

Africana Studies

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

November 2023



Africana Studies Hosts

President of
Botswana

VP of Nigeria

Nobel Laureate
Wole Soyinka

1619 Project Founder,
Nikole Hannah-Jones



President Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana takes a selfie with Africana students and staff.

Four Africana Professors Elected into American Academy of Arts and Science

Director's Note

As Africana Studies at Penn celebrates its 50th anniversary this year (we delayed the celebrations for two years because of the COVID-19 pandemic), we look back to the vision, mission, and struggles that led to the creation of a specific Program (later Center and also Department) focused on the study of people of African descent. We are also projecting into the future. To mark this milestone, we hosted a conversation on the state of Africana Studies (see story on page 3) in which the discussants and the audience reflected on the past, present, and future of the discipline within and beyond Penn.

It is significant that we are also producing our first elaborate annual newsletter (both print and digital) this year. This newsletter captures the different dimensions of many of our activities in the last couple of years. It reflects the work of the Center – as well as the Department – and of our affiliates across the university. We hope to sustain this every year.

As the new Director of the Center, I would like to thank the staff of the Center as well as of the Department, including Kelly Harris, Teya Campbell, Carol Davis, Audra Rodgers, Campbell Knobloch, and Tyrone Bullock Jr. They all work hard, every day, to ensure that we carry forward, elaborate, and deepen the founding mission of the Center.

I would like to especially thank my predecessor, Professor Camille Z. Charles. As I stated at our anniversary event, Camille has dedicated over 25 years of her career to Penn, serving as a professor in both Sociology and Africana Studies. Notably, she held the position of Director at the Center for Africana Studies twice, a role she undertook with remarkable distinction.

She assumed this crucial leadership position as the Center's second director, serving for about a decade, and recently, she

admirably stepped back into this role for two years while simultaneously chairing the department. Camille's stewardship of both the Center and the Department has been immeasurably valuable, and her contributions are beyond quantification. Under her guidance, our presence at Penn has flourished, and the Center has garnered immense respect throughout the university, largely attributable to Camille's tireless efforts.

On a personal note, I must express my gratitude to her for the generous support and graciousness during my transition into the director's role.

Wale Adebaniwi
Director



Camille Z. Charles

CFAS: Response to the SC Decision on Affirmative Action

The Center for Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania is disgusted by the recent Supreme Court ruling that bans the consideration of race in college admissions effectively overturning over four decades of established precedent set by the Bakke decision. Instead of supporting Affirmative Action policies and their benefits in higher education, the Court chose to evaluate admissions policies from the perspective of a race-neutral America that does not exist. This outcome is not surprising given the composition of the Court and exemplifies the ongoing backlash against the progress made since the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Justices Sotomayor and Jackson present strong and persuasive arguments against this decision, highlighting the flawed interpretation of the law and history. Even a casual observer cannot disregard the significant role that race has played in shaping past and current realities in the United States. The majority opinion reflects the partisan divides in the country and reveals the ideological nature of judicial review.

The majority opinion takes a narrow view, assuming that students come from educational backgrounds where racism has no impact on their educational achievements. However, even the most optimistic individuals cannot ignore the disparities in health, wealth, and educational attainment highlighted in the dissents of Justices Sotomayor and Jackson. Sotomayor correctly points out that the Brown v. Board of Education decision was a race-conscious ruling that emphasized the importance of education in society. We agree with Justice Sotomayor's assertion that "the Court's re-characterization of Brown is a form of revisionist history and an insult to the legacy of Justice Thurgood Marshall."

In reality, as both the majority opinion and Justice Thomas's concurring opinion fail to acknowledge, Black and Latino students disproportionately attend segregated schools with all the accompanying disadvantages resulting from generations of racism, discrimination, and neglect. Justice Jackson appropriately begins her dissent by noting that there are substantial "race-based disparities in the health, wealth, and well-being of American citizens." These disparities cannot be ameliorated by robotic declarations of a nonexistent "colorblind" America.

It is worth reflecting on the timing of this decision, coinciding with the nation's celebration of its independence. In his seminal speech, "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" Frederick Douglass reminds us that this celebration belongs primarily to one group, not to all. We are also reminded of the Court's previous decision in the Civil Rights Cases of 1883, which declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. As then, the majority opinion revolved around the 14th Amendment. Justice Harlan's dissent in the 1883 decision, in which he asserts that the essence and spirit of recent constitutional amendments were undermined by the Court's clever semantic arguments, is eerily relevant today.

The majority opinion in the Civil Rights Cases of 1883 effectively perpetuated the Jim Crow era until the 1964 Civil Rights Act was passed. Let us learn from history and have the foresight to prevent a new era of racial regression that could endure for another century.

Africana Studies Celebrates 50th Anniversary



Charisse Burden-Stelly, Tukufu Zuberi, and Molefi Asante

The 50th anniversary of Africana Studies was celebrated on September 18th at the Penn Museum, with a capacity audience of 150 attendees. The focal point of the celebration was a symposium that delved into the history, current state, and future prospects of Africana Studies. Wale Adebani, the Director of the Center, opened the celebration by emphasizing the vital role of Africana Studies in higher education.

He highlighted the creation of various ethnic, gender, and diversity departments/programs, which owe their existence to the Black Studies movement—an influential movement that reshaped higher education in America. Adebani concluded his remarks by introducing Tukufu Zuberi, the Lasry Professor of Sociology and Africana Studies, who moderated the discussion featuring Professor Molefi Asante from Temple University and Dr. Charisse Burden-Stelly from Wayne State University.



The panelists and the audience

Wale Adebani also read the prepared remarks by Professor John L. Jackson Jr., the Provost and a member of the Africana Studies Department and Center. Jackson reflected on Africana's

contributions to the university. The Provost underscored that the study of the African diaspora at Penn has a rich history dating back not just 50, but 124 years. He referenced W.E.B. Du Bois's monumental work, *The Philadelphia Negro*, a seminal achievement in the field of social sciences. This reference sparked a lively discussion among the panelists.

