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50th

ANNIVERSARY

special edition



AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY | FALL 2019 - SPRING 2020



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the Department of African and African American Studies at Fordham!

The Department of African and African American Studies at Fordham proudly celebrates its 50th anniversary this academic year of 2019-2020.

Fifty years ago, a group of brave and politically conscious students at Fordham University demanded that Fordham gives more recognition to the history and culture of people of African descent in its curriculum. In response to a year long campaign culminating in a peaceful sit in at the Administration building, Fordham recognized their demands for Black Studies and a more inclusive curriculum. Their efforts had a profound impact on the intellectual landscape of Fordham.

Founded in 1969, during a period of great political and social changes in the United States, the department is proud of its efforts over half a century to produce and disseminate knowledge about people of African descent in the United States, Caribbean, Africa, Latin America, and Europe from multifaceted historical, political and cultural perspectives.

The celebration of its 50th anniversary will take place throughout the academic year and will include lectures, panels and artistic performances. The celebration begins on November 2, 2019, from 3pm-11pm. The all-day celebration will feature panel of the department founders, panel of African community leaders in the Bronx, as well as African percussionists and a dance party DJ's by a Department alum. Farah Jasmine Griffin, chair of the department of African and African diaspora Studies at Columbia will deliver a keynote speech.

During the 17 years that I have been a member of the faculty, there has been incredible growth in all three missions of the department, an unparalleled sense of teamwork, and dedication to professionalism. The department will continue to do what it has been doing since its inception. Despite its small size and limited resources, the department continues to have a deep commitment to academic excellence and social responsibility in teaching, research, and service. Our goal is to prepare our students to serve as global citizens who are able to recognize and understand the complexities and challenges of the globalized world. Hence, the department will continue to update its curriculum and strives to make it innovative and inclusive.

In addition to commitment to academic excellence, the department will strengthen its partnerships with diverse local organizations in Bronx and New York City, spearheaded by the Bronx African American History Project, one of the most respected community base oral history projects in the nation. It will strive to highlight the importance of reaching out to diverse communities to forge collaborative and mutual partnerships.

No doubt, the department and the University are the beneficiaries of the struggle students waged to bring to Fordham cutting-edge scholarship and teaching in African and African American history, literature, and the arts, along with critical race theory, and critical perspectives in Anthropology, Religion, Sociology, and beyond.

The department recognizes and salutes those students and their teachers for their contributions and commitment for making Fordham a better place in practice and discourse.

AMIR IDRIS

Professor and Chair

MEET THE FACULTY



AMIR IDRIS

Chair and Professor

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Research and Teaching Interests: history and politics of colonialism, on slavery and race, and on postcolonial citizenship in Northeast and Central Africa.



MARK L. CHAPMAN

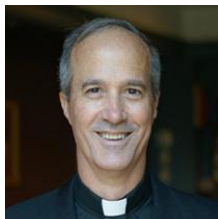
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JANE KANI EDWARD

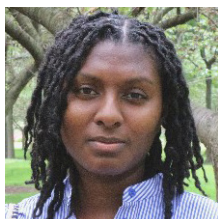
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Research and Teaching Interests: African American politics, labor history, popular culture and education policy.

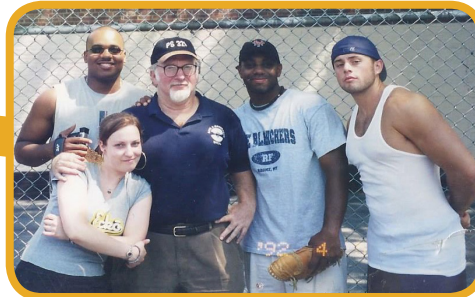


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Research and Teaching Interests: African American history, women's history, Atlantic migration and black identity.

FIFTY YEARS IN THE MAKING



TRIBUTE TO DR. QUINTON BERNARD WILKES

I have been asked to write some personal reflections regarding the unique contributions of the late Dr. Quinton Bernard to Fordham University.

Quinton (or as some would call him Bernard or QB) and I first met in the Spring of 1964 when I was pledging the historically African American fraternity Kappa Alpha Psi here in New York and he was a member having pledged at his undergraduate college Morgan State University in Maryland and was about to leave for service as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army in Germany. Little did I realize at that time that our professional and personal lives would become linked.

When I came to Fordham in September 1969 to serve as the Director of the federally funded Upward Bound program there were student demonstrations on a number of college campuses throughout the U.S.

In the Spring of 1969 about twelve of the small portion of the Black students in the undergraduate colleges on the Rose Hill campus staged a sit-in demanding an African American program of courses and greater increase and supports for Black students. Undergraduates Bob Bennett and Fred Douglas had already been involved in teaching a course and the need was felt for more courses.

Quinton had returned from military service and had enrolled in the Psychology Department doctoral program at Fordham. Undergraduates knew him through his attendance at the Black student organization meetings. Several students had asked him to participate in the sit-in but he informed them that he did not want to jeopardize his standing in the Psychology Department program. He did agree, however, to stand outside the door of the sit-in and communicate messages.



Dr. Claude Mangum and Dr. Mark Naison with former Department professor, Dr. Quinton Wilkes and Dr. Donald Clarke, chemistry professor, at a Black and Latino Alumni Association Reception in the late 1990's

Ironically, it was QB who received the most notoriety. TV and news coverage of the sit-in pictured Quinton not only on TV but in Newsweek and Time magazines as well.

Once the University agreed to forming the Institute of African American Studies its office was located on the second floor of Dealy Hall directly across from the office of the Upward Bound Program. QB became a full-time instructor in the program and 1969 had been the last year of his doctoral courses.

