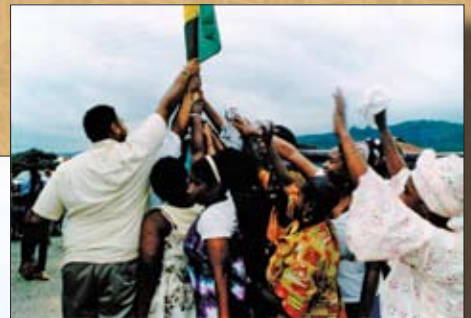
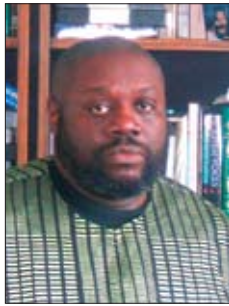


Vol. 14, No. 1 • Fall 2007

UJIMA

The Newsletter of the African American Studies Program





DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The 2006-2007 academic year was filled with much activity, advancement, forward thinking and proactive growth for the African American Studies program at the University of Houston.

James L. Conyers, Jr., Ph.D. With the continuation of our seminar lecture series and the impetus of the hip

hop lecture series archive, AAS sustained its tradition of providing the campus and surrounding community with critical discussions of contemporary issues facing African people. In this respect, African American Studies celebrated our emphasis on African-centered research and service by bringing to campus a number of named academic and independent scholars to discuss topics from: ethno-musicology, African American architectural history, Africana Islam, Africana History and Culture, and the critical discourse on Africana Studies.

With regard to student input and advancement, we sponsored a delegation of UH students to participate in the model African Union conference at Howard University. Mr. Paul Easterling, our program manager, has labored in coordinating student efforts and has been supportive in being the staff-faculty advisor to this group. During the spring of 2007, the Center for the Study of African American Culture, with the support of a GEAR grant from the University of Houston, hosted the Charles Hamilton Houston symposium. This event attracted a plethora of scholars from across the country to Houston, to brief and debrief on the intellectual tradition and lasting contributions of the late Charles Hamilton Houston.

Additionally, we hosted our annual scholarship banquet with the coordination, support, assistance, and patience of our Friends of African American Studies. Indeed, without the Friends of African American Studies support, this event would be not be able to be hosted. Again, as mentioned in our communication throughout the year, we are extremely grateful to the Friends for their support and assistance. AAS was also supportive in working collaboratively with the Houston chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self Defense (People Party 3) for coordinating a community reception for Attorney Bobby Caldwell for his untiring work and support of civil rights litigation in the state of Texas for over five decades.

In closing, the graduate program has graduated our first student with the certificate in African American Studies at the University of Houston. Similarly, our Kwame Nkrumah Scholars had a successful summer study abroad exposure to Ghana and experienced participating in Panafest—a biannual celebration recognizing Pan-African unity across the continent of Africa. We are now getting in gear for the 2007-2008 academic year and expect to dialog and advance the idea of AAS becoming a degree granting unit. In doing so, our primary job remains to educate and graduate students at UH. By advancing these ideas forward, we look to bring forth stewardship and good fellowship for our goals and objectives.

James L. Conyers, Jr., Ph.D.

Director, African American Studies Program

Director, Center for the Study of African American Culture

University Professor of African American Studies

COVER: Original Oil On Canvas by Charles “Boko” Freeman.

Fall 2007

UJIMA

Volume 14, Number 1

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM

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COVER STORY

Nkrumah Scholar shares life changing experience

Last summer Kimberlie Wilkins, a 2006-2007 African American Studies Nkrumah Scholar, completed a study abroad to Ghana. At the time of her visit, the West African nation was commemorating the 50th anniversary of its independence from British colonial rule with its biannual Panafest celebration. In this essay/interview, she talks about her experience in Ghana and the role African American Studies played in changing her life.



Kimberly Wilkins at the El Mina dungeon, in Ghana.

Kimberlie Wilkins sees herself as a person skilled at accepting new people and experiences into her life. Her engaging personality, polite smile, and confident demeanor undoubtedly assist her in this regard. It was Ms. Wilkins's early childhood years, however, that prepared her for life as a world citizen. “I was born in Katy, Texas, but didn't stay there for very long because my dad worked for Southwestern Bell and we moved all around the country,” Kimberlie says of her early years.



2007 Ghana Study Abroad students.

“I went to a lot of different schools because I was moving all the time.”

Her graduation from high school only increased her opportunities for travel and comparative study. Ms. Wilkins took courses at New York University (NYU) before transferring to the University of Houston her sophomore year. A senior psychology major set to graduate this December, her initial encounter with the University of Houston left something to be desired. “I really didn't feel like anybody cared what I was doing or

that I was going to make it out of here,” she says.

“When I started taking African American Studies courses it was the first time I felt a connection to the campus. I got involved with the program and felt like I had a home here—a place where I could come and see familiar people and get sound advice.”

“Dr. Conyers has been like a mentor to me by helping me

make decisions about entering graduate school and getting me involved in study abroad. This led up to the coolest part of my college experience: being able to go to Ghana last summer and experience things that I had never even imagined. I went on scholarships provided by African American Studies.”

“One of the first amazing things that I experienced in going to Ghana was crossing the Sahara Desert in a plane. It took three hours—three hours of flying over endless sand. That is when I realized that I was not in America anymore. When the plane landed, my classmates and I shed a few tears of excitement and amazement. The experience was a life changing event for me.”

“Whether we were climbing mountains, visiting historical slave castles, taking classes, enjoying the company of monkeys, visiting schools, or celebrating 50 years of independence with the locals, we were constantly moving and learning. I was learning and seeing a place that I had only heard of

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AAS STUDENT Activism

“To Whom Much Is Given...”

By Stephanie Barton

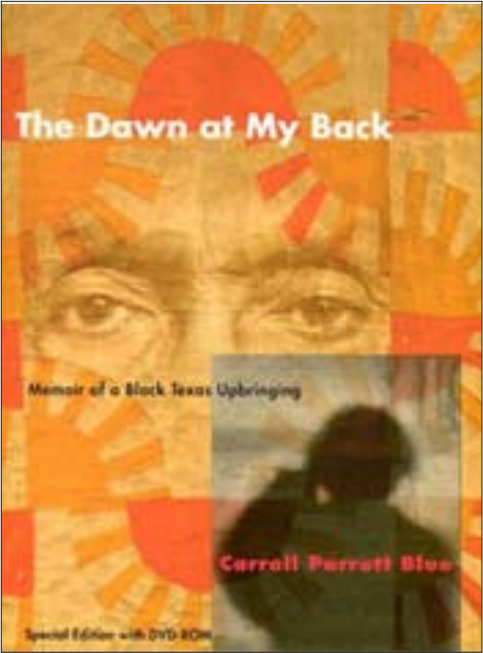
Going down to Jena, Louisiana was definitely an experience to remember. Leaving from Houston at 12:00 a.m. to travel to Louisiana wasn't on my list of things to do. I actually had a quiz in my class that Thursday and immediately informed my professors that I would not be in class because I had to answer the call. While some people expressed how much they would like to go but could not due to work or school, I realized that if I were locked up and unfairly charged, I would hope that people would respond with a sense of urgency. It was this same sense of urgency that led our ancestors to demand change. Going to Jena was not something that was convenient; it was something that was necessary. On the morning of 20 September, my sister, Faith Deggs, and I went to Texas Southern University and boarded the charter buses provided for their students at no cost. Since it had been decided that there would be no money pumped into Jena's local economy, we stopped at a Wal-