Molefi Asante, the founding chair of the first doctoral program in African American Studies in the United States and a proponent of 'Afrocentricity,' asserted that the Africana project was essential in challenging the dominance of the 'Pan-European academy.' He described Temple University's Africology department, which focuses on methods and theories from a 'Diopian' perspective. In doing so, he highlighted Senegalese scholar, Cheikh Anta Diop, as a prime example of someone who turned the Pan-European academy on its head. Asante argued that Du Bois was unable to fully escape the influence of pan-European thought in his work.

Asante's perspective on Diop and Du Bois shifted the discussion from Africana Studies in isolation and toward a broader exploration of its place in the (study of the) human. Tukufu Zuberi initiated his remarks by suggesting that 'Africana Studies helps redefine what it means to be human.' Importantly, Zuberi shared a personal reflection that Africana Studies sought to surpass the conventional boundaries of university education.

He challenged Asante's characterization of Du Bois, referencing *Dusk of Dawn*, where Du Bois expressed uncertainty about the future of European civilization.

Charisse Burden-Stelly concluded the discussion by anchoring her responses in the modern struggle for human rights. She cautioned the audience that Africana Studies aimed to break down the physical barriers separating universities from the communities they intend to serve.

Burden-Stelly invoked Walter Rodney's assertion that 'academics are enemies of the people until proven otherwise' and urged Africana scholars to consider the questions they ask and the dialogues they engage in.

The conversation among the three scholars was followed by a Q&A session in which members of the audience asked questions and contributed to the debate.



Camille Z. Charles giving remarks after receiving gift for service as director.

The celebration concluded with Adebani commending his predecessor, Professor Camille Z. Charles, for her outstanding stewardship of the Center and department. In her remarks, Charles credited her success as a faculty member to the invaluable guidance, mentorship, and support she received from senior faculty in Africana Studies, from her time as a tenure-track professor through serving as chair and director.



Africana Studies Hosts President of Botswana, VP of Nigeria, Nobel Laureate Soyinka, and Hannah-Jones

The Center for Africana Studies and the Department of Africana Studies in collaboration with different units of the university including the Perry World House, Penn Global, the Perelman School of Medicine, Department of English, Program in Comparative Literature, Annenberg School for Communication, the Penn Museum, and the Wharton African Students Association, hosted President Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo of Nigeria, Nobel Laureate in Literature, Professor Wole Soyinka and the 1619 Project founder, Nikole Hannah-Jones.



CFAS Faculty and Staff with President Masisi

The four distinguished guests were hosted in the last two academic years.

While we hosted Soyinka in the 2021-2022 academic year, we hosted the other three in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Hosting these high-profile guests signals a new era in the Center as we renew our mission in an era in which old questions resurface while emergent ones are simultaneously embracing old prejudices and projecting long-standing verities of hope.

All of this takes place within the framework of a revival of the civil and civic impulse to protest and demand greater and deeper justice, equity, and fairness.

These efforts are part of a common, albeit challenging, endeavor to collectively reimagine our shared humanity, including the role of Global Africa in this collective pursuit.

Botswana's President Discusses Good Governance, Democracy

President Mokgweetsi Masisi spoke with Penn Professor Wale Adebanwi at the second annual Distinguished Lecture in African Studies.

By Kristen de Groot | Photos by Eddy Marengo

(This piece was first published in Penn Today.)



Presidential Penn Compact Professor of Africana Studies Wale Adebanwi (left) and Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi (right) at this week's event at Perry World House.

Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi sat down with Wale Adebanwi, Presidential Penn Compact Professor of Africana Studies, to discuss his country's successes in furthering democracy, tackling the HIV/AIDS epidemic, supporting LGBTQ rights, handling the challenges of allowing elephant hunting, and the backsliding into authoritarianism by other nations in Africa. The talk was part of the second Annual Distinguished Lecture in African Studies.

Penn President Liz Magill started the evening with opening remarks to the packed room at Perry World House.

"I think it's fair to say that we are old friends," Magill said of Penn and Botswana, referencing the Botswana-UPenn Partnership (BUP). BUP began in 2001 as a project to provide HIV/AIDS treatment and over the last two decades has transformed into a clinical success story on many fronts: a scholarly exchange, a research alliance, and an educational investment.

Magill noted that this past July, Botswana reached the UN's AIDS target, which is a goal that 95% of HIV-positive individuals know

their status, 95% of those are receiving treatment, and 95% of those receiving treatment have an undetectable viral load.

"And they are not the only remarkable numbers to come from Botswana," Magill said. "The oldest multiparty democracy in Africa, Botswana is admired for so many things, including its uninterrupted civilian leadership and its progressive social policies. These traditions have created one of the most stable and vibrant economies in Africa."

Magill also announced that the first Penn Global Seminar in Botswana will be held in the spring of 2024, saying "This evening's event is yet another opportunity to strengthen the ties between Botswana's leadership and this University."

Camille Z. Charles, the Walter H. and Leonore C. Annenberg Professor in the Social Sciences in the School of Arts & Sciences and chair of the Africana Studies department, introduced Masisi. "The Republic of Botswana achieved independence in 1966, the same year that students began fighting for Black studies here in the United States," said Charles, noting that this year marks

the 50th anniversary of the Africana Studies department at Penn. "Thus, in some ways, Black studies and the Republic of Botswana share an anniversary."

The world has been challenged by endless examples of conflict, violence, and corruption, Charles said, but Botswana is one of the few countries to remain above the fray.

"It's imperative that Africana Studies and the Penn community highlight people, institutions, organizations, and governments who may provide solutions to those protracted problems," she said. "Botswana's example offers us useful templates to reflect on."

