular culture, to my current work on heritage breed pig production and consumption in the United States.

In spite of the diverse places and topics I've worked on, I think all of my work asks about similar questions. I'm interested in PLACES - what makes a place recognizable and important to us? How is it organized? What draws us to places?

Asking these questions leads me to ask about VALUE. What does it mean to value people, objects, relationships, and places? How do different ways of valuing the world stand in relationship to each other? In my view, this is one of the most fundamental social and political problems we face: how do we define what counts as valuable? Who gets to make that determination? Who gets excluded - and what happens to their alternative understandings of value?

Research

I've been carrying out Social/Cultural (or Socio-Cultural) Anthropological research since 1986, when I first went to Tanzania. I have published three books on this work, as well as one edited volume. I served as an Editor of the Journal of Religion in Africa for over ten years, including four years as Executive Editor of the JRA (2004-08).

Popular Culture in Urban Tanzania

I began my next research project in the Summer of 1999 in the city of Arusha, in Northeast Tanzania. While beginning my work there, I was struck by the HUGE number of barbershops that sprung up all over town. I got to know a bunch of barbers, almost all of them young men who had grown up in town. They were all extremely familiar with African-American hip hop, and had decked out their shops with a pastiche of images cut out from Ebony and Vibe. Most strikingly the shops were painted with huge murals that featured iconic images of rappers, basketball players, and film stars. At the same time, these young men talked about local politics, and the struggles and strife of trying to make a living in a country that was undergoing unprecedented political and economic change. The results of this research were published in a volume I edited, *Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age* and the book I wrote, *Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops: Global Fantasy in Urban Tanzania*.



Professor of Literature & Creative Writing Hermine Pinson: WEAVER AND WIZARD OF WORDS

by Francis Tanglao-Aguas



Professor of African American Literature and Creative Writing Hermine Pinson has published three poetry collections: *Ashe* (Wings Press), *Mama Yetta and Other Poems* (Wings Press), and *Dolores is Blue/Dolorez is Blues* (Sheep Meadow Press). She has released two album recordings, *Changing the Changes in Poetry & Song*, in special collaboration with Yusef Komunyakaa and Estella Conwill Majozo and *Deliver Yourself*. Her poetry, fiction, and critical essays have appeared in anthologies and journals such as *Callaloo*, *Verse*, *Cave Canem Poetry Anthology*, *The Ringing Ear: Black Poets Lean South*, *African American Review*, *Common Bonds: Stories by and About Modern Texas Women*, *Eyeball*,

Konch, *Melus*, *Paintbrush Forum for European Contributions in African American Studies*, and will soon appear in *Richmond Noir*. She teaches courses in Creative Writing, Black Expressive Workshop, Poetry, African American Literature, and Introduction to Africana Studies. Featured here is her poem "Theory," which was recently reprinted in *Broome: International Journal Journal of the Arts*, about what it takes to be a hero. It alludes to black heroes, from Martin Luther King ("Letter from a Birmingham Jail"), to Harriet Tubman (conductor), to Judith Jamison, the dancer, to Ralph Ellison's "Invisible man," drawing from "found imagery" of the scientific journal.

THEORY

a woman sits in an attic for seven years
she is not rapunzel
perfect

in the heart of a galaxy
130 million light-years away

there's a hole as big
as the orbit of mars

a hundred million suns
have fallen
into it

nothing escapes
it's perfectly black

as the poet's night
falling gently

as steal away
the last note and after
on the general's tongue

as even a man
darkens newspaper margins
completing a letter in a birmingham jail

perfect

the dancer's
god-driven legs
her gran jetés

revelation

they bent time
collisions of stars
each spiral
its own orbit
at the galactic core
of the matter

perfect

hambone hambone
where you been
round the world and
back

as a woman sits in an attic
so
a man sits in a hole
strung with ten thousand lights
he thinks his story through

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS BERHANU ABEGAZ: A Passion for Service & Academic Activism

by Francis Tanglao-Aguas

The well-revered and astute Professor of Economics Berhanu Abegaz, one of the faculty pillars of Africana Studies, was awarded the most prestigious Award for exemplary service for advocacy and governance in 2012. The Arts & Sciences Award for Faculty Governance honors faculty members who devote special efforts to helping their colleagues through committee memberships and other services to departments, programs, Arts & Sciences, and College committees. Dean Eugene Tracy led the awarding with a College wide reception where Professor Abegaz was feted with a cash prize and a citation, which read:

