Hello. I hope you enjoy our spring 2012 newsletter. It has been a pleasure serving as the interim director of the African American Studies Program (AASP) this academic year. We have accomplished a number of things this year and are making plans for our future. First, we’ve added a number of new courses to our curriculum. Hopefully, we will be able to offer an African American Studies major in the fall 2013 semester. This will be an interdisciplinary major that includes courses in the fields of anthropology, criminal justice, education, English, history, political science, sociology, and others. With a Bachelor of Arts degree in African American Studies, you will be able to pursue a variety of careers and/or attend some of the finest graduate and law schools in the country. Many prominent African Americans such as actresses Angela Bassett and Sanaa Lathan, astronaut Dr. Mae Jemison, political cartoonist Aaron Macgruder, and others - have earned degrees in African American Studies. The AASP has also co-sponsored a number of activities. In January 2012, I along with Drs. Faye Harrison and Zoharah Simmons participated in a “Women in the Civil Rights Movement” panel. Each of us discussed various aspects of the movement and talked about the role women played in the advancements of civil and human rights. In February 2012, Professor Sonia Sanchez gave an enlightening presentation as part of the Dr. Ronald C. Foreman Lecture Series. Our program has also co-sponsored events with the Samuel C. Proctor Oral History Program, the Institute for Black Culture, the African Student Union, the Black Female Extravaganza, and the Black Graduate Student Organization. Because of our commitment to undergraduate and graduate student research, our program assisted several students as they prepared papers for the National Council for Black Studies conference in March 2012. Vincent Adejumo, Jean-luc Adrien, Tiffany Bennett, Justin Dunnavant, Ayanna Flewellen, LaToya Hunter, Kevin Jenkins, Danielle King, Rosalyn Monroe, Erica Odera, Levy Odera, Jacob Parker, and Tiffany Walker. Each presented scholarly papers based on their research on African and African American Studies.

Two of our students, Angela Thorpe and Yoldine Valerie, also presented papers at the Annual Meeting of the Association of African American Life and History during the fall of 2011. We are even more excited about the activities and programs we are planning for next year. The AASP received a $3,500 grant from the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere to sponsor a two-day workshop on “The Education and Identity of African American Men.” This workshop will take place in the spring 2013 semester. We have also invited Dr. Marc Lamont Hill of Columbia University to give the 2013 Foreman lecture. Again, I hope you enjoy the newsletter and we look forward to working with everyone at the University of Florida as we build our program.

Lastly, in honor of my autistic son Alfred Jr., I’d like to remind you that April is autism awareness month. So, when you see a person with autism, give them a high five!

Sincerely,

Dr. Sharon D. Wright Austin, Associate Professor of Political Science and Interim Director of African American Studies
On February 23rd, 2012, the African American Studies Program held its signature event of the year, The Ronald C. Foreman Lecture. The event was held in Smathers Library with roughly 100 people in attendance. The night first started out with introductions from Dr. Patricia Hilliard-Nunn, a faculty member in the program, and Dr. Sharon Austin, Interim Director of the Program. After their introductions, the guest lecturer for the evening, Professor Sonia Sanchez, dazzled the crowd with a medley dedicated to famous African American Poets such as Toni Morrison and Nikki Giovanni. Professor Sanchez then went on to give a history about her life and why she is passionate about her work. The crowd was particularly captivated when she described the beginning of her teaching career at San Francisco State and the process of starting the black studies program. She was involved with a program called SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) which purpose was to organize sit-ins, freedom rides, and voter registration drives. Professor Sanchez was inspired to help start the program in part because of her experiences in the SNCC program and her interest in teaching black literature. There were many roadblocks that were meant to stop the advancement of the black studies program at San Francisco State including a peculiar visit from the FBI. From that point on, Sonia knew that the government was watching her and her colleagues every move but that did not stop them. Professor Sanchez felt that the only way to effectively teach black literature was through studying influential black leaders such as WEB Dubois and Marcus Garvey as well as economical events in black history such as the period of black reconstruction in the south. The impact of Professor Sonia Sanchez’s perseverance of establishing the black studies program is that it spawned other cultural centered programs on campus such as the Asian, Women, and Chicano studies programs. After recollecting about how the black studies program impacted her career, Professor Sanchez again recited a flurry of poems that addressed Cruelty in Society, War and Peace, and then ended with poems about her late father and brother. As the night came to a close, Professor Sanchez answered questions from the audience, emphasizing the point that her most important mission throughout her life is to celebrate black men and women of all forms of colors and hues.
Several UF students and alumni presented papers at the National Council for Black Studies conference in Atlanta, GA from March 7-10, 2012. The following students presented papers on topics of relevance to African American Studies: Vincent Adejumo, Jean-luc Adrien, Tiffany Bennett, Justin Dunnavant, Ayanna Flewellen, LaToya Hunter, Kevin Jenkins, Danielle King, Rosalyn Monroe, Erica Odera, Levy Odera, Breanne Palmer, Jacob Parker, Tiffany Walker, and Darrius Woods.

