



## The BCC Experiences New Orleans, Louisiana Post Katrina

*By Juanita Crider, Sabrina Reed,  
and Mary Gilliam*

In five days of research, tours, lectures, performances, panels, instruction, traditional cuisine and fun the BCC performing Arts Ensembles traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana to explore the effect of Hurricane Katrina on the African American and African Diasporic culture of New Orleans.

The October 10-14 tour is one of the highlights of the fall theme: "What the Waters Washed Away: The Impact of hurricane Katrina on the Retention of African American Art and Culture." The research tour serves as a "map" which Artists-In-Residence and performers will use to share the tour experience at the annual Cultural Arts Festival on December 5, 2008 and throughout the semester. The tour participants, a group of 61, included BCC staff, ensemble members, Artists-In-Residence and university photographer Mark Simons.



Tour Participants at historic St. Augustine's Church

St. Augustine's Catholic Church, located in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans, Louisiana was dedicated in 1842. Since its inception it has been a church of the free black citizens of New Orleans, welcoming both free and slave as worshippers.



Mr. Sylvester Francis and the Backstreet Museum



The Backstreet Museum is dedicated to preserving the rich cultural heritage of the Black Mardi Gras Indian tradition. The Mardi Gras Indian tradition is believed to have been practiced since the 19th century. The tradition served as a form of resistance to oppression and segregation while celebrating the historical connections and relationships between Blacks and Native Americans

# Research Tour Continued...



Palm Court Jazz Hotel

We enjoyed dinner and live jazz at the Palm Court Jazz Cafe located in the famous French Quarter district of New Orleans. The French Quarter, also known as Viuex Carre, sits on some of the highest ground in New Orleans. This area is a mixture of Spanish, French, Creole and American architecture. It is reputed to be New Orleans oldest neighborhood.



An Authentic Second Line Parade

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PAE members got the chance to participate in an authentic second line parade. The first line are the band, social clubs or krewes and the “second line” are the people who join up and follow the band as they travel along the streets.

# “When the Delta Speaks” A Contemporary Dance Concert

By Wenxin Zhang, Staff Writer

This unique dance concert, choreographed by Millicent Johnnie will take center stage at the Loeb Playhouse at Purdue University on November 12, 2008 at 7 p.m.

Ms. Millicent Johnnie, the producer and graduate student of Florida State University, devotes her life to exploring, researching and studying diverse dance forms from around the world. Her most famous choreographed works include “Hair Stories” “Shadow’s Child” and “Sincerely, Katrina Jones.” According to Ms. Johnnie, “I dance to rejuvenate my spirit and stay balanced. It is the language I use to communicate with my ancestors, and it heightens my awareness to social conditions that were plastered upon countless people of color throughout the world.”

“When the Delta Speaks” is another great performance true to Johnnie’s production traditions. Using the vocabulary of Africanist movement in a social and political context, with profound individual aesthetic ideals, this production reflects the essence of the Mississippi Delta region and its influences on hip-hop culture. The performance shows the process of researching, identifying and clarifying similarities between various forms of dance, and eventually creates a hybrid form of movement that emerges with hip-hop culture. By including young artists of varying backgrounds, Ms. Johnnie and her colleagues show their diversity as women of different cultural ethnicities and versatility as performers, while showing how their differences compliment each other.

After finishing her undergraduate studying, Ms. Johnnie started teaching at Tulane University in New Orleans. As a result of Hurricane Katrina, she and her family lost everything. “When the Delta Speaks” utilizes the hip-hop aesthetic as a vehicle for providing a response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Audiences should expect to see an incredible performance with a powerful message!



## Cultural Arts Series

### “We Are Americans: The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Politics of Language”

Charles P. Henry Ph.D.  
Monday, November 10th  
A BCC Library Event  
Fowler Hall, Stewart Center,  
7 p.m.

In the epilogue of his most recent book, *Long Overdue*, Charles P. Henry connects three simple words — “we are Americans” — to the need for a public discourse on racial reparations.

Dr. Henry is a professor of African American Studies and Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley

### “When the Delta Speaks” Contemporary Dance Concert

Loeb Playhouse, Stewart Center  
7:00 p.m.

This unique concert, choreographed by Millicent Johnnie, explores cultural influences indigenous to Louisiana and their effect on hip-hop culture.

The performance utilizes the hip-hop aesthetic as a vehicle for providing an artistic response to the devastation of Hurricane Katrina on the Mississippi Delta region.

# The Cultural Arts Festival

## “What the Waters Washed Away”

By Wenxin Zhang, Staff Writer



For the past six years, each fall semester the Black Cultural Center has selected a theme. Once the theme and location are chosen ensemble members, Artists-In-Residents and BCC staff travel to conduct hands-on research related to the theme. On December 5, 2008 at 7 p.m. the BCC Performing Arts Ensembles will take the stage at Loeb Playhouse in the annual Cultural Arts Festival. The Cultural Arts Festival (CAF) is a performance where students and Artists-In-

Residents showcase the results of the research tour experiences.