“Professor Berhanu Abegaz has built an impressive record of service over nearly thirty years at the College of William and Mary. He has served on, and sometimes chaired, a number of College and Arts and Sciences committees, including the Affirmative Action Advisory Committee; Educational Policy Committee; Faculty Affairs Committee; Faculty Assembly; Faculty Compensation Board; International Studies Committee; International Advisory Committee; Committee on Nominations and Elections; Committee on Retention, Promotion, and Tenure; Student Body Size Committee; and Study Abroad Committee. He has also served on the advisory committees for the programs in Africana Studies and in Russian and Post-Soviet Studies; as Academic Director for the Reves Center for International Studies; and on the search committee for the Dean of Arts and Sciences. Throughout his many contributions, Professor Abegaz has demonstrated a deep commitment to a system of governance with transparency and with shared responsibility through participatory decision-making. He was also responsible for shepherding the 2009 merger of the programs in Black Studies and African Studies into the



▲ Professor Abegaz speaking at the Lemon Symposium.

current Africana Studies Program; and currently serves as a mentor in the Africana House, which he was instrumental in establishing, and as director of the Africana Studies Program.”

Professor Abegaz received his A.B. from Princeton University and his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania. His teaching interests encompass macroeconomic theory, regional economic integration, comparative economics, and development economics. His research interests are wide-ranging including structural convergence in manufacturing industries between leaders and latecomers, the role of diversified business groups in emerging economies, African industrialization, and poverty traps in Ethiopia’s agrarian system. He is Director Emeritus of William and Mary Africana Studies. He is a former Senior Fulbright Scholar in Vietnam.

Senior Scrapbook: ANNA SWANSON, '13



NAME: Anna Swanson

DATE OF GRADUATION: May 2013

MAJOR: Africana Studies (African concentration), minor in Environmental Science and Policy

FUTURE PLANS: I hope to work for the nonprofit sector in food security and/or urban sustainability. I would love to work abroad Africa or Latin America eventually.

MOST UNFORGETTABLE MEMORY AS AFRICANA STUDENT: Taking the opportunity to study abroad at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. It was an incredible addition to my major to be able to study Africana Studies from both the American and the African perspective.

FAVORITE MOMENT IN AFRICANA CLASS: I took a Swahili course offered one summer and I just remember sitting under a tree next to the sunken gardens and speaking little beginner Swahili sentences to each other. It was such a cool moment, both for the setting and the opportunity to learn a language like Swahili at William and Mary.

FAVORITE AFRICANA PROFESSOR: All of them! In particular, Professors Froitzheim (Gov’t), La Fluer (Hist), Osiapem (Linguistics), and Vinson (Hist).

PERSONAL MESSAGE: Best of luck to the program- thank you **so much** for all the time and energy you’ve spent to bring me where I am today!

CONTACT INFORMATION: akswanson@email.wm.edu

BE THE CHANGE: Why I Majored in Africana Studies

by Anna Swanson, '13

“Sooo what do you do with an Africana Studies major?” Without fail, I am confronted with this question almost every time I meet someone new. My go-to answer these days: “well, I’m planning on moving to Africa and saving the world.” A bit sarcastic, but effective. The honest answer is, I don’t really know. All I know is I’ve been really lucky to find something I love studying; Africa and South Africa in particular, and I went with it. I should be a senior this year, graduating in May, but my path has been a bit different.

It started back in my own days in this fine academy. I was one of the exchange students to Australia summer after sophomore year and went to Tanzania with my mom and the other EA kids summer after my junior year. By senior year, to all of the language department’s horror I am sure, I was apparently not content with the regular 3-year single language commitment, but instead was taking French, Spanish, and Mandarin. I had stumbled upon something new and intriguing- traveling and other cultures. My summer’s abroad had broadened my horizons significantly but if anything, left me wanting more. And so I did something a bit unusual, something that almost everyone questioned. But, being my stubborn self, I was convinced it would be worthwhile.