The students also visited historic sites in the city, attended a student luncheon, and an awards banquet. Many of their papers will be considered for the best paper award at the 2013 conference.

Dr. Hilliard-Nunn Moderating Presentations given by Undergraduate Students Tiffany Walker (right) and Tiffany Bennett (Left)

Ph.D Political Science Student Latoya Hunter presenting on Poverty in Urban Miami

(From Left to Right) Dr. Sharon Austin, Ouida Davis, LaToya Hunter, Erica Odera, Levy Odera, Justin Dunnavant, Rosalyn Monroe Vincent Adejumo
On January 25th, 2012 the Black Graduate Student Organization (BGSO) hosted their annual MLK Celebration, “A Night with Danny Glover,” at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. BGSO member, Lewis Blake IV opened the event with a monologue enacting a 21st century rendition of King’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech, entitled “The Persistence of a Dream.” The event followed with a performance by the Springhill Missionary Baptist Church Voices of Praise gospel choir and a brief history of the Black Graduate Student Organization. The main event featured a one-on-one interview with actor Danny Glover, followed by questions from the audience. During the interview, Mr. Glover recounted his role as “Mister” in The Color Purple and the trials and tribulations associated with his acting career. Additionally, Danny Glover discussed his upbringing and the impetus for his activism throughout Africa and the Americas. The audience raised a number of poignant questions about issues facing black communities today, the importance of local activism, and the status of his film on the Haitian Revolution. Following the event, Danny Glover was available to sign autographs and take pictures.

BGSO would like to thank everyone who attended, as well as their sponsors: Dixon, Hughes, Goodman, LLP, the Office of the Provost, Multicultural & Diversity Affairs, Black Student Union, Hispanic Student Association, College of Public Health and Health Professions, Office of Graduate Minority Affairs, and the City of Gainesville Equal Employment Opportunity Office.
The Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere, part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Florida, has been located in 200 Walker Hall since 2009. It serves three interrelated purposes: to facilitate and promote the research programs of humanities scholars at the University, to provide an intellectual space and a physical location within the University and College for critical and collaborative discussions of the Humanities that reach across and beyond individual disciplines, and to provide a place for outreach to the community in which we live and teach. In 2010, the Center began collaborating with the Alachua County Library District and entities at UF to organize public and guest speaker series. To date, these series have explored technologies of surveillance (“Tracking Citizens and Subjects: Evolving Technologies of Identity”), the future of libraries (“Imagining the Library: Books in Public Life from Late Antiquity to the Digital Age”), and rebuilding Haiti (“Haiti’s Challenges: Rebuilding Lives & Nation in the Earthquake’s Aftermath”). In 2011-12, the Center is organizing a 3-semester series entitled “Rehumanizing the University: New Perspectives on the Liberal Arts”, to discuss and debate key issues in the future of higher education.

