

DIASPORA CALLING:

The Newsletter of the African and African American Studies Program at Louisiana State University

Fall 2017

Director's Note

The 2016-2017 academic year was my first year as Director of the African & African American Studies Program at LSU. Working with a paucity of reserves and faculty lines was a daunting challenge, and I want to say, "thank you" to the Faculty Affiliates, as well as to Dr. Lori L. Martin, Dr. Joyce M. Jackson, and my Graduate Assistant, who joins our faculty this fall, Dr. Dari Green. You did it!

I say this sincerely. What AAAS accomplished last year far exceeded what a small interdisciplinary program was supposed to be able to do, and because of you, AAAS's footprint has become far larger than the actual size of the academic unit and its resources. Let me rehearse some of what you accomplished last year.

- AAAS Concentrators (Majors) in the Liberal Arts increased 500%. You read that correctly, 500%.
- AAAS Minors increased approximately 25%-30%.
- AAAS Faculty Affiliates increased by 25%.



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- Thanks to Steering Committee (Drs. Lori L. Martin, Dr. Tom Durant, Dr. Roland Mitchell, Dr. Dari Green, Dr. Joyce M. Jackson, and Dr. Derrick Rovaris), we completed our 5-year Profile Plan (2017-2022) that will guide our efforts in raising our profile in the college, state, region, and nation, becoming more efficient in our activities, a larger and fuller unit beyond simply a coordinating program, greater fundraising and development, better structured in administration and reporting, and giving us a roadmap to the potential of beginning a research institute. The Profile Plan also included an organizational flow chart that will help us to realize our vision.
- AAAS initiated the Director's Club, made up of student leaders and advisors, who will offer critical insight to the Director about their experience in courses, on campus, their needs, and assist with recruitment of students to the major and minor.
- The student organization, SAAAS: The Society for African & African American Studies, is growing in numbers and activities and will serve as a peer-mentoring and educational auxiliary for AAAS.
- AAAS formulated earnest plans to expand its curriculum and cross-listed courses that will give us more control over our offerings and give students a richer intellectual experience and a wider range of post-graduation possibilities.
- In conjunction with the AAAS Community Advisory Council (CAC), AAAS began its LSU AAAS 25@25 Campaign in honor of our 25th anniversary (1994-2019) to raise money to endow The Dr. Thomas Durant Scholarship, (*in memoriam*) The Dr. Troy D. Allen Award, as well as to improve our office and buttress operating funds. We also have some ambitious long-term goals that require capital.
- We created a student handbook for AAAS concentrators and minors. The handbook provides students with information about the history of the program, degree requirements, information about advisement, and the official student organization for AAAS, Society of African and African American Studies.

I could say so much more about what AAAS has done, and I could call many more names, and none of that would approximate my deeply-felt sentiments and respect for the commitment and hard work of the Faculty, Affiliates, and Students. I am in awe of the possibility of building on this great start during the 2017-2018 academic year.

As for me, I was fortunate to win a statewide competitive ATLAS (Award to Louisiana Artists and Scholars) Grant, given by the Board of Supervisors. While I will continue to be engaged in important matters, I will be researching and writing on women and embodiment in the Nation of Islam for a monograph and returning, later in the year, to essays on Malcolm X and gender for another. Dr. Lori L. Martin will be excellent in her role as Acting Director until I return next fall. Until then, cheers

A FEW WORDS FROM DR. LORI MARTIN



AAAS is a wonderful oasis. AAAS provides relief and refuge for students, faculty, staff, and community residents weary from the challenges of fighting for social justice and raising awareness about the rich history, experiences, and ongoing contributions of people in the African Diaspora and on the continent of Africa.

AAAS is a place where theory meets practice; expectations and standards are high; there is a sense of belonging; and a shared commitment to encourage and uplift one another.

As I begin my fifth year at LSU and one-year term as Acting Director of AAAS, the program remains that kind of place for me, and for so many others. For nearly a quarter of a century, AAAS has been there for LSU and for the broader community. My goal as Acting Director is to continue to fulfill the program's mission and vision.

