

A monthly* publication of the Department of African American and African
Diaspora Studies at Indiana University



Welcome to Diaspora, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies' electronic newsletter. We are all connected to AAADS in one way or another, yet we are spread far and wide throughout the university, the community, and even farther afield. We are the AAADS Diaspora.

Events

- The department held its annual **Holiday Pitch-in Luncheon** on Dec. 6. Hearts were glad and the celebration merry, and of course the food was delicious!
- Auditions for *Against the Grain*, the master's thesis production of a play by **Garlia Jones**, were held on Jan. 9-10. **Black Curtain**, the student theater group of the department of African American and African Diaspora Studies, will perform the thesis play at the Waldron Arts Center on Feb. 22-25. Attend a performance to see who's on stage!
- The **Project on African Expressive Traditions (POAET)** presented "Conversations: 2006 POAET Grantees Report on Their Research" on Jan. 19. Three panels of grantees told about research in the categories of Visual Arts, Music and Performance, and Culture, Memory, and History. For more information about POAET, which fosters research on the cultures of Africa and communities of African descent, contact Natasha Vaubel at nvaubel@indiana.edu or visit www.iub.edu/~complit/poet.html. Currently, POAET is inviting applications for 2007 travel and research grants. View complete information and application materials at www.indiana.edu/~complit/poet.edu.
- The Center for Minority Health and the Department of Applied Health Sciences presented the **Healthy Lifestyles Conference** on Jan. 27 in the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. The event addressed issues related to African American women's

health. AAADS secretary **Yunika Jackson** offered the invocation for the conference, and Professor **Carolyn Calloway-Thomas** (communications and culture) introduced the guest speaker.

- The AAADS **Brown Bag Series** continues this semester with several grad students planning to make presentations. Be sure to bring a lunch and find out what these students are researching! Each presentation begins at noon in the NMBCC Library.

- Jan. 31: **Sara Bagby**
- March 7: **Alyssa Liles-Amposah**
- March 28: **David Amposah**
- April 4: **Katie Dieter**
- April 18: **Langston Wilkins**

- The third annual **Men of Color Leadership Conference** will take place on Feb. 3 in the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. This year's theme is "Demystifying, Navigating, Transforming Higher Education and Beyond." For more information, visit the MOCLC web site at www.indiana.edu/~moc/.

- **Black Knowledge Bowl 2007** is coming up! Graduate and undergraduate teams will be competing for great prizes on Feb. 22 in the NMBCC Grand Hall at 8-10:30 p.m. Be sure to register your team by Friday, Feb. 2. Come watch the action and support the team of your choice! For more information, contact **Ketwana Wilson-McCormick** at kwilsonm@indiana.edu.

- The **African American Dance Company** has a busy schedule this semester. They are hosting the company's 10th Annual Dance Workshop on March 2-3. Four professional dance practitioners, Francis NiiYartey, from Ghana, Reynaldo Gonzales, from Cuba, Elana Anderson, of Deeply Rooted Dance Productions, and Jose Rivera, formerly with Ballethnic, will be teaching dance classes and participating in a panel discussion. AADC will be performing for two Evansville schools; at Rogers Elementary, Stonebelt Center, and Harmony school in Bloomington; and at Broadripple High School and Shortridge Middle School in Indianapolis. The spring concert will be held at the Buskirk-Chumley Theatre in Bloomington at 8 p.m. on April 14.

- Plan now to attend the **Herman Hudson Symposium** on March 30-31! This year's theme is "Start the Healing: Multidisciplinary Solutions to Issues in the African Diaspora." Read more about the symposium and the call for papers on the AAADS web site at www.indiana.edu/~afroamer.



- The **Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center** has changed the monthly talk day from Mondays to Thursdays this semester. Thursday Talk will take place from noon to 1 p.m. in Room A223 on Jan. 25, Feb. 22, March 29, April 26, and May 31. Bring a brown bag lunch and enjoy talking about common issues and programs. For information on other events, visit the NMBCC web site at www.nmbcc.indiana.edu.

