AADS Honors Sandra Sandiford Young and Hubert Walters

By Nathaniel Tolbert

The upcoming 2010-2011 school year will see a significant change in the AADS office. Two of the program’s core members, Dr. Sandra Sandiford Young, Associate Director of AADS and Prof. Hubert Walters, Director of the Voices of Imani and Instructor in the department of music at Boston College for over twenty years, have moved on to other pursuits. Over the course of their respective careers they have made a significant impact on the lives of many Boston College students, regardless of color or creed. They captivated with a teaching style filled with oratory highlights and possessed the ability to combine their wealth of knowledge with the kind of warmth ordinarily reserved for family members and closest friends.

The impact of Prof. Walters and Dr. Young has not been limited to the classroom. Taking time to mentor students was also a large part of their contribution to the Boston College community. I have yet to encounter a BC student who has a bad thing to say about either of these remarkable professors. This lack of enmity can be attributed to the strong impact they have had on the lives of students, not only within the classroom but outside the classroom as well. During Dr. Young’s time at Boston College it was not uncommon to see one of her former students stop by to visit their mentor and be welcomed with all the warmth of an aunt greeting a nephew or a niece. My own experience as a student of Prof. Walters included long, (and I mean long), talks outside of the classroom that were meaningful, enlightening and not restricted to the topic of music.

A number of BC alumni and former coworkers can also attest to the positive impact of Prof. Walters and Dr. Young. Aly Azor, class of 2010, and current BC graduate student, praised Dr. Young.

2010 - 2011 Works In Progress Lecture Series

by Ashley Woods

In 2006, under the direction of Dr. Cynthia Young, the African and African Diaspora Studies Program began its Works in Progress Lecture Series. Works in Progress highlights the research and writings of AADS core and affiliate faculty who have the opportunity to present their research to the Boston College community. In the past, the Works in Progress Lecture Series has featured captivating titles such as “Brazilian Modernity and British Nationalism” by Zachary Morgan, Assistant Professor in the History Department, and “Busing as History: The Desegregation Era in Boston,” by David Quigley, Dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Now in its fifth year, the Works in Progress Lecture Series is excited to feature amongst its presenters, Professors Leigh Patel Stevens and Rosanna DeMarco. Professor Stevens, an Associate Professor of Education in the Lynch School of Education will be presenting her lecture, “‘I Didn’t Know I Was Just Black Until I Got Here’: Immigrant Youth, Race, and America,” at the first lecture series of the school year on September 21st, 2010 at 12:30pm. Professor Stevens’ lecture will explore the social, cultural, and economic aspects that influence young peoples’ racialization process of immigration. This lecture will be followed by the AADS Open House.

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Dr. Rosanna DeMarco is an Associate Professor in the William F. Connell School of Nursing, and her program of scholarship includes the study of women, marginalization, and health behaviors with special emphasis on the concept and outcome measure of "silencing the self" in African American women living with HIV, African American teen girls at risk, and nurses in the workplace. On October 19th, 2010, Dr. DeMarco will be presenting her lecture, “Writing the Self: Black Women Living With HIV.” Dr. DeMarco hopes to address a culturally relevant, gender sensitive, effective way to increase health protective behaviors in Black women living with HIV/AIDS over 40 years of age in Boston. For more information on the Works in Progress Lecture Series and for upcoming events, please visit our website at www.bc.edu/aads or email Cat McAtteer at mcateerm@bc.edu

AADS Honors

for her positive influence on his academic and personal development. He praised her as a “truly a remarkable woman in every sense of the word” who “took the time to mold relationships with her students.” Similarly, students speak warmly about Prof. Walters. Ashley Woods a graduate student in the School of Social Work reflects fondly on her time with Voices of Imani: “Professor Walters has been the most influential figure in my experience at Boston College. He has served not only as an incredibly wise teacher, but as a mentor and an inspirational father figure to anybody who has been a part of Voices of Imani.” I can personally echo Ashley Wood’s sentiments. Prof. Walters’ classes, “Jazz in America” and “R&B in America”, were two of the most enriching courses I have taken at BC. Not only did I leave them with more knowledge about the roots of the respective genre of music but I also left feeling tremendous pride as a young black man.