Mart in Alexandria, Louisiana to take care of all our personal needs. After that we were off to Jena. We arrived to an atmosphere that was not hostile at all. People were there in the spirit of justice. Once we reached the front of the Parish County Courthouse, we heard Reverend Al Sharpton on stage compelling the audience to demand change. It was so inspirational to hear him speak after seeing him on television for all of these years. The march began shortly thereafter. Marching down the streets of Jena was one of the best decisions I've ever made. Seeing so many black people unite for one cause was mind blowing. Looking around I could see New Black Panthers, Old Black Panthers, motor cycle riders, Pan-Africanists, university students, high school students, mothers, fathers, children, all from different walks of life collectively demanding justice. Taking coursework in African American Studies for three years provided context for our engaging in sim-

ilar demands for justice as such ethical luminaries as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I was not there marching to see six black boys get off free with assaulting their white peer; I was there to show the criminal justice system in Jena, Louisiana that regardless of race and circumstance all people should be prosecuted fairly. While there, we raised \$22,000 for the young men's defense fund. I became discouraged after finding out that the court did deny Mychal Bell's request for bail the following day. Despite that decision a glimmer of hope remained in that Mychal Bell would be tried as a juvenile. Going to Jena was truly a testament to what we can accomplish collectively when we demand justice—not just for African Americans, but for all of God's children. As students who have been given the opportunity to attend college we must remember, to whom much is given much is required. When the call is extended, we must answer the call as we would hope others would do for us. 📺

AAS Visiting Scholar

In pursuit of our broad mandate to advance excellence in academic research, undergraduate and graduate education, and intellectual exchange and service within the University and Houston communities, the African American Studies Program at the University of Houston annually invites two scholars whose demonstrated research and teaching are in the discipline of Africana Studies/Africalogy for a year-long visiting appointment. Visiting Scholars add to the richness and diversity of our undergraduate curriculum in Africalogy by teaching one course of their own design. In addition, the program prioritizes applications from scholars who demonstrate a commitment to generating research and publication in the discipline of Africana Studies/Africalogy. Successful candidates are, therefore, afforded an opportunity to add to the ongoing scholarship in the discipline by working toward the completion of a research project. The Visiting Scholars Program is designed to encourage scholars to contribute fresh and innovative teaching and research in the discipline of Africalogy. Professor Carroll Parrott Blue is one of two African American Studies Visiting Scholars for the 2007-2008 academic year. Professor Blue, professor emeritus at San Diego State University's School of Theatre, Television and Film, is a nationally and internationally recognized and respected filmmaker, a producer, director, and writer. Her work has been featured internationally in such countries as Brazil, Germany, Great Britain, Canada, Nigeria, Australia, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the Virgin Islands. Perhaps her most noted recent work is her memoir published as a book with accompanying DVD-ROM titled *The Dawn*



The Dawn at My Back by Carroll Parrott Blue.

- at My Back: Memoir of a Black Texas Upbringing, published by the University of Texas Press in 2003. An extremely short list of her work includes:
- Producer, director, writer of a one-hour documentary film titled “Mystery of the Senses; Vision,” which appeared on NOVA/PBS-TV as one in a five-part series.
 - Producer, director, writer of a one-hour documentary film titled “Nigerian Art-Kindred Spirits,” which was one in a series of documentaries that appeared on PBS-TV titled “Smithsonian World.”
 - Segment producer for “Eyes on the Prize, Series II,” which appeared on PBS-TV.

Professor Blue is teaching AAS-3356 Africana Thought and Philosophy: Explorations in Community Learning, Public Art, and Community-Made Media, this fall on Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:30 PM to 4:00 PM. The Course is a Houston Third Ward case study that explores the role

of public art and community-made media in community development. The objective is to help students learn the history of the new emerging arts, how to employ traditional and new media art as tools for African American community development, and/or how to work effectively with artists who are doing this work and audiences who are using it. The course incorporates parallel learning between students, scholars, policy makers, institutions builders, and community residents in order to create new cultural and economic infrastructures to enrich the quality of life of Houston's Third Ward. It explores the use of 21st century arts and media tools as methods for becoming effective global citizens.

Dr. Clyde C. Robertson, Visiting Scholar at the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at the University of Memphis, is the second of two African American Studies Visiting Scholars for the 2007-2008 academic year. An accomplished administrator, insightful scholar, and critical theoretician, Dr. Robertson's areas of emphasis focus on African American History and Twentieth Century African American Leadership Typologies. His ongoing research projects examine Africans in America and the African Diaspora in comparative, cognitive and cultural perspectives. A Hurricane Katrina survivor, he is co-director of the Saddest Days Project, a multi-state effort that examines Katrina's aftermath and impact on New Orleans's African American community through qualitative oral interviews, archival retrieval and curriculum development. In the spring of 2006, he published an article titled “Bon Feerey: A Teaching and Learning Methodology for Healing the Wounds of Distance, Displacement and Loss Caused by Hurricane Katrina,” in the *Journal of Black Studies*.



AAS Welcomes the new assistant director and editor of Ujima, Malachi D Crawford.

Community Support for AAS

The African American Studies Program has continued to receive strength, vitality and encouragement in support of its ongoing mission to explore the varied dimensions of human existence from the perspective and interests of African people, from Africans throughout the Diaspora. The program expresses its profound appreciation and gratitude to Charles “Boko” Freeman. A scholar activist and native Houstonian now residing in Atlanta, Georgia, Freeman donated an original painting of Malcolm X to the program in May 2007. His wife is an archivist at the Auburn Avenue Research Center in Atlanta. Freeman was once a member of People's Party II, which was aligned with the Black Panther Party

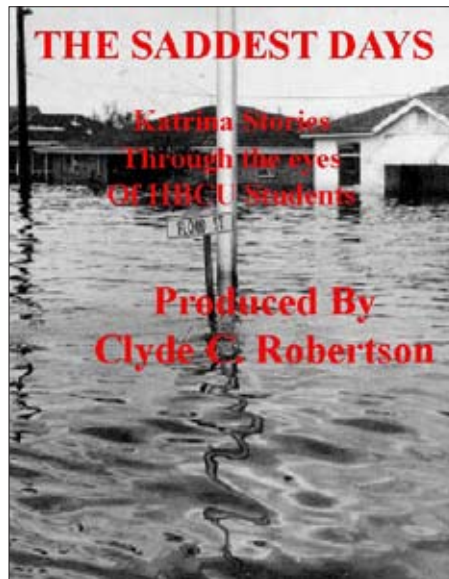
Original Oil On Canvas by Charles “Boko” Freeman.



out of Oakland, California. The painting is displayed alongside a selection of other original works from former alumni and local artist in the program's conference room. 📺


Although his research interests lie largely within the realm of twentieth century African American history and leadership typologies, Dr. Robertson's teaching agenda and interests are broader both in terms of methodology and topic areas. He has taught, researched, and held administrative posts in both Africana Studies and Communications. Most recently, he was the Director of the Africana and Multicultural Studies Department for the New Orleans Public School District. He also served as the News Director for the Temple University Public Radio Network.