Building on the work of individual departments and programs in the humanities across the University of Florida, the Center for the Humanities and the Public Sphere emphasizes collaboration and critical discussion as its basic program models. To do so, it often grants in a variety of areas. First, in order to support some of the best and most exciting work taking place within the humanities and to build bridges between the humanities and related fields, the Center sponsors collaborative exchanges between faculty and students by supporting Workshops and Speaker Series that promote interdisciplinary themes and highlight faculty and graduate student achievements. Organizers use Center funds to invite innovative faculty from outside the University to participate in these collaborations with resident faculty, students, and members of the wider community. Second, the Center’s Library Enhancement Program in the Humanities allows faculty to expand the existing University of Florida library collections in areas in and related to the humanities that are currently underserved. Resources may include print, digital, or audio-visual media that enhance scholarly research and teaching and public outreach in the humanities disciplines, or audio-visual media that enhance scholarly research and teaching and public outreach in the humanities disciplines. or audio-visual media that enhance scholarly research and teaching and public outreach in the humanities disciplines. Requests that address the needs of broader constituencies of the University beyond the immediate applicants are judged especially favorably. Third, the Center has also sponsored a pilot program in Interdisciplinary Team-Teaching in conjunction with the University of Florida Honors Program to encourage faculty members in different departments and colleges to collaborate in the classroom. This program gives faculty members the opportunity to create innovative undergraduate interdisciplinary courses in order to link to the humanities, and begin the long-term process of establishing collaborative relationships between faculty in separate disciplines. Past and current programs include: Medicine and Philosophy, Foodscape: The Science and Culture of a Meal, and Culture and Identity on the Global Map. The objective of supporting ranked faculty advance their careers, the Center also began offering Rothman Summer Fellowships in the Humanities to tenured and tenured faculty at the University of Florida in the summer of 2010. These grants have allowed recipients to make significant progress on existing creative/research projects, publish their research, and successfully apply for external funding. The Center typically awards four to six fellowships each summer, and fellows present their research the following academic year in a public brown-bag seminar series at the Center. This year, the Center created a new avenue to support doctoral research with the creation of the Tedder Family Doctoral Fellowships in the Humanities for dissertation-level graduate students at the University of Florida. These grants permit doctoral candidates to travel to archives, field sites, and libraries, and/or to acquire resources to advance their dissertation research. Awarded will present their research to the university community following their return from research. The Center awarded three fellowships for 2012-2013. To support our writing in the Humanities at both the faculty and graduate level, the Center website also hosts a growing list of internal and external funding resources for research and creative activities available to faculty and graduate students in the humanities, including opportunities for collaborative grant-writing in the humanities, digital humanities, and public humanities. Additionally, with the support of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Office of Research, and in collaboration with UF Smathers Libraries, the Center has begun a series of grant-writing workshops each semester to prepare applicants for individual and collaborative competitions.
Alumni Spotlight: Parris Baker

