

A 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

- On Oct. 3, renowned filmmaker Julie Dash spoke on "My Narrative: Experiences of a Filmmaker" as part of the "Reel Images: Film in Teaching and Research" conference at the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. On Oct. 4, Dash screened her 2002 film *The Rosa Parks Story* at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater in Bloomington. AAADS was a co-sponsor for the two-day event.



Posing with Julie Dash, far right, are, from left, Iris Rosa, Audrey McCluskey, Michael Martin, Claudia Drieling, Karen Bowdre, David Amponsah, Alyssa Liles-Amponsah, Coye Lloyd, and Jean-Christophe Henry.

- On Oct. 8, AAADS held a reception to celebrate faculty members with recent and forthcoming books. To read more about the event and see more photos, visit the AAADS web site at www.indiana.edu/~afroamer.



AAADS faculty, staff, and students, as well as faculty from other departments, enjoy hearing about some of the recent and forthcoming books by departmental faculty members.

• Over **Homecoming Weekend**, Oct. 19-21, AAADS people could be seen around campus taking part in the frenzied fun surrounding football. A departmental contingent rode in the Homecoming Parade, adding our own special spirit to the exuberant mix of Hoosier Hysteria as the people and vehicles wended their way through Bloomington. As the festive weekend progressed, lots of folks enjoyed more food and fun, sponsored in part by the **IU Neal-Marshall Alumni Club**. The "Friday Night Chill," held at the KRC Banquet Hall, featured music by the McCutchen & Mahluli Jazz Quartet (yes, two AAADS adjunct professors!). On Saturday, people filled up on "all the good stuff" at the Jimmy Ross Tailgate before watching the close heartbreaker against Penn State. Saturday evening was reunion time for IU's black alumni who attended the "Reunion XVIII Banquet," followed by "The Chill Continues" into the night with dancing and DJ music, sponsored in part by the IU Black Student Union.



Several graduate students and faculty members rode in the Homecoming Parade on Oct. 19, representing AAADS and urging the IU team to "beat the socks off" Penn State.

- On Oct. 24, the department held the **Undergraduate Fall Festivity** so the faculty, staff, and graduate students could share a meal and spend some time with the AAADS undergraduates. Because of inclement weather, the festivities took place in the Office of Women's Affairs Lounge, instead of the veranda, in Memorial Hall East.
- On Nov. 5, the **Black Film Center/Archive** is hosting filmmaker Donnie L. Betts (donnie l. betts), who will screen his documentary about Oscar Brown Jr. That event is free and open to the public. Betts will also speak to several classes on the Bloomington campus. For more information about the film and the filmmaker, visit Bett's web site at www.musicismylife.info/.
- On Nov. 9-10, the fourth annual **Men of Color Leadership Conference** will take place in the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. This year's theme is "Political Education for Social Change: Moving from Dialogue to Action." For more information about the conference, visit www.indiana.edu/~moc.
- On Nov. 10, the 14th annual "**Potpourri of Arts in the African American Tradition**" will take place in the Buskirk-Chumley Theater at 8 p.m. Each of the **African American Art Institute's** three ensembles will perform, showcasing the diverse talents and musical arts of the African American tradition. Don't miss the IU Soul Revue, the African American Dance Company, and the African American Choral Ensemble in their signature event, with this year's theme "Proud and Keeping It Real!"



The African American Dance Company performs in a previous "Potpourri."

- The **Second Wednesday Brown Bag Lunch Seminars**, highlighting new research and creative activity by faculty and graduate students, takes place in the Bridgwaters Lounge of the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center on the second Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m.
- Looking for something else to do? The **Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center** has something planned to fit your interests. For information on events, visit the NMBCC web site at www.nmbcc.indiana.edu.

Faculty

- On Oct. 18, several AAADS faculty members marched in the inaugural procession with IU President Michael McRobbie.



Professors Valerie Grim, at right, and A.B. Assensoh and Micol Seigel donned their academic robes to march in Michael McRobbie's inauguration as IU's 18th president.

- Professor **Valerie Grim**, chair of the department, gave a guest lecture, titled "Reading Race, Reading Symbols: The Role of Dance in Helping Us Understand the Meaning of the Jena Six Movement," in the Black Dance in the African Diaspora course for the African American Dance Company.
- *Callaloo* turned 30 years old in October. On Oct. 24-27, the distinguished journal of literature by African Americans writers was feted by the Center for Africana Studies at Johns Hopkins University with a conference that featured the 100 "best creative writers, intellectuals, academics, and artists to launch the journal into the next 30 years." One of those 100 is AAADS Professor **John McCluskey**, who moderated a panel on "Writing and Publishing in the U.S.A." For more information about the conference and the celebration, visit www.callaloo.tamu.edu/~conference.
- Professor **Iris Rosa**, director of the African American Dance Company, and the AADC presented a lecture and demonstration at St. Richards School in Indianapolis on Oct 26 and will do another one at Batchelor Middle School in Bloomington on Nov 26.