I soon came to form a friendship with Quinton and came to appreciate the relationship he had with his Institute colleagues, students in his courses, the undergraduates who served on the Institute's governing board, and the students he counseled.

In addition to his wife and late daughter Laura, as well as Fordham responsibilities, Quinton volunteered for other significant duties. He became the Bronx borough coordinator for Black Solidarity Day an event that called for African Americans to absent themselves from work and school to indicate their significance to this country and the demand for equal rights.

QB created the Institute's weekly radio program Elimu (a Swahili word meaning a search for truth and knowledge) on Fordham's WFUV on which he interviewed such nationally known figures as Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael).

Brother Wilkes was able to initiate the founding of a chapter (Iota Rho) of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity at Fordham and my continued contact with those who became members illustrate the close ties between those who became members and the many achievements they have made and contributed since their graduations.

Quinton Bernard Wilkes died of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease), several years ago, although he would lose the ability to move his legs, arms, and body, and the ability to breathe on his own, his mind remained sharp, and his memories strong. The last time I saw him in Maryland before his passing, he still had a strong sense of humor and he was still able to sing some of his favorite songs.

Quinton Bernard Wilkes certainly made a strong impact on his family, friends, colleagues, students, clients, and public and he will continue to be strongly missed.

Claude Mangum, Ph.D.
Emeritus Associate Professor

A SHORT HISTORY

OF THE BSI & AAAS DEPARTMENT: 1984-1996

IN 1984, I was hired by the Black Studies Institute, (BSI), with a joint appointment in the Humanities Division. All of Lincoln Center was organized quite differently from what exists today—the interdisciplinary Humanities, Social Sciences, Arts, Natural Sciences and Excel Divisions, and then the Black Studies and Urban Studies and Puerto Rican Studies Institutes, made up the complement of Lincoln Center. We were an autonomous faculty, having almost no relation at all to RH. I was told Black Studies had Department status at Rose Hill, but I was never made privy to the history. Indeed, I only met one of my colleagues at RH once when he invited me to be part of the faculty contingent attending the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities conference in Detroit, around 1986, I believe. I met everyone else during and after restructuring that took place in the early to mid nineties. The separation between campuses was true for all units, not just the BSI.

The BSI was headed by Perry Knight when I arrived and consisted of two other full time faculty members, an African historian, Peter Molotsi, and myself. My predecessor was Dr. Constance Berkeley, whose specialty was Sudanese Literature, I believe. (I recently learned she went on to have an illustrious career at Vassar, where she became the beloved mentor of our own Professor Daniel Alexander Jones, in Theater! Sadly, she passed away in 2014, or she would surely have had an active place of honor in these anniversary celebrations.) Here is a link to Professor Jones's letter on learning about her passing: <https://vq.vassar.edu/issues/2014/02/letters/>

All other courses were taught by a cohort of long-time adjuncts, mostly professionals in their fields: Dr. Walter Lyle, a psychologist, Clive Banks, a retired police detective, Scott Kennedy, a Professor of Drama and African American Studies at Brooklyn College, Charles Whitfield, an entrepreneur, as well as a rotation of others. Institute meetings were always a public event, with members of the “community” invited to attend, often to receive awards from the Institute in recognition of the work they did.

A certain amount of tension existed between the BSI and the rest of the academic community, which Perry Knight described to me as “turf wars.” For example, courses could be cross-listed but under no circumstance was Humanities, Arts or Social Sciences to offer courses in Black Studies—only Black Studies could do that. At the same time, when I proposed a BSI course on Black Women Writers, I was told I could not teach it as the topic was “too sensitive.” As it was though, most of the students enrolled in courses controlled by the Institute were in Urban Studies courses. Like today, a strong emphasis and value was placed on the number of majors and size of class enrollments throughout the college.

IN my second year, a major overhaul of the Core was undertaken, and over an intense two year process, I and a couple of allies, fought very hard to have a new dedicated course included: American Pluralism. It was among the first of its kind in the nation, where students were introduced to the methodologies employed to understand the categories of race, ethnicity and class, and how they had and did operate in the United States. (In later years, gender and sexuality were added as well.) This meant that for the first time, the entire college community was exposed to these issues, which in turn meant that the Institute and its work became far more integrated into the academic and intellectual life of the whole college, and not just to the self-selected few. In part, this was also because it meant that a large number of faculty outside the two Institutes (BSI and PSI) had to be educated in order to teach the course, and this was a task undertaken by the Institutes. Those were exciting times as we forged a palpable change in the larger curriculum.

The other developments at this time, 1987-89, included the unexpected death of Perry Knight, and the unfortunate denial of tenure by Social Sciences of the other full time faculty member, Dr. Peter Molotsi. That was a particular blow for me as he'd been a wonderful colleague and ally of mine in African Studies. Dr. Molotsi had an illustrious activist career as a senior member of the South African anti-apartheid group, PAC. He became a university Professor relatively late in his career, and the wealth of experience he brought was amazing. I was deeply sorry to learn recently that Dr. Molotsi died in 2010. Here is a link to his obituary: <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/peter-hlaole-molotsi>

But prior to that, when he left Fordham, I was alone within BSI; I became the newly appointed interim and soon to be full director. Mercifully, in 1988, Dr. Watkins-Owens was hired (my hand in hiring her is probably the triumph of my career at Fordham), and between the two of us, something of an overhaul of the Institute took place. Without Perry Knight, several of the long-term adjuncts were uncomfortable with the changes underway, but some remained and worked with us. We explored the move from “Black Studies” to “African American and African Studies,” which also reflected the changes in the field of African American Studies: from a stress on experiential based courses, taught by professionals in the field, such as the police, social workers, lawyers and the like to the transition when the few existing AA PhD programs (I recall there were two at the time—Temple and Yale) were finally producing personnel and scholarship that was collectively coming to fruition on a scale never known before. This began to shape a new curriculum within the department. Rather than the same cycle of courses again, and again, Irma and I were able to offer different courses—such as AA Women Writers, and Women of Color, which we team-taught.