“What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?”
-Langston Hughes

Fortunately for Parris Baker, a proud University of Florida alum and professional actor starring in Valencia College’s A Raisin in the Sun, he won’t have to know. Baker’s dream of acting first started in 4th grade. At that time, he was asked by his Sunday School teacher if he wanted to try out for the lead role in the church’s annual Christmas play. Parris humbly accepted, mainly because he wanted to honor her trust in him. From that point forward, he’s had a fascination with acting and the performing arts. He refined his skills throughout high school and honed them further at the University of Florida. While a student at UF, Parris was heavily involved with extracurricular activities. He attended the 2008 Presidential Inauguration ceremony, conducted original research as a Ronald E. McNair Scholar, participated in research projects with world renowned Professors at the University of Chicago, and served as a mentor and tutor to underserved youth. As he embarked on these endeavors, Baker still found time to maintain a 4.0 grade point average, and serve as President of UF’s Black Political Science Association. While reflecting on his time as a student, he mentioned the significance of the arts to undergraduates: “Undergrads are usually trying to discover themselves, and an important step in self actualization is identifying with an art form, whether it's music, movies, plays, etc. Since the Arts reflect the human experience, there’s also an opportunity for students to learn about their heritage, which aids in helping them form healthier and more complete visions of who they are.” In February, Parris played Walter Lee in A Raisin in the Sun at Valencia College, which was recently named the best two year college by Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program. Baker went through a three week selection process for the role, consisting of two rounds of auditions. At the end of the process, he received a phone call from director John DiDonna offering him the lead role. When asked how this role impact him, he said, “Any role an actor accepts impacts his/her life, but this one in particular is very special to me. I revere Sidney Poitier, and he was the first person to play Walter Lee Younger. My chief aim since I found out about auditions for A Raisin in the Sun was to develop a performance that would honor and build upon Mr. Poitier’s work as Walter Lee. I pray I achieved that. Based on the Box Office’s consecutive sellouts and the audience's positive reactions, my hopes seem to have come true.” As his career takes flight, Baker’s immediate focus is to concentrate on his current role in Missed Connections, a theatrical short at the Orlando Shakespeare Theater. As he moves forward, he will continue to build a professional network throughout the Southeast. His long term goals, however, will take him further: “My long term goals include building my network across the U.S. and moving to one of the major film hubs in the country. The best thing I can say is one should stay tuned. My career may be one worth following.”

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Black Female Extravaganza

Black Female Extravaganza (also known as BFE) is an original theatrical production that began in 1992 and has continued strong ever since its conception. This year will mark the 20th anniversary of the Black Female Extravaganza and will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2012, at 6 p.m. at the University Auditorium located at the corner of Union Road and Newell Drive on UF’s campus. This year’s performance is titled No Dreams are Forgotten and will feature a talented cast of actresses, singers and dancers from the UF community. Our goal is to present the entire community with an uplifting and positive message while sharing awareness on pertinent issues that many face today. In honor and celebration of this beautiful legacy, this year’s production will focus on the theme of using one’s voice to make change—whether that change is political, social or personal. As always, Black Female Extravaganza is free to the public and is appropriate for all ages. Our directors have been working diligently since the start of the summer 2011 to ensure the creation of a beautiful masterpiece, while our cast members have been dedicated to their roles since the fall semester 2011 to guarantee an impeccable performance come show time. This event is annually sponsored by Women Raising Awareness in People (WRAP) and features support from the following organizations this year: Student Government Multicultural Affairs and Women’s Affairs Cabinets, African American Studies Program, Black Political Science Association, and the Gainesville Area National Organization for Women (NOW). For more information please join our Facebook Event: Black Female Extravaganza 2012, follow us on Twitter @UF_BFE2012, e-mail blackfemaleextrav@gmail.com, and/or visit our website at http://www.wix.com/ufwrap_bfe/2012.

“In 1992 one woman accepted the challenge. Today we stand 20 years strong with one captivating performance. Experience this legacy and discover that no dreams are forgotten.”
Funding Opportunities

Capital Semester Fall

Sponsored by The Fund for American Studies, Capital Semester combines substantive internships, 12 academic credits, career development activities, site briefings and lectures led by policy experts. This fast-paced, fifteen-week residential program provides undergraduate students from around the world with opportunities to gain the edge in today’s competitive job market and graduate school admissions, and experience the excitement of Washington first-hand.

SAMPLE PAST INTERNSHIP SITES

- Aerospace Industries Association
- American Legislative Exchange Council
- Children’s Rights Council
- Congressional Offices
- First Book
- Foreign Embassies
- Institute for World Politics
- New Leaders for New Schools
- Philanthropy Roundtable
- U.S. Department of Education

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Internships - Competitive placements with government agencies, congressional offices, public policy groups, international affairs organizations and nonprofit organizations
- Housing - Roommate matching and furnished Capitol Hill apartments in the heart of D.C.
- Classes - Full-time course load in political science and economics accredited by Ohio Northern University
- Guest Lectures - With Washington's top policy and economics experts
- Exclusive Briefings - At the World Bank, State

EARLY DEADLINE - 5% DISCOUNT

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the Final Deadline of June 1, 2012. Students are encouraged to apply for the early deadline of April 1, 2012 to receive a 5% discount on their tuition balance as well as priority internship placement. Detailed information on the program may be found at www.DCinternships.org/CS. For more information and an online application, please visit our website www.DCinternships.org/CS or contact Lily Harrison, Capital Semester Director at lharrison@tfas.org or 202-986-0384.