The year after I graduated Episcopal, two of my fellow EA alums, Quinn Libson and Mia Kent, and I decided to travel and volunteer for a year before heading to college. We all went slightly different places, but with a common goal: to learn something about and to experience a larger world. My adventures took me into the jungle of Peru where I worked on a reserve in conservation. Then to a small village near Machu Picchu, where I taught English to middle and high schoolers. Then across the Atlantic into the bush of Botswanan wilderness for another conservation project. To the streets of Cape Town, South Africa, where I worked in a daycare. And, finally, throughout Senegal in West Africa where I taught English to adult learners and French to kindergartners.

In each of these places my situation was a bit different. In the wilderness, working on conservation projects, I lived in volunteer-made cabins, tents, and little stone shelters with other volunteers from around the globe. In the towns and cities I lived with host families of incredible diversity. They were Christian, Muslim, Peruvian, Senegalese, Cape Tonian, “colored,” African, Andean, French speaking, Spanish speaking and Afrikaans speaking. I met people from all over the world with different stories, backgrounds, and goals. I skydived over Table



▲ “Looking over the beaches of Cape Town, my roommate and I celebrate the sunset on Lion’s Head.”

Mountain, hiked Winu Picchu, swam in piranha-infested water, drove for over 42 hrs total in a 7-person car with no air-conditioning in 106 degree heat. I got my hair braided into 142 braids down to my butt, ate a whole guinea pig, dove with great white sharks, and walked by moonlight only through the African bush. It was an experience of a lifetime.

But most importantly, I learned. Some learning was obvious- nature walks with our leader in the jungle taught me all the complexities about the jungle’s species and how they worked. Cab drivers, host families, and the kids I worked with all helped me improve my Spanish and French constantly correcting me and developing my vocabulary. Tours of historical sites and museums in Cape Town taught me about the nation’s horrifying history of Apartheid and the Civil-rights like movements against it.

But some of the learning was a bit less direct and only evident upon reflection. I had to learn how to be responsible; navigate airports, trains, work assignments, and tricky situations by myself. “Africa time” forced me to learn patience. Being a two hr boat ride from the nearest village with no electricity taught me to enjoy simplicity. In Senegal, where 90% were Muslim and 100% were African, I learned what it felt like to be a minority, constantly being picked out, treated differently, and taken advantage of. It wasn’t always fun and easy. Handling a room full of screaming kids who don’t speak your language by yourself can be a bit intimidating. Having to be picked up and

driven from a chosen location because your walking path to work suddenly transitions to an unsafe area can be a bit scary. But I can’t tell you how rewarding it feels to be absolutely exhausted mentally and physically at the end of the day from working and speaking with other people in another language all day. Or the sheer pride you feel when you’ve returned home to a host mother’s approval finally on a price you’ve bargained down in the market from the “white person price” to the “locals price”.

Living with all those different host families and meeting so many people from all over the world constantly forced me to challenge previous ideas. Everyday I learned something about a place, a person, or a part of society I didn’t know before. Every day something pushed me out of my comfort zone and forced me to learn something new about myself or about others.

I began to learn and understand parts of the world I never knew and was hooked. I fell in love particularly with South Africa. Its complexities challenged me, its beautiful façade but deep seeded sadness and inequality perplexed me. I wanted to know more, to know the country and its people better. So I vowed to go back.

But first, I returned home and started at the College of William and Mary in Virginia. My first semester I took a Modern History of South Africa class and by the time second semester had come around I was planning my study abroad and had declared myself an

Africana Studies major. I dove into South Africa’s history, reading novels, Nelson Mandela’s biography (which is not short), watched movies, read the news. I wanted my second experience in South Africa to be even more meaningful.

This past semester, as I promised myself, I began at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. By the time I returned, South Africa had earned a very special place in my heart as the most beautiful, inspirational country in Africa. My memories of anything negative from my gap year were quickly shaded over by the images of the “rainbow nation,” a place where people had moved so swiftly from the utmost challenge of oppression to freedom, change, democracy and happiness. Of course there were problems, but everyone was so positive! How could it matter?