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WE still found ourselves in a somewhat hostile environment, though. In trying to maintain a balance between the traditional and the new culture of BSI, we organized lecture series as well as events that didn't always sit well with the larger community! For example, after a very successful Fair of local African American merchants which we held in the Plaza area, we were told that we couldn't have another for liability reasons because purchases had taken place; Molimo was told to disinvite Lionel Jeffries because the anticipated "security" cost would be too high; some deemed the lectures by Martin Bernal and Ivan Van Sertima and Lenora Fulani too controversial; bell hooks refused to answer the question of a well known Professor because of the hostility with which the question was posed; Henry Louis Gates, Jr. earned the permanent hostility of a very important administrator when he flip flopped the title of his lecture with that of his seminar, spoiling the administrator's introduction; and so on. Still, from 1988 until the end of my stint as director in the mid--nineties, we had a wonderful record of stimulating and very well attended lectures, which along with those already mentioned included Cornel West, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Robert Farris Thompson and Hazel Carby. In retrospect, given the subsequent developments in the field, we did quite well in bridging the divide between the newer liberal humanist branch, and the older, and original activist branch of the field.

When restructuring happened, and the merging of the Institute and the Department was undertaken, one import feature that LC was able to bring was the incorporation of both a Pluralism and Global Studies distribution requirements in the new, unified Core. You should know that Global Studies emerged out of the fierce debates about whether or not the original Pluralism requirement should be both domestic and international: the result was two requirements, which allowed Pluralism to remain dedicated to the domestic US and its particular and specific histories of subjection. But Pluralism was no longer a dedicated course, alas, it was now, along with Global Studies, a distribution requirement. Nevertheless, it did mean that AAAS was more of a player in the university wide dispensation of courses than ever before. One other note: LC faculty had to choose a department in which to be housed: no joint appointments were allowed, only courtesy appointments (no voting rights, just participation in department affairs and classes.) I ended up choosing English rather than AAAS in part because English had no faculty of color whatsoever, nor had it ever managed to retain one in its entire history. I already had tenure, and so thought (naively, perhaps) that I could do something towards that imbalance. Some in AAAS were unhappy with my decision, others more accommodating.

Finally, during those years the Black Studies Institute at Lincoln Center was one of the most politically active on campus, and helped organize a major, college-wide two-day teach-in about divestment from companies doing business with apartheid South Africa and organized another huge three-day teach-in against the first Gulf War. We also were key in a massive teach-in about the Iran-Contra debacle. And, among other noteworthy events, we hosted the famed Kenyan novelist, activist and scholar, Ngugi wa Thiongo's very first public lecture in the United States!

Fawzia Mustafa, Ph.D.
Professor



Dr. Fawzia Mustafa and Dr. Irma Watkins-Owens
May 2015

REFLECTIONS ON THE HISTORY OF **BLACK STUDIES** AT LINCOLN CENTER

The more I reflect upon 35 years of teaching—27 of them at Fordham—the more I realize that becoming a black studies professor has been a collective journey, though certainly not an easy one. Locating myself in the larger frame of the black studies movement has made these years less isolating and a lot more meaningful. A few years ago, I came upon a number of reminders of that connection while browsing through materials in preparation for my retirement in 2015. Looking at these materials took me back initially to my own undergraduate years and the nationwide black student movement that gave rise to Black Studies.

One of these sources, a box containing the *Liberator* magazine, an influential periodical of the 1960s and 70s had been archived on shelves in my office at LC and remained there for over 40 years. The editor of the magazine, Daniel Watts had been an adjunct professor in journalism during Black Studies first years at Lincoln Center and no doubt left them there. One of the articles in the April 1969 *Liberator* referred to the student movement at Tougaloo College where I had been an undergraduate. The historic liberal arts college located in Northeast Jackson is known as a civil rights base and sanctuary for activists in the Mississippi movement. The article was written by Howard Spencer, a Tougaloo student activist who recruited me and many others to SNCC's (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee) campus-based branch. Spencer described the paradigm shift in the campus movement at Tougaloo, in the wake of the Black Power movement, when students (me included) demanded a black studies curriculum and more black professors at the college during Fall 1968 demonstrations. Subsequent *Liberator* articles described similar campus movements, including one written by Houston Baker about Yale and another calling for a NYC black studies consortium written by Fordham's Selwyn Cudjoe. These demands in the late 1960s were fueled by the urban rebellions, Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, revolutionary struggles in the developing world and opposition to the Vietnam war.

In the Fall of 1969, the RH Ram student newspaper reported that after a year of student protests and negotiations, Fordham's Black Studies Department opened for classes at the new Lincoln Center campus. It was arguably one of the few such programs in the nation to open with departmental status. Black Studies also opened at Rose Hill as well but initially as an Institute. The students on both campuses obviously coordinated their efforts forcing negotiations at RH after barricading the Dean of the College in his office. Later, Professors Claude Mangum and Mark Naison were instrumental in negotiating Departmental status, a key to institutional longevity. Meanwhile at LC several factors probably influenced a temporary but important beginning as a Department: student demands, the support of a new Dean for minority affairs in the charismatic Jesuit Daniel Mallette, and a visible student of color enrollment and finally financial support to the tune of a \$684,000 from the New York State Department of education to "aid 700 economically challenged Fordham students."