University of Florida Atlantic Coast Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Alliance Award

The University of Florida’s Atlantic Coast Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences Alliance (SBES) Award, funded by the National Science Foundation, was created to increase the number of underrepresented minority doctoral students in the SBE disciplines. As an SBES scholar, students receive a stipend and an opportunity to design and conduct a research project under the guidance of faculty mentor. In addition, scholars will participate in professional development workshops. A few examples include: receive strategies for academic success, assistance with the graduate school application process, coaching on how to prepare for oral defenses. Scholars will have opportunities to publish their research, attend graduate level seminars and professional workshops, and travel to research and professional conferences. The program begins during summer b and continues throughout the following academic year. During the summer, scholars begin preliminary research on their topic. This includes preparing an abstract, literature review, and methodology. The ultimate goal of the SBES program is to develop future doctoral student scholars, so participants in the program will be required to submit graduate school applications and participate in GRE prep activities. In addition, during the fall semester scholars will conclude their research and submit a final research paper. As part of the program, scholars will submit their research to the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). The ultimate goal of the SBES program is to develop future doctoral student scholars, so participants in the program will be required to submit graduate school applications and participate in GRE prep activities. In addition, during the fall semester scholars will conclude their research and submit a final research paper. As part of the program, scholars will submit their research to the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). The ultimate goal of the SBES program is to develop future doctoral student scholars, so participants in the program will be required to submit graduate school applications and participate in GRE prep activities. In addition, during the fall semester scholars will conclude their research and submit a final research paper. As part of the program, scholars will submit their research to the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR). The ultimate goal of the SBES program is to develop future doctoral student scholars, so participants in the program will be required to submit graduate school applications and participate in GRE prep activities. In addition, during the fall semester scholars will conclude their research and submit a final research paper. As part of the program, scholars will submit their research to the National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR).

If throughout the application process you have any questions, please contact Ruth Visuete (rvisuete@aa.ufl.edu) or Janet Broiles (jbroiles@aa.ufl.edu). You can also reach the OGMP office at 352-392-6444.
Tradition and Transformation

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Dr. Patricia Hilliard-Nunn presents at NCBS in Atlanta, Georgia

Dr. Patricia Hilliard-Nunn, Lecturer of African American Studies, presented a paper titled Kemet (Egypt) to Compton: African Hairstyles from Ancient Times to the Present at the National Black Studies Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on March 9, 2012. The paper is an interdisciplinary examination, which highlights primary sources (i.e. royal mummies, painted and carved tomb images and artifacts) and compares and contrasts them with styles and styling elements (i.e. braids, plats, curls, Afros, extensions, wigs and hair oils) used among African Americans today. This paper represents one facet of Hilliard-Nunn’s research on African cultural connections and retentions in the United States. It is a modified version of a lecture titled The Kitchen Doesn’t Lie: The Ancient Kemetic Origins of African American Hair Design that Hilliard-Nunn delivered at the Auburn Avenue Library in Atlanta, Georgia for a Black History Month program coordinated by the Atlanta Chapter of the Links, Inc.

