

# THE VILLAGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AFRICAN  
& AFRICAN STUDIES ALUMNI COMMUNITY

DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

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## A MESSAGE FROM SCOTT

Dear Alumni and Friends,

As we reflect on last year and look forward to 2009 I encourage you to stay connected to the University of Minnesota. It is truly an exciting place to be. At the Department of African American & African Studies (AA &AS), our activities are not only in the lecture halls—with our students, but also within our community.

In 2009 AA & AS faculty, staff and students will continue to work close with a range of partners to address local, national, and global issues facing African American and African communities.

I hope you will enjoy the information that is included in this newsletter. Know that you are always welcome

to attend presentation, and programs highlighted by the Department. The Department extend best wishes to you as we move into a new year of opportunities and experiences.

Scott Redd



## OUTREACH WEBSITE COMING SOON

The Department of African American & African Studies (AA &AS) is pleased to announce a new Community Outreach website will soon be available. The Outreach website will be located on the Department's main web page at [afroam.umn.edu](http://afroam.umn.edu). This site was initiated by the Department as a way to reach and inform the public of important community initiatives supported by the

Department of AA & AS. The new site will be a great addition to our communication activities.

It will highlight significant projects and joint ventures of the Department and the community. The site will also act as a point to direct those who wish to get involved and partner with AA & AS and the community.

Over the next few months, we will introduce new features on

the Outreach site. Your comments and suggestions for strengthening our communications are encouraged and welcomed.



## ALUMNI PROFILE

This month *The Village* caught up with Alumus, Paul Amla, class of 03.

What is your current occupation?

Founder & President of AMLA INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATIONS LLC.

How has AA & AS helped you to achieve success in your field?

My degree helps me to better understand African history, and the many sacrifices made by our ancestors who have paved the way for me and empower me to preserve regardless of challenges ahead.

Why did you choose AA & AS?

As an African descendant, it is a moral obligation not only to learn and understand my own culture and be able to pass it on to future generation but most important be nourished by it. I was in search of making a distinction between cultural bias and the true history of Africa, Africans and African Americans.

What about AA&AS inspires you?

To better value, appreciate, and maintain my culture. It also commands me to be a role model in my community and avoid failure regardless of the challenges. An exam-

ple of this is that my company is the winner of the MSHALE 2008 African Business of the Year Award. I am so humbled and at the same time honored by this recognition.

What is your fondest memory of AA&AS?

I truly enjoyed the conversations and networking with other African & African American students including Professors and faculty members from various states and countries.

What do you do in your free time?

I play soccer, watch NFL, camp, and travel abroad.



Paul Amla; M. Ed.  
Class of 2003  
BA Global Studies  
Minor AA & AS

### COURSE SPOTLIGHT AFRO 3426 AFRICAN AMERICANS, SOCIAL POLICY, AND THE WELFARE STATE

Dr. Keith Mayes will offer a course on the history of public and social policy of African Americans. It attempts to familiarize students with some of the most pertinent issues that continue to dominate the news. The course seeks to place into historical context the present-day commentary on social security, affirmative action, welfare, healthcare, and incarceration. Instead of focusing on political movements, Dr. Mayes will address the outcome and manifestation of social and political

movements, mainly policy concerns and questions. We will begin with the period that ushered in the tradition of social policy—the New Deal. The New Deal, the Great Society, and other attempts by the federal government to involve itself in the lives of ordinary people will be at the center of this course. The course will go beyond this and explore the racial, class, and gender implications of social and public policy. How are African-Americans situated within the welfare state?

Do African-Americans receive and share in social benefits to the same degree as other groups? How are African-Americans impacted by education policies such as affirmative action and busing, reforms in welfare, sentencing, and incarceration? What presidential administrations have been amenable to policies that address the problems facing African-Americans? The goal of the course is to turn students into policy-makers.



"Our job as an ethnic studies department is to create inspiration for students about coming to college."