Masisi thanked the University for the opportunity to share Botswana's story of good governance, democracy, and the management of natural resources, adding he hopes that others will find inspiration to build a strong coalition of global progress. "It is critical to point out that Botswana's democratic ideals and economic transformation are underpinned by principles of democracy, development, unity, self-reliance, and 'botho,'" a Botswana concept of community, he said.

The nation's practice of "kgotla" is also key to how the country functions, he said, "with the village a central point where everybody has a say and there is respect for everyone's rights.



The event included (left to right) Wale Adebani, current Director of the Center for Africana Studies, Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi, Penn President Liz Magill and Camille Z. Charles, Interim Director of the Center for Africana Studies (2021-2023).

The 'kgotla' system promotes tolerance across inclusion, freedom of assembly, and speech. It also promotes human rights as well as collective decision making."

He went on to discuss his nation's management of natural resources and how diamonds were discovered in Botswana a year after independence.

He said Botswana's founders were convinced that to better manage the limited resources at their disposal a constitutional and multiparty democratic republic committed to the rule of law was the best way to take the country forward.

"This became exceptionally valuable for Botswana following the discovery of diamond deposits shortly after—and thankfully after—our independence," Masisi said, joking that he certainly wouldn't be in his current position if it happened before independence.

The people of Botswana can own land and use it as they like, but, if precious resources are found beneath the surface, that goes to the government to benefit all citizens. He said the laws surrounding how the wealth of mining is invested in the state is "probably one of the major reasons Botswana has been able to achieve tremendous economic growth, from being one of the poorest countries at independence to a high middle-income country and economy it is today."

Masisi said that, while the discovery of natural resources in some parts of Africa "became what is regarded as a resource curse, Botswana's natural resources and the discovery of diamonds became a resource blessing for the country to date."

Adebani started the conversation by asking Masisi what the single most important factor is for his nation to have had such success in the areas of good governance and management of natural resources.

"The critical ingredient is peace," Masisi replied, repeating the word three times for emphasis. "With peace, you are able to resolve whatever challenges you have. The absence of peace is a huge setback."

Adebani moved the conversation forward on the topic of Botswana's decriminalization of homosexuality in 2019 and asked why Masisi came out so strongly in support of LGBTQ rights.

The issue needed to be taken to the highest court to settle what the rule of law would be, said Masisi. Many in Botswana have conservative views of sexuality, and he knew people would be upset by the ruling. But the country is deeply committed to the rule of law, and he said he sees himself as the protector of the rights of every citizen.

"When our highest court spoke, my job is to comply," he said. "So, I called the national leadership of our gay and lesbian groupings, and I told them and their base that they will be supported and defended."

The conversation then turned to Botswana's decision to lift the ban on hunting elephants in 2019. Adebani noted the population of elephants has gone down due to poaching, but Botswana maintains that it's important to cull herd sizes for the safety of its citizens.

Masisi said that his country has set aside 40% of the nation as a reserve—"that's a big giveaway"—but elephants forage way beyond those boundaries and can come into destructive and deadly contact with humans.

"We are a developing country, we are vastly populated, we have limited resources, and many of our people are poor. When they earn a living plowing the field, herding their livestock, they sadly at times come face to face with the largest land mammal on earth. You don't need to be a rocket scientist to know who wins that contest," he said.

The absence of peace in the region is also contributing to Botswana's elephant problems, he said, with mother elephants remembering the dangers of landmines in Angola and violence in Namibia, many won't herd into those places anymore, preferring the safety of Botswana.

After discussing the return to authoritarian democracy in some places in Africa, the talk then turned to audience questions,

which touched on topics ranging from knowledge sharing within the African Union and how Botswana's indigenous Bushmen group fit into the vision for national development, to health care goals and why the nation maintains the death penalty.

An audience member from Uganda noted his nation has had a single president for more than 30 years, and mentioned a saying in Africa that being president is like riding on the back of a lion: You don't let go because if you do, you'll most likely get eaten, the reason why many leaders cling to power.

He asked how Africa is prepared to manage presidents who do not leave their posts.

Masisi says it comes down to embracing democratic ideals, and "one of the most important is that even before you get into an electoral contest, you must begin by respecting the rules, and part of the rules is that, if you are the loser, respect the loss, accept and embrace loss."

He said he also supports the idea of sanctions for those who even threaten to not respect election results or term limits.

The Annual Distinguished Lecture in African Studies highlights voices and scholarship in African Studies today. The lecture was sponsored by the Center for Africana Studies, Perry World House, Penn Global, and the Wharton Africa Student Association.



"The critical ingredient is peace. With peace, you are able to resolve whatever challenges you have. The absence of peace is a huge setback."



Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka on art and culture

Wole Soyinka, the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, spoke as the inaugural guest for the Distinguished Lecture in African Studies.

By Louisa Shepard | Photos by Chloe Dawson

(This piece was first published in Penn Today.)



Playwright, novelist, and poet Wole Soyinka (right), the first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, was the inaugural speaker for the Distinguished Lecture in African Studies. The event at the Penn Museum included a Q&A with Wale Adebani (left) a professor of Africana studies in the School of Arts & Sciences.

The first African to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, in 1986, Soyinka spoke before an audience of more than 150 people filling a Penn Museum auditorium and many more online in the streamed, hybrid event on March 22.

Interim President Wendell Pritchett said the study of Africa “is fundamentally important to understanding the world we live in and the planet we hope to nurture and protect” and “is relevant to every facet of contemporary life.

“This inaugural Distinguished Lecture in African Studies sets our course at Penn for greater attention and deeper integration of Africa, its peoples, cultures, climate, and contributions in our own outlook and understanding,” Pritchett said.

Camille Z. Charles, professor of sociology, Africana studies, and education, said in an introduction that the annual lecture will highlight “the most important voices and scholarship in African studies today” and that she could think of “no greater voice, no greater presence” than Soyinka as the inaugural guest.