Two African American Studies Minors Present at NCBS

African American Studies minors, Tiffany Bennett and Tiffany Walker, presented research at the National Council of Black Studies Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on March 8, 1912. The title of their session was Black Girls and Black Women: Studies in Representation, Spiritual Transformation and Labeling. Tiffany Bennett’s paper is titled Colorism and its Impact on dark skinned African American Girls. The title of Tiffany Walker’s paper is Agency and Labeling in the work of Octavia E. Butler. Bennett and Walker’s papers are based on research conducted for Senior Seminar II, the African American Studies Capstone class which is taught by Dr. Patricia Hilliard-Nunn. This was the first time that either student has presented at a professional conference.
Dr. Faye Harrison

Confronting Racism, Sexism, & Epistemic Erasure in Academe

Dr. Faye V. Harrison was invited to participate in a March 28-29, 2012 symposium on strategies for success in women’s academic careers at Texas A & M University. With funding from the National Science Foundation and other sources, the Department of Anthropology hosted the symposium; however, the organizers and targeted audience included faculty in both Africana Studies and Women’s Studies. The symposium, the highlight of the department’s Women’s Week activities, featured four senior women scholars representing each of anthropology’s major subfields. TAMU’s sociocultural faculty, which includes two women appointed jointly with Africana Studies, selected Dr. Harrison to speak in a symposium that departed from the traditional symposium. The four speakers were asked to address how gender, race, and ethnicity along with the selected focus of their research had affected their career development. Most of the speakers had never publicly divulged “personal” information about their careers. The most senior scholar, who claimed not to have any expertise in gender analysis, rocked the auditorium with her no-holds barred presentation, which focused on women in science.

Dr. Harrison’s lecture, “Decolonizing Anthropology from the Outside Within,” was informed by her track record of scholarly writings on epistemological hierarchies, the history and politics of knowledge, and the decolonization of the social sciences. Her lecture—which balanced the personal, professional, and theoretical—was well-received and stimulated a lively discussion that continued informally over the two-day period. In the second day’s panel discussion on “Promoting Climate Change in Departments,” she presented on the common misconceptions and anxieties about racism, affirmative action, and compensatory justice. She also zoomed in on some of the subtle and not-so-subtle forms that academic racism commonly assumes—including the micro-aggressions documented in studies based on multi-methodological research designs that combine empirical and experiential evidence. She drew on a chapter she has contributed to *Racism in the Academy: The New Millennium* (Audrey Smedley and Janis Hutchinson, eds.), which will be available from the American Anthropological Association later in the spring. As the organizers requested, she also addressed her own experiences with intersections of racism and sexism in academia along with strategies she has deployed for survival and success over the course of her career.

After returning home from Texas, Dr. Harrison received thoughtful “debriefing” messages from the organizers and a fellow participant. The latter wrote: “What an INCREDIBLY powerful critique you left us with yesterday morning. I am stunned by your brilliance as a thinker and theoretician … We will all be citing you on this in our classes!!! … Thank you so very much … for the incredible work you do and have done. You are an inspiration.”
Dr. Marilyn Thomas-Houston

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROFESSOR EDITS INNOVATIVE NEW BLACK STUDIES JOURNAL

Dr. Marilyn M. Thomas-Houston is the Senior Editor of the Association for the Study of African American Life and History’s (ASALH) latest publication, Fire!!!: The Multimedia Journal of Black Studies. The journal, distributed as part of JSTOR’s new Current Scholarship Program and the first of its kind, went live with its inaugural issue during Black History Month. Fire!!!, a multimedia online-only peer reviewed journal, was designed to promote the scholarship of scholars who utilize media evidence to advance their theories and interpretations.

Fire!!! takes its name from the short-lived Harlem Renaissance journal of the same name that was edited by Wallace Thurman and participated in by other legendary literary figures including Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston. Similar to the original Fire!! (written with two exclamation points), the new publication seeks to break new ground and explore all avenues of scholarly inquiry. The creation of Fire!!! (with three exclamation points) is the result of the vision of scholars such as Thomas-Houston, Abdul Alkalimat and Ron Bailey (founders of the eBlack Studies Consortium), and the late Gloria Dickerson, who view multimedia sources as a vital aspect of capturing the full dimensions of Black Studies.