I look forward to working with everyone committed to African and African American Studies at LSU. I am also committed to continuing the commitment to excellence demonstrated by past directors of AAAS, most recently, Dr. Stephen C. Finley. Dr. Finley's commitment, dedication, and advocacy for all things AAAS, during his first year as director, serves as a great example of what we can accomplish together: a higher profile on-and off-campus, an unprecedented number of new majors and minors, more affiliates, and a renewed commitment to engaging, advising, recruiting, and mentoring students.

Together we can, in the tradition of adaptive leadership, mobilize people to tackle the tough challenges the program and city will likely face, and not only survive, but also thrive.



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Thomas Durant Jr.

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Joyce M. Jackson, Geography & Anthropology

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Sunny Yang, English

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. SUNNY YANG

By: Nayyir Ransome, AAAS and Creative Writing Student

Dr. Sunni Yang has a Ph.D. in English with a certificate in Africana Studies. Her studies are in multiethnic American literature in the long nineteenth century. Dr. Yang grapples with questions like, “What are these other histories that haven’t been taught?” She looks at law and literature and the way the language of law justified excluding non-white people from American citizenship as America’s territory expanded. “How does the America justify not extending rights to non-white people?” and “How did these people respond?”

Her undergraduate degree is in Anthropology. While determining what to study in graduate school, she realized that as an observer of any culture there is the possibility of unconsciously shaping the narratives of a culture in ways that they don’t intend. This looming possibility led her to the wise decision of studying English where those narratives have already been written.

Dr. Yang teaches Asian American literature and taught an African American Literature and Law class. In her classes, she emphasizes close reading and analysis while drawing attention to the implications of words and how they have shaped our ideas of Race over time.

Currently, Dr. Yang is working on a book and plans to have it out in the next couple of years.



(Photo of Dr. Sunny Yang)

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: DR. FAHIMA IFE

By: Eunice Koomson, AAAS and Creative Writing Student

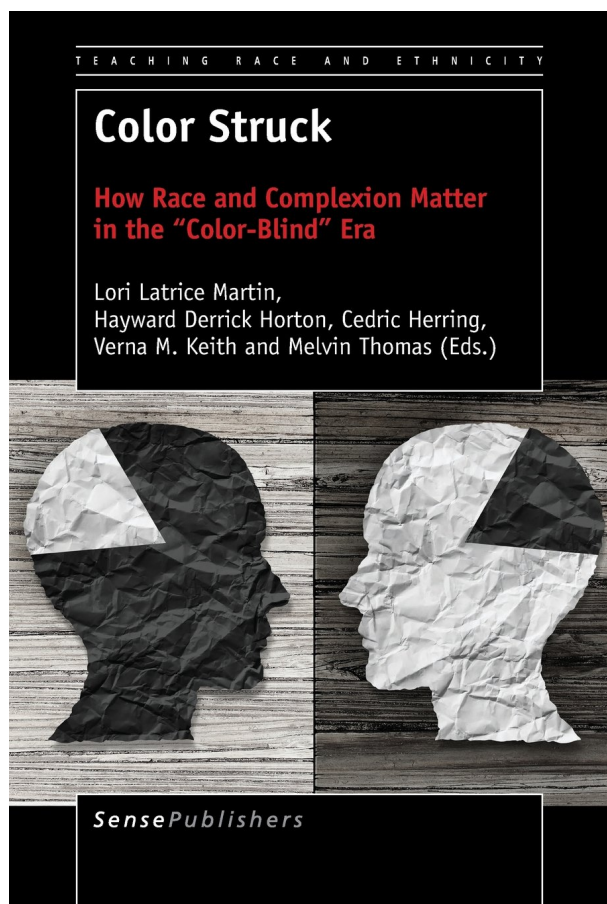


Dr. Fahima Ife was born and raised in Riverside, California. Before arriving to Baton Rouge, Dr. Ife lived in Atlanta, GA for six years; she received her Master's from Emory University and also taught middle school students. Dr. Ife then received her PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. At UW-Madison, Dr. Ife took a class filled with many black women who were "very vulnerable in what they would share and express in this class." Dr. Ife was not only interested in their ability to be so vulnerable in an academic setting but also intrigued by this idea that these women have never encountered another academic space that felt that safe for them to divulge the things they were sharing. This experience caused Dr. Ife to switch her research from seeing how young people develop their subversive literary practices to how black women navigate through academic spaces especially in predominantly white settings.