From Nigeria, Soyinka has authored more than 40 works, including plays, novels, poetry, essays, and memoirs and is the recipient of numerous national and international honors. His latest novel, “Chronicles from the Land of the Happiest People on Earth,” was published in September.

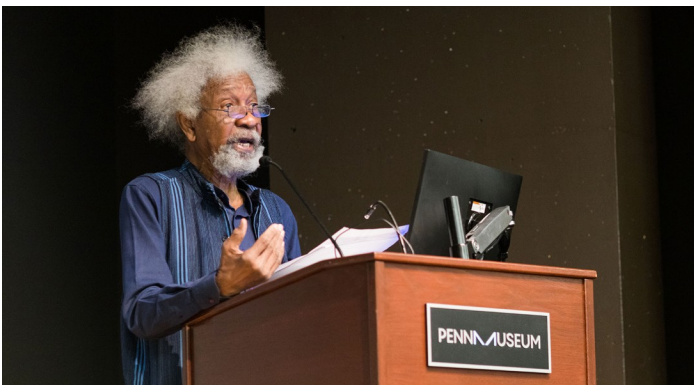
He is an emeritus professor at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; has taught at several universities in the United States and England; and has received several academic fellowships.



The inaugural Distinguished Lecture in African Studies was a hybrid event, held in person and online. The Penn Museum Rainey Auditorium was nearly full with more than 150 people in attendance, including University Interim President Wendell Pritchett (left) and Professor Camille Z. Charles (seated to his right).

Now 87, he lectures internationally and continues to play an active role with artistic, academic, and human rights organizations. During the lecture, he described his views on the complex history of the World Black and African Festival of the Arts and Culture (FESTAC), the next to be held May 23-29 in Zanzibar, Tanzania. Previous festivals were held in 1966, 1977, and 2010.

He said history has defined Africa, which resulted in Africa reconfiguring its geography.



Wole Soyinka delivering remarks

Soyinka has authored more than 40 works, including plays, novels, poetry, essays, and memoirs and is the recipient of numerous national and international honors. Now 87, he lectures internationally and continues to play an active role with artistic, academic, and human rights organizations.

"History has defined us, the Black race, as a people from whom emerged a unique entity,

the diaspora of the enslaved, distinct from other occupants of the continent, indeed of the globe, or indeed from other peoples also who have undergone the experience of slavery," he said.



The Q&A discussion between Soyinka (right) and Adebaniwi (left) was wide-ranging, addressing racism, reparations, colonialism.

"It's a consolidated existential reality that deserves its global recognition."

Soyinka proposed a "Grand Voyage of Return," along with the Festival, an annual symbolic "sea voyage of the diaspora back to the continent," to create "a floating space of learning" in a "therapeutic exercise" to retrace slave routes into Africa.



African Studies professors Dorothy Roberts and Barbara Savage in the audience

The travelers would set off from the Mediterranean to cruise along the West African coast, stopping in ports that played a role in African enslavement, ending in Lagos, Nigeria, or perhaps might continue around the Cape to Zanzibar, the site of the Festival.

"Don't try to evade history. Confront it," he said. "Don't try to eliminate race. Co-opt it."

Soyinka addressed the question of repatriation of cultural objects in a Q&A discussion with Wale Adebaniwi, professor of Africana studies. "What are the arts? The arts are the material expression of the people's essence, of their spirituality of their dignity," Soyinka said, suggesting that museums around the world "return the spirituality to Africa by returning all the looted works."

Soyinka said he disagrees with those who consider the history of Africa begins with colonization by European nations. And he made a distinction between encounters and domination.

"Encounters are very important for any society," he said. "Culture is not static." But domination, he said, is destructive. He said he continually asks himself, "What is human?" as he considers injustices past and present, including Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

When asked about the fact that he writes and speaks in English, he said his first task is to communicate. "We didn't ask for this imposition of this language" by the British in Nigeria, he said.

"But if you want to communicate effectively it has to be a common language. But you can also take the instrument that belongs to your enemy and turn it against your enemy."

Soyinka said that personally he does not "resent" the English language. "I think I've used it effectively," he said.

The last question was from a young person, who said they were from Ghana and who asked about becoming a successful writer. "Get ready to receive your rejection slips," Soyinka said, pausing for the laughter from the audience. "But don't be discouraged. Just write."

The Distinguished Lecture in African Studies was co-sponsored by Perry World House, the Department of English, the Program in Comparative Literature, and the Penn Museum.



Vice President Osinbajo of Nigeria Reflects on 'Just Energy Transition in Africa'

Outlines Pathways for Climate-Positive Economic Growth in Africa

By Chukwudi Mathias Isiani, PhD student in Africana Studies



The Center for Africana Studies (CFAS) in conjunction with Perry World House, Penn Carey Law School, and Perelman School of Medicine hosted the Vice President of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo, on April 24, 2023.

Vice President Osinbajo, in a Special Lecture reflected on the question of 'Just Energy Transition in Africa' in relation to the extent, dimensions, and outcomes of energy shift on a global scale.

Professor Osinbajo, who was only a few weeks to the end of his two-term tenure with President Muhammadu Buhari, acknowledged that climate change poses a substantial challenge to the world, and to Africa, in particular.

Osinbajo stated that for African countries to attain middle-income status, and societal and individual prosperity for its people, the issue of energy poverty has to be tackled headlong and reflected in the global energy transition conversations.

The former Attorney-General of Lagos State and former professor of Law at the University of Lagos, Nigeria outlined the specific pathways that will lead to climate-positive economic growth in Africa and similarly lead to the realization of the global net-zero emissions targets.