As soon as I started university I realized how untrue this was. I decided I wanted to get to know the community, or at least a part of it, better than just from a book. I went in search of a volunteer position or internship that would place me in the heart of somewhere different and stumbled upon one through a program called SAEP. There, I met a woman named Indra who asked me if I’d like to help start up a photography program. I jumped on the idea, even though the last time I formally took photography was in this very school with Mr. Collins. But I thought, hey, how hard can it be?

The first Monday I was driven deep into a township called Phillippi and dropped in a classroom of 7 students with just myself, my camera, and a list of photography vocabulary. The students were all Xhosa speaking (yes, the language with the clicks), but could understand a bit of my English if I spoke slowly. They were between the ages of 17 and 20 and all but one had never worked a camera. They lived in what is called a “township;” what most would call a shanty town or slum consisting of scrap iron houses, dirt roads, stolen electricity, and the occasional port-o-potty. These townships are the remnants of Apartheid. They are the informal housing outside the city were thousands of blacks and “coloureds” were made to live, often by forced removal from their homes closer to the city, by Apartheid laws laying racial claims over certain areas. They went to a school with not a single white person nor anyone of any other tribe or race for that matter, and I was the first American they’d met.

A particular incident stands out in my mind where I realized the importance of our interactions. My students and a bunch of the



▲ (top) “My last day with my photography students! From right: Ayanda, Thembe, Ozayo, Yonela, Sinazo, Me”

▲ (bottom) “One of my best friends, Comfort, and I ‘helping’ the chefs at a local township barbecue house called Mzoli’s.”

other art program students had taken a field trip to the National Art Museum in Cape Town to see a photography exhibit. We were waiting outside for the other van to come pick us up afterwards and I started chatting with one of the girls. She asked me what I was doing that weekend and I said I was probably going to Mzoli’s, a restaurant in a black township where you bought your meat at the deli next store, they grilled it, and you ate it with your hands and danced the afternoon away with the DJ. She was amazed that I would be going into a township to eat. She asked me why? I said it was fun. She then asked me, shocked, so you have black friends? Assuming I would only be going to a township with black people. I said yes, I have black and white friends and friends from all over. She then got really quiet for a moment then said, I wish I had a white friend.

I don’t know any, except you. Will you be mine? This struck me.

It was interactions like these with my photography students and in my classes at UCT when South Africa crept up on me and began testing my faith in its success. Was it possible for a country with a history of such violence to proceed out of it with no consequences? How could the country move past the racism when students like my own never even had contact with whites? Why were the students at UCT still so vocal about Apartheid and racism when they hadn’t experienced it firsthand and currently lived in a democratic nation? I came home crying more than once feeling ashamed and heart broken at the violence and oppression that was attached with my skin color and the ignorance that was attached with my accent and nationality. I began to question my ability to teach the students photography when what they saw and what I saw in their community were so different. I was frustrated that the country wasn’t the positive rainbow nation it once seemed and pessimistic about my ability to change anything.

But always, just when I thought I would give up there were moments of hope. Moments when I bonded with a South African classmate over similar book taste. Times when I was goofing off with my students dancing and laughing even though they could hardly understand the lyrics of my choices and I had no idea what theirs were saying. I know this is going to sound really cliché, but I realized that one of the most important things I could do was exactly as Ghandi said, and be the change I wanted to see in South Africa. It was the little exchanges that showed my students that I was as much their teacher as their equal, the comments and discussions in class where I challenged South African students stereotypes of me as a white American. I may not have solved all the problems of their community, but I did make a change in their world. And that’s the thing about creating change- its not always huge, its not always “saving the world” as I say. Sometimes it is just making a positive difference in a few people lives.

There is a quote by Jane Goodall I really like that I think goes along perfectly with the chapel theme. She says, “only if we understand can we care, only if we care will we help, only if we help shall we all be saved.” The whole point of me telling you all this is that these experiences in South Africa and on my gap year helped me do this- understand, care, help.

According to Jane’s quote the first part of

“being a change” and ultimately, helping, is understanding. For some, this is years and years of school, books, lectures, speeches, conferences, and research. For me, this means experiencing and exploring. It means taking every opportunity you have to challenge yourself, branch out, expand your mind. To leave behind your expectations and biases and look at something in a new way. For me, it meant traveling around the globe learning and experiencing other cultures. However, it also meant beginning to understand myself. Understanding and learning my interests, fears, stereotypes, areas where I needed to improve, and areas where I had developed.