In addition to his post at the University of Memphis, Dr. Robertson




Dr. Robertson's documentary project - The Saddest Days: Katrina Stories Through The Eyes of HBCU Students.

brings a wealth of teaching experience in the classroom. He has taught or lectured at Southern University-Baton Rouge, Alabama State University, Xavier University of Louisiana, and the African World Studies Department at Dillard University.

In the Spring 2008 semester, Dr. Robertson will teach AAS 4373: Black Leaders of the 20th Century. The course looks at the different leadership typologies that have arisen among Africans in America over the past century from a multi-disciplinary approach. 

New Course on West African Dance



students will explore the meanings of specific dances including history and evolution. While examining West African dance we will specifically focus on movement from Ghana, West Africa. Though lecture, film, written assignments, as well as movement students will gain knowledge of West African dance. Instructor: Shani Henderson. 



In the spring 2008 semester, African American Studies will offer a new class on West African dance through its special topics course AAS 3394. A wonderful introduction in to African dance, this course is ideal for the beginner as well as the advanced dancer (no previous dance experience necessary). Within the context of this course

AAS Events Brief

On Thursday, 7 September 2006, hosted "Lecture: Africana Studies and Historiography," by **Dr. Magahan Keita**, Professor of History and Africana Studies at Villanova University.

On Wednesday, 13 September 2006, co-sponsored presentation by poet and activist **Maya Angelou**.



On Thursday, 14 September 2006, attended University sponsored Study abroad fair to promote annual trip to Ghana, West Africa.

On Thursday, 5 October 2006, hosted lecture by **Dr. Makeda Graham**, Professor of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Oklahoma.

On Wednesday, 25 October 2006, co-sponsored with Gerald Horne, Moores' Professor of History and African American Studies, "**Resources of the Southwest Archives-UTEP**" Are the Answers in the Archives Series featuring **Claudia Rivers** from the University of Texas-El Paso Library.

On Wednesday, 8 November 2006, co-sponsored Gerald Horne, Moores' Professor of History and African American Studies, "**Slave Papers and the Heartman Collection**" Are the Answers in the Archives Series featuring **Bernard Forrester** from Texas Southern University's RJT Library.

On Friday, 14 December 2006, hosted for UH and Houston Community the **Annual Holiday Reception**, "Walking Through a Cajun, Caribbean, and Soul Food Wonderland."

On Wednesday, 31 January 2007, **Ankh Maat Wedjau** Honor Society sponsored by AAS had its first general meeting.

On Thursday, 1 February 2007, hosted lecture by **Dr. Michael Gomez**, author of "Black Crescent."

On Friday, 2 February 2007, hosted first series in Africana Film Festival, "**When the Levees Broke**," Spike Lee's Documentary on Hurricane Katrina Acts I & II.

On Tuesday, 6 February 2007, hosted first sequence in Hip Hop Lecture Series featuring **S. Craig Watkins**, author of "Hip-Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement."



On Friday, 9 February 2007, hosted second series in Africana Film Festival, "**When the Levees Broke**," Spike Lee's Documentary on Hurricane Katrina Acts III & IV.

On Saturday, 10 February 2007, hosted Study Abroad Interest Meeting



at the Shrine of the Black Madonna with guest speaker **Kwaku Passah** from **Galaxy Tours in Ghana**.

On Monday, 12 February 2007, hosted second sequence in the Hip Hop Lecture Series featuring **Dr. Anthony Pinn**, editor of "**Noise and Spirit: Religious and Spiritual Sensibilities in Rap Music**." Pinn discussed the religious nature of Hip Hop Music.



On Tuesday, 13 February 2007, hosted lecture featuring **Rukiya Curvey-Johnson**, Director of Shrine of the Black Madonna.

On Friday, 16 February 2007, hosted third series in Africana Film Festival, "**The Spook Who Sat by the Door**," by Sam Greenlee.

On Monday, 19 February 2007, hosted third sequence in Hip Hop

Lecture Series featuring **Cheryl L. Keyes**, author of "**Rap Music and Street Consciousness**."

On Thursday, 22 February 2007, hosted exhibition of "**The Menil Collection Art of Africa**," bought by **Kristina Van Dyke**, Associate Curator for Collections.



On Friday, 23 February 2007, hosted last series of Africana Film Festival with the showing of "**Lord of War**," based on former president of Liberia Charles G. Taylor.

On Tuesday, 27 February 2007, participated in the **Model African Union Conference** at Howard University.

On Tuesday, 27 February 2007, attended African American Honor Student Association **MLK Panel**, where honors professors analyzed and commented on Dr. King's most famous speeches and writings.

On Tuesday, 27 February 2007, delivered keynote address for University of Houston's NAACP Chapter "**Black History Month Candle Light Vigil**."

On Monday, 5 March 2007, co-sponsored "**In Celebration of Black History and Women's History- Four Events**." The lecture featured teacher/scholar **Trudier Harris**, Professor of English at the University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill.



On Tuesday, 6 March 2007, hosted lecture by **Beth Johnson** on African American Architects.

On Saturday, 17 March 2007, attended reception for Bobby Caldwell and People's Party II.

Lequintiss Taylor is an alumnus of the University of Houston and African American studies program. A former Nkrumah Scholar, Mr. Taylor completed a study abroad in Ghana, West Africa in the summer of 2003. After graduating from U of H, he established an internet café in the capital city of Accra. Since his last interview with Ujima (Vol. 13, No. 1; Fall 2006), his internet café has morphed into a new project. He describes this latest venture with Malachi D. Crawford, the new assistant director of African American studies.

Malachi - I wanted to talk to you about the project that you are doing in Ghana. To get a little background information, what's the name of the project?

Lequintiss - It's called Technology in Africa

Malachi - what are some of the goals that you are trying to achieve with this project?

Lequintiss - We're looking at going over [to Ghana] to build up the ITC, which is the information technology communications infrastructure. One of our goals is to implement modern technology into rural and urban areas. A second goal is to offer training courses in all areas and fields of technology with adequate skills for the people of Ghana. Those are two of the goals of the institution.

Malachi - Do you have any specific population like adults, youth, or a certain ethnic group that you are working with or are you working with Ghanaians period?