According to Osinbajo, over 1.3 billion people in Africa face a lack of access to energy for electricity, heating, cooking, and cooling, leading to increased unemployment. The primary question in Africa's energy transition conversation, therefore, the VP argued, is how to develop and create well-paying jobs and livelihoods while adhering to global carbon constraints.

Professor Osinbajo believes that Africa can generate its pathway for a healthy climate using its vast resources and population.

This conversation has been discussed at the Paris Agreements, the Kigali Accord, the Kyoto Protocol for Developed Economies, and the Renewable Energy Standards.

Osinbajo proposed three pivotal strategies to help Africa achieve climate-positive growth.

The first involves shifting away from carbon-intensive practices and instead embracing green technologies and sustainable practices for meeting energy, goods, and service needs.

The second strategy involves optimizing land use and ecosystem management to harness Africa's potential energy, as well as investing in new engineered removal technologies.

Finally, the Vice President emphasized that Africa's vast reserves of renewable energy and raw materials make it a prime candidate for becoming a leading green manufacturing and energy hub, which would also expedite the global transition towards a greener industry.

Africa is currently taking significant strides towards achieving equitable energy practices, exemplified by initiatives like the lithium processing plant in Kaduna, Nigeria, and local lithium processing policies in Zimbabwe.

These initiatives position the African continent as a prospective contender vis-à-vis Europe and America in terms of energy emissions, fostering economic growth in sectors like ammonia, fertilizer, and eFuels.

Osinbajo stressed that Africa's successful energy transition stands as a pivotal linchpin for the global achievement of net-zero goals. Hence, proactive actions from African states and the international community are imperative to support and expedite this process, a critical endeavor encapsulating the path toward sustainable energy transformation.

After his lecture, a Q&A session was led by Dr. Wale Adebani which later included members of the audience. Osinbajo fielded questions including on democracy in Nigeria, the performance of President Buhari's administration and climate change.



Dr. Zuberi taking a selfie with the VP of Nigeria



'Fight for it:' Nikole Hannah-Jones on abolition, reparations, and building a more just future

Journalist Hannah-Jones delivered the 22nd annual Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture in Social Justice in conversation with Sarah Jackson of the Annenberg School for Communication.

By Kristina García | Photos by Eddy Marengo

(This piece was first published in Penn Today.)



Nikole Hannah-Jones signed books and greeted audience members after the lecture.

At 5:30 p.m. on Jan. 25, Zellerbach Theater's audience seating was packed to capacity as the Penn community gathered for the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture in Social Justice to hear Nikole Hannah-Jones, the Pulitzer Prize-winning creator of the 1619 Project, in conversation with Sarah J. Jackson.

But the stage itself, decorated like a living room, with an area rug, side tables, and two black leather chairs bookended by fiddle-leaf figs and parlor palms, was silent.

The event opened with audio from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I've Been to the Mountaintop" speech. Images from the Black struggle for equality glowed as projections on a screen: Rosa Parks'

Black men carrying signs reading "I am a man." A man with a rifle posing beside a billboard urging voters to "Pull the lever for the Black Panthers." A portrait of Frederick Douglass. A lunch counter sit-in. A button that read, "We shall overcome."

King's booming voice resonated in the theater. "I've been to the

mountaintop," he said. "I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land!"

But the stage was stark, empty. Just one day after delivering that speech at Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in support of 1,300 striking sanitation workers, King himself was struck down outside his second-floor room at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. That was April 4, 1968.

This spring will mark the 55th anniversary of King's death. And yet, all MLK celebrations are centered on his January birth, to mark not his untimely murder, but his life and work.

For the last 22 years, one of the ways Penn has honored King's life and work is with the Lecture in Social Justice, which is co-hosted by the Center for Africana Studies and the Annenberg School for Communication.

Beth Winkelstein, interim provost, and faculty member Camille Z. Charles stepped out to introduce Nikole Hannah-Jones and

Jackson, the Presidential Associate Professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and co-director of the Media, Inequality & Change Center.

"Dr. King knew that ours is a remarkable yet deeply flawed nation," Winkelstein said. "And Ms. Hannah-Jones would surely note that its founding blueprint was drawn up not in 1776, but in 1619. We've been structurally unsound ever since. Despite the challenges or perhaps because of them, we remain not only hopeful, but confident in our ability to make the world a better, more equitable place."

Hannah-Jones is a staff writer at The New York Times Magazine, co-founder of the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, and the Knight Chair of Race and Journalism at Howard University. She won the Pulitzer Prize for the 1619 Project, initially a magazine feature, now a book, curriculum, podcast, and a documentary.

The magazine's publication date—August 2019—marked the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in the English colony of Virginia. The work's stated aim is to "reframe the country's history by placing the consequences of slavery and the contributions of Black Americans at the very center of the United States' national narrative."

To begin her conversation with Hannah-Jones, Jackson noted that Jan. 26 marked the premier of the 1619 Project as a docuseries on the streaming service Hulu. Jackson asked the reporter about translating long-form essays for documentary film.

In February 2019, Hannah-Jones pitched the idea of the 1619 Project to the New York Times Magazine, she said. The article went to press the following August. It was a compressed timeline, she said, and writing a book and creating the subsequent documentary allowed her to add essays and respond to critiques.

A frequent response to her article was, "If this were true, I would have heard of this before," she said. The book and documentary allowed her to lay out her sources and present other voices corroborating her research, she said. "The difference between a magazine article and a book is you can provide endnotes."

Jackson asked Hannah-Jones to reflect on how the arguments made in the 1619 Project connect to King's goals around economic equality.

"Legal equality is only going to go so far," Hannah-Jones said. "You have to deal with the material economic disadvantage that most Black Americans—no matter where they live in the country—were dealing with."

In response to economic realities, King "began to really sharpen his critique," she said. "And of course, that's when he begins to lose the white, liberal, northern support in places like Philadelphia, where they were fine as long as the Civil Rights Movement was about making the South behave."