Dr. Keith Mayes

## YOUTH 'STAND ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS' AT U OF M CONFERENCE

The following is an excerpt from the *Minnesota Spokesman Recorder* by Professor Rose Brewer

The Department of African American & African Studies, University of Minnesota, in view of the forthcoming 40th anniversary celebration of the department's founding in 1969, placed youth at the center of a political conversation on November 7, 2008. Conference facilitator Rose Brewer, professor in the department, noted that this pre-conference, "Standing on the Shoulders of Giants," was perfectly timed.

Over 150 K-12 and college-aged youth brought tremendous energy and electricity to Coffman Theatre on November 7. In the wake of the election of Barack Obama as the first Black president of the United States, the students were ready to listen, critically assess political activism, and move in the world as social change agents.

With Voice of Culture Drum and Dance Company opening the event, all present were connected to the ancestors, and the spirit was set for a vital and politically engaged set of conversations. Spoken-word artists, using their gifts of words as political catalysts, powerfully moved the group. These incredible artists included the Poetic Assassins, Shá Cage and the Minnesota

Spoken Word Association, and Frank Sentwali.

Sam Grant, longtime Twin Cities community organizer and activist, called the students to the tradition of community organizing. He pressed the students to make a difference in the world, leaving cynicism behind. Youth in the room called back to Sam Grant to help them understand the meaning of cynicism and how they might move in the world to create equality and social justice. These concerns went to the heart of the gathering youth engagement and activism.

Of course, youth were at the center of the Morrill Hall Takeover at the University of Minnesota nearly 40 years ago. Some of these "giants" participated in a panel recounting to youth moderators and the conference participants what moved them to social activism 40 years ago. The Morrill Hall activists who participated in the panel included Rose Freeman Massey, who was the chair of the Afro-American Action Committee in 1969; Dr. Manuel Woods and Marie Williams, members of the organization; and ally Bill Tilton. Student moderators of the panel were Black Student Union President Dionne Dillard and executive committee member Jalessa Joy. All the students present received a

lesson in vision, courage and political commitment as they heard the panelists respond to a series of questions posed by Dillard and Joy.

A central component of the day was an intergenerational conversation on political activism. Some of the leading activists and organizers from the region participated in this discussion. Multiple generations were represented in the fishbowl roundtable, ranging in generational ages from under 20 to over 50. Participants included Jazzmin Brooks, Dafina Bobo and Brittany Delaney (under 20); Jessica (Verse) Holloway, Derek Biney and Alisha Volante (20-30); Chaka Mkali, Shá Cage and Lena Jones (30-40); Sam Grant and Cheryl Wilson (40-50); and Rose Freeman Massey and August Nimitz, Jr. (over 50).

Political generations are not just about age, commented facilitator Rose Brewer, but about coming to political age at a particular political moment. As the participants shared their moments of political awakening, it was clear that the current generation of youth will be profoundly shaped by the candidacy and election of Barack Obama to the presidency.

The day ended with small group discussions by the youth in attendance. They reflected on next steps and

how they would like to continue the political conversations initiated by the pre-conference. The Department of African American & African Studies plans to continue to work with these young student leaders over the coming year through mentoring, workshops, and an ongoing series of dialogues and discussions with the youth.



## FACULTY SPOTLIGHT ROSE BREWER

### Publications

- *Black Radical Theory and Practice: Gender, Race, and Class.* Brewer, Rose Marie, 2003.
- *A Special Issue on Gender, Color, Class, and Caste.* Brewer, Rose Marie, Routledge Press/London, 2002.
- *Family Structure, Poverty, and Race in the United States..* Brewer, Rose Marie, 2003.
- *The Color of Wealth.* Brewer, Rose Marie, Meizhu Lui, Barbara Robles, Betsy Leondar-Wright, New Press, Author, 2006. Link