At this moment in time, Dr. Ife is exactly where she wants to be in life. Considering that the 2016-2017 academic year was the first year as a tenure-track faculty, it was very ideal for Dr. Ife to be able to not only teach but to design a course that had that response she wanted. The level of excitement and enthusiasm for #BlackGirlMagic and what that course has been throughout this semester is actually "magic in itself." Dr. Ife dreams of co-designing very artistic healing spaces where queer black girls/women and LGBTQ youth of color can come together in these spaces that are all about "vulnerability," "expression," "safety," "nurturance," "reclamation" of spirituality. When asked to share some advice for students who are struggling with their major and/or career choice, Dr. Ife says to listen to your heart. In fact, Dr. Ife, herself, began in the Psychology field and was interested in clinical work. "Follow that passion that you get very excited about and you know deep in your heart that you want to do...If you're truly living in your purpose and on purpose then you're not gonna fail."

In addition to Dr. Ife's accomplishments and inspiring words, her name is one of the most interesting aspects of her character. At just 22 years old, Dr. Ife took control of her life and changed her name: "Fahima" meaning "understanding" in Arabic and "Ife" meaning "love" in Yoruba. With the help of her mother's unwavering support and love, a free black child ultimately became a free black woman--the one and only Dr. Fahima Ife.

In Memory of Dr. Troy Allen



Dr. Lori Latrice Martin, an associate professor of African and African American Studies and Sociology at Louisiana State University, co-edited a book with sociologists Drs. Hayward Derrick Horton, Cedric Herring, Verna Keith, and Melvin Thomas, about color stratification. The book includes chapters co-authored by Dr. Petra Robinson, an assistant professor at LSU and affiliate of AAAS, and Dr. Stephen C. Finley. Dr. Finley's chapter is co-authored by Dr. Martin. Dr. Roland Mitchell, a professor at LSU and affiliate of AAAS, contributed advanced praise for the edited volume. The book is dedicated in memory of Dr. Troy Allen.

Dr. Troy Duane Allen was a valuable member of LSU, Southern University, and the city of Baton Rouge. He passed from this life on March 17, 2017, but is immortalized by the impact that he made on his students and colleagues. His humor and intelligence were a delight to all who knew him. His wisdom and compassion were a comfort. His loyalty and devotion were mainstays.

Dr. Allen was an insatiable reader with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. Teaching was his passion and the impressions he made on students always surpassed a need for formal recognition for the work that he did.

He was an accomplished athlete with a remarkable passion for basketball. He was an extraordinary father and an adoring husband. He is greatly missed by the students, colleagues, and affiliates of the African and African American Studies program at LSU!



Check out a special tribute from Dr. Joyce M. Jackson on page 9.

ALUMNA SPOTLIGHT: MIKANA SCOTT

I am currently a first-year PhD student in the Department of Africology & African-American Studies at Temple University. Currently, my research interests are within the realm of the African Diaspora, specifically: Maroon Communities, African Spirituality/Religion and Colonialism with a focus in the Caribbean.

Having graduated from LSU in 2012 with a BA in Liberal Arts: Concentration in African & African-American Studies, my work within AAAS at LSU positioned me to apply a critical lens not only to the African Diasporic experience within classes in the program, but also other general classes.

Within the program, I experienced a level of rigor and specificity that I was not finding in other academic disciplines. I was successfully able to apply concepts, theories and writing skills to the public sector, and while taking a break from graduate school, I was employed within a Disaster Management Office, where I was effective in applying the skills that I learned during the program at LSU.

Now, as a PhD student within Africana Studies, I am very grateful for the thorough academic foundation, as well as continued support from faculty from my time at LSU. I am continually re-reading texts that I encountered first in the program for my own academic purposes, but also within the undergraduate classes that I am currently a Lecturer of Record at Temple University, teaching classes entitled *Representing Race* and *The Black Woman*.



(Photo of Mikana Scott)

The interdisciplinary field of Blacks Studies—alternatively called African American Studies, Afro-American Studies, Africana Studies, Pan African Studies, or Black World Studies, depending on the school where it is offered has many men and women like Mikana, who are agents of change. We, at LSU, take great pride in seeing the students who have graduated through our African and African American Studies program, go on to do great things in the world!