Dr. Thomas-Houston, joint associate professor in Anthropology and African American Studies, was asked by the Board of ASALH to spearhead the establishment of their new journal because of her interdisciplinary experiences and technological skills. Dr. Thomas-Houston’s scholarship includes the ethnography, “Stony the Road” to Change: Black Mississippians and the Culture of Social Relations, the first book published with URL links to media documentation from her Mississippi research as an intricate part of the text. She also has taught the Visual Anthropology course at UF for 11 years and designed the Blacks in Films course. Dr. Thomas-Houston’s IT training has allowed her to serve the profession in other ways. She has designed and been the webmaster for the website of the Association of Black Anthropologists, functioned as the graphic design and layout artist for the Woodson Review, designed the annual Black History theme products for ASALH, and produced and directed videos on the Black experience. Dr. Thomas-Houston considers her role and work with Fire!!! to be her most significant contribution to the field of Black Studies to date.
Written By Marna Weston  African-American History Project Coordinator for the Samuel Proctor History Program at UF

On December 22, 2003 I met with Dr. Patricia Stephens Due at her home in Quincy, Florida for what I had planned as the first of three interviews. In some ways it is sad that life, time, and circumstances dictated this to be our only formal interview. I was fortunate to visit her many times in person, to exchange emails and phone calls, to chat at her bedside and fluff a pillow when she was ill, and even to attend the graduation ceremony where Florida A&M University conferred her honorary doctorate. I valued our conversations. She was a teacher who conveyed the knowledge of the world through her presence. Her deeply resonate patient voice was to me a mixture of both my maternal and paternal grandmothers and Maya Angelou. Once you meet a person like Dr. Due their stature, grace, and humanity override the research side of scholarship. After only a short time turning on an audio recorder and placing it on a table between us seemed to separate us more than allowing a bond to form between her and me. The recorder ever present from that time on remained silent as I preferred being a guest in her home rather than a probing investigator. As a guest there were no barriers in listening, learning, and laughing, and so sans microphone I had the honor to better know Patricia Stephens Due. The facts are that very few Floridians have heard her name. I was fortunate to befriend a former University of Florida Black Student Union President, Danny Harmeling whose dad was a 1960's era North Florida activist who worked in The Movement with both Patricia Stephens Due and her husband John. When I read Freedom in the Family: A Mother-Daughter Memoir of the Fight for Civil Rights by Dr. Due and her eldest daughter Tananarive, pictured with the family was Danny Harmeling's dad. I knew Dan Sr., though the Gainesville local labor unions, Civic Media Center, local Democratic party and my friendship with his son. So I told Big Dan I had found a letter Patricia Stephen Due had written when she was in jail in Tallahassee. He said he knew her. My heart skipped a beat as I explained to him that this little known letter I’d found in a book titled The Black Man and The Promise of America stated March Luther King had written to her during her incarceration in Leon County Jail in March 1960. It was said Dr. King heard her CORE activist group was refusing bail following a sit-in and so he asked them to strongly defend their principles and stay in jail. Dan confirmed this information as well. From my personal knowledge and prior research I knew of no individual or group prior to March 1960 including Dr. King, who had voluntarily stayed in jail and refused to pay a fine that could otherwise immediately release them based on principle. This act which today we know as "Jail For Bail” would have been revolutionary in spring 1960 Tallahassee, Florida. To take such a stance would undoubtedly cause a reaction of expulsion from school, ruin any chance of getting a job or holding a professional position due to the notations in permanent files, put pressure on friends and family for their jobs, and perhaps worse. What could be worst? To be beaten, injured, become sick, disappear, or die while incarcerated. Patricia Stephens Due accepted these consequences. She had a natural sense of what activism was and the sacrifices it required. So for a few short years I was honored to know this co-founder of Florida A & M University’s Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) chapter. A group which organized, agitated, and with integrated groups of students and local citizens, negotiated with Jim Crow officials to integrate lunch counters, movie theaters and all of the other public spaces of Florida’s capital city in the 1960’s. As a leader in CORE she was both feared and admired by those within the system which tried to deny her liberties. Dr. Patricia Stephens Due was a living presence of freedom personified. In thinking about the challenges still remaining in social, political, and economic freedom and justice her example inspires. During the One Florida Initiative protests in Tallahassee on January 20, 2000, Patricia Stephens Due was there of course to tell the story of The Movement, to demonstrate by her presence the nobility of activism, and to place in context for the witnesses there the relevance of sacrifice and fearlessness in the face of oppression. When then Florida Representative Kendrick Meek and State Senator Tony Hill used a sit-in occupation of the Lt. Governor’s offices to force Florida Governor Jeb Bush to extend time for public hearings and additional public comment on the One Florida Initiative, Patricia Stephens Due flew in from Miami, joined the press conference going on and expressed pride in Meek and Hill. She was always at the center of issues addressing freedom, justice, jobs, and education. In these times we need more people like Patricia Stephens Due. I will always be appreciative that her jail house letter and our December 2003 interview were central elements in a phase of my school education. More central to my ministry in life however, I am privileged to have known her and to still practice what she taught me about life outside the classroom. Her memorial service in Tallahassee, Florida at FAMU Lee Hall on Sunday February 19, 2012 left no doubt of the truth in her time tested statement ...The Struggle Continues!  

