

THE VILLAGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
AFRICAN AMERICAN & AFRICAN STUDIES ALUMNI
COMMUNITY

SUMMER 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT	1
TADE OKEDIJI	1
YOUR THOUGHTS	2
OPENING DOORS	3
COURSE SPOTLIGHT	3
BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE	4
UPCOMING EVENTS	5
QUOTE OF THE MONTH	5

A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT

In the past few months I have had the pleasure to attend many events that celebrate the great accomplishments of the Department of African American & African Studies and its alumni. I continued to be awed by the many wonderful stories that have been shared about the life changing stories that our graduates experienced through the Department of African American & African Studies. The fondness with which these stories are told only begins to capture the very special experience that link this Department to our great alumni and friends.

This May I attended the University of Minnesota's Commencement Ceremonies. As I watched our graduates accept their diplomas I could not help but to think about the impact

the Department has played on shaping the lives of our new alumni. I came away from the event with an even greater appreciation for the work the faculty, staff, and alumni provide to are students and the community. This hard work is paying off, spring 2009 the Department saw it's highest ever enrollment numbers: 41 majors, and 44 minors. It is our hope that the 40 years of giving continues to be passed on to the students we serve today and in the future.



TADE OKEDIJI

Please welcome the newest faculty member to the Department of AA&AS, Associate Professor Tade Okediji. Professor Okediji research focuses on comparative institutional economic development with specific emphasis on Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America.

His current research projects examine effects of multiple dimensions of social fragmentation on economic performance in developing countries, with an emphasis on Sub-

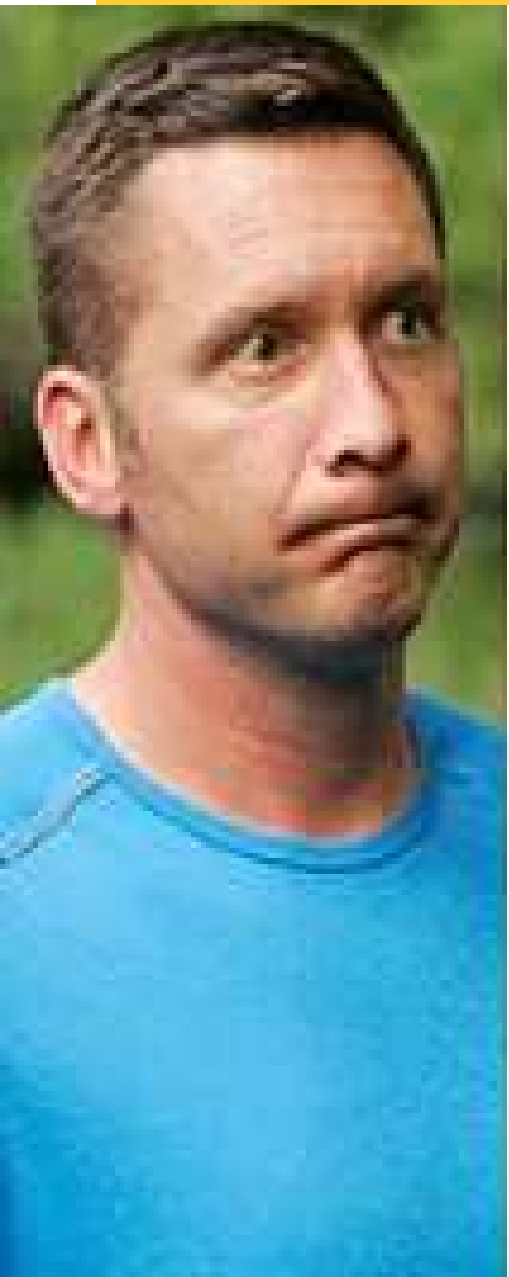
Saharan Africa. Other research areas include: economic development theory, political economy of ethnicity, and economics of governance.

His publications have appeared in *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, *Journal of Economic Issues*, *Journal of Socio-Economics* and *The American Economist*. He has also contributed several book chapters in edited volumes. Professor Okediji has a joint appointment

In the Department of Applied Economics.