Dr. Troy Duane Allen: A Memorial Dedication

By: Dr. Joyce Marie Jackson

It is difficult to express how deeply I feel about Dr. Troy Allen's untimely transition. What started many years ago as a colleague relationship quickly became a warm friendship. It was a privilege to have known him, and I will never forget his academic prowess, wisdom, humor, mother wit, street savviness, and thoughtfulness. In the African tradition, when a learned elderly person dies, the community declares that a "Great Tree Has Fallen." Although Troy was only fifty-six when he made his transition, most of us who knew him would agree that he was an old soul with fresh and ageless wisdom that was the embodiment of his spirit, so he could fall into the category of a "Great Tree."

Troy's teaching and research crossed multiple disciplines, but most strongly in History, Political Science and Sociology. His research record is certainly admirable when viewed along with his teaching record over the years. He normally taught 6 courses per semester, two for AAAS at LSU and four for the History Dept. at Southern University (SU). With this enormous teaching load he managed to publish one book, six refereed journal articles, five book chapters along with four book reviews, encyclopedia entries and an essay for a handbook on Black Studies. In addition, he had another book and article in progress.

Troy has been an invaluable Instructor and enormously popular among students, making him a great asset in our primary goal to recruit students to the AAAS concentration in Liberal Arts and to expanding our course enrollments. He has taught for AAAS for 14 years (since 2003), teaching multiple courses each semester, including Race Relations, Introduction to African American Studies, Black Popular Culture, and History of Ancient Africa. Moreover, his training explicitly in African American Studies theory and practice (M.A., Ohio State University, 1992; Ph.D., Temple University, 1998) gave him unique expertise that greatly benefitted the Program as our faculty considered ways to be more effective in teaching, recruitment, and raising the profile of the AAAS Program nationally.

Troy had a passion for teaching and as a student advisor and mentor, he was outstanding. Listening to students (at LSU and SU) talk about him, before and after his demise, was simply uplifting to me to hear the accolades and praises for a fellow colleague. Statements like, "He redirected my life, because I was on a downhill spiral." "I would not be in Law School today if it were not for that man." "I like rolling with Dr. Troy, he taught me life lessons as much on the basketball court as he did in the classroom." "I can't believe he is gone, I was looking forward to taking another class with him next semester." He was truly devoted to his students and has also offered service to the AAAS unit on many occasions, such as moderating sessions at the 20th Anniversary conference, *Blacks in the Red Stick: The African American Experience in Baton Rouge*, at LSU in 2015.

With great personal joy, I will always remember him as a great colleague and warm friend. Again, in the African tradition when an elder has passed on, the community sustains his legacy by continuing to call his name. We will continue to call his name and students will know about him for generations to come.



(Pictured Left to Right: Dr. Lori Martin, Lia White Allen, Dr. Joyce M. Jackson, and Dr. Stephen C. Finley)



AAAS is preparing to celebrate the program's silver anniversary in 2019. As part of our efforts to commemorate the program's humble beginnings, AAAS seeks to raise \$100,000, over the next two years. The funds will support scholarships for students, beautification of the AAAS office suite, and operating costs. Named scholarships include, Dr. Thomas Durant Scholarship and the Dr. Troy Allen Service Award. Members of the AAAS faculty met with Dr. Allen's wife, Lia White Allen to discuss creating an award in her late husband's honor. Lia White Allen shared many wonderful memories about Troy Allen with Drs. Martin, Jackson, and Finley, impressing upon them Dr. Allen's passion for life, learning, and for his family.

We invite you to contribute to the award fund, honoring the legacy of Dr. Troy Allen or any of the other areas, which are the focus of the 25@25 Campaign. In keeping with the theme of the campaign, prospective donors are asked to consider giving \$25, or \$250, or \$2,500, or \$25,000, etc. Donations at any level are greatly appreciated. Please send checks to AAAS, 135 Howe-Russell Complex, LSU, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70803. Make checks payable to AAAS. Feel free to designate your gift in the memo for one of the purposes listed above. You may also visit our website to make a donation online (www.lsu.edu/aaas).