By doing this I have begun and you will begin to care. Beginning to understand the country of South Africa and the situation of most of its population a bit more inspired me. I developed a passion for this place that constantly confused, frustrated and inspired me. This passion was the only way I could help. It drove me to learn more, do more, and not give up. Because I wanted so badly to understand and be a part of the community, I kept working even after I would come home crying feeling judged and belittled just for the color of my skin and accent. And I’d like to think I helped a little. In the end, I did set up a very successful photography program at the school, which will hopefully be working with the Cape Town School of Photography students next year. But, to me, the biggest positive change I made was with the students. I developed a friendship and relationship with them that helped them unravel many stereotypes of race, nationality, and class they had never had to confront before.

If I leave you with one thing today, I want to encourage you to not just “be the change” but first, find it. Learn and experience. This school has so many opportunities available to you all- take advantage of them. Keep searching, don’t settle for something you feel average about, find something your passionate about. If you keep exploring, as I have, your passion may just find you. It’s something that challenges you and forces you out of your comfort zone. But at the same time, something that is rewarding and that you feel good about. Its taken me a long time and many experiences to even start to begin to know where my future lies, and trust me, I’m still barely there. But for now, I know where that passion lies and that’s enough for me to feel hopeful that I’ll make a change somewhere, sometime.

AFRICANA STUDIES at William & Mary



▲ Cape Town, South Africa

MISSION AND STRUCTURE

Africana Studies is an interdisciplinary major that explores the scholarship on the history and cultural traditions, and the political and economic circumstances which together define over 1.2 billion people of African descent. Students take a common set of core courses, and may select one of three tracks in which to concentrate:

African-American Studies

African Studies

African-Diaspora Studies

The central mission of the program is to prepare students for lifelong learning, graduate study in various fields, and careers in private and public organizations worldwide. Africana studies seeks to develop a habit of thinking that is inter-disciplinarily analytical and a habit of heart that is cross-culturally empathetic. Embracing more than the centrality of race, it is designed to apply a comparative lens to the study of imperial, national, ethnic, linguistic, and religious currents and intersections in Africa, and its far-flung Diaspora in North America, the Caribbean Basin, Latin America, the Middle East, South Asia, and Western Europe.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH

Students are supported by over thirty affiliated faculty. Majors are expected to engage in research in various forms, including independent study, Honors, and structured internships. Majors and Minors are encouraged to combine their scholarly study with service learning, study away in the U.S., and study abroad, especially in Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The Program is a lead sponsor of the W&M summer program in Cape Town, South Africa. In the near future, we hope to add summer programs in the Caribbean and Brazil. The student-run African Cultural Society, Black Studies Club, and Africana House are open to all members of the William and Mary community.

CAREERS AND GRADUATE STUDY

Students with a major in Africana Studies (or its predecessors, African Studies and Black Studies) have attended graduate programs in various disciplines and professions. Several alumni have joined the public sector at all levels, while others work for a variety of private employers. Many served as Peace Corps volunteers or joined a variety of non-profit organizations in the U.S. The analytical skills and broad perspectives acquired in life-long learning or to prepare for myriad occupational opportunities.

ALUMNI AND FRIENDS

Your News and Contact Information

For your convenience, we have provided an online form (www.wm.edu/as/africanastudies/alumni/sendusyournews) for your news and contact information. As always, we look forward to your visit to campus.

Alumni Career Connections

One of the most helpful and popular resources provided by the Office of Career Services is Alumni Career Connections—a searchable database of alumni who have volunteered to support students and fellow alumni by sharing information about their career field, internships and job search strategies

CURRICULUM: MAJOR AND MINOR

Disciplines Studied:

Anthropology
Art and Art History
Economics
English
Government
History
Modern Languages and Literatures
Music
Philosophy
Religious Studies
Sociology
Theatre, Speech, and Dance

Distinguishing Features:

Foreign Languages
Research Methods
Core and capstone
Interdisciplinary
Globally comparative
Melds the Local with the Diasporic
Study away
Study abroad
Internships
Community Engagement

