On December 6, 2013, it was time again for the Cultural Arts Festival (CAF)! The festival showcased a semester’s worth of research about Gullah culture which also included a fall break tour to St. Helena Island, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia. The goal of CAF is to share with the campus and greater Lafayette community what students learned about Gullah history, traditions and folklore. The show also provides students an opportunity to display how their experience studying and travelling to the “Low Country” (a name for the Gullah region) affected them.

The title for this year’s show derives its name from the indigo plant which was used to make the dark bluish purple dye often seen in many West African textiles. While on the tour participants were able to decorate their own piece of cloth using the dye and a stamping technique.

This year’s CAF was under the direction of Dr. Twana A. Harris, full time BCC Artist -In-Residence and director of the Black Voices of Inspiration (BVOI) choir. According to Harris music, dance, story-telling, i.e. performance is integral to the Gullah culture which is rich in instrumentation and folktales. Additionally Dr. Harris desired for the production to remind the audience how music played a key role in communication between enslaved Africans while they lived and worked in the plantation system. Another important and fun part of “Low Country” culture is folklore which is passed on even today through story-telling. The show featured several traditional Gullah stories which have their roots in West African culture.

Throughout the course of a semester, the cast has collected various ways to express the Gullah culture with dance, basket making, quilt making, food, storytelling, woodcarving, ink/dye printing, and shrimping as well as home remedies that are unheard of! All of this was present in the show and if the audience reaction was any indication, the show was a tremendous hit!
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Building on the theme of the AFROS exhibition, The Purdue University Black Cultural Center in conjunction with The Purdue University Graduate School’s Office of Interdisciplinary Graduate Programs is inviting students to submit a proposal on the identity politics, product development, sociocultural significance, economic importance and/or scientific relevance of natural hair. Students should explore how natural hair has been central to various topics and issues within academic disciplines and public discourse.

Students whose abstracts are accepted will be required to present on February 25, 2014 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm to discuss their research or creative project. Monetary awards ranging from $500 -$1,000 will be given to the top presenters. Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words and must be submitted by Monday, January 27, 2014 utilizing the following survey: https://purdue.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV1Gk1A17HdUVOV

Inquiries regarding the symposium may be made to Renee Thomas or Dr. Colleen Gabauer.
Purdue Celebrates MLK

Michael Sullivan, Staff Writer

January will usher in the new semester and hosts the time of year to reflect on the life and work of Martin Luther King Jr. In recognition of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, Purdue University has assembled a variety of programs to cause reflection on the life and legacy of Dr. King. Faculty, students, and community members will be able to take advantage of lectures, service, learning opportunities, discussions, film, and music throughout the week.

The campus will physically transform to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Purdue Libraries faculty and staff will create and mount displays in libraries across campus on a variety of topics related to Dr. King’s legacy. An Interactive diversity message board via Facebook and Twitter will be hosted by the College of Agriculture Data Action Team. The College of Technology will create an interactive display in the lobby of Knoy featuring a picture of Dr. Martin Luther King. Students are encouraged to write their dream on the display.

On January 19th, an MLK Memorial Service will be held at Second Baptist Church, Lafayette. A candlelight vigil will take place on Jan. 21 at 6 p.m. Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. will host this solemn memorial walk in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The march will commence at the BCC and conclude at Loeb Theatre. A hot chocolate social will follow. In addition to these events, students will also have the opportunity to listen to powerful speeches.

On Jan. 21 at Loeb playhouse, Purdue will host Julian Bond, a social activist and leader in the American civil rights movement. Bond will deliver a powerful message of greater equality, freedom, and justice with a renewed sense of relevance to the Civil Rights Movement in our present times. The Purdue Dreamer Award, which is given annually to an individual or organization within the Purdue community to honor contributions that embody Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s vision of service to others and further the University’s commitment to diversity, will be also be presented prior to the keynote address.

Students, staff and faculty will have other opportunities to listen to other speakers about social justice. Dr. White, Assistant professor of Environmental Justice at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will discuss how communities of color and grassroots organizations are involved in the development of sustainable community food systems as a strategy to respond to issues of hunger and food inaccessibility.

BTV will air a series of documentary films to educate about civil rights films include – The Jackie Robinson Story and Venus and Serena.

The 2014 celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. at Purdue will end with the MLK Awards Reception on Jan. 30 at 4 p.m. in the PMU Anniversary Room. A series of awards will be presented to students, organizations, community members and Purdue faculty and staff who best exemplify or emulate the characteristics that advance the philosophy of Dr. Martin Luther King. Purdue students will share excerpts from various MLK speeches.
The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was founded on February 12, 1909 in response to the horrific practice of lynching and the series of race riots in Springfield, IL in 1908. A multiracial group, primarily consisting of White New York City liberals (including descendants of abolitionist such as Mary White Ovington and Oswald Garrison Villard), wanted to ensure the rights of all U.S. citizens. Finding the violence committed against Blacks appalling, this group of nearly 60 people, of which only 7 were African American (including W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, and Mary Church Terrell), banded together and formed the Association.