The theme for this year is “What The Water Washed Away”, where the impact of Hurricane Katrina on the Retention of African American Art and Culture in New Orleans will be illustrated through music, dance, and dramatic interpretations. Compared to previous Cultural Arts Festivals, this year’s CAF will offer something different to its audiences because instead of researching topics and events that are more historical in nature, the research group has had the privilege to study a very recent event that we all have lived through and been able to make critical reflections about.

According to Twana Harris, CAF director for two years, full time Artist-In-Residence and the director of the Black Voices of Inspiration, “The most important message we want to share with the public is that the catastrophe of Katrina has not broken the spirit of the people of New Orleans. They are determined to continue to celebrate their traditions, as well as maintain their strength as people who live in the power of community.” The Black Cultural Center desires to share the stories of those who are living, thriving and surviving in the aftermath of the chaos. Audiences can expect an interactive show that shares social criticism, emotional and inspirational dance, vocal music, and provoking drama. We hope to see you 7 p.m. at Loeb Playhouse.

## PBAO & BCC Celebrate Homecoming 2008

The Purdue Black Alumni Organization teamed up with the BCC and PAA to offer a Homecoming weekend full of exciting events. Over 250 Black alumni came back to campus October 24-26, 2008. The following individuals were honored during the weekend:

### *Outstanding Alumni*

Marcus Clarke, ChE ‘57  
Kelvin Pennington, IM ‘80

### *Faculty and Staff*

Roger Blalock, LA ‘60 Senior Assoc. Athletic Director  
Jackie Jimerson, CFS ‘73 Director Multicultural Programs  
and Senior Associate Director of Student Services  
Marion Blalock, LA ‘60, MS ‘73 Minority Engineering Program

### *Young Alumni Award*

Toyinda Wilson, ‘98, T’99

Candice Nash, regional human resources manager, Toyota Financial Services was elected the new president of PBAO and Camille McKinley, technical lead software engineer, WMS Garning, will serve as vice president.



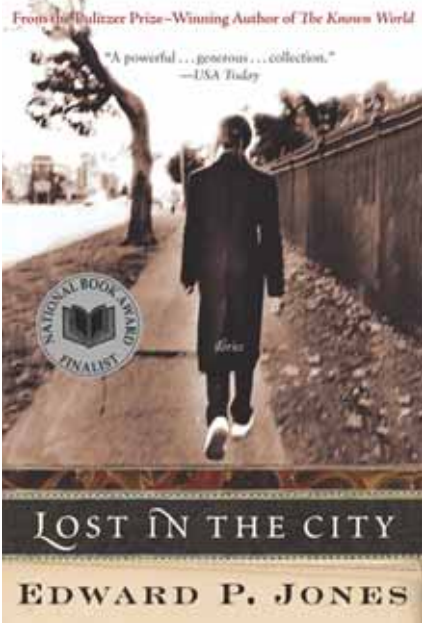
Jackie Jimerson

Purdue University College of Liberal Arts honored Tanasha Anders with the 2008 Emerging Voice Award. Tanasha is director of special events for REACH Media, directing national urban events for the 8 million listeners and 120 affiliate stations of The Tom Joyner Morning Show in Dallas. She also served as interim president and chief executive officer for Indiana Black Expo.



Tanasha Anders

# Focus on the Media



**“My shoes are my greatest joy, black patent leather miracles, and when one is nicked at the toe later that morning, in class, my heart will break.”**

**- From “The First Day” (p. 26)**

# Edward P. Jones Straight to the Heart Storytelling

It has been my experience that when most people think of reading they think primarily of novels, perhaps plays and even less poetry. Rarely do I hear any of my friends mention short stories. *Lost In the City* came to my attention from visiting the web site *The Root* (which I highly recommend, <http://www.theroot.com/>).

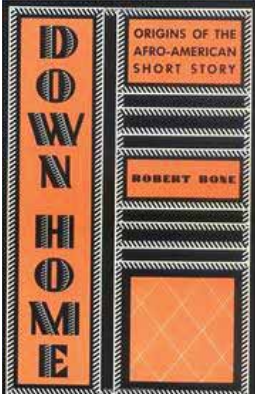
In this collection of short stories Jones introduces you to a cast of characters who are complex, indelible, and not so easily placed in the traditional antagonist/protagonist model. Jones hails from the nations capital and the stories in this collection are unapologetically flavored with the sights and sounds of the everyday people who make the nations capitol their home. In the hands of this author Washington , D.C. becomes a character just like, Betsy Ann in “The Girl Who Raised Pigeons” or Woodrow in “A New Man.”

Jones, born in Arlington, Virginia but educated in D.C. public schools, tells the authentic story of D.C. not the one fueled by tourism and politics, i.e. the one that most often exists in many people’s minds. While reading this book I traveled down the streets with the characters and found myself laughing out loud and shaking my head as I remembered people from my old neighborhood just like a character in a story.

This, Jones first collection of short stories was a national book finalist and a recipient of the Pen/Hemingway Award. Other books by Jones include: *All Aunt Hagar’s Children* and *The Known World*.