Faculty

- On Martin Luther King Day, Professor **A.B. Assensoh**, along with IU diversity manager **Eric Love**, was a special guest on WFHB's "Bring It On" radio program on the topic of King's legacy and where we stand today.
- Professor **Vernon Williams** has been appointed general editor for the Association of Black Anthropologists. His duties include overseeing the association's journal, *Transforming Anthropology*, and the ABA's web site, as well as contributing a column to the monthly newsletter of the Association of American Anthropology.
- Professor Emerita **Winona Fletcher** has been spending her retirement as busy as she always was at IU! From helping Kentucky State University organize the Winona Fletcher Collection in their archives to visiting her granddaughter in Maryland, she has had no time to do "Nothing!" as had been her plan. Following the "unveiling of her life" and the exhibition of her collected memorabilia, she is relaxing more and planning even more visits with 9-year-old Olivia, who is as creative and artistic as her grandmother. The current issue of *Stages*, the alumni newsletter of the IU Department of Theatre and Drama, features an interesting article about the Fletcher exhibit. To read it, go to www.alumni.iu.edu/publications/conpubs/archive.php?archive=coas&subCategory=theatre. Click on the winter 2006-07 edition, then go to page 6 of the PDF.
- Professor **Valerie Grim** is coordinating a series of Black History Month events, titled "In Celebration of Who We Are," at Bethel AME Church in Bloomington. The Sunday series will feature expressions of art and styling, as well as food and fellowship. She invites the AAADS community to join the church in celebration of Black History Month

by attending any or all of the special events. For more details, just ask Professor Grim or departmental secretary Yunika Jackson.

- Professor **Michael Martin** will be attending the Festival Panafricain du Cinema et de la Television de Ouagadougou from Feb. 22 to March 6 on behalf of the BFC/A.

FESPACO is a premier film festival, colloquium, and film market held biannually in Burkina Faso. For information about FESPACO, see their web site at www.fespaco.bf. During the festival, Martin may be working on a documentary about IMAGINE, the film institute/center in Ouagadougou, and its director, the Burkinabe filmmaker Gaston Kabore. He invites all students interested in attending this lively festival to contact him as soon as possible at martinmt@indiana.edu.

- Professor Emeritus **James Mumford**, who retired last year, was a recipient of the P.A. Mack Award for Excellence in Teaching. The award, the most prestigious teaching recognition in the Indiana system is presented by the Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching. A plaque commemorating each year's honorees is on display in the IMU. While he has spent the past couple of months recovering from surgery, Mumford is keeping busy, working to complete his first opera, "Cinque," which is based on the Amistad event, and preparing a book on Eva Jessye. He is grateful for all the messages and visits he received while ill.

- Commissioned by the School of Health , Physical Education, and Recreation, Professor **Iris Rosa** contributed an original work along with the IU Contemporary Dance faculty to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the school. The piece premiered at the Ruth N. Halls Theatre on Jan. 11-12. It dealt with rebellion and resistance by "cimarrons" in the African Diaspora. Her ensemble Sancocho: Music and Dance Collage is performing "Nuestra Diaspora: One Heart, One Beat" at the Indianapolis Museum of Art on Feb. 9 at the Deer Zink Pavilion. The performance is in connection with the Star Studio exhibition "William Rasdell: African Roots in Cuban Soil" and Black History Month as part of the pre-performances for the Magdalena Campos-Pons exhibit "Everything Is Separated by Water." Rosa directed the African American Dance Ensemble in its annual Studio Concert on Dec. 5.

Adjunct Faculty

- Professor **George B. Hutchinson** (English) has had an essay on Nella Larsen come out in the book *Harlem Speaks* (Sourcebooks, 2006), edited by Cary Wintz. His book *In Search of Nella Larsen: A Biography of the Color Line* (Harvard University Press) was chosen one of the "Best Nonfiction" books of 2006 by the *Washington Post* in December. It was also an "Editor's Choice" of the *New York Times Book Review* in September.
- Associate Vice Chancellor **Frank Motley** (law) has been on a one-year leave of absence to work at Florida A&M University Law School. He will return to IU in March.
- **Charlie Nelms**, IU vice president for institutional development and student affairs, was the 2007 King Legacy Award winner, presented at the city's King Day celebration in the Buskirk-Chumley Theater. One of 11 speakers at the event, Nelms reminded the audience that "King is long gone ... it's up to us."