To attempt to fully chronicle Dr. Young and Prof. Walters’ historical contributions to Boston College and the African and African Diaspora Studies Program is a task much too large for this small Newsletter. But this I can say for sure, their indelible impact will long be remembered and their heartwarming presence deeply missed.
Word Around the Community

Each month Voices will include articles of note pertaining to the African and African Diaspora. Feel free to submit any articles that pique your interest to aads@bc.edu.

First Person Singular: Johnnetta Cole, director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African Art

Interview by Robin Rose Parker

Well, first I need to say that while I grew up black, I did not grow up poor. My maternal great-grandfather had very little formal education, but he had a vision, he had drive, he had tenacity. He and six other black men, in 1901, began the first insurance company in the state of Florida. Not the first black insurance company, the first insurance company. It went on to become the Afro-American Life Insurance Co., and he became Jacksonville, Florida's, first black millionaire. So my parents were unusual. As Southern black folk of that era, each went to college. For my sister, for me and my younger brother, this was not even to be discussed, whether or not we were going to college. The question was: Which college?

I have always had a love of art. My mother, who never had an art course, loved works of art. She had what we call an eye. She knew a good piece when she saw it. And because she had the eye, our home, in my view, was a place of artistic expression and warmth.

Read the rest of this piece at the Washingtonpost.com

Sub-Saharan Africa leads global decline in new HIV cases

The UN called for greater global investment in HIV/AIDS prevention

Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are leading a global decline in new HIV infections, the UN has said.

UNAids said 22 countries in the world's worst affected region had seen a new cases of more than 25%.

The fall was because of greater awareness and better use of preventative measures, it said.

But UNAids also noted that cases of HIV were increasing in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and among gay men in developed countries.

Michel Sidibe, UNAids executive director, said the world was making "real progress" towards achieving the sixth Millennium Development Goal (MDG6) of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015.

"For the first time change is happening at the heart of the epidemic. In places where HIV was stealing away dreams, we now have hope," he said.

Read the rest of this article at bbc.co.uk

Culture on Campus

Boston College has a rich tradition of cultural clubs pertaining to the Diaspora. Culture on Campus’ goal is to make students aware of said clubs’ events

Sept 23rd • Unity BBQ
7pm – 9pm @ Corcoran Commons

This event will enthusiastically launch the celebration of the rich history, culture, and strong legacy of Boston College’s diverse student body. It will also serve as the unofficial Kick-Off for the 40th Anniversary of Black Student Forum, the first culture-based student organization on campus.

Sponsored by Black Student Forum and AHANA Leadership Council; blkstudentforum@gmail.com

Sept 29th • African Student Organization First General Meeting
6pm – 8pm @ 2nd Floor Lounge of St. Ignatius Gate

This event will introduce the African Student Organization’s executive board, mission statement, open positions, and upcoming events. There will be dynamic speakers, interactive activities, and food!

Sponsored by African Students Organization; muli@bc.edu

Sept 30th • Black Student Forum First General Meeting
@ Corcoran Plaza

This event will formally introduce Black Student Forum’s executive board, mission statement, theme/goals for the year, and upcoming events. A large segment of this event will explore the history of interracial dating, touching on the Loving vs. Virginia case that resulted in the repeal of the state’s anti-miscegenation law. Audience will discuss the struggles that previous generations endured to get this law repealed and Black people’s views on interracial relationships.

Sponsored by Black Student Forum; blkstudentforum@gmail.com

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From the Director’s Desk - - History of AADS @ BC

The African & African Diaspora Studies Program at Boston College (AADS), originally called the Black Studies Program, began in 1969-1970 alongside BC’s “Black Talent Program,” two parts of an effort to recruit talented Black students from across the country to study at this university. This program was a direct response to Father General Pedro Arrupe’s 1968 “Interracial Apostolate” letter to Jesuit Colleges and universities and a consequence of discussions begun in 1967 between then BC President Michael Walsh, S.J. and Boston community leaders Mel King and Bryant Rollins.

The Black Studies Program was part of an academic initiative to … make [BC’s] undergraduate curriculum more broadly reflect a range of intellectual and critical perspectives. With these efforts, Boston College became one of the first major universities in the United States to establish Black Studies as integral to its academic curriculum.