Adjunct Faculty

- Best wishes to **Grace Jackson-Brown**, former head librarian for the Neal Marshall Black Culture Center Library, who is moving with her husband to the University of Missouri. On Nov. 1, DeLoice Holliday took over as the new head librarian and manager for the African American and African Diaspora Studies collection. Holliday also will continue as the multicultural outreach librarian for the Information Commons Undergraduate Library.
- Professor **Sylvester Johnson** (religious studies) will present a Second Wednesday Brown Bag Lecture on the topic "Black Religions, F.B.I. Surveillance, and the Rise of Black Ethnics in the Early 20th Century" on Nov. 14 in the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, Bridgwaters Lounge.

Graduate Students

- **Regina Barnett** made a brown bag presentation on Sept. 12 on the topic "A Change Gon Come: The Plantation in Ernest J. Gaines's *Bloodline*." On Oct. 10, **Hassan Wahab** spoke on "Assessing the Symbiotic Relationship Between Ghanaians and African

Americans in the Diaspora." To read about these talks and view photos, go to the AAADS web site at www.indiana.edu/~afroamer to the Events section.

- On Oct. 6, **Sara Bagby** and James Farmer (HPER) were married. The wedding reception, held at the Four Winds Resort Hotel, was attended by many friends from the department. *Best wishes to the newlyweds!*



From left, Claudia Drieling, Langston Wilkins, Alyssa Liles-Amponsah, James Farmer, David Amponsah, Sara Bagby Farmer, Hassan Wahab, and Sara's father.

- **Katie Dieter** is the promotional coordinator for the African American Arts Institute. In addition to sending out timely information on their performances and other activities, she was spotted holding down the AAAI booth at the annual Soul Food Picnic in September.

- **Bergis Jules** has been appointed as an intern for a two-year term to the American Library Association's Spectrum Advisory Committee. This committee is of particular importance because its work is in support of a scholarship program and raises awareness of the "necessity for diversity in both education and practice."

- **Phillip Wagner**, co-founder and director of Rhythm of Hope and founder and director of Rhythm of Hope in Brazil, says that Rhythm of Hope, the new parent organization for Rhythm of Hope in Brazil and Rhythm of Hope in India, held its first full board meeting in a combined phone-net meeting on Oct. 15, with the goal of securing 501c3 status, which should happen before the end of May 2008. Plans are underway with partner organizations to obtain office space for RoHB in Salvador, Bahia, and to build a community theater for the district of Ribeira in the ICBIE compound. Already in progress is an ROH-facilitated Engineers Without Borders project on the island of Itaparica, Brazil, and new volunteers are being referred to

Projeto Didá, the Afro-Brazilian women and girls dance and percussion school. [Editor's note: In the last issue of *Diaspora*, some of Wagner's experiences last summer in Brazil were mentioned, along with a URL. Unfortunately, because of a changeover in our web technician, the text and photographs were not uploaded in time. Now they are! To learn more about this, visit www.indiana.edu/~afroamer/site2/gallery/wagner/index.html.]

• Many AAADS graduate students continue to publish their work in refereed journals. Under the aegis of **Professor A.B. Assensoh**, who for several years has encouraged and guided students in their academic publishing efforts, the following people have had articles accepted in the Leiden, Netherlands-based *African and Asian Studies Journal*.

• Review essays were published in Vol. 6, Nos. 1-2, summer 2007 by

Sara Bagby, "The Japanese Mafia: Yakuza, Law, and the State";

Femina T. Ajayi (and Dennis J. Hackworth, SPEA): "Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics";

Damien Strecker, "Chiefs in South Africa: Law Power and Culture in the Post-Apartheid Era"; and

Phillip Wagner, "Managing NGOs in Developing Countries, Volume II: Management Cases from Pakistan."

• Review essays were published in Vol. 6, No. 3, fall 2007 by

Alyssa Liles-Amponsah, "Africa in Chaos";

Tyron Cooper and **Langston Wilkins**, "African-American Music: An Introduction";

Bergis Jules, "Afro-Atlantic Dialogues: Anthropology in the Diaspora"; and

Cory Brodnax, "Crisis and Creativity: Exploring the Wealth of the African Neighborhood."

• In addition, **Mohamed Yunis Rafiq**, **Ontario S. Wooden** (and J.M. Crumsey), **Crystal Brown**, who minored in AAADS and have since graduated, also had reviews published in the journal.