YOUR THOUGHTS: GATES ARRESTED

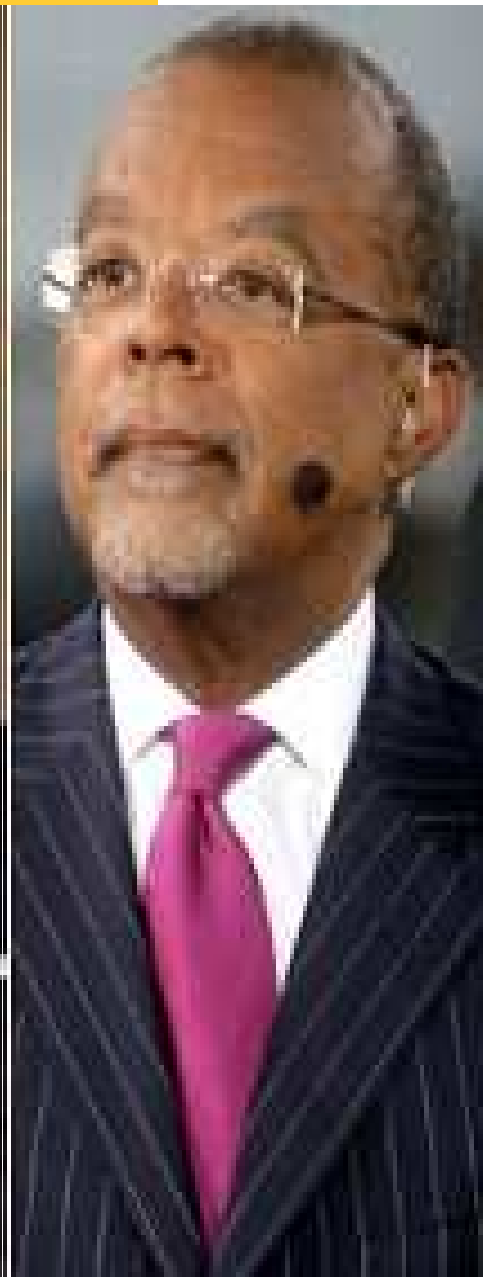


Sgt. James Crowley

Cambridge Police Department



President Obama



Henry Louis Gates

Harvard University Professor

By now you've heard both sides of the story involving the arrest of Harvard University Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr.

Now it's time for you to weigh in with your thoughts. Should Gates have been arrested? Was Sgt. Crowley simply just doing his job? Did President Obama have

a responsibility to comment on the situation?

Please send your thoughts and comments to:

redd0002@umn.edu.

Each submission will be eligible to win a signed copy of Professor Keith Mayes soon to be released

book *Kwanzaa: Black Power and the Making of an African American Holiday Tradition*.

The winner will be randomly selected from the entries in a drawing.

Comments and thoughts will be shared in the next issue of *The Village*. If you prefer to stay

anonymous please state this in your email and your request will be respected.

Good luck and looking forward to hearing from you.

OPENING DOORS IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS

This fall the University of Minnesota's Urban Research And Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC) is scheduled to open. The UROC is poised to anchor the university's commitment to urban community engagement and finding ways to use its resources to work collaboratively with community, city, and county partners to address the many challenges facing North Minneapolis, one of the most underserved communities in the metro area.

The Department of AA&AS will be one of a selected few resident programs to

operate out of the UROC. Being housed in UROC will allow the Department to better partner with the North Minneapolis community. Department plans are underway to offer a mentoring program, guided campus tours, and courses in the community.

The mentoring program will link both middle school and high school students to University of Minnesota student mentors. The program will offer students of North Minneapolis a road map to post secondary education while building on their understanding of the

significance of African American & African Studies.

The Department strongly believes in connecting the community to the campus. Guided tours showcasing our faculty, students, and units on campus that work directly with the Department will be provided to community members.

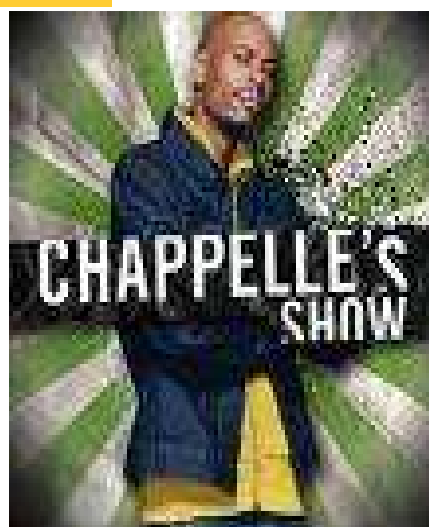
Lastly the Department is planning to offer a few courses in the community. The Department envision this as an opportunity to better connect University students to the community.

COURSE SPOTLIGHT - AFRO 1902: YOUR TELEVISION WILL BE COLORIZED: BLACK TV COMEDIANS RIFF'S ON RACE

In this seminar Professor Jacobs will help students identify and decode racial critiques of American society found in TV shows featuring African American Comedians. From the overt commentary offered in sketch comedy shows such as Chappelle's Show and In Living Color, to the more subtle discourse of a situation comedy like The Cosby Show, African American Comedians have a long history of using television as a stage to address the continuing

significance of race in the United States. We will explore both historical and contemporary uses of humor to explain and reorganize our understandings of American racial dynamics. Using a variety of cultural studies methods and online technologies (including blogs, podcasts, and Moodle), students will develop "critical media literacy" – the ability to be rigorously analytical about the information and understandings we draw from the mass media without

diminishing the pleasure gained. Students will create, perform, and analyze comedic skits.



African American Comedians have a long history of using television as a stage to address the continuing significance of race in the United States.