Lequintiss - Well, we are working with Ghanaians period, but we are really targeting students ages 16, 17, and on up because that is when drop-out rates in the public school system here become a problem. We figure if we get students around that age, we can help them have a smooth transition into a technical institution. A year after they are 17 years old most people graduate. They can go through the

entire curriculum straight out and they can also take courses as well.

Malachi - How did you get started in this project? What lead you to envision doing this?

Lequintiss - I was selected as one of the Kwame Nkrumah Scholars to study abroad in Ghana, West Africa in 2003. I went over and saw the technology and information systems and became surprised at how outdated that technology was: Pentium IIs—our mid 80's systems. I went back home and thought about it, and thought about it. During this time, I had gone back to Ghana on another study abroad. About a week before leaving for the US in 2004, I was walking through the University of Ghana-East Lagon campus and began asking myself: "Lord, what is my purpose? My major is information systems technology and minor African American Studies. How can I tie the two together?" I always look at everything that I go through by asking what I can really learn from it. It was spoken to me as clear as day to come back and help them with their information systems infrastructure. I was really honored, baffled, and a little overwhelmed. When I came back I did a lot of research on how to start a business. It started as an internet café and over six to eight months it evolved into the institution itself.

Malachi - What successes have you had so far in terms of putting your plan into action? Where are you at now with the project?

Lequintiss - Okay, as far as here in the states the project is actually incorporated as a non profit organization. We have an executive board, our board of directors, a website, and all the information and paper work is done on this end as well as there in Ghana. I registered the organization as an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) since it will be almost like a 501c3 non profit organization over there. I've been successful in doing that. I've also been able to acquire land in Adodowah, which

is in the Accra region. We were able to attain two and a half acres of land for the project during the first week in April of this year. Now that we have the land, it's a matter of going over and actually meeting with the contractors and architectures to try and get blue prints and a lay out completed. You know, seeing exactly what the cost will be.

Malachi - Okay, how many students do you look to enroll in the uh first year of the institute (in-aud) or is that something that contingent upon the availability of space and resources later on?

Lequintiss - I'll go head and pull those number as we talk, but we're starting it off with at least four class rooms, from programming, to web development, system integrations and so forth. We'll be offering four courses pretty much, including the beginning and intro class itself. Let's see, how do we do this.... we're looking at twenty students in class size. We have four subjectsthere so it's roughly now don't hold me accountable to this roughly the way we have it set up here is ...I'm just going to break it down you'll just have to play around with it okay we; The graduating class we'll do just the bare minimum.... say just ten students per basic course. We have four basic courses that meet four times a day equaling sixteen courses. So you got sixteen basic courses per day times ten students, that's 160 students. We'll have those 160 students for twenty-four weeks, and each class is a twelve week session. You'll have sixteen courses being taught over 24 weeks. It will be a two year program. We want to make sure that they are proficient in each of their respective courses.

Malachi - That's actually all of the questions that I had for you. Do you have a way for people to contact you if they're interested in learning more about the project?

Lequintiss - The web address here is www.TechnologyInAfrica.Org.

Adinkra Collection

As part of its ongoing commitment to advancing discussions, analyses, theoretical perspectives, and research methodologies in the discipline of Africana Studies the African American Studies Program announces the creation of the Adinkra Collection, housed in its digital library within the African American Studies Reading Room in 629 Agnes Arnold Hall. The newly organized archival collection represents an original corpus of nearly

2,000 digitized photographs of Ghanaian life and culture as taken by AAS Nkrumah Scholars during the study abroad experience to Ghana. The library systematically catalogs each photograph according to a principle reflected in one of seven Adinkra symbols. The collection reflects the basic attempt of the Nkrumah Scholars to locate their study abroad experience from the context of an indigenous cultural frame of reference.

NK*NS*NK*NS*N

(corn-song-corn-song)

"A chain, or link" — Society



Symbol representing collective responsibility, unity, and social organization. It reflects the individual's importance as a social link and basic building block for a strong society.

In August 2007, Ghana highlighted the 50th anniversary of its independence from England in its biannual Panafest celebrations. Here, a mother and child stop and pose for one of the Nkrumah Scholars while waiting for the Panafest activities to get underway.



Asase Ye Duru

(Ah-sah-see yeah doo-rooo)
"The earth has weight" — *Nature*

Symbol representing the divinity of Mother Nature, and essence of human existence. Asase Ye Duru represents the idea that human understanding of the principles that govern the universe cannot lie outside of human experience on Earth. The earth sustains human existence and is therefore an aspect of the Divine.

On the way past a local village three hours north of the capital, a student took this photo of a plant indigenous to northwestern Ghana and used strictly for medicinal purposes. Despite being in a rural area, villagers in this locality had developed a public health care system dependent upon shared knowledge and resources.



Gye Nyame

(jeh N-yah mee)
"Except God" or "Tis Only God" — *Religion/Spirituality*

Symbol representing the infinite wisdom, presence and power of the divine in all things. This photograph shows libations being poured into the earth inside an

earthenware pot. A griot is invoking the spirit of our ancestors before the students go out the "Door of No Return," in the slave dungeons of Cape Coast.



No. 2 State Department official on African Affairs speaks at annual scholarship banquet

The second-highest ranking official at the U. S. State Department in charge of African affairs spoke on the conflict in Darfur, Sudan at the African American Studies Annual Scholarship Banquet on Thursday, May 3, 2007.

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the principal deputy assistant secretary, U.S. State Department Bureau for African Affairs, was keynote speaker for the annual scholarship fundraising banquet held at the University of Houston Hilton Hotel.

Thomas-Greenfield’s discussion on Darfur helped to clarify State Department policy in the region, following recent statements made by Andrew Natsios, Presidential Special Envoy for Sudan, that genocide is no longer occurring in Darfur.

The evening event also included a performance by the Ikenga Cultural Group, a Nigerian drum and dance troupe, and a live auction conducted by Alan Helfman, co-owner of River Oaks Chrysler Jeep, and Georgia Provost of Provost & Associates. The auction included a wide assortment of


sports and entertainment memorabilia. State Representative Sylvester Turner presented the awards while Channel 13 news anchor Melanie Lawson emceed the event.

The banquet honored University of Houston alumni Michelle Swain Barnes, co-founder and executive director of the community Artists’ Collective in Houston and State Senator Royce West of Dallas with public service awards for contributions to their respective communities.

African American Studies awarded nine academically talented undergraduate students with scholarships for the 2006-2007 academic year. Caleb Alexander (senior/mathematics and philosophy/AAS minor), Jasmine Black (junior/psychology/AAS minor), and Nichole L. Flanagan (senior/biology/AAS minor) received the Friends of African American Studies Scholarship. AAS awarded Stephanie Barton (senior/pre-psychology/English and AAS minor), Sarita Minor (senior/chemistry/AAS minor), and Kalaiah Vauhgn (senior/creative writing and

sociology/AAS minor) with the John Rueben Sheeler Memorial Scholarship. Leniqua’ dominique Jenkins, a senior and political science major, received the Mrs. Debbie Haley Academic Scholarship. The John J. Moores, Sr. Academic Achievement Scholarship went to Kimberly Keeton, a senior majoring in creative writing. Eronn Putman, a junior majoring in political science, received the Sylvester Turner Academic Distinction Scholarship.