Friends

• Friends and future alumni **Kwadwo** and **Livingston Assensoh** had their letter to the editor published in the Bloomington *Herald-Times* on Oct. 18. The young men wrote to show appreciation for the recent debate on local poverty between Mayor Mark Kruzan and Councilman David Sabbagh and to urge more attendance by young people at such important political discussions. In addition,

they pointed out that neither mayoral candidate addressed the issue of immigrant poverty. Although they raised their hands to ask questions on that and other issues, they were, unfortunately, never called on by the moderator. *Well done, Kwadwo and Livingston!*

- **Fernando Orejuela** (folklore/ethnomusicology) conducted a workshop, titled “The Internet Course that Wasn’t: Synchronic Web-based Pedagogy and the Virtual Classroom,” at the 14th International Conference on Learning, held at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa, in June. For the past four semesters, he has been teaching Survey of Hip Hop: Socio-cultural Perspectives of African American Music online. The non-traditional classroom setting enhances the teaching and learning of an African American musical phenomenon. The course consists of a live lecture component using Adobe Breeze to deliver the instructor’s face and voice via camera, the computer desktop delivers PowerPoint presentations and other audio and video materials. During the live lecture, students “text-message” their questions and responses to the professor's questions in a chat room.



The screenshot illustrates Orejuela's online classroom.

- **George Taliaferro**, former IU and National Football League star, is now the star of a new book by IU alumna Dawn Knight. *Taliaferro: Breaking Barriers from the NFL to the Ivory Tower* tells about the College Football Hall of Famer's life as the first African American player in the NFL when he was drafted by the Chicago Bears in 1949. Look for book signings in the Bloomington area in November!

Alumni

- **Elizabeth Hadley**, PhD'90, died on Oct. 21 at her home near Boston. While she earned her doctorate in education/theatre and drama, Hadley came to IU to study in the Department of Afro-American Studies, where she worked closely with professors emeritae Phyllis Klotman and Winona Fletcher. Hadley was an associate professor and a former chair of Africana studies at Simmons College in Boston. In addition to the transformative energy and commitment she brought to her teaching, Hadley is especially remembered for her critiques of television and film, particularly of the portrayals of black women; for her book *Bessie Coleman: The Brownskin Lady Bird*, about the first black woman aviator; and for her fight to persuade the U.S. Postal Service to commemorate Coleman with a stamp. Hadley's daughter, Malika Freyberg, who was often seen "on the floor" of Memorial Hall East when her mother was a student here, is now a high school choir teacher in Atlanta.



Elizabeth Amelia Hadley

- **Monique Threatt**, MLS'99, AAADS minor, was recently tenured and promoted as a librarian with the Herman B Wells Library. Threatt currently serves as the Media librarian and associate head for the Kent Cooper Room of the Wells Library. She is a former archivist for the Black Film Center/Archive.

News of Note

- As the year winds down, many people are reviewing their opportunities for tax deductions. Anyone interested in making donations to the department can express their generosity through the IU Foundation (P.O. Box 500, Bloomington, IN 47402) by writing AAADS account #32AS58023 in the memo line of their check. *Any amount is*

appreciated and all donors have our deepest gratitude.

- There are several local volunteer opportunities available for those who want to participate in **community outreach**. Departmental secretary **Yunika Jackson**, who coordinates community outreach, will answer questions and accept donations. The following efforts have been "officially" adopted by the department and all contributions are gratefully welcomed:

- Hannah's House: During October, we collected infant material (bottles, diapers, bibs, lotions, powders, etc.) for young families in crisis.
- Back Street Mission: During November, we are collecting food for the homeless and other less fortunate people.
- Salvation Army: During December, we will be collecting hats, gloves, scarves, and other winter gear for children in need.

- Be sure to catch ***Bring It On***, a local radio program that explores the people, issues, and events affecting the African American community in south central Indiana and beyond. Tune in to WFHB 91.3 at 6 p.m. on Monday nights. The show is produced by **Clarence Boone**, director of IU's Neal-Marshall Alumni Club.



All faculty, graduate students, undergraduate students, staff, alumni, and friends of the department are invited to send your comments, suggestions, and information on your activities and interests to Carol Edge at ccedge@indiana.edu or to the department in care of Yunika Jackson at ytjackso@indiana.edu. Digital photos may be accepted if appropriate.

** Published monthly or bimonthly through the fall and spring semesters. Diaspora is not published during the summer. (Following the contours of the academic calendar, the usual schedule of issues is August-September, October, November-December, January, February-March, and April-May — or some variation thereof.)*