According to Dean Arthur Clark, S.J. the college wanted to design "its program to be an honors program for the masses." The September 9, 1969 issue of the Ram reported that of the 350 Lincoln Center first year students admitted that year, 116 were Black or Latino. It is worth remembering that the liberal arts college formerly located at 309 Broadway was built at its current W. 60th Street location on land purchased from the city after urban renewal displaced many longtime residents, including working class families of color who resided in the historic San Juan Hill district. The notion of a college for the working class on this site was an appropriate one in my view.

My own journey coincided with Black Studies' formative years at Fordham. In the Fall of 1969, I left for graduate school at Atlanta University to study history with Clarence Bacote, who had been a student of W.E.B. Du Bois' in the 1930s. And I spent as much time as I could at the Institute of the Black World (IBW), a think tank and a resource for black studies scholars. At IBW I met Garvey scholar Robert Hill who supplied resources for my MA thesis on the DuBois and Garvey controversy. Thereafter I accepted a position at Fisk University in Nashville. As a novice I found a teaching four courses each semester nearly unsustainable. Still the University offered other outlets: participation in study groups, research in the library's exceptional special collections and visits to the University's historic art galleries. After two years I resumed my graduate studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor where student protests, BAM I (Black Action Movement) facilitated my admission to a PhD program there.

One of the strengths of the early Black Studies Department at Fordham was the diversity and experience of the faculty. Several had roots in Black Arts Movement, community-based print culture, radical politics, social justice struggles or were working artists and professionals who brought real world expertise to the classroom. The Department-- later Institute-- also recruited doctoral students and PhDs with full time positions elsewhere. Professor Selwyn Cudjoe now Wellesley Emeritus, then a Fordham graduate student who had been a leader of Fordham LC's black studies movement, joined the first faculty group as an Instructor of African American Literature. Clayton Riley, an actor and theater critic taught drama and theater; artist Leo Carty, a syndicated cartoonist and illustrator taught African American and African Art; and Daniel Watts, journalist, editor of the *Liberator* taught courses on the black press. The first Chair Edwina C. Johnson, was a NYC public school activist/ educator who taught African and African American History. Johnson was the sole woman in a roster of 10 faculty identified in the 1971 catalogue. Dr. Alyce P. Hill Wright, a professor of French, joined the Department as an adjunct in 1973 and served as Chair in 1974-1975.



Dr. Irma Watkins-Owens at 1992 Kwanzaa Celebration

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A review of these and subsequent catalogues reveals a conscious attempt to center interdisciplinarity in the LC Black Studies course offerings, a goal the program struggled to maintain in later years. After an introductory course in black studies the program offered a balanced selection of courses in the social sciences, humanities and the arts. Languages offered included Swahili, Yoruba and Arabic. Students could take courses in drama, theatre, history, religion (Islam, the black church), multiple literatures, art history, and creative writing. After several years the program added a course in black women's history and literature.

One of the first developments to threaten the stability of Black Studies as a Department at Lincoln Center was a decline in student of color enrollment at LC. The representative numbers of minority students admitted in 1969 had dwindled significantly by 1973 according to campus news reports. The decline was so dramatic that Black and Puerto Rican students at Lincoln Center protested in a series of campus demonstrations during the Spring semester. The Ram reported that demonstrators claimed that only 30 minority students had been admitted to the downtown liberal arts college by March of that year. The demonstrators also believed that federal funds to support minority admissions had been diverted elsewhere. In addition, the contracts of two full-time instructors, including Selwyn Cudjoe had not been renewed without consultation with Chair, Edwina Johnson, who spoke in support of the demonstrators. Perhaps suggesting that working class students were unwelcome. The Ram reported that she told the demonstrators that the College sought to "reform students of color rather than educate them."

An overall decline in enrollments combined with a NYC fiscal crisis impacting the college foretold a dim future for Black Studies as a Department at Lincoln Center. In a reorganization of the Lincoln Center academic units from departments to divisions in 1976, the Black Studies Department (now AAAS) as well as the Puerto Rican Studies Department (now LALSI) became Institutes with limited autonomy. Full time faculty members would be evaluated, promoted and hired through the Divisions but perform their primary teaching responsibilities in the Institutes. The decline in enrollments and haphazard support and even resistance from university administrations forced Black Studies programs in many places to innovate for survival rather than for program building or expansion. At Fordham the innovative curriculum of the early seventies had narrowed to a social science and urban studies emphasis a decade later. This shift away from the early interdisciplinarity and diasporic focus was not an isolated one. Still in the 1980s the Institute attracted several outstanding scholars including the renown South African activist/intellectual Peter Melotsi, the Egyptian and Sudanese literary scholar Constance Berkeley and Tanzania- born scholar of post-colonial and African literatures, Fawzia Mustafa.



Drummers at 1992 Kwanzaa Celebration in Pope Auditorium



Kwanzaa Celebration in Pope Auditorium with Molimo student

By the time I arrived in 1988 on a one-year contract after the death of Institute Director, Perry Knight, I joined a single tenure track faculty member, Professor Fawzia Mustafa. Both Peter Melotsi and Constance Berkeley had been victims of personnel decisions over which the Institute had little control. Several loyal adjunct faculty members including Walter Edge and Hermon Banks remained with the Institute through most of the 1990s. Though smaller in scope than in its first phase, the Institute, located at 414 Lowenstein and shared with Puerto Rican Studies/Latin American and Latino Studies, remained a dynamic space. This was particularly so around 5:30pm when adult students arrived for office hours and conversation. I also became good friends with Professor Gustavo Umpierre and Susan Berger in Puerto Rican Studies (LALSI) whose offices were across the hall from mine. Having acquired a tenure track appointment the following year, I teamed up with Professor Mustafa on a campaign of outreach to Fordham students, faculty and the metropolitan community. There was no budget to fund such outreach so we wrote grant applications in order to sponsor events. That first year we instituted the tradition of an annual Open House and sponsored a weekly Black History Month program with poets and writers, scholars and activists. We also introduced several women's studies courses including African American Women's history, Women in the African Diaspora, and the much talked about interdisciplinary Women of Color, taught by Professor Mustafa and myself. In addition to Professor Mustafa's post-colonial and African literature we recruited adjuncts to teach African history, art and religion.