The Late Dr. Patricia Stephens Due (December 9, 1939 - February 7, 2012)
Donating to the African American Studies Program

The African American Studies Program at the University of Florida depends upon gifts from alumni and friends to fund student and faculty travel, research, and lecture series. If you would like to support the program, please consider making your gift today. The University of Florida Foundation, Inc. is the steward of all private support of the University of Florida—there are two ways to donate. You can give online to THE AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM FUND which makes it possible for the program to engage in extracurricular activities that promote community building and public programming. Private sources of funding increase our capacity for creating a supportive environment for interactions among students, faculty, and the wider community.

THE JAMES HASKINS VISITING SCHOLAR FELLOWSHIP ENDOWMENT FUND honors the memory of the late James Haskins (1941-2005), a former University of Florida Professor of English and a distinguished writer who interpreted the African American experience. In well over 100 books, he exposed children and youth readers to the biographies of leading African Americans and key aspects of Black culture, social history, and contemporary life. The scope of his writings also extended beyond Black America to other parts of the world. The James Haskins Visiting Scholar Fellowship Endowment Fund will provide the critical resources needed to enable the AASP to host emerging and established scholars with research interests that complement some aspect of the scholarly agenda of faculty within the program. You may also make a gift of cash, appreciated stocks and bonds, real estate, and through various planned giving opportunities through the college of Liberal Arts and Sciences Development and Alumni Affairs office. For more information, please contact Melissa Tyrone, Associate Director of Development and Alumni Affairs (352) 392-0624 or mtyrone@uff.ufl.edu.

AASP Students Who Have Graduated With a Minor Now Have a Network!

The UF African American Studies Program is making strides towards a major and we need your help! If you have graduated from the program with a minor or taken classes that have impacted your professional and personal development, please keep in touch with us. Here are 5 ways to keep in touch:

1. Check the http://www.clas.ufl.edu/afam/ and Facebook sites regularly and add us to your favorites page.
2. Contact the Association of Black Alumni to keep up with what is happening all over campus.
3. Add your contact information and professional updates to your alumni profile by emailing Rhana Gittens, President of the Alumni Network: rhana.gittens@gmail.com
4. Donate to the Program to support ongoing programming contact Melissa Tyrone, (see information above).
5. Stop in to our offices at 103 Walker Hall or call 352-392-5724.

Dr Harry Shaw Travel Grant

Dr. Harry Shaw (PhD, University of Illinois) was a member of the UF Department of English from 1973 to 2004, where he taught courses in 20th Century and African-American Literature. He was the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Associate Dean for Minority Affairs from the establishment of that position in 1979 until his retirement from UF in 2004.

During his employment at UF, he was one of the most distinguished professors here and a strong supporter of our program and minority interests in general. After his retirement, the African American Studies Program created the Dr. Harry Shaw travel grant to fund the travel expenses of AASP students presenting papers at conferences. If you would like to be considered for a travel grant, please contact Dr. Austin at polssdw@ufl.edu.