AAAS Introduces Director's Club

AAAS values input from students, faculty, and staff about what we are doing well and areas where we could improve. To that end, the Director's Club was created. Standing members of the Director's Club include the president and vice-president of Society for African and African American Studies (SAAAS). The remaining members of the Director's Club are selected in the spring of each academic year for the following year based upon the student's commitment to AAAS, scholarship, and demonstrated practice of leadership. The first class of the Director's Club are as follows: Zuwena Easterling, G. Lynn Espinoza, Katherine Evans, Monturios Howard, Miles Jordan, Eunice Koomson, Sebastian Mejia, Sierra Phelps, Nayyir Ransome, and Jeremiah Anthony Rogers.

SAAAS CORNER



My name is Sebastian Brumfield Mejía. I am a sophomore double majoring in Political Science and Sociology from Baton Rouge, LA. I am involved in College Democrats and Male Leadership Council. I am passionate about social justice and music.

This year will be my second term serving as the President of the Society for African and African American Studies (SAAAS). SAAAS is a student organization for students of all backgrounds to join in conversations of identity, inequality, and intersectionality, specifically related to African and African Americans. Its purpose is to attract interested students to the AAAS Department, promote meaningful dialogue, and host impactful programs.

During the 2016-17 academic year, SAAAS recruited new members and co-sponsored multiple programs, including a panel discussion of colorism and a screening of the Oscar award-winning movie *Moonlight* followed by a panel discussion. During the 2017-18 academic year, SAAAS aspires to grow further by developing a consistent membership, hosting more frequent dialogues and programs, connecting students with resources within the AAAS Program, and continuing its long term goal of becoming a significant presence on LSU's campus.

contact us: LSUSAAAS@gmail.com

CONGRATULATIONS

JEREMIAH ANTHONY ROGERS

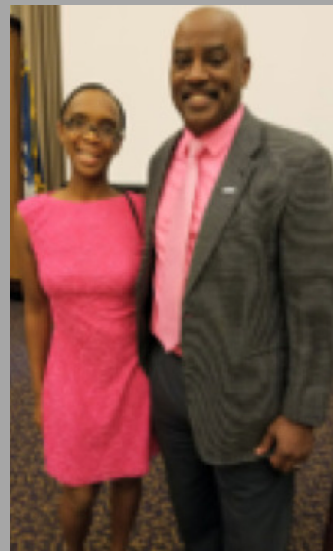
AAAS Major and Member of the Director's Club

SAAAS, Vice President

&

**Recipient of LSU Board of Supervisors
Scholarship**

2017-2018



Dr. Lori L. Martin and Dr. Dereck Rovaris, Vice Provost for Diversity and Chief Diversity Officer, are pictured in the photo on the right at LSU's Summer Leadership Institute on August 8, 2017. Dr. Rovaris was a featured presenter and Dr. Martin attended the event on behalf of AAAS.

DID YOU KNOW?

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Paul M. Hebert Law Center have partnered together to launch a new 3+3 program, allowing students to receive a bachelor's and law degree in six years' time. As a student in AAAS you can take full advantage of this opportunity!



HOW TO MAJOR IN AAAS

A concentration in AAAS requires a total of 33 credit hours including:

- A required core of nine (9) hours: AAAS 2000; AAAS 3024 or 3044 (CxC); & AAAS 4020.
- In addition to 9 hours of required courses, students must complete 24 hours from at least two divisions and three different departments.
- A minimum of 6 hours must focus on a geographical area outside of the U.S.
- 3 hours in a Service Learning or Communication across the Curriculum (CxC) course
- Only 12 hours from courses numbered below 3000-level may count towards degree.

Sign up today to get started!



DID YOU KNOW?

Before attending Law school at Harvard University, **First Lady Michelle Obama** studied Sociology and African American studies at Princeton University. She along with many other notable names, like: Angela Bassett, Mae Jemison, Aaron McGruder, even Marc Morial, pursued degrees in African and African American Studies. A major or minor in AAAS provides a firm academic foundation for pursuing career options in numerous fields.