They were unwilling to look at the hyper-segregation of Black people in northern cities and neighborhoods and schools, and certainly not the economic disadvantage that black Americans were facing.

"Realize: you can't get a colorblind society until you've addressed all of the effects of a race-specific society," Hannah

Jones said. "What the 1619 Project is trying to do is to really complexify and subvert these myths about America."

Jackson and Hannah-Jones discussed racial apartheid and the need for a new abolition movement. "We begin to use the carceral system to replicate (as close as possible) the institution of slavery" right after slavery is abolished, Hannah-Jones said. "We can't enslave 95% of Black people, but we can lop enough of them off in this system," she said. "There is a continuity, and the continuity is that we, as a people, are seen as a problematic people who need to be resolved and who need to be fixed. And who, hopefully, will just go away."

Jackson raised the topic of reparations and Hannah-Jones' essay "What is Owed," published on June 24, 2020 in the New York Times Magazine.



Sarah Jackson and Nikole Hannah-Jones in conversation

"You can't get a colorblind society until you've addressed all of the effects of a race-specific society," said Nikole Hannah-Jones in conversation with Sarah J. Jackson. "What the 1619 Project is trying to do is to really complexify and subvert these myths about America."

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, "all these institutions were looking to capitalize on the moment," Hannah-Jones said. She realized that "our ask has to be far bigger than a bunch of private corporations doing diversity initiatives."

"If y'all really, really think it's time for reckoning, we need to deal with the original issue of why Black Americans are suffering," she said. "We're suffering for a lot of reasons. But I'd rather suffer with money than without it."

Slavery was an economic institution, Hannah-Jones said. "We are taught to think about slavery as a racist institution, as if the reason that we went to war was just [that] white people in the South are particularly racist, or the reason that you transport 13 million human beings across the Atlantic in the largest forced migration in human history was just to be racist."

"No. There was profit to be made. That is what drove the system, is extracting wealth from Black bodies and redistributing that wealth to white institutions and white people," Hannah-Jones said.

Reparations is a legitimate political issue, she said, and she "wanted to use that moment" of the summer of 2020 to make that argument, she said. Other activists have raised the argument before her, she noted, but "it hits different in the New York Times."

Hannah-Jones got into journalism because she wanted to write

about Black people. "It has always been impossible for me to divorce the work from the personal," she said.

In reply to a question from Jackson about the experience working as a Black woman in the journalism industry, Hannah-Jones said, "People in our industry, they like to have phenotypical diversity. They want to be able to check off, okay, we got a Latino guy, gay person, got a Black person ... But then, in your report, they want you to be white and straight. Right? They want you to write from what they think is a universal lens, but of course is not, in fact, the universal lens."

In an earlier position at *The Oregonian*, Hannah-Jones was told that "the fact that I wanted to write about Black people was a problem," she said, "a sign of my bias."

"I was told, you know, if I wanted to be successful and ascend in my career, I had to learn to write about other things," she said.



Hannah-Jones' work has been turned from an article into a book, school curriculum, and now a docuseries.

As an investigative reporter, she decided to look at the data. She printed out every single story she had written and separated into a pile every story that included a Black person, even if the story wasn't about race, she said. "And it was 10% of my stories. Ten percent was too much for them."

"So, I took my little stack into the office, and I said, 'Okay, these are all the stories I've written about Black people.'" She set her 10% down on the table. Then she set down the other 90%. "These are the rest of my stories," Hannah-Jones said. "So, why don't you write down ... what the problem is and also tell me how many white reporters you've had a conversation with about how many white stories they're writing."

When Hannah-Jones was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for "the Blackest thing I ever did," she said "it was one of those divine moments."

"Y'all have to know my petty side," she said. But "on any given day, most newsrooms don't reflect America," Hannah-Jones said. "Look at the newspaper. Does it reflect community, or does it reflect power?"

Jackson asked Hannah-Jones about refusing a job offer from the University of North Carolina (UNC). "That was a top-five petty moment for me," Hannah-Jones said. After backlash following UNC's announcement that Hannah-Jones would join the faculty at the Hussman School of Journalism and Media, the Board of Trustees took no action to approve Hannah-Jones' application for tenure. Instead, UNC offered her a five-year contract with

tenure review, to which Hannah-Jones agreed, she said.

"But they weren't satisfied with that," Hannah-Jones said. "So, they leaked a story saying the board didn't vote on my tenure, but they hired me anyway." The response from American academia was outrage.

Hannah-Jones was able to force a vote (she was ultimately given an offer that included tenure in June 2021), but at that point, she had decided to reject the offer in favor of teaching at an HBCU.

"I just wanted to send the message that, no longer do we need to be in a position where we do every single thing you tell us to do," Hannah-Jones said. "We get every accolade, we check off every box, and then you just change the rules on us at the end. And then when you're forced to do right by us, we're so happy to get the crumbs that we take the crumbs. Like, I'm overtaking the crumbs."

Hannah-Jones accepted an offer from Howard University and has since raised almost \$25 million to found the Center for Journalism & Democracy, Jackson said.

Jackson fielded questions from the audience. "What do we do, even when we're weary, to be intentional and acts that are sustainable for ourselves and for our people, our community?" one person asked.

"We are here to commemorate Dr. King, right?" Hannah-Jones said. "And he said, he doesn't know if he'll reach the promised land, right? 'I might not be there with you.' But I know whether or not we do, we owe it to our ancestors to fight for it."

"So, I never wake up and say, 'How am I gonna keep going? I don't have a choice,' Hannah-Jones said. "We may not ever see the world that we're trying to build, but ... we all better fight for it."



Brave Testimony

Brave Testimony: A Celebration of the Poetry of the African Diaspora, is our annual program where we host acclaimed poets during National Poetry Month in April.