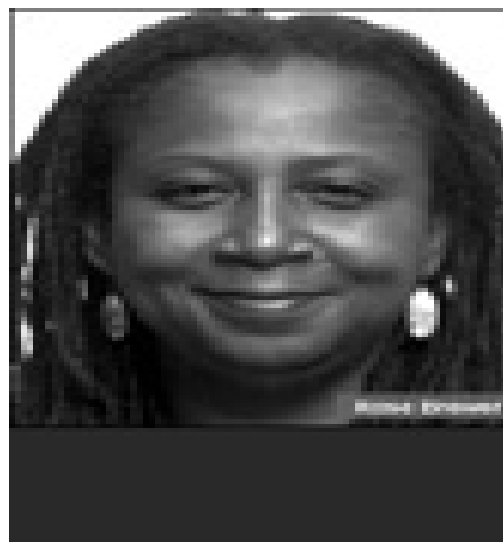
### Professional Activities

- Contributing Editor, *Souls*, a national and international journal of distinguished scholars.
- Member, Council of Chairs, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota: 1999 - 2001
- Member, Student Fees Committee, University of Minnesota: 1999 - 2001
- Member, Advisory Panel, Civic Engagement Task Force, University of Minnesota: 2001

- Member, President's Distinguished Faculty Mentor Program, University of Minnesota: 1999 - 2000
- Member, Student Academic Affairs Committee, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota: 2002 - 2003
- Member, CLA Leadership of the College, College of Liberal Arts, University of Minnesota: 1999 - 2001
- Member, Strategic Planning Committee, Department of African American & African Studies, University of Minnesota: 2001 - 2002
- Chair, Merit Committee, African American & African Studies, University of Minnesota: 2001 - 2002
- Member, Community Outreach Committee, Department of African American & African Studies: 2000 - 2001
- Member, Student Fees Advisory Committee, University of Minnesota: 2000 - 2002
- Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of African American & African Studies: 2001
- Member, Faculty Senate, University of Minnesota: 1998 - 2001
- Interim Chair, Department of African American & African Studies, University of Minnesota: 1999 - 2001
- Editorial Board, *Contemporary Sociology*
- American Sociological, Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology: 2003 - 2006
- Chair, Rhonda Williams Award Committee of the International Association of Feminist Economics.

### Outreach Activities

- Co-Founder and core group member, The Freire Center, Minneapolis, MN: 2001
- Member, Planning Committee, African Genealogy Series: 2001 - 2002
- Board of Trustees, St. Paul Academy and Summit School



## UPCOMING EVENTS

Celebrate the Dream

1/15/2008 Thursday

Doors open at 6:00pm

Location: The Basilica of  
St. Mary

Cost: Free

Come celebrate the Dream. The featured speaker is Paul Rusesabagina, real life hero from Hotel Rwanda. featured music by the Grammy Award-Winning Sounds of Blackness.

Community Advisory Council

1/15/2008 Thursday

1:30PM-3:00PM

Location: Social Science Bldg  
Conf. RM. 1314

Contact: Scott Redd

[redd0002@umn.edu](mailto:red0002@umn.edu)

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) is designed to stimulate communication between community members and the University of Minnesota's African American and African Studies department (AA&AS). Council members serve in an advisory capacity to the department by providing input on local/national/global issues affecting

19th Annual MLK, Jr. Breakfast

1/19/2009

7:00 AM

Location:  
MPLS Convention Center  
Ballroom A  
1301 Second Ave S  
Mpls, MN

2100 Plymouth Ave, Mpls

Cost: \$30.00

The Holiday Breakfast is an opportunity to celebrate the life and legacy of the man and movement that not only changed civil rights laws for all Americans but set in motion the drive for human rights reform worldwide. The theme of this year's Holiday Breakfast is "Because of His Dream, I can...Lead, Grow, Inspire." Keynote speaker General Colin L. Powell

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 - TC267 19th Avenue South  
808 Social Sciences Building

Phone: 612-624-0556

Fax: 612-624-9383

E-mail: [redd0002@umn.edu](mailto:red0002@umn.edu)

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom.

Martin Luther King, Jr.