“Our fundraising goal for the event is \$100,000 which goes to student scholarships,” said Dr. James L. Conyers, director of African American Studies. “These annual banquets usually draw a diverse crowd because of our prominent speakers.” Last year’s banquet drew a number of local celebrities, including star athletes.

African American Studies offers courses on the history, culture and contributions of people of African descent to a cross-section of students from various disciplines—including the arts, natural sciences, social sciences, business and engineering. 

AAS STUDENT News Briefs

Model African Union



AAS Minor Khalaiah Vaughn at the Model AU Conference.

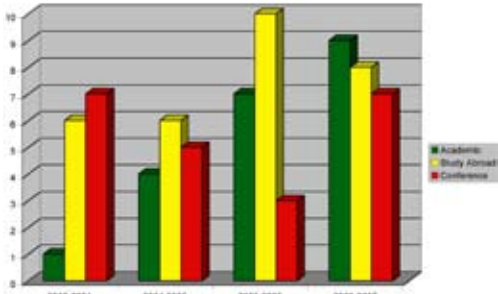
In 2007 the delegation from the African American Studies Program at the University of Houston represented the country of Cameroon at the Model African Union Conference. Sha-Kara Jackson, Bogani Meshele, Willie Wright, Kalaiah Vaughn and Kymberly Keeton comprised a very talented cohort representing not only Houston but the entire state of Texas. The delegation addressed topics related to Women’s rights in education, African centered education and deforestation in Africa. Students from the University of Houston participating in this program are given the opportunity to network and caucus with many diverse students from across the country that also share their interests in the society, culture and politics of historical and present day Africa in a united effort for deeper understanding of the issues affecting the continent and its people.

Scholarship Banquet


The 2007 African American Studies Program Scholarship Banquet was once again organized and executed beautifully by the staff of the program and the Friends of African American Studies headed by Dr. Clara Meek. Despite the fact that Houston spring time weather may have kept many from being in attendance, the program

and dinner was welcoming as well as inspiring for all those who battled the elements to embrace the young scholars of the University of Houston community. The range of scholarships given by the African American Studies Program covers more than just the financial needs of our scholars it also provide students with funding to participate in the Ghana Summer Study Abroad program and other academic programs designed to promote knowledge and scholarship concerning Africana life, history and experience from a global perspective. The volume of scholarships given to UH students by African American Studies has markedly increased over the past four academic years. While AAS remains consistent in its commitment to providing study abroad opportunities to its minors, the program has rededicated itself to recognizing academically talented AAS minors and advancing student interest and participation within the discipline on a national and international level (see bar graph). Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of African American Studies and the need for today’s afrilogists to study the human experience using a multitude of approaches is reflected in the disciplinary diversity of UH students receiving awards from the program (see pie chart).

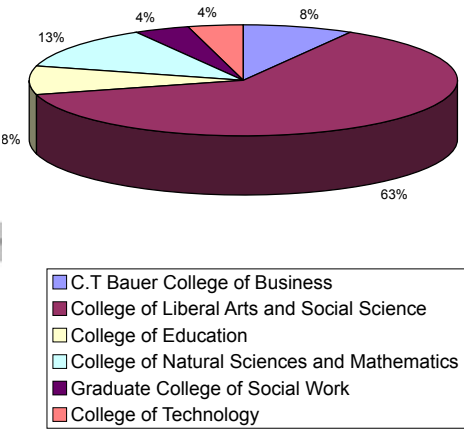
Number of scholarships awarded by type, 2003-2007



Ghana Summer Study Tour

The Summer Study Tour to Ghana, West Africa is a program that has been a very important element of African American Studies at the University of Houston since 2003. This program allows students to experience the beauty, history and culture of Africa and its people from a very intimate first hand basis. In the country of Ghana students study at the University of Ghana at Legon, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and the University of Cape Coast on a variety of subjects that range from the history of slavery and enslavement to the culture and religious practices of the Akan. In 2007 eight University of Houston students, Tracey Crawford, Leniqua’dominique Jenkins, Angela Bankhead, Brian Harris, Kymberly Wilkins, Vatesha Perry, Willie Wright and Kymberly Keeton were provided with funding to participate in this rich and fulfilling program. In all since 2003 the African American Studies Program has sponsored over thirty students to travel to Ghana and continues to encourage students to be internationally minded in this growingly global world. 

Scholarships distribution by student program plan, 2006-2007



Nkrumah Scholar continued from page 1


and read about in books, but still a place to which I knew that I was destined to return. Sankofa is the most important thing I’ve done in my life; it means to return to your roots, and that is something that is worth more than anything in this world.”

“In going to Ghana and seeing how the people lived, it made me realize how overly indulgent we are here in the states. I saw how hard the people worked and how much pride they took in everything they created.”

Although Ms. Wilkins is a psychology major, she considers her education in African American Studies as an imperative part of her overall career goals. “I would

love to do something where I could intertwine the two fields [psychology and Africana Studies]. I feel that a lot of stuff needs to be changed in terms of early education—especially in the area of assigned readings. They establish from a very early age class and racial boundaries. As an African American, you have to sit through a whole month of learning about enslavement. My purpose in life is to address these issues.”

Ms. Wilkins considers the opportunities that she now has to share her knowledge of the African Diaspora with other students as one of the most remarkable accomplishments that she has

achieved here at the University of Houston. “Now, at parties, I’m the one that’s talking about issues from an African-centered perspective—gettin’ deep—you know. I’m actually able to open paths for other people that haven’t been able to take themselves out of the state of mind that you can get in living here in America: thinking that this represents reality. You can feel insane here as an African American: wondering why is this not working out; why is this so hard? To be able to break away from that and study how we got here and to know that African people have made contributions to world history is life changing.” 

In remembrance:
Julius E. Thompson (1946-2007)

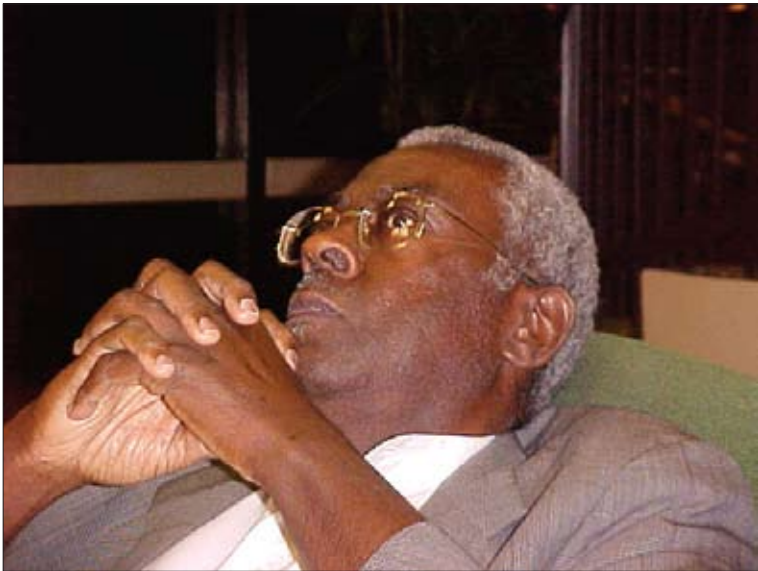
Dr. Julius E. Thompson, scholar, poet, and biographer, made his transition on Friday, 26 October, 2007. He was widely known for his scholarship on African life in Mississippi and development of upcoming Africana studies scholars who have gone on to have productive careers in academia.