Like my predecessors I found that a faculty position in black studies involved much more than teaching and conducting research. We were one of the few and often the only unit to organize forums to address race and social justice issues important in the college community and the world. In August 1989 after Brooklyn black teenager Yusuf Hawkins was shot to death while walking through Bensonhurst in search of a used car for sale, we invited scholars and activists to discuss the implications of the tragedy. The event was so explosive we decided we had to organize another forum to discuss it. In addition to these kinds of events, the Institute supported and co-sponsored events such as the annual Kwanzaa celebration with Molimo (BSA), the Black student club organized during the black studies movement at Fordham. The Molimo Kwanza event was often elaborate with drummers and dancers invited to perform for the celebration.

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Although there had been limited contact between the Black Studies faculty at Lincoln Center and Rose Hill, public events and conferences offered some opportunity for interaction. At our first LC Open House I was pleased to meet Professor Claude Mangum a fellow historian of African American experience. A few years later, on a visit to a seminar sponsored by the Black Studies Department at RH, I met Department Chair and Professor Mark Naison, whom I was eager to know because of our research on Harlem. And at the same seminar I met theologian, Mark Chapman who led the seminar and gave a talk on the topic of his forthcoming book, *Christianity on Trial*. I also met Sr. Francesca Thompson, a professor of theater and Assistant Dean, at a Kwanza celebration at Lincoln Center.

One challenge facing Black Studies at Lincoln Center and Rose Hill in the second half of our 50-year history was the merging of the two units under restructuring of the Colleges in 1996. Disciplines within the Lincoln Center's division organization would become part of a departmental structure that already existed at RH. For the first time the Institute and the Department of Black Studies at RH, would now become one unit with a single department chair based on one campus and an associate chair based on the other. In the absence of a joint appointment option, Professor Mustafa continued to teach courses in AAAS but settled in the Department of English. As the two Black Studies units merged, I was the only faculty member from Lincoln Center entering the now "new" Department. How would this arrangement work? How would the distinct identities of the two units operate? Would I as the single new faculty member be fully part of the decision-making process in the new Department. Or would I be expected to mind my business at Lincoln Center? How open was I to colleagues participating in decisions pertaining to matters at Lincoln Center? How would a department even more top heavy with historians after restructuring, forge an interdisciplinary approach to Black Studies? These were not easy questions to resolve but similar questions and contentious debates over campus identities and practices were not ours alone. Some administrators not fully prepared to deal with sensitive issues themselves, found it difficult to ferment the concept of "one College, two campuses." One RH Dean suggested through a colleague after the Department nominated me, a LC faculty member, for Chair that they might consider someone else since I was not known on the RH campus. In time that Dean and I got to know each other and became quite congenial colleagues.



**Dr. Irma Watkins-Owens with her students
at her Retirement Party - May 2015**



**Dr. Irma Watkins-Owens and Dr. Claude Mangum
at Dr. Watkins-Owens' Retirement Party - May 2015**

Not all of the Department's reorganizational pains were addressed immediately and working together as an effective unit is an ongoing process. The campuses are still addressing issues of gender equity in leadership highlighted by external reviewers years ago. The senior scholar search currently underway may help with this concern. However, some small but landmark collective projects such as building our first website, producing brochures and selecting a departmental logo and conducting seminars and working groups, fostered a singular identity. Larger endeavors such as the Bronx African American History Project can be appreciated by all. Teaching across the campuses also helped faculty feel invested in both.

In the second half of our 50 years newer faculty have helped cement the identity of the Department on both campuses. No one had done a better job with this than Professor Amir Idris who joined the Department in 2001 followed by Professor Jane Edward a few years later. Taking over the reigns as Chair in 2011 he developed with faculty input a strategic plan for the Department's future. Professor Bentley Anderson, S.J. who joined the faculty a decade ago has played important roles in the Department's recent history, taking on key administrative responsibilities. Since my retirement several new faculty members have joined the Department and are doing cutting edge scholarship in the field. They are Assistant Professors Tyesha Maddox and Laurie Lambert and Lecturer, Lisa Gill. It's important to acknowledge too, that several faculty members who have since left the University were important to Black Studies history, particularly in the latter years. They include Political Scientist, Mojubaolu Okome, anthropologists Oneka LaBennett and Aimee Cox and historian, Brian Purnell.

Black Studies at Fordham has had an important impact on the University community and beyond. Our influence in the Core through developing and teaching required courses on race ethnicity, gender and sexuality, our willingness to take on controversial issues in college and university-wide forums, our advocacy of social justice and diversity through practice, and our outreach through community-based research have been basic to our identity at Fordham. And it has been rewarding for me to situate my own journey within the Department's fifty-year history.

CHERISHED MEMORIES FROM FCRH

1975-1979



Marlene Taylor with friends from Class of 1979

Sitting on my bed in my all girls dorm at Spellman Hall in the fall of 1975, surrounded by wide eyed, happy, excited fellow freshman after moving in, was a memory I hold dearly in my heart. In the center of the conversation was my mother, who was so happy for me after getting me settled in, that, she became the center of attention giving words of advice before heading back to her apartment in the Polo Grounds in Harlem. The next time she was on the campus was at my HEOP graduation dinner where I was chosen to speak as one of the student representatives. What took place in between those two visits on the campus of Fordham, I know for sure grounded me in so many ways, as I evolved from a shy, soft spoken, introverted Black girl with humble beginnings, to leader on campus who overcame, persevered and thrived in ways I could never have imagined.