Fall 2017 Course Offerings

<i>Course #</i>	<i>Day/Time Offered</i>	<i>Instructor</i>	<i>Title</i>
AAAS 2000.1	Online Course	Jas Sullivan	Intro to AAAS
AAAS 2000.2	T/TH 12:00-1:20pm	Dari Green	Intro to AAAS
AAAS 2000.3	T/TH 7:30-8:50am	Dari Green	Intro to AAAS
AAAS 2410	T 4:30-7:20pm	Dari Green	Black Pop Culture
AAAS 2511/ SOCL 2511	T/TH 9:00-10:20am	Dari Green	Race Relations
AAAS 3044	T/TH 7:30-8:50am	Herman Kelly	The Black Rhetorical Traditions
AAAS 3120	MWF 1:30-2:20p	Gibril Cole	Topics in History of Africa and the African Diaspora
AAAS 3902.1	T/TH 9:00-10:20am	Lori Martin	Sports Race and Society
AAAS 3902.2	T/TH 12:00-1:20pm	Herman Kelly	The History of the Civil Rights Movement
AAAS 4450	MWF 9:30-10:20pm	Joyce M. Jackson	Studies in African Diaspora Religions

ENROLL TODAY!

Greetings from Linda Smith Griffin



Dear AAAS Faculty,

Welcome back to the start of a new academic school year! Congratulations on your collaborative and individual accomplishments that continue to further the role and mission of the AAAS Program. I sincerely thank you for your warm thoughts, prayers, and continued support during my unexpected illness that occurred in the spring 2017 semester. I am progressing well with the expectation of returning to work at some point in the semester. I would especially like to thank Dr. Stephen C. Finley for his leadership of the Program and for his continued encouragement as I move toward a successful recovery. For library resources and other information needs while I am away, please contact the LSU Libraries for assistance.

Best wishes for a great semester!

Linda Smith Griffin, Subject Specialist, Middleton Library

African and African American Studies Program

NEWS AND NOTES

Publications

Finley, S.C., Green, D., Martin, L.L. & Rovaris, D. (Forthcoming). Lifting as We Climb. *Western Journal of Black Studies*.

Finley, S.C. and Martin, L.L. (2017). The Complexity of Color and the Religion of Whiteness. In Martin, L.L., Horton, H.D., Herring, C., Keith, V. and M. Thomas. (Eds.). *Color Struck*. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers. 179-195.

Martin, L.L., Horton, H.D., Herring, C., Keith, V. and M. Thomas. (Eds.) (2017). *Color Struck*. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.

Martin, L.L. (2017). Introduction. In Martin, L.L., Horton, H.D., Herring, C., Keith, V. and M. Thomas. (Eds.). *Color Struck*. The Netherlands: Sense Publishers. xiii-xvii.

Mitchell, R. & Lewis, H. (2016). *Beyond Mammy, Jezebel, & Sapphire: Reclaiming Images of Black Women*. Portland, OR: Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation.

Wooten, S.C., & Mitchell, R. (Eds.) (2016). *Preventing Sexual Violence on Campus: Program Innovation to Challenge Traditional Approaches*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Awards

- Dr. Roland Mitchell was awarded the 2017 LSU Distinguished Faculty Award!
- AAAS faculty won five out of six awards sponsored by the African American Cultural Center (Dr. Roland Mitchell, Dr. Dari Green, Dr. Stephen C. Finley, Dr. Joyce M. Jackson and Linda Smith Griffin).
- Four AAAS faculty were awarded Manship Summer Research Grants (Dr. Solimar Otero, Dr. Stephen C. Finley, Dr. Isiah Lavender, and Dr. Michael Bibler).

Other News

- Congratulations extended to Dr. Stephen C. Finley on receiving the prestigious ATLAS grant for the 2017-2018 academic year.
- Faculty Affiliate, Dr. Juan Barthelemy accepted a new position in the School of Social Work at the University of Houston.
- Congrats to our own, Dr. Solimar Otero, on becoming Director of the Program in Comparative Literature!
- Dr. Herman O. Kelly, Jr.'s edited book, "The Black Rhetorical Traditions in The Civil Rights Movement," is under contract with Congnella Academic Publishing. Congrats Dr. Kelly!
- Dr. Dari Green's book project, "The Lower Coast of Algiers," is under contract with Arcadia Publishing and will become part of the *Images of America* series. Congrats Dr. Green!