Born in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 1946, Professor Thompson moved to the city of Natchez early in his youth. He enrolled at Alcorn State University after graduating from high school. In

1969, he completed his undergraduate studies by earning a bachelor of science in history. Soon thereafter, he entered into the graduate program in American history at Princeton University, eventually going on to earn the doctorate in 1973.

Throughout his life, Dr. Thompson was both a participant and chronologist of the Black Arts Movement. In 1970, he published his first book of poetry *Hopes Tied Up In Promises* with Dorrance & Co. while still a student at Princeton. He went on to publish two more works of poetry: *Blues Said: Walk On* (1977); and *Mississippi Witness: Poems* (2001).

After receiving his doctorate in American history from Princeton, Dr. Thompson returned to Mississippi and applied for an assistant professorship at Jackson State University—a historically black university. By this time the African experience in Mississippi had become a central theme of his scholarship. *Lynching in Mississippi: A History, 1865-1965* (2006), the last work Dr. Thompson published before his transition, is a testament to the ongoing atrocities that Africans encountered in post-



Dr. Julius E. Thompson (1946-2007).

bellum Mississippi. Originally entitled *The Age of Lynching*, the manuscript was nearly 900 pages in length and covered the lynching of African people throughout America from 1865 to 1965. With this work, he had attempted to both redefine and challenge conventional African American historiographies that assumed that the promise of civil rights (instead of the reality of lynching) accurately reflected the everyday concerns of African people living in America during this time. Publishers interested in the markets that local histories held out had redirected the Pan-African thrust of his scholarship.

Nevertheless, his return to Mississippi in 1973 signaled a lifelong commitment to African solidarity, service and reciprocity. He became actively involved in working with both undergraduate and graduate students in the history department. Dr. Thompson taught Afro-American History, United States History, Blacks in the South, Black Social & Political History, and The Civil War and Reconstruction, while serving the department as coordinator of the

History Forum Series, 1975-1980. After leaving Jackson State, Dr. Thompson went on to teach at several other major research universities. From 1980 to 1983, he taught at Florida Memorial College. He served as chairman of the social science division from there 1981 to 1983. His first historical narrative came with out in 1982, with the publication of his dissertation, *Hiram R. Revels, 1827-1901: A Biography* by Arno Press. In 1983, Dr. Thompson left Florida to assume an assistant professorship

in the African and Afro-American studies department at State University of New York, Albany. He served there as director of undergraduate studies from 1983 to 1987. Dr. Thompson continued to move his career forward and completed a year in residence as a visiting scholar at the Frederick Douglass Institute in Rochester, New York from 1988 to 1989. Between 1989 and 1996, he taught at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale such courses as African-American history, United States History to 1877, Independent Studies in Black Studies, and History of the New South, a graduate seminar. He worked especially hard at SIUC to serve as a mentor to more than fifty young students who showed outstanding promise in terms of their academic careers.


In 1996, he assumed the post of director of the Black studies program and associate professor of history with tenure (Full Professor granted in 2001) at the University of Missouri-Columbia. He headed a program active at the University of Missouri-Columbia since the early 1970's. The program currently offers 14 to

15 courses per semester, and 15 or more faculty members throughout the university are affiliated with the program each year. In addition to the academic work of the unit, he coordinated research and publication efforts, as well as the service and community outreach goals of the program. During his ten years as an administrator, Dr. Thompson was the most published scholar on African American history in the history department at the University of Missouri-Columbia. In all, he published nine works on African American history. By the fall of 2006, he had already completed a tenth work, *Hoyt W. Fuller (1927-1981): A Life in Black Literature and Journalism*, which was




Dr. Thompson at the Annual African American Studies Research Program Symposium.

under consideration for publication by a well known university press. A short list of his published works includes: *Pan African Nationalism in the Americas: The Life and Times of John Henrik Clarke*, Edited by James L. Conyers, Jr. and Julius E.

Mississippi, 1865-1985 (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 1993); *Dudley Randall, Broadside Press*, and the *Black Arts Movement in Detroit, 1960-1995* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1999). 

Thompson (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, Inc., 2004); *Black Life in Mississippi, Essays on Political, Social and Cultural Studies in a Deep South State* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2001); *Percy Greene and the Jackson Advocate: The Life and Times of a Radical Conservative Black Newspaperman, 1897-1977* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1994); *The Black Press in*

AAS Visiting Professor Co-Hosts AB-Psi Convention

In August 2007, the Association of Black Psychologists held its thirty-ninth annual international convention at the Hilton-Americas Hotel in Houston, Texas. Denise Lovett, visiting professor of African American Studies, served as National Liaison and Houston Chapter Convention Chair. The annual convention attracts scholars from around the world to critically discuss issues impacting the mental health of African people. The theme for the 2007 convention was “Reclaiming and Revitalizing Our Communities”. 



AB-Psi graduate students relaxing in the lobby of the Hilton-Americas Hotel.

Student Funding Support

John Rueben Sheeler Memorial Scholarship:

Established in 1981 by the widow of Dr. John Rueben Sheeler, historian and chair of the Department of History and Geography at Texas Southern University, this scholarship provides funding to academically talented students who have declared minors in African American Studies and whose GPAs are at least 3.0. The amount of this award is \$1,000.

• Mrs. Debbie Haley Academic Scholarship:

Established by Mrs. Debbie Haley and African American Studies, this scholarship provides funding to students who have declared minors in African American Studies and whose GPAs are at least 2.5. The amount of this award is \$1,000.

• Friends of African American Studies Scholarship:

Established in 1999 by supporters of African American Studies throughout the Houston community, this scholarship provides funding to students who have declared minors in African American Studies and whose GPAs are at least 2.5. The amount of this award is \$1,000. Scholarships are awarded annually in the name of an important person of African world heritage.

• Sylvester Turner Academic Distinction Scholarship:

Established in 2006 to provide funding to students who have declared minors in African American Studies and whose GPAs are at least 3.5. The amount of this award is \$1,000.

• John J. Moores, Sr. Academic Achievement Scholarship:

Established in 2006 to provide funding to students who have declared minors in African American Studies and show GPAs are at least 3.0. The amount of this award is \$1,000.