The HEOP program, which I was accepted to, gave me the opportunity to live on campus the summer before Freshman year, it gave me a foot in the door with being acclimated to my new home. My friends Sara, Sonia, Helyn, Mazelle, and Evelyn along with other girls supported and gradually became part of a larger group of friends, a family at Fordham. We did almost everything together from eating, studying, social events and although all different majors, we occasionally had classes together.

There were several places on campus where we congregated throughout the day, these places were the roots of our support system. Looking back, I know without a doubt that without these “havens”, we all would not have gotten through those 4 years as successfully as we did. Those places were the HEOP Office (in the basement of Keating Hall) and the 2nd Floor of Dealy Hall, the African American Studies Department.

The director at the time, Dr. Claude Mangum, along with Dr. Mark Naison, Dr. Quinton Wilkes and other professors, always had an open door policy, which felt like more of an open department policy. They were not only instructors when you were in class, but in the hall, in the waiting area, whenever they ran into you. The conversations were just as valuable and allowed us to develop relationships, which help us grow and mature as critically thinking young adults ready to take on any challenge we faced when we left Dealy Hall. It was the most nurturing, inviting, comfortable non-judgmental place to go to whenever you wanted to and were always met warmly by the secretary who was as important to us as the professors.

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“ **BECAUSE** ^{OF THE}
AA STUDIES
DEPT.,
ON THAT LARGE
CAMPUS,
AND BEING ^{A MINORITY}
IN ALL MY CLASSES,
NEVER FELT ALONE. ”

As undergrad students, we had a thirst for the knowledge and those professors shared with us their wisdom so effortlessly. Over time, we became more confident on campus because we had the support of faculty on campus, who “had our back”. We started organizations like SAAL (Society of African American Leadership), and the first and only Black fraternity to my knowledge, Kappa Alpha Psi and I helped start and became president of AMPBS (Association of Pre Health and Biology Students) club which exists today as the Minority Association of Pre Med Students where I had the honor of speaking in 2018.

Although I was a Biology major (the only Black female graduating with a Bio degree that year), my “distribution requirements which included Theology, History Philosophy, were mostly from the African American studies department. To say that what I learned sitting in the classes of Dr. Mangum, Rev Dr. Calvin Butts, Dr. McMickle, and others is an understatement. The valuable lessons, I still apply to my life until today. Because of the AA Studies Dept., on that large campus, and being a minority in all of my classes, I never felt alone.

One of my proudest moments was being chosen to speak at graduation dinner for the HEOP Program along with my dear friend Evelyn Ortiz. My friend Sara (an accomplished artist) did the cover for the program and I received a standing ovation for my speech which spoke to hope and responsibility, as the next generation of Black and Hispanic students.

After graduation, 1979 I attended the Sophie Davis School of Biomedical education, and graduated from the PA program. While practicing I continued my education at New York Medical College master’s program in cell biology and anatomy. I went on to specialize in HIV and other comorbid conditions affecting communities of color.



Marlene Taylor with former Fordham roommate and friend, Mazel Upson

I got married in the Chapel on campus, moved to Riverdale and as my family grew; my son became involved with the Fordham STEPS program, where I reconnected with Fordham. In early 2015, I became aware of several incidences occurring on campus which not only alarmed me, but caused me to feel compelled to become involved as an active and involved alumnus. I owe my reconnection to none other than Dr. Mark Naison who had been an inspiration for me and countless others in the Fordham community.

Now in at 61 years with one son, a journalism major at Howard University, and the other a Marketing professional in Europe, I have become involved, thanks to the support and encouragement of Dr. Naison in advocacy roles for current students as well as helping to address various cultural, racial, and social issues impacting the Fordham community.

I am currently, a member of MOSAIC the Multicultural Organization Supporting Alumni Initiatives and Community which supports the inclusion and engagement of diverse Fordham community members in the life of the University. I attend and support the African American History Project and my family and I attend as many cultural events as possible.

I cherish my fellow Fordham friends who I have managed to remain friends with for over 40 years now. Living in the Bronx and visiting the beautiful campus when time allows brings back those incredible memories in Spellman Hall, on Edwards Parade, the Student Center, Keating Hall and of course the 2nd floor of Dealy Hall.

The only thing left today, which feels close to what was we experienced, is sitting in the red recliner in Dr. Naison’s office, which is a timeless relic of what was back then.

I can honestly say that without the African American Studies Department, I would not be who I am today as I continue on reaching my potential with regards to my professional spiritual, family lifelong friends and cultural advocacy life. These are the lessons Fordham taught and instilled in me and for that I am forever grateful.

**MARLENE TAYLOR-PONTEROTTO, PA-C
 FCRH’ 79**

SPOTLIGHT ON 2018-2019 EVENTS

8th Annual Student-Led Conference – September 29, 2018

The 8th Student-Led Conference was held at the Lincoln Center campus the weekend of September 29th with 10 students presenting on three different panels.

Moderating Session One was Dr. Tyesha Maddox; presenters included Dajasmín Rodríguez, “How Government Involvement Shaped Marriage, Family Structures, & Gender Roles in Antigua and Barbuda”, Liliana Mendez, “The Gold and Silver Workers on the Panama Canal”, and Nzinga Stewart, “The United Fruit Company and West Indian Workers.”

Session Two, moderated by Dr. Jane Edward, included presentations by Michael Appler, “Transgender and Transatlantic: An Examination of Queer and Diasporic Identity in Caribbean Literature”, Marley Shelby, “Language as a Connection to Africa in The Book of Night Women”, and Ekum Sohal, “The relationship between Slavery and Gender.”