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate race-based discrimination. The principle objectives of the Association are as follows:

• To ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens
• To achieve equality of rights and eliminate race prejudice among the citizens of the United States
• To remove all barriers of racial discrimination through democratic processes
• To seek enactment and enforcement of federal, state, and local laws securing civil rights
• To inform the public of the adverse effects of racial discrimination and to seek its elimination
• To educate persons as to their constitutional rights and to take all lawful action to secure the exercise thereof, and to take any other lawful action in furtherance of these objectives, consistent with the NAACP’s Articles of Incorporation and this Constitution.

Why should a student at Purdue care about the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, you ask? Well, William Pollard once stated, “The arrogance of success is to think that what we did yesterday is good enough for tomorrow.” Major social issues still arise in 2013, and our tactics to address said issues must match the era we live in. We must be innovative, well informed and proactive, not traditional, misinformed and reactive, to create changes we need.

Purdue NAACP wishes to facilitate students’ social awareness, create open dialogue on issues, and act purposely to exact change. We are building an impactful program that has longevity; the NAACP’s presence must be firm and constant. Our current goal is to build a membership full of diverse, forward-thinking students, similar to the individuals that started the Association in 1909. “The enlightenment of people and the cultivation of public opinion” is at the forefront of Purdue NAACP’s vision for our university. All students eager for Purdue University to become a progressive and inclusive institution of higher learning are welcome to join the chapter, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion.

AnnDrea Butler, Chapter President

For updates, follow us on Twitter at @PurdueNAACP.
Email us at purduenaacp@gmail.com with your questions, concerns, or suggestions.
In Memoriam: Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela
July 18, 1918 - December 5, 2013

Juanita Crider, Editor

On December 5th the world lost one of its most iconic leaders and the country of South Africa, as stated by its current president, Jacob Zuma, “lost its son!” Mandela, a Xhosa, born Rolihlahla Mandela in Mvezo, South Africa studied law and afterwards lived in Johannesburg, South Africa where he became politically involved in anti-colonial politics and became a member of the African National Congress (ANC). In 1962, after years of organized protest and legal action against the apartheid government of South Africa, Mandela was arrested and convicted of conspiracy to overthrow the government, and was sentenced to life in prison.

He served 27 years in prison, beginning at Robben Island where he served the majority of his time. Later he was moved to other prisons. Over the course of his imprisonment an international campaign grew to abolish the South African government’s apartheid system and also for Mandela’s release from prison. In 1990 Mandela was finally released and continued to work for not just the abolishment of apartheid but also for democratic elections which were held in 1994. As a result of this election, won by the ANC, Mandela became South Africa’s first black president. In 1993, prior to becoming president, Mandela received the Nobel Prize for Peace.

He is survived by his wife, Graca Machel, six children, several grandchildren and a nation and world of people who affectionately called him by his Xhosa clan name, Madiba.

Hamba Kahle Madiba (Go well/Rest in Peace)

“I hate race discrimination most intensely and in all its manifestations. I have fought it all during my life; I fight it now and will do so until the end of my days.” - Nelson Mandela

Recommended Reading

Juanita Crider, Editor

- Long Walk To Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela

- Nelson Mandela’s Favorite African Folktales
  by Nelson Mandela, Editor
Dr. Nadia Brown: Drawn Back to the Classroom

Ebony Barrett-Kennedy, Staff Writer

The BCC extends a warm welcome to Dr. Nadia Brown. Dr. Brown joined the College of Liberal Arts faculty in the fall with a dual appointment in Political Science and African-American Studies. Growing up in New Jersey, she took an interest in politics at an early age. She earned a BA in political science from Howard University and went on to complete a PhD in Political Science from Rutgers University, with major fields in Women and Politics, and American Politics. She also holds a graduate certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies.

While Dr. Brown’s path to becoming a professor was not always in her plan, she could not imagine doing anything else. Her family has always had strong ties to academia. Brown says her grandfather had a large influence in this family dynamic. Moving north from South Carolina during the Great Migration, he always stressed the importance of political involvement and education. In fact, as a child, Dr. Brown aspired to be a civil rights activist. When asked about her decision to pursue a PhD she chuckled as she responded. “After finishing my BA at Howard, I didn’t know what I wanted to do, but I knew that I didn’t want to go to law school.”

During her time at Howard she participated in a summer program with the Ralph Bunche Institute. The goal of these programs is to encourage students to pursue academic careers in political science. “It was like a research bootcamp,” Brown recalls. “I loved it and I loved being in a university setting.” Although she enjoyed her time working on Capitol Hill, she found herself drawn back to the classroom. Dr. Brown finds her experience at Purdue University to be especially rewarding. “I was nervous about coming to the middle of nowhere,” she admits, but she was quickly won over by excellence of students, the resources and above all the sense of community.