• Dr. Ira B. Bryant, Jr. Academic Scholarship:

Established in 2005 in honor of the great Houstonian educator and civil rights leader, this scholarship provides funding to students who have declared minors in African American Studies.

• Dr. Kwame Nkrumah International Study Scholarship:

Available to UH-matriculated undergraduate students enrolled in six (6) credit hours of African American Studies Summer IV Session International Study courses to the University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana, West Africa.

• African American Studies Graduate Assistantship:

This award, established in 1995, was initiated to recruit outstanding students for graduate study at the University of Houston pursuing M.A. or Ph.D. degrees in research related to or in the disciplinary field of African American Studies. Graduate assistants work 20 hours weekly on various assignments as required by the African American Studies Program.

International Study and Conference Exposure

• Summer International Study Program—Ghana, West Africa (Summer Session IV, annually):

UH students take three (3) or six (6) credit hours of African American Studies courses that integrate lectures by Ghanaian academics at the University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology with work at the University of Houston. Study includes educational travel.

• National Model African Union-Washington, DC (First Week in March, annually):

UH students participate in the annual National Model African union hosted by Howard University in Washington, DC, during the first week in March. UH students compete with undergraduate and graduate students from colleges and universities from across the United States who represent the 54 states on the African continent. The African Union is the newly founded transnational institution created to replace the Organization of African Unity, which was formed in 1963.

• National Council for Black Studies Conference (Third Week in March, annually):

The National Council for Black Studies is the leading organization of Black/Africana Studies professionals in the world. In addition to establishing standards of excellence within the discipline, NCBS serves as a major outlet for the scholarly dissemination of African-centered knowledge and modes of inquiry regarding the life and experiences of African people. UH students are encouraged to attend and present research-based papers at the annual conference, which convenes during the third week of March each year. The conference exposes UH students to research generated by the leading theories and methodologies in the discipline, as well as introducing them to peers from leading institutions for the purpose of sharing and comparing ideas. In the past, AAS minors have presented papers and achieved academic distinction such as induction into the Ankh Maat Wedjau Honor Society and placement in the NCBS Student Essay Competition.

New Teaching Initiatives

• Graduate Certificate in African American Studies

The Graduate Certificate in African American Studies is a nine-hour disciplinary concentration open to students in all UH graduate and professional degree programs. It is also open to post baccalaureate professionals (including teachers, social service providers, policymakers, and others) interested in enhancing their knowledge and understanding of Africana phenomena.

The graduate concentration provides intellectual breadth to

a student’s course of study, increasing the depth and coherence of the student’s work within her/his primary field of study on critical issues concerning Africana phenomena.

• Undergraduate Minor Degree Program:

Established in 1989, the undergraduate minor draws from the African American Studies Program’s 42-credit hour inventory of permanent courses. Students take 18 credit hours in Africana Studies course in areas of both humanities and social sciences.

• Ankh Maat Wedjau Honor Society of the Nation Council for Black Studies, University of Houston Songhai Chapter: The honor society’s overall mission is to establish for students a strong foundation in the discipline of Africana Studies at the University of Houston through extracurricular engagement in intellectual and active learning experiences.

Publication and Research

• Africana Studies, A Review of Social Science Research:

A new peer-reviewed academic annual serial published by Transaction Publishers in New Brunswick, New Jersey, the new journal offers an important contribution to research and scholarship in the discipline of Africana Studies. The annual serial’s inaugural issue will be published in 2004.

• African American Studies monograph series, Transaction Publishers: The series features original studies and recovery works within the discipline of Africana Studies.

• African Americans in the American West monograph series, University Press of Colorado: The series publishes original studies and recovery works on the Africana experience in the western United States from diverse disciplinary perspectives.

• The Black Houston History Project: An initiative committed to the research, study, and preservation of the history of African American people and institutions in the city of Houston, Texas, from the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries.

• Center for the Study of African American Culture: Approved by the University’s Division of Research, the Center for the Study of African American Culture is committed to interdisciplinary research revived in the multiple dimensions of African American life and culture.

• Visiting Scholars Program: Each year, at least two scholars from across the Untied States participate in a one-year visiting appointment in African American Studies. They teach one course of their own design while working toward the completion of a research project. The Visiting Scholars Program is designed to encourage new scholars to contribute new and innovative teaching and research in the discipline of Africana Studies.

CSAAC Annual Research Symposium

In April 2007, the Center for the Study of African American Culture (CSAAC) hosted its third annual research symposium at the University of Houston Hilton Hotel. The symposium centered on the life of legal scholar, social engineer, and civil rights attorney Charles Hamilton Houston. Scholars from across the country, representing a variety of academic disciplines and from a broad field of professional backgrounds participated in the two-day event.

The list of scholars presenting at the conference included: Katherine Olukemi Bankole, Ph.D., associate professor of history (and former director of the Center for Black Culture and Research and coordinator of Africana studies) at West Virginia University; Counsel John Brittain, J.D., chief council and senior deputy director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Paul

Finkelman, Ph.D., President William McKinley Distinguished Professor of Law and Public Policy at Albany Law School; Lewis R. Gordon, Ph.D., Laura H. Carnwell Professor of Philosophy at Temple University; James L. Conyers, Jr., director of the African American studies program, director of the Center for African American Culture, and University Professor of African American studies at the University of Houston; Charles Hamilton Houston III, a partner with Thomas, Thomas & Markson, P.C. in Phoenix, Arizona; Genna Rae McNeil, Ph.D., professor of history at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill; Charles Ogletree, J.D., Harvard Law School Jesse Climenko Professor of Law, and founding and executive director of the Charles Hamilton Houston Institute for Race and Justice; Christel

N. Temple, Ph.D., associate professor of Africana studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC); the late Julius E. Thompson, Ph.D., director of the Black studies program and professor of history and Black studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia; L. Darnell Weeden, J.D., is an associate dean and Roberson King Professor of Law at Texas Southern University, Thurgood Marshall School of Law; and, Cary D. Wintz, Ph.D., professor of history at Texas Southern University.



AAS STUDENT News Briefs

Paul Burgman, an African American Studies alumnus, is a graduate of the University of Houston. A writer, scholar, and social critic, Mr. Burgman received a fellowship to complete graduate studies in the Pan African studies department at Syracuse University. This interview inquires about his transition from undergraduate to graduate school.

Interview with Paul Burgman

Staff - Since your graduation from the University of Houston what are you doing with yourself at this time?

Burgman - Well, I am currently a master's candidate in the Pan African Studies Department at Syracuse University. My concentration is going to be in Afro-Latin America and they're doing great things here to help me and assist me with this. We have a specialist here, Dr. Kwame Dixon, who works specifically on Latin America, so with his help and some funding I hope to go real far.

Staff - Okay, excellent. And, have you made any travel arrangements to study abroad in Latin America, or have you done so already?

Burgman - I studied abroad this past summer in Cuernavaca, Mexico and this summer it looks as if I'm either going to Venezuela or Nicaragua.