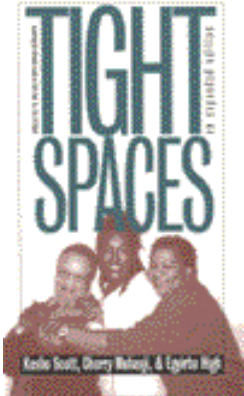
*By Juanita Crider, Editor*

## Recommended Reading



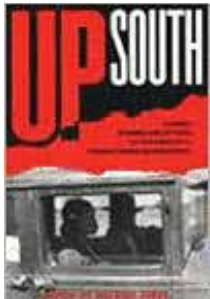
*Down Home: Origins of the Afro-American Short Story*

By Robert Bone



*Tight Spaces*

By Kesho Scott, Cherry Munhanji, and Egyirba High



*Up South: stories, studies, and letters of this century’s Black migrations* edited by Malaika Adero.

# A New Orleans Family at Purdue

## Meet the Rochons

*By Sabrina Reed, Staff Writer*



*Dr. Gilbert Rochon, Patricia Rochon and Hildred Rochon. Also featured in the picture is their son who is a graduate of Penn State and is currently working in the field of science in Philadelphia.*

How often do you find three members of one family employed by the university at the same time? Well as an answer to that question we would like to introduce you to three members of the Rochon family at Purdue University; Dr. Gilbert and Patricia Rochon and their daughter Hildred. Dr. Gilbert Rochon is Associate Vice President for Collaborative Research & Engagement. He obtained his Ph. D. in Planning Support Systems from MIT. He also has a MPH in Health Services Administration from Yale University, and B.A. in English from Xavier University in New Orleans, Louisiana. Patricia Rochon is a faculty member in the Communication department. She currently teaches an intro into digital production course and a video journalism course which is responsible for Fast Track, a weekly production of student news (Fast Track can be viewed on the Purdue Television channel). She holds a M.F.A. from Yale University, and a B.A. from Xavier University. Additionally she has also produced news and special programming for a CBS affiliate station in Boston, Massachusetts which is the 6th largest market in the nation, winning two regional Emmys for her shows. The two met in a special way. While taking an undergraduate course in directing Patricia needed someone for a one act play. Upon hearing of her need Dr. Gilbert's cousin ended up introducing the two. After that, they have been inseparable.

Hildred Rochon is the Research associate for the cytometry for life program at Bindley Bioscience Center. She has received her master's degree in public health from Tulane University's School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine. She obtained her undergraduate graduate degree in biology from IUPUI. Her research expertise includes adolescent reproductive health, water-borne pathogens, African sleeping sickness, cervical cancer and the cell that is destroyed by the HIV virus in AIDS called CD4 lymphocyte. She has traveled to Madagascar to put her expertise in practice.

As former residents of New Orleans, they have personally felt the effect of Katrina on their loved ones and friends who were residing there at the time of the hurricane. When asked, what will flourish now that the waters are gone, Patricia said, "That is hard to say because I am so far from there most of the time and because the recovery is still in its infancy." Patricia also went on to comment about the upcoming Cultural Arts Festival that will highlight and celebrate the survival of the New Orleans community. "I hope you are able to let people know that Katrina survivors are still fighting the sadness brought on by a loss of the pre-Katrina community. Relatives and friends who lived 5-15 minutes from each other have been flung across the US. Sunday dinners and Holiday celebrations will never be the same again."

# Research Tour Continued....



## Treme Community Center

Jerome Smith, community activist and director of the Treme Community Center shares stories of the rich history of New Orleans role in the civil rights movement.



## Xavier University- Katrina Survivor Panel

The most unforgettable moments of the trip were the first hand accounts of living through Hurricane Katrina. The panel consisted of college students, a Dillard University professor, and community activists. When asked about the key to their resilience, Mr. Ronald Lewis, director of the Feather and Dance Museum replied, "The culture is our medicine."



## Ashe Cultural Arts Center

Participants were treated to a hands on demonstration of the Mardi Gras Indian rituals and learned some traditional songs at the Ashe Cultural Arts Center. Ashe is located in the heart of the historic central city section of New Orleans.



## St. Peter Claver Catholic School

A highlight of the trip was the opportunity to perform for pre k - 5th grade students.

Ensembles presented a 30 minute performance based on their research about Hurricane Katrina prior to the trip. St. Peter Claver is a Catholic school which believes in affirming their African American heritage. The church suffered heavy damage as a result of Katrina.

And Finally...

# Quotes From the Research Tour...

*"Never have I seen a more lively culture filled with beauty, strength and appreciation. New Orleansians have rebuilt their homes from scratch and don't ask for pity. I feel at peace here and I am proud of who I am and knowing who I am. It was like a cleansing for my soul, so pure and true."*

- Sarah Hodson,  
Freshman Pre-Dentistry/  
Communications



*"The strength of the people of New Orleans is incredible. I feel like I experienced a greater sense of culture, family and redemption in three days than my previous 26 years of living."*

-Tion Thomas,  
Graduate Student Computer  
Science

*"This trip was inspirational and uplifting. I feel as if I am part of this culture and it runs throughout my blood."*

- Deshanna Crockett,  
Senior Mass  
Communications



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