This past April (12th) we had the privilege of hosting Pulitzer Prize-winning author Tyehimba Jess, who read from his two major works: *Leadbelly* and *Olio*. *Olio* was honored with the 2017 Pulitzer Prize for poetry.

Herman Beavers served as the faculty host, providing a stirring introduction, and serving as moderator.

In his introductory remarks, Beavers explained how he was first introduced to Jess and his work. They were both members of a summer retreat where writers were able to share their work and receive critical feedback. It was during this time that he recognized Jess's immense talent and creativity.



Herman Beavers and Tyehimba Jess strike a pose

Jess's exceptional talent shone brightly as he recited passages from his works. The audience was captivated by his reading from *Olio*, a book that effortlessly transcends the boundaries of poetry. *Olio* is a remarkable work that encompasses elements of lyricism, poetry, history, and religion, all coalescing into a tribute to ragtime and vaudeville.

Jess initiated his presentation by describing *Olio* as a diverse compilation of literary and musical selections, which historically constituted the second part of minstrel shows, later evolving into vaudeville performances. Within his work, we encounter a rich tapestry of prominent figures, including Paul Laurence Dunbar, Bert Williams, The Fisk Jubilee Singers, Edmonia Lewis, Henry "Box" Brown, "Blind" Tom Wiggins, and the conjoined McKoy twins, Millie and Christine.



Conjoined McKoy Twins

The audience was truly amazed by Jess's remarkable creativity. Many of his poems were crafted in an unconventional and non-linear style, allowing readers to explore passages in various directions—side by side, diagonally, from top to bottom, or bottom to top.

Jess himself describes this unique approach, stating, "Syncopated sonnets sometimes sing in circles to allow recitation that'll roll interstitial, antigravitational, and diagonal, with voices splitting to each side but joining in the middle."

His exceptional work not only showcases this innovative style but also humanizes his subjects, most notably the conjoined McKoy twins, rescuing them from the obscurity of history where they were unfairly labeled as "freaks."

On one side of the page, Millie shares the story of how scientists victimized them, while on the other side, Christine describes their experiences as performers. Their narratives converge with the powerful statement, "We've mended two songs into one dark skin," encapsulating the profound unity of their stories.

This year's Brave Testimony exemplified how scholars and artists in the Africana tradition can employ their talents to rescue, reframe, and reconstruct the global Black experience. For those who attended this year's Brave Testimony, their perspective on poetry will never be the same.



Race and Sports

Each year the Center for Africana Studies collaborates with the Wharton Sports Analytics and Business Initiative to host a discussion on Race and Sports.

The annual Race and Sports lecture interrogates the intersection of race, sports, business, and activism. Kenneth Shropshire developed a class, "Race and the Global Sports Business," and has written numerous related books, most recently *The Miseducation of the Student Athlete: How to Fix College Sports*.



Ken Shropshire and Bomani Jones

The Race and Sports Lecture has offered a forum for a wide range of athletes, writers, and scholars, including Katrina Adams, Tina Sloan Green, Kellen Winslow, Todd Boyd, Harry Edwards, Stephen A. Smith, Marion Jones, Wyomia Tyus, Sonny Vaccaro, Anita DeFrantz, and John Carlos as part of this program.

The moderated conversation program format has worked well over the years, allowing for a full exchange of ideas as well as a question-and-answer period with the audience. This annual event is open to the public and routinely draws a capacity crowd of students, faculty, and community members.

This year we hosted Bomani Jones to discuss "The Future of Equity and Opportunity in Sports." Bomani Jones is the host of *Game Theory with Bomani Jones* on HBO, where he tackles sports and their intersections with the world.

He also hosts *The Right Time with Bomani Jones* podcast on ESPN. As CEO of Old Soul Productions, Bomani hosts *The Evening Jones*, an audience driven podcast discussing a range of pop culture topics. Jones was the former co-host of the ESPN sports television programs *Highly Questionable* and *High Noon*, and was a panelist on the sports roundtable discussion show *Around the Horn*.

He was the executive producer of *Rand University*, a film about former NFL wide receiver Randy Moss and an episode of ESPN's acclaimed documentary series *30 for 30*. He also worked on several documentaries.



CFAS holds annual Summer Institute for Pre-First Year Students

The Summer Institute for Pre-First Years, hosted by the Center for Africana Studies, took place this summer. It attracted more than 70 students from various countries and states across the United States.

These students engaged in a rigorous one-week program designed to introduce them to college-level coursework, all the while immersing them in the intellectual, cultural, and societal dynamics of the Africana world.

At the helm of the Institute is Camille Z. Charles, who serves as the current Director, alongside Teya Campbell, who fulfills the role of Associate Director.

Participating students exit the program having established a valuable network comprising faculty members, graduate students, and fellow undergraduates, offering them enduring support throughout their academic journey at Penn.

Moreover, those who participate in the institute emerge with enhanced leadership abilities that are integral to their success at Penn and beyond.

The following classes were offered this summer:

Introduction to the History of Modern Africa

(Cheikh Babou, Professor of History)

Toni Cade Bambara: Writer, Activist, Scholar

(Keisha-Khan Perry, Presidential Penn Compact Associate Professor of Africana Studies)

Joking Seriously: Humor, State and Society in Africa

(Wale Adebani, Presidential Penn Compact Professor of Africana Studies)

All the Stars: Afrofuturism in Black Popular Music

(Jasmine Henry, Assistant Professor in Music)

Race, Cities, and the built Environment

(Akira Rodriguez, Assistant Professor of Design)

Black Visual Culture

(Dagmawi Woubshet, Abuja Family Presidential Associate Professor of English)



Ben Jealous addressing students



Students at the Summer Institute



Students at the Summer Institute



Camile Charles, Ben Jealous, and Teya Campbell

Student Leaders for Summer Institute:

Niiaja Wright, Co-Head Graduate Fellow

Rose Poku, Graduate Fellow

Taylor Heath, Co-Head Graduate Fellow

Perculiar Adimabua, Graduate Fellow

Kwame Ocran, Graduate Fellow

Olivia Kerr, Graduate Fellow

Cynthia Chude, Graduate Fellow

Claire Wan, Graduate Fellow

Azsaneé Truss, Graduate Fellow

Manny Minaya Fernandez, Graduate Fellow

Ravenne Aponte, Graduate Fellow

Marc Ridgell, Graduate Fellow

Cienna Davis, Graduate Fellow

Mathias Chudwudi Isiani, Graduate Fellow

Faith Dempsey, Co-Head Peer Mentor

Dahai Yonas, Co-Head Peer Mentor

Beza Zewdie Mersiehazen, Peer Mentor

Ashley Alexander, Peer Mentor

Lydia Worssa, Peer Mentor

Ebunoluwa Akadiro, Peer Mentor

Kailey B. Ayisi, Peer Mentor

Jai Smith, Peer Mentor

Kara Butler, Peer Mentor

Kathrine Bryant, Peer Mentor

Zawadi Sankofa, Peer Mentor

Leah Elesinmogun, Peer Mentor

Ca'Rynn Campbell, Peer Mentor



Summer Institute Peer Mentors

Program on Race, Science, & Society

By Hafeeza Anchrum

The Penn Program on Race, Science, and Society (PRSS) is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year! With the generous support of Penn's President and Provost, Professor Dorothy Roberts founded PRSS in the fall of 2013 at the Center for Africana Studies.

The initiative is devoted to transformative and interdisciplinary approaches to the role of race in scientific research and biotechnological innovations, aiming both to promote social justice and to dispel the myth that race is a natural division of human beings.

To commemorate the ten-year milestone, PRSS will release a "Decennial Anniversary Report" in the fall, with a focus on the program's symposia: "The Future of Race and Science: Regression or Revolution? Symposium" (2014), "Quantifying Race: How Politics, Economics and Medical Myopia Drive Color-Coded Data Workshop: Brocher Foundation Symposium" (2015), "Ordering the Human: Global Science and Racial Reason Symposium" (2018), and "Medicine and the Afterlives of Slavery Symposium" (2022).

The report also highlights the program's annual Lectures and Colloquia series over the last ten years, the 2019 launch of the Penn Medicine and the Afterlives of Slavery Project, and faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students who have been involved with PRSS since its inception.

The PRSS Lecture and Colloquia Series for the 2023-24 academic year focuses on the theme of racism in the child welfare system, or, as Professor Roberts refers to it in her most recent book, *Torn Apart* (Basic Books, 2022), the "family policing system."

The series will include presentations and panel discussions by guest speakers who are engaged in efforts to abolish the family policing system. In addition, PRSS will host meetings with a working group comprised of professors and postdoctoral fellows across academic disciplines.

The meetings give members the opportunity to present their scholarly work, engage with guest speakers and potential collaborators, and discuss the current status of their research.

Lastly, PRSS welcomes two new affiliate scholars into its postdoctoral fellowship program: Arthur Wang (English Department) and Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts (Fulbright Scholar, Law School).

They will be joining the current PRSS postdoctoral fellows Hafeeza Anchrum, Nic Ramos (Ford Foundation), and Marie Plaisime (Affiliate National Science Foundation).

Congratulations to Professor Roberts, PRSS, and the Center for Africana Studies on their remarkable decade of accomplishments, and PRSS looks forward to another great year!



Dorothy Roberts
Director of PRSS

Four Africana Studies Professors Elected into American Academy of Arts and Science

Four members of the Africana Studies Department were elected into the American Academy of Arts and Science in the last four years. They are **Dr. Eve M. Troutt Powell**, **Dr. Michael Hanchard**, **Dr. Dorothy E. Roberts**, and **Dr. Marcia Chatelain**.

Troutt Powell was elected in 2020, Hanchard was elected in 2021, while Chatelain was elected in 2023.

Troutt Powell is a historian of the modern Middle East, focusing on Egypt, Sudan and the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, whose works illuminate questions of race and slavery at the juncture of Arab and African societies.



Eve Troutt Powell

Her book, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the Mastery of the Sudan* (2003), casts light on the region's multiple sources of racial thought, bypassing the usual European-inspired categories.

Her most recent work, *Tell This in My Memory: Stories of Enslavement in Egypt, Sudan, and the Late Ottoman Empire* (2012), uses memoirs by slave masters and former slaves to mount an argument about the differing impact and memory of slavery in these different contexts.

The author of many essays and articles, Troutt Powell is also notable for the stylistic elegance of her work. One of the pioneers of the history of African and Middle Eastern slavery, Troutt Powell has been the recipient of many prestigious fellowships, including a MacArthur award in 2003.

Hanchard is the Gustav C. Kuemmerle Professor of Africana Studies at The University of Pennsylvania, and director of the Marginalized Populations project. His research and teaching interests combine a specialization in comparative politics with an interest in contemporary political theory, encompassing themes of nationalism, racism, xenophobia and citizenship.



Michael Hanchard

His publications include *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, Brazil, 1945-1988* (Princeton, 1994), *Racial Politics in Contemporary Brazil*, editor, (Duke, 1999), *Party/Politics: Horizons in Black Political Thought* (Oxford, 2006) and most recently *The Spectre of Race: How Discrimination Haunts Western Democracy* (Princeton, 2018) His scholarly articles have appeared in journals such as *Public Culture*, *Political Theory* and *Social Text*.

He has held visiting scholar and professorship positions at the W.E.B. DuBois Institute at Harvard University, Universitaria Candido Mendes, Rio de Janeiro and the Universidade de Sao Carlos, Sao Paulo (Brazil), the University of Cartagena (Colombia), the Instituto Gramsci in Milan, Italy, the University of Ghana, Legon (West Africa), and the University of