Staff - Do you have any group of people or research interest that you're focusing on?

Burgman - Well, research interests in particular, if I want to go to Venezuela it will be to study the social movement that's going on there, I want to look at how this social movement will adapt to the needs of African Latinos and address issues of human rights, citizenship, inclusion, and cultural respect.

Staff - Sounds interesting. How did your experience in African American Studies at the University of Houston prepare you for graduate school?

Burgman - I think because a lot of the coursework was very rigorous, as a matter of fact when I first got here in this graduate environment because we had to read—you know—like 250 to 300 pages a week just for one class. This didn't bother me because the African American studies program there taught me how to read and think critically. It prepared me beyond my own comprehension for this experience.

Staff - What are your plans over the next year?

Burgman - Over the next year, as I said, hopefully I will be in Latin America. By next December, I hope to defend my thesis, and after that I will take off for about a year or two and go and teach at a university in Venezuela.

Staff - Do you plan on presenting at the National Council for Black Studies in March?

Burgman - I'm looking into it. I definitely plan on being there. If I'm able to get a panel together, I'm all for it.

Staff - Have you received any awards since your graduation from U of H?

Burgman - I'm the graduate representative on the search committee for a new professor here, if that means anything.

Staff - Well, Paul that's it for now. Is there anything else you'd like to say to our readers?

Burgman - I have tremendous respect for the African American studies program at UH given their ability to produce students. I also enjoyed the interaction we had with the community; it prepared me not only for graduate school, but it has prepared me for life.

AAS GRADUATE ASSISTANTS Bios

Three UH students received graduate assistantships in African American Studies. Graduate assistants work 20 hours weekly on various assignments as required by the African American Studies Program.

Radheshyam K Bang was born in Dhule, a small city in Maharashtra, India. He completed his high school education there while scoring 95% in science studies and placing 22nd among 150,000 students. Radheshyam went on to enroll at the University of Pune, where he pursued an undergraduate degree in electrical engineering. He has received recognition for ranking second among all engineering students at the University of Pune for the last three years. With an interest in learning new technologies that will sharpen and hone his skills, he is pursuing an M.A. in computer science

from the Department of Natural Science and Mathematics at UH.

Cynthia Anteauss Tate is a first year M.A. student in the Department of Communication. She grew up on the Westbank of New Orleans, Louisiana where she received her high school education. Cynthia graduated from Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge with a B.S. in Psychology and a minor in African and African-American Studies. Her area of concentration is public relations with special focus on organizational communication and media theory. She intends to pursue a career in the application of public relation in an urban setting with the goal of becoming an opinion leader.

Quiana Whitesell is a Graduate Assistant with the African American Studies Department. She is a second year grad-



uate student in the Graduate College of Social Work with a focus in political social work and a minor in African American Studies. In addition to her work with our department, she works as a public affairs intern with Planned Parenthood of Houston and Southeast Texas. Quiana is originally from Austin, Texas. She graduated from A.S. Johnston High School's Liberal Arts Academy in May of 2002. She attended Texas Southern University and decided to continue her education at UH in May of 2006.

The Adinkra Process



Gathering Wood - The first step in the process of making Adinkra cloth involves gathering bark from the bade tree.



Pounding - Once the bark has been gathered, it is allowed to soften in water and then pounded in a mortar over a long period of time to increase its softness.



Orienting - The cloth that will be stamped is placed down on a flat surface. A comb dipped in the dye is then used to draw perpendicular lines across the fabric. In addition to their spiritual significance, these lines help evenly proportion the fabric into a number of sections. The fabric is now ready for stamping.

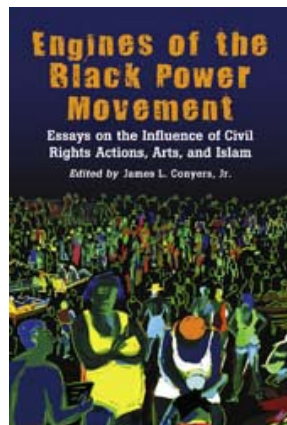


Stamping - Adinkra symbols are added to the fabric according to the purpose or occasion for which the garment will be worn.

AAS Publications

AAS Faculty Publications

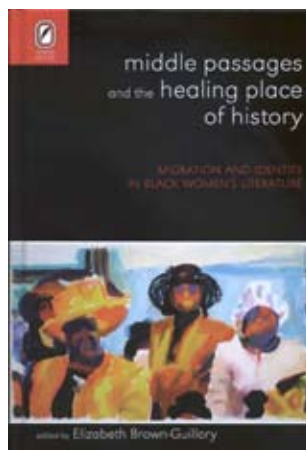
In December 2006, **Dr. James L. Conyers, Jr.**, University Professor and director of African American



Studies, published an edited work entitled, *Engines of the Black Power Movement: Essays on the Influence of Civil Rights Actions, Arts, and Islam* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2006). With a view to assessing losses and gains, this collection of 17 essays examines the evolution and perception of the African American civil rights movement from its inception through today.

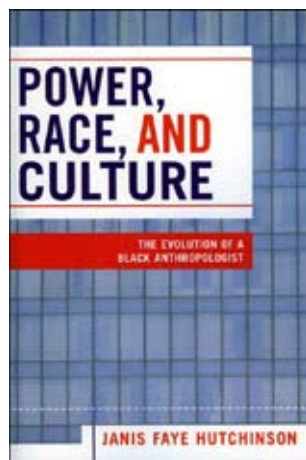
AAS Adjunct and Affiliate Faculty Publications

In November 2006, **Elizabeth Brown-Guillory**, professor of English, edited *Middle Passage and the Healing Place of History: Migration and Identity In Black Women's History*

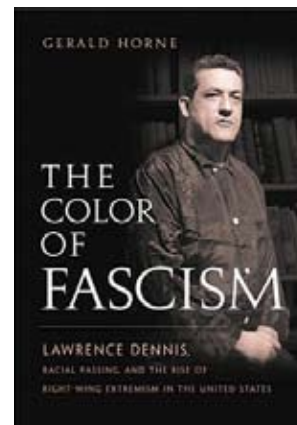


(Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2006).


Janis Faye Hutchison, professor of anthropology, published *Power, Race, and Culture: The Evolution of a Black Anthropologist* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2006).



Gerald Horne, John and Rebecca Moores Professor of History, had a particularly productive publication year with: *The Final Victim of the*



Blacklist: John Howard Lawson, Dean of the Hollywood Ten (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006); and, *The Color of Fascism: Laurence Dennis, Racial Passing, and the Rise of Right-Wing Extremism in the United States* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

In the spring of 2007, **W. Lawrence Hogue**, professor of English, published "Postmodernism, Paul Auster's The New York Trilogy, and the Construction of the Black/Woman of Color as Primal Other," in *Women & Others: Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Empire* (Signs of Race), eds. Celia R. Daileader, Rhoda E. Johnson, and Amilcar Shabazz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 83-104. 



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