BUILDING A BETTER TOMORROW

It's hard to believe, the Department of African American & African Studies has been in existence on the University of Minnesota campus for forty-one years. The Department started out in 1969 as a small unit that knew the contributions of African descendants and the great need for its scholarship.

Forty-one years later, our coalition of supporters and alumni continue to grow and make a difference across the world.

The Department could not be prouder of all the progress we've made with your support over the years. But in these challenging and exciting times, there is little time to look backward. The challenges we face are too great and the opportunities ahead of us are too urgent.

Instead, the Department would like to offer you five recent accomplishments that give you reason to celebrate:

1. Rose Brewer (faculty) selected as the University of Minnesota Ada Comstock Distinguished Women Scholar Awardee for Fall 2009. This prestigious award has been established to acknowledge and honor the scholarly accomplishments and leadership of distinguished women faculty at the University of Minnesota and to offer a forum for them to share their insights and ideas with a campus and community audience.

2. Ernest Comer (student) was awarded a 2009 President's Student Leadership and Service Award. Each year, the President's Student Leadership and Service Awards (PSLSA) recognize the accomplishments and contributions made by outstanding student leaders at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

It is presented to approximately one-half of one percent of the student body for their exceptional leadership and service to the University of Minnesota and the surrounding community.

3. Njeri Githire (faculty) and Walt Jacobs (faculty) were selected by the University of Minnesota Imagine Fund Arts, Design, and Humanities faculty committee to receive 2009-2010 Annual Awards of \$3,000 for the projects "Consuming Passions: Consumption, Encounter and Gender in Caribbean and Indian Ocean Women's Writings" (Githire) and "Diasporic Ghost Stories" (Jacobs). The Imagine Fund mission is to support, sustain, and enliven arts and humanities research and activities on the four University campuses.

4. Keith Mayes (faculty) obtained final publication acceptance for his book *Kwanzaa: Black Power and the Making of an African American Holiday Tradition*. Routledge will publish it in summer 2009.

5. Antoni Tang (student) received a 2009-2010 Fulbright Scholarship to study in Venezuela (one of only three available Fulbright Teaching Assistant Grants to Venezuela). Noah Sims (student) was a finalist for a 2009-2010 Fulbright Scholarship to study in Tanzania.

The issues we've tackled have been different over the last 41 years, but one thing has not changed. When you make a donation to the Department of AA&AS, these are the kind of great results you can expect.

Please help us keep this important work moving forward for the next 41 years by making a donation today. Every dollar really makes a difference.

To make a donation go to: <http://afroam.umn.edu/gift/> and click on [Make a gift to the Department of African American & African Studies online](#) through the University of Minnesota Foundation.



Co-founder of the Black Panther party Civil Rights Activist Bobby Seale pictured with BSU members.



Department of African American & African Studies faculty with BSU members.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Freedom Jazz Festival

8/1/2009 Saturday

1:00PM-7:30PM

Location:

Minnehaha Falls Park

Band Shell

Cost: Free

Sponsored by:

Freedom Jazz Festival, Inc

**Jazz for a Change:
Music for a Brave New World**

Jazz has been a revolutionary social force and the innovative soundtrack for the shared consciousness of America. The theme for this year's Freedom Jazz Festival is a reflection on the kindred nature of jazz and the struggle for America to find its collective identity.

Mahmoud El-Kati book signing: Hiptionary

8/4/2009 Tuesday

7:30PM

Location:

Common Goods Books

165 Western Ave. N

St. Paul

Cost: Free

El-Kati is an African-American educator, activist, lecturer, writer, and commentator on the African American experience.

Trinity Fest '09

8/5/2009 Saturday

12:00PM -5:00PM

Location:

First Trinity Church

981 Marshall Ave, St. Paul

Cost: Free

Contact: Gerrod at:

Trinityfest@hotmail.com or
(651)645-0965

Trinity fest is an annual, outdoor festival that connects individuals and families to resources, ministries and programs. The event will feature music from Twin Cities local artists, southern style food, BBQ & concessions, fellowship with families, friends and neighbors, health fair and a plethora of information.

The Department of African American & African Studies plays an important role in the University's rich liberal arts tradition. The department's beginnings in the Morrill Hall takeover of 1969 by students demanding change demonstrate that the academy—and society—often move forward by challenging traditional boundaries and practices.

Today, the department offers students opportunities to explore American cultural diversity and the wide diversity of the African continent. An undergraduate major in African American & African Studies provides students with a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the cultural and historical experiences of African American & African peoples from a multidisciplinary perspective including history, political science, sociology, psychology, literature, music, and art. Courses and faculty are drawn from the department as well as from other units of the University.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA - TC

267 19th Avenue South
808 Social Sciences Building
Phone: 612-624-0556
Fax: 612-624-9383
E-mail: redd0002@umn.edu

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Invest in the human soul. Who knows, it might be a diamond in the rough."

Mary McLeod Bethune