SUPPORT AFRICANA STUDIES

Ways to Contribute

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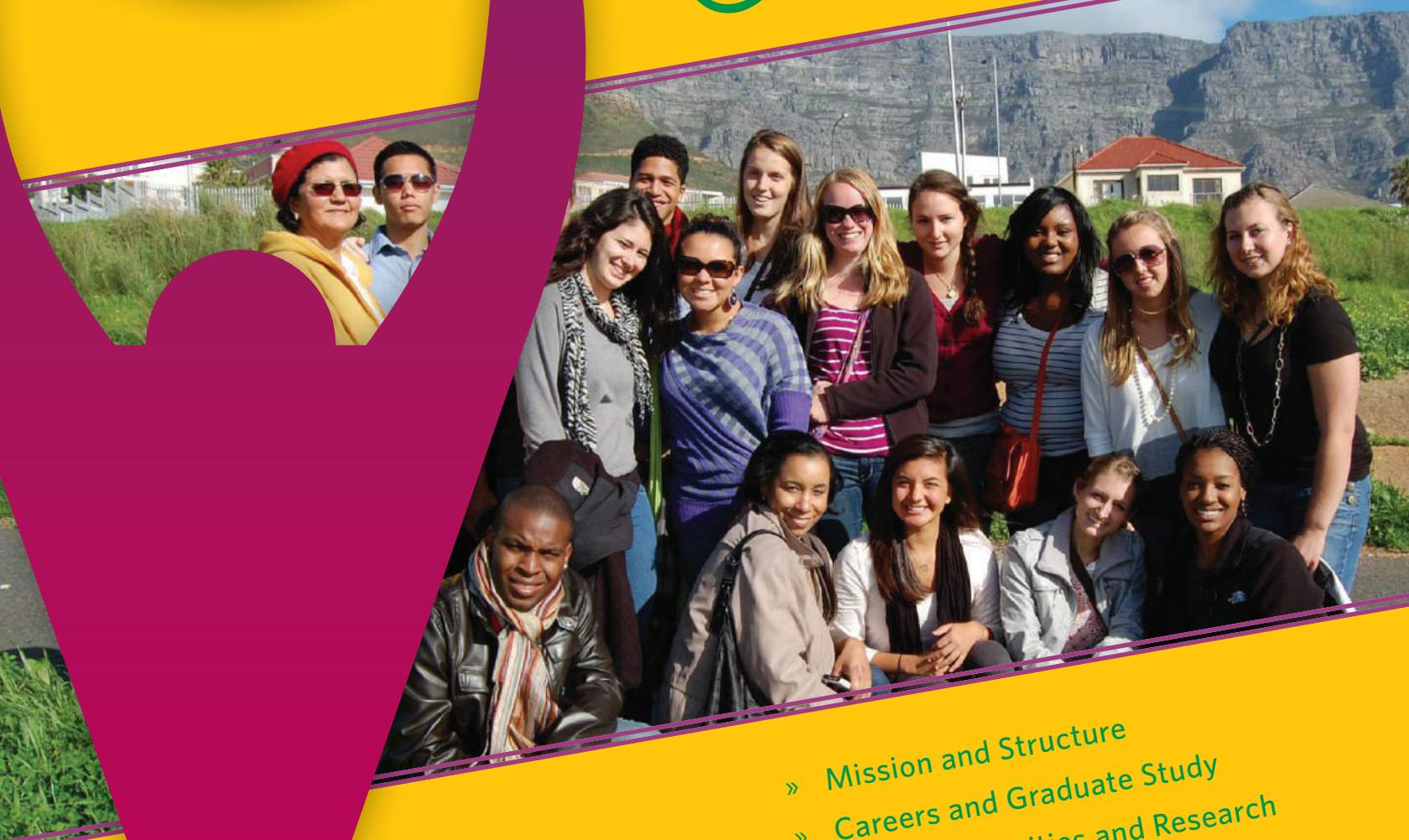
Program Director:

Francis Tanglao-Aguas, Class of 2015 Distinguished Associate Professor of Theatre & Africana Studies
fjtang@wm.edu
PBK Hall Room 224
757-221-2684



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