Session Three was moderated by Dr. Amir Idris. It included presentations from Christina Blackman, “The Atlantic-Slave Trade and Colonization of Africa - European Justification”, Catherine Fernando, “Violence in Slavery: Oppression and Resistance”, Mariam Wahba, “The Colonization of Africa: Causes, Impacts, and Damages”, and Nia Johnson, “The Federation of South African Women: The Fight to End Apartheid and Misogyny in South Africa.”

Prison Abolition and Scholar Activism – February 15, 2019

The Black History Month Annual Lecture, “Meanwhile: Making Abolition Geography Happen,” was delivered by scholar-activist Ruth Wilson Gilmore on 15 February 2019 at the Lincoln Center campus. For decades, Gilmore has worked in and written about communities that have been devastated by mass incarceration. She is Professor of Earth & Environmental Studies, and American Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where she is also Director of the Center for Place, Culture, and Politics. Her lecture covered a range of issues that intersect with the abolition movement including racial capitalism, organized violence, organized abandonment, changing state structure, criminalization, and labor and social movements. The anti-prison movement is actually comprised of communities as diverse as farmers, water conservationists and activists, sex workers, faith workers, youth, and mothers, she explained. Gilmore’s lecture expanded on the research she explores in her award-winning book, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (2007), on the dehumanizing effects of incarceration not only on incarcerated people and their families, but also on the broader communities from which incarcerated people are taken. In this text she writes, “Dehumanization names the deliberate, as well as the mob-frenzied, ideological displacements central to any group’s ability to annihilate another in the name of territory, wealth, ethnicity, religion. Dehumanization is also a necessary factor in the acceptance that millions of people (sometimes including oneself) should spend part or all of their lives in cages” (Gilmore 243). Gilmore’s research is focused on identifying areas where community building and development can help prevent the kinds of social harms that we currently address via prisons.



Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore - Prison Abolition and Scholar Activism Feb. 2019



FORDHAM'S INAUGURAL BLACK GRADUATION CEREMONY

On May 9th, members of ASILI: The Black Student Alliance at FCRH and the BSA at FCLC hosted, in conjunction with the Department of African and African American Studies and the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer, Fordham's inaugural Black Graduation. The students felt that it was necessary to have a commencement event that highlighted the accomplishments of Fordham's 2019 black graduates, so they took the initiative to plan and organize a more inclusive event that would speak to their unique and diverse experiences at Fordham. While the event was funded and supported by Fordham administration and faculty, the organization came directly from student leaders who worked hard to pull off this event. They were truly successful in achieving this goal. Many students invited their parents to share in this experience, which really illustrated the importance of community. Overall, the ceremony was a great success which students hope to replicate in the coming years.

The ceremony included several speakers with Dr. Mark Chapman giving an opening address that spoke to the work that must continue after students leave Fordham. Elicia Bates was presented the W.E.B. Dubois Award for Academic Excellence. Charlotte Hakikson received the Alvin Leonard Award for her outstanding service and leadership at Fordham. Finally, the graduates' achievements at Fordham were highlighted during a kente cloth conferring ceremony.

This student-driven event was one that took into consideration the needs of black graduates and was very moving experience. We hope it will be a tradition that continues at Fordham for many years to come.



Dr. Mark Naison with Elicia Bates, recipient of the W.E.B. Dubois Award for Academic Excellence



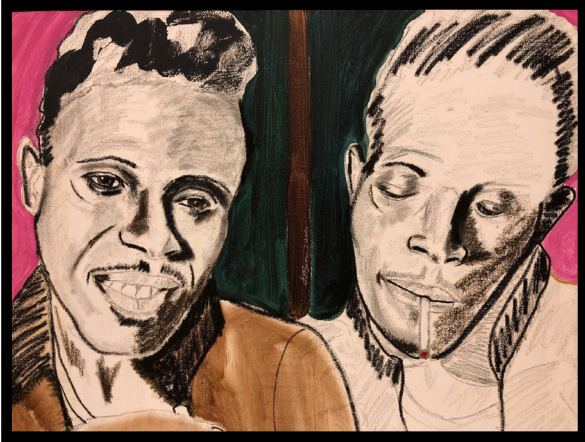
Dr. Mark Chapman with Charlotte Hakikson, recipient of the Alvin Leonard Award for Service



Black Graduation Class of 2019



BRONX AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2018-2019



Art Exhibition and Concert Honoring Frederick Brown - October 2018

The Bronx African American History Project had a banner year conducting oral history interviews, bringing world class performing artists to Fordham, highlighting the culture and history of the Bronx, and working with Bronx schools, cultural organizations and representatives of the African immigrant communities of the Bronx. Among our most important events were an art exhibition and jazz concert honoring legendary African American artist Frederick Brown; a performance by world-class rapper, poet and producer Akua Naru and a panel discussion highlighting inter-generational issues among African immigrants in the Bronx. On the international front, we also hosted a delegation of elected officials and Paramount chiefs from Ghana and a group of rappers, dancers and social worker from Berlin and Paris; while more locally; we hosted school groups from the Bronx and Manhattan. Finally, we had as a guest speaker Daryl McDaniel of Run DMC, an inductee into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and headed a seminar on the Pedagogy of the Bronx sponsored by the Fordham Provost Office.



