

THE VILLAGE

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE AFRICAN
& AFRICAN STUDIES ALUMNI COMMUNITY

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FROM THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR

In this issue of *THE VILLAGE*, you'll read about the Department's engaged and innovative community partnership with North Minneapolis and Urban Research Outreach and Engagement Center, and you'll meet alumna Sonal Desai. You'll also find an informative article on the Obama Effect, an event sponsored by the School of Journalism & Mass Communication and the Department of AA &AS, in which members of the department and the community reflect on the recent Obama phenomenon. In this edition the Department will highlight Professor Onishi's course, Black Worlds in

Global Perspectives: Challenges and Changes, a course Professor Onishi employs to prepare our future alumni for tomorrow's world. You'll also get to know Prof. Keletso Atkins in Faculty Spot light

And last, but certainly not least, you'll read about the many events happening on and off campus.

The Department invites you to continue with us in our ground breaking endeavors, or to join your Department with your words of support, your ideas, and your gifts.

Best,
Scott Redd
Community Outreach Coordinator



PARTNERING IN NORTH MINNEAPOLIS



The Department of African American & African Studies (AA & AS) has undertaken a new initiative to address the concerns of North Minneapolis. The Department will partner with North Minneapolis stakeholders and the University of Minnesota's Urban Research Outreach and Engagement Center (UROC). UROC is the University's anchor in North Minneapolis. It partners with

residents, organizations, local businesses, the city, and county to strengthen the community. The partnership will bring the community and the Department together to give residents, organizations, AA & AS faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to work collaboratively on community identified issues. By forming partnerships with the community the Department hope to facilitate processes which bring significant resources to the

community in a well organized and clearly focused manner that will advance the over-all quality of life in North Minneapolis. Our efforts are designed to better educate the community on the African Diaspora and to increase higher college attendance rates.

ALUMNI PROFILE

This month *The Village* caught up with Sonal Desai, class of 91.

What is your current occupation?
High School Principal in Minneapolis.

How has AA&AS helped you to achieve success in your field?
African American and African Studies gave me the relevant intellectual insight and approaches to view our world as a critical thinker. Equally important the major gave me the tools to work across cul-

tures, given our changing demographics this is a skill every public school administrator needs to successfully educate all children.

Why did you choose AA&AS as a major?
It was actually by default. I initially took a course in the department to meet a graduation requirement, I was hooked there after. I found the courses enlightening and relevant to the world around me.

What about AA&AS inspires you?

The stimulating scholarship on the black experience throughout the African Diaspora and its continued focus on human progress.

What is your fondest memory of AA&AS?
Working with Dr. Taborn. I was lucky enough to do an internship with him on the effects of AIDS in the African American Community. It was a great eye opening experience that I will never forget.

What do you do in your free time?
Hang out with my family, read, and play scrabble with friends.



Sonal Desai
Alumna Class of 91

THE OBAMA EFFECT

Few politicians have sparked the interest of the world like Barack Obama. From his keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention to his nomination for the presidency, Sen. Barack Obama has challenged conventional wisdom about race, politics, media, and generation.

The Department of African American & African Studies joined the School of Journalism and Mass Communication to co-sponsor the Obama Effect, a conference conceived of and organized by Dr. Heather E. Harris, Associate Professor of Business Communication and Director of Multicultural Affairs, Stevenson University, Dr. Kimberly Moffitt, University of Maryland, B.C., and Dr. Catherine Squires, University of Minnesota, School of Journalism and Mass Communication. The conference discussed the compelling issues and events that have surrounded Obama's

campaign.
The three-day conference kicked off Thursday October 23 with reflections on covering the campaign from keynote speaker Desiree Cooper, an award winning columnist for the American Public Media and the Detroit Free Press. The conference ended Saturday October 25 with closing remarks and a reception in Coffman Memorial Union.



COURSE SPOTLIGHT AFRO 1012 BLACK WORLDS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE: CHALLENGES AND CHANGES

Afro 1012 is a gateway course that introduces to students the dynamic worlds of AA & AS. The course explores the dynamic processes of the dispersal of Africans and their descendants throughout the world to develop strategies to engage with "the practice of Diaspora." Our approach is historical, examining why and how this phenomenon of dispersion occurred and changed over a long period of time. Such a sweeping historical perspective allows us to: (1) assess the relationship

between Africa and the world at large both before and after the "transatlantic moment" of the fifteenth century; (2) explore Africa's place in the modern world and how it continues to play a critical role in it; (3) examine the transformation of identities and struggles for Africanity and pan-Africanism in the New World. In addition, this course is interested in exploring the possibilities of the African Diaspora, as well as challenges facing the communities of the African Diaspora in such places as the United

States and other parts of the Americas in the contemporary world. Throughout the semester, we will searchingly look for ways to reconnect with Africa and myriad communities of the African Diaspora in new ways. Our methods of inquiry include personal reflection, group work, written assignments, and class discussion. This course appeals to students who are interested in international Black history, Black radicalism, pan-Africanism, and questions of identity and politics.



My hope is that by the end of this semester, students will have the necessary tools to develop an academic voice and become confident thinkers and writers, which is key to success at the University of Minnesota and beyond.

Professor Yuichiro Onishi

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT KELETSO E. ATKINS

PUBLICATIONS

-*The Black Atlantic Communication Network: African American Sailors and the Cape of Good Hope Connection.* , 1996.

-*'Kafir Time': Preindustrial Temporal Concepts and Labour Discipline in Nineteenth Century Colonial Natal.* , 1988.

-*Origins of the Ama Washa: The Zulu Washerwoman's Guild in Natal, 1850-1910.* , 1986.

-*The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money!*. Heinemann, *Social History of Africa Series*, 1993.

AWARDS

-Social Science Research Council International Doctoral Fellowship, 1982 - 1983

-Fulbright-Hays International Doctoral Research Fellowship, 1991 - 1992

-African Studies Association Herskovits Award for The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money!, 1994

-American Association of University Women Fellowship, 1985 - 1986

-National Humanities Center Fellowship, 1995 - 1996

-Choice Outstanding Academic Book for The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money!,

1995

-University of Michigan Faculty Recognition Award, 1995 - 1996

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

-Advisor, African Journal Newspaper

-Committee for Community Research Initiative - Metropolitan State University/ African American & African Studies African Community Outreach Initiative



UPCOMING EVENTS

Paul Rusesabagina

11/3/2008 7:30PM

Location: Northrop Memorial Auditorium

Cost: Free and open to the public

Contact: Serena Wright (612) 624-0430

wright103@umn.edu

Can one person make a difference?

Join author Paul Rusesabagina, inspiration for the 2004 story of courage and compassion in the opening days of the Rwandan

genocide. His example, demonstrates

how each of us can

change our world. A reception will follow the event.

Intergenerational Youth Conference:

11/7/2008 9:30AM-1:30PM

Location: Coffman Memorial Union Theater

Cost: Free open to selected middle school, high school and college students

Contact: Prof. Rose Brewer (612)624-9305

brewer001@umn.edu

"The 1969 Morrill Hall Takeover: University of Minnesota Veteran Activists Reflect on Black Bodies in Resistance"

11/12/2008 4:00 PM

Location: Nolte Center for Continuing Education, 125

Organized by Walt Jacobs, African American & African Studies, this roundtable discussion will be one of several events leading up to the fortieth anniversary of the peaceful protest efforts that forced the University to address issues of equal rights for minorities.

Cosponsored by the Department of African American & African Studies

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.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.

Colin Powell