In 1981, BC and the Black Studies Program [appointed] Amanda V. Houston … as permanent part-time Director. Mrs. Houston [conceptualized] the Black Studies minor, established in 1985, and [laid the groundwork] for the structure, goals, and mission of today’s program. While Mrs. Houston’s vision of a Black Studies major has not yet been realized, it is possible to … propose an Independent Major in AADS. The first independent AADS major graduated in 1990.

In 1983, the Black Studies Program … initiated the first in a successful series of “Blacks in Boston” conferences that examined the social, political, and cultural issues faced by the … ethnic groups … that [make] up Boston’s “Black” community. This and other outreach efforts helped develop closer connections between [BC] students and the wider Boston community.

(Navigate to http://www.bc.edu/schools/cas/aads/history.html for the full text version.)

Voices of the Diaspora

Musics from the Diaspora

Each month, “Voices” will pick a topic of interest relevant to the Africans in the Diaspora and submitted by its readers. The goal of these editorials is to promote dialogue; after each editorial, readers are encouraged to submit written replies. Respondents may respectfully agree or disagree, but always remember that the goal is dialogue. The opinions expressed are exclusively those of the writer.

Is it wrong to want black love? Growing up it was always ingrained in my mind by many family members (and I mean many) that marrying outside of my race wasn’t an option. I heard countless stories about uncles cut off or whispered about disparaging when they came to family functions with their white mates. As I’ve grown older I’ve witnessed a change in the response to the interracial relationship. No longer is it the taboo topic that it was in the early 90’s (to a certain extent). In fact as a young man who’s traveled a lot, I’ve seen the number of interracial couples build dramatically and much of the social stigma around such relationships has disappeared. Interracial relationships have seemed to become all the rage at least according to the heightened media representation of bi-racial couples, particularly between blacks and whites. My question is; when did black and white couples become so popular particularly in the media and is it wrong for black people to want to marry each other?

Before I dive any deeper into the subject let me make this statement. I have no problem with or anything against interracial couples. Bi-racial people have long been some of the biggest contributors to African-American culture. In fact as an African-American male I’m well aware that blacks in America have white blood throughout their family tree (half my family is Colin Powell beige). What I do have a problem with is the use of interracial relationships, particularly relations between blacks and whites, as an attack on black nuclear families and a cure all to the racial tensions between whites and blacks in America. (The beige future has been preached by many a public figure as the solution to race issues)

Let me elaborate. During my recent television and movie viewing experiences it seemed to me that there was a scarcity of black family life portrayals and, more often than not, interracial couples were always prominently featured. For example, in Death at a Funeral, a recent movie with black comedy giants Chris Rock and Martin Lawrence, Chris Rock’s character and his black wife are having difficulty conceiving a child. His sister and her white companion (who dominate the movie) find out they have a baby on the way and this is presented as a positive climax to the movie. Another example, during the television reality series What Chilli Wants R&B star Chilli of TLC routinely rejects prominent single black men at face value, and the two finalists whom she develops a special connection with, are white. I saw another VH1 reality show, Ochoocino The Ultimate Catch draw the ire of attractive black female college students this summer when black professional football player Chad Johnson dismissed black women in droves in the first episode. Another VH1 show the T.O. Show which focuses on the personal life of professional football player Terrell Owens, his black female publicists were condemned for suggesting he needed a strong black woman in his life, and to top if off Owens proposed to his white girlfriend with whom he seemed to have little in common and a garnet of problems with. Even in The Boondocks a show praised by black militants, the only example of a traditional family in the show is an interracial black and white couple.

Ironically the only current show that I can think of that shows a half-way positive image of black families are Tyler Perry’s and Ice Cube’s sitcoms, Tyler Perry’s work is frequently referred to as a minstrel show by his peers. Another thing worth noting is while writing this article I attempted to find a old New York Daily News article about the pros and cons about interracial relationships from 1996. When I found the article, only the pro argument was available.

Have we truly moved past all the racial barriers in America? Is a person wrong to find this explosion of the black-white relationship representation in the media odd? If we truly are a colorless society, why a large majority of the interracial relationships represented in the media black white couples? Finally is a Black person who prefers to marry and procreate with another Black person wrong? Send in your responses and let me know.

- Nathaniel Tolbert

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