Judy Carmichael Women Empowerment Event April 2019



African Panel on Generation Tensions Among African Immigrants - November 2018



Naison Classroom Visit with Darryl McDaniels from Run-D.M.C - April 2019



Ghanaian Delegation - November 2018



Walking Tour of Historic Morrisania with Bronx class - September 2018



Berlin Youth Exchange - November 2018

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Jane Edward

Publication:

"Reconfiguring the South Sudanese Women's Movement," *HAWWA: Journal of Women of the Middle East and the Islamic World*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, (April 2019), pp. 55-84.

Presentations:

"What can South Sudanese Women do to Engender Change?" Paper Presented at a Conference Sponsored by South Sudan National Democratic Alliance (SSNDA) and School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, George Mason University, Arlington, VA., March 23, 2019.

"Recognizing the Diversity and Influence of Africans in America," Paper Presented During African Diaspora Extravaganza, Hostos Community College, November 27, 2018.

Dr. Tyesha Maddox

She was awarded the 2019-2020 Race and Gender Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Rutgers University.

FACULTY SEMINAR

ON May 6, 2019, the Department of African and African-American Studies hosted a faculty seminar from 12 to 2pm at the Lincoln Center campus. The seminar was attended by twelve members of the Fordham community, including faculty members from the departments of English, Communications and Media Studies, the Graduate School of Education, Theology, as well as two doctoral students. Lunch was served and very collegial fellowship ensued while members of the group introduced themselves to one another.

In keeping with the AAAS department theme for the last three years (blending scholarship and activism) a recent book by scholar/activist Dr. Barbara Ransby was chosen, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century*. Dr. Mark Chapman facilitated the discussion, and began by sharing his response to three major themes in the book that most connect with his own research and activism. He then asked each member of the group to do the same. This approach enabled us to discuss the book in relation to our own work, and allowed us to learn more about our colleagues. The discussion was invigorating and the fellowship was refreshing. When the 2pm hour arrived, it was clear the conversation could continue for another hour. We concluded the gathering around 2:15 pm. The faculty seminars continue to be one of the most stimulating events hosted by the department. We look forward to being able to host more seminars in the future.



FORTHCOMING EVENT

FALL 2019 & SPRING 2020

Department's 50th Anniversary Celebration – Saturday, November 2nd 2019

This all-day celebration will feature a panel of department founders, a panel of African community leaders in the Bronx, a panel of emerging Fordham scholars, notable Fordham alumni, buffet-style dinner, and a dance party with Fordham's own DJ Charlie "Hustle" Johnson. Farah Jasmine Griffin, chair of the Department of African and African Diaspora Studies at Columbia University, will deliver a keynote speech.

Black History Month Event – Friday, February 21st 2020

The Department of African and African American Studies is excited to be hosting Saidiya Hartman as the speaker for our Black History Month Lecture on 21 February 2020. Hartman, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, is known for her field-changing books *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (Oxford UP, 1997) and *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2008). She will be speaking about her latest book, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (Norton, 2019), which examines revolution, kinship, and intimacy among young black women in Philadelphia and New York at the turn of the twentieth century.

COURSE LISTINGS: 2019-2020

This is a brief listing of our course offerings for 2019-2020. To view the complete listing and descriptions, please visit our website at www.fordham.edu/aaas.

FALL 2019

AFAM 1600 R01 Understanding Hist. Change: Africa
AFAM 1600 C01 Understanding Historical Change: Africa
AFAM 1650 L01 Black Popular Culture
AFAM 3001 R01 African American History I
AFAM 3115 R01 ML King & Malcolm X
AFAM 3135 R01 Contemporary Black Thinkers
AFAM 3141 R01 Women in Africa
AFAM 3192 L01 U.S., Africa, and the Cold War
AFAM 3633 R01 The Bronx: Immigration, Race, and Culture
AFAM 3634 C01 Film and the African American
AFAM 3667 L01 Caribbean Literature
AFAM 3692 R01 Social Construction of Women
AFAM 4000 R01 Affirmative Action: American Dream

SPRING 2020

AFAM 1600 R01 Understanding Hist. Change: Africa
AFAM 3002 R01 African American History II
AFAM 3037 R01 Being and Becoming Black
AFAM 3071 C01 African Intellectual History
AFAM 3132 R01 Black Prison Experience
AFAM 3134 R01 From Rock & Roll to Hip Hop
AFAM 3695 L01 Major Debates in African Studies
AFAM 4650 R01 Social Welfare and Society
AFAM 4890 R01 Research Seminar

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

AAAS Major Requirements (9 courses)

1. AFAM 1600 Understanding Historical Change: Africa
2. AFAM 3150 Caribbean People and Culture
3. AFAM 3001 African American History I
4. AFAM 3037: Being and Becoming Black
5. AFAM 4890: Senior Research Seminar
- 6-9. And four (4) AFAM electives

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

AAAS Major Requirements (9 courses)

1. AFAM 1600 Understanding Historical Change: Africa
2. AFAM 3150 Caribbean People and Culture
3. AFAM 3001 African American History I
4. AFAM 3037: Being and Becoming Black
5. AFAM 4890: Senior Research Seminar
- 6-9. And four (4) AFAM electives

AAAS Minor Requirements (6 courses)

1. AFAM 1600 Understanding Historical Change: Africa
2. AFAM 3001 African American History I
- 3-6. And four (4) AFAM electives

AFST Minor Requirements (6 courses)

1. AFAM 1600 Understanding Historical Change: Africa
2. AFAM course from a Social Science discipline
3. AFAM course from Arts & Humanities offerings
- 4-6. And three (3) African Studies elective

Language Requirement: Two (2) courses– including one 2001-level course in the following approved languages:
Swahili, Twi, Zulu, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish, or French.

****Some requirements for the AAAS major/minor may be fulfilled with courses in English, Literary Studies, History, Art & Music History, Political Science, or any field that has been cross-listed by the department. Speak to your major/minor advisor for approval.***

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