Graduate Students

- Visiting scholar and doctoral candidate **Claudia Drieling** took time out to stay with her pregnant sister and brother-in-law in Chicago over break and became a first-time aunt on Christmas Eve! Congratulations to the proud parents and aunt!
- **Jeremy Gilmore**, an associate minister at Second Baptist Church in Bloomington, was interviewed by the *Herald-Times* on the meaning of Martin Luther King's message. "Love," answered the AAADS graduate student, who is writing his thesis on King and Howard Thurman, adding that the message remains relevant today.
- **Garlia Jones** will present her master's thesis, a play titled *Against the Grain*, on Feb. 22-25 at the Waldron Arts Center in downtown Bloomington. The play will be performed by Black Curtain.
- **Diane Perry** defended her thesis on Jan. 18, earning honors for *Cradling*, a contemporary novel-in-progress with racial themes set in the context of the American Indian game of Lacrosse. Afterward, she celebrated with friends at the Irish Lion in Bloomington. *Photo: Diane Perry talks with her son, who called to congratulate her, while Claudia Drieling cheers her on.*



- **April Smith** defended her thesis on Dec. 14. Her topic was "Spirit, Space, and Survival: Joy James and Intellectual Resistance." She is currently pursuing a doctorate in communication and culture at IU.

- In early December, **Phillip Wagner** made a presentation at the Global Symposium: Towards a New World Civilization during the seventh Congress of Chief Justices of the World in Lucknow, India. The conference and symposium are grounded in the pursuit of social justice. Wagner spoke about the un- or under-recognized relevance of three grassroots social programs in the Afro-Brazilian community of Salvador, Bahia, which are confronting the oppressive effects of social exclusion on black favela (slum) youth. Appointed chair for the new World Movement for Global Democracy Committee, he led members from Somalia, Sri Lanka, Slovakia, Nepal, Canada, and Colombia to produce a first draft of a "Proposed WMGD Doctrine on the Role and Practice of Education in Society." He also composed communications drafts for a former (and first) president of the Republic of Mauritius, Cassam Uteem, and the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Panama, Graciela Dixon. Wagner is currently serving as an intermediary for a former justice on the International Court at the Hague, C.G. Weeramantry, who is also a former justice on the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka. Judge Weeramantry is seeking collaboration with the Kroc Institute for Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame to establish a Peace Studies University in Sri Lanka. *Photos: At left, Phillip Wagner is seated between symposium delegates from New Zealand and Germany. At right, President Uteem and Judge Weeramantry take part in a candle-lighting ceremony.*



Alumni

- **Mary Smith-Forrest** has been visiting her daughter's family in California for about six weeks, enjoying the climate, the sights, and the food. Her two grandsons made sure she saw "little Nemo," the fish, at the San Francisco Bay Area Aquarium, with whom they had their picture taken numerous times. Another highlight of the trip was a visit to Allensworth, a town founded in 1908 by African Americans that is now a historic site offering tours. Once called "the Tuskegee of the West," the site is the only California state park dedicated to African Americans. Smith-Forrest was dismayed, however, to find that a group of dairy farmers wants to take over the property. The takeover is being fought by the descendents of the Allensworth founders. She will return soon, with lots of photos and stories to share.

News of Note

- The **AAADS Graduate Society** planned several events for January, including going to the IU Women's Basketball game against Iowa on the 11th, and more for February. All grad students are urged to take part and support the organization, which is currently collecting items to make the grad lounge more comfortable. (Wish list includes couch, fridge, microwave, rug, curtains, picture frames, end table, and money.) On Feb. 22, there will be a free workshop on "Endnote the Basics." Check it out and register at <http://ittraining.iu.edu>, or e-mail **Femina Ajayi** at ajayi@indiana.edu.

- Black faculty and staff at IU have formed a new, 10-member representative organization, the **Indiana University Black Faculty and Staff Caucus**, whose mission is to hold the university accountable for its pledge to promote racial diversity. Formed in December, the group has served notice to IU trustees and administrators that black members of the university community expect progress. Representing the Bloomington

campus are adjunct professors **Yvette Alex-Assensoh** (political science) and **Portia Maulsby** (folklore and ethnomusicology). Everyone get behind the important work of this active group!

- There's a new **study abroad** trip being offered for this summer. You can visit the Dominican Republic to learn more about the African diaspora. The trip is co-hosted by AAADS Professor Iris Rosa. Deadline for registration is Feb. 2. For more information, go to www.indiana.edu/~overseas/flyers/dr_identity.html.



- Congratulations to David Hummons, Janice Wiggins, Mary Goetze, Susan Johnson, Courtney Williams, and Kathryn Schluntz — all winners of **IU Building Bridges Awards**. The award is given in appreciation for individual and collective efforts to exemplify the noble works of Martin Luther King through service and leadership.



All faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students, please send your comments, suggestions, and information on your activities and interests to Carol Edge at ccege@indiana.edu or to the department in care of Yunika Jackson at ytjackso@indiana.edu.

** Published monthly or bimonthly through the fall and spring semesters. Diaspora is not published during the summer.*