At Purdue, Brown intends to continue her investigation of women, race and ethics in politics. She is most interested in examining how black women get elected to office. When asked about the current political landscape for black women, she takes issue with imagery and media depictions. She points out how cultural and popular depictions of black womanhood shape how black women are expected to behave. “Reality TV plays a role in us needing to pull out our inner ‘Ne-ne’…our strength is expected to be on the surface while we are forbidden from walking in the full essence of our humanity.” She is the author of a book titled Sisters in the Statehouse: Black women and Legislative Decision Making (under contract with Oxford University press).
“Afros: Celebration of Natural Hair”
Coming to the BCC

Through a collaboration with the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Purdue University’s Black Cultural Center (BCC) and the Art Museum of Greater Lafayette will feature a new art exhibition entitled, “Afros: Celebration of Natural Hair,” celebrating the beauty of natural hair in the African American community as well as its historical significance. The exhibition will run January – March 2014 and feature works by photographer Michael July and Chicago artist Margaret Burroughs. An opening reception will be held on Friday, January 17, 4:00-6:00pm.

Originally from Brooklyn, NY, Michael July was influenced by his parents’ love for the arts (poetry, painting, and fashion). Between the 1960s and 1990s, July started his own collection of magazines, music, and newspaper that discussed and reflected on Black culture. The book “Afro: Celebration of Natural Hair” was inspired by an Afropunk New Years’ Eve party where July was photographing a black couple who both had afros. This initial photograph stemmed a five-year project for July where he photographed people from around the world “as natural as possible.” His long-term goal with the project was to target young audiences who have a lack of self-esteem or struggle with personal identity due to peer pressure, a lack of natural role models, and negative stereotypes in the media. One of his photographs of a young boy with an afro, Julien Florez, illustrates Michael July’s attempt to highlight the renaissance of the afro.

Similar to July’s interest in displaying the natural expression of the African diaspora, art educator and founder of the South Side Community Art Center and Du Sable Museum in Chicago, IL, Margaret Burroughs’s work illustrates the history and beauty of Black people. Born in 1915, Burroughs was born in Louisiana and moved to Chicago at the age of five. As a principal member of the Black Chicago Renaissance, a confluence of Black artists, writers, and philosophers, Burroughs invested her energies in educating young people in the arts in Chicago and Mexico as well as representing those she met in her paintings and lithographs. Burroughs continued her work until her death in 2010, at the age of 95.

Inspired by the work of Michael July and Margaret Burroughs, North Carolina artist and Purdue University student, Boyd Smith will also exhibit two- and three-dimensional paintings depicting the struggle of Black people through slavery and civil rights as well as the celebration of beauty and natural hair. Smith received a BFA at University of North Carolina at Pembroke and went on to operate his own art gallery, Boydz Aficher Gallery, for three years. As a recent migrant to Indiana, Smith works as an art curator for the BCC and a faculty member at the Art Museum of Greater Lafayette.

There will be a series of events around the theme of Natural Hair throughout the semester. February 11 “Our Crowning Glory: Kinky, Curly, Puffy, Wavy” presentation by Dr. Tanisha Ford, University of Massachusetts and scholars from Purdue University – Dr. Nadia Brown and Dr. Marlo David will participate in a roundtable discussion in a round table talk facilitated by graduate student Aria Halliday.
You have seen it even if you didn’t know its name and history. What am I referring to you might be asking? Resolute of course, the famous and iconic desk that is often in use in the White House, oval Office. The desk is made from timber from the British Naval ship the HMS Resolute. Queen Victoria had four desks built from the wood and presented one to President Rutherford B Hayes. Not all U. S. President’s since Hayes have used the desk in the oval office some preferred the desk to be in their private study. Some readers may even be familiar with the iconic photo of President Kennedy sitting at this desk in the oval office while his son John Jr. is playing under the desk and peeking through the desk panel. Our current President uses the desk in the oval office also.

This desk, made from remaining timber after the HMS Resolute was destroyed, has been witness to many important public and not so public events. There have even been small modifications to the desk. For example there was not always a panel that opened. It was installed so that FDR’s leg braces would be hidden as he sat.

During the years when Resolute was not in use it has been part of a traveling display as part of the Kennedy Presidential Library and it has also been on exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute. It seems to me the name perfectly fits the desk. To be resolute means to be determined, firm, purposeful and persistent. So I challenge you to be like this desk in 2014. You may have to change course a bit, shift an original intent or idea, and/or modify a familiar method of doing things but even in the midst of necessary change you can be steadfast in setting and reaching your immediate and long-range goals. Be safe during winter break and see you next semester!

For more information on Resolute or any other white house furniture visit: http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/inside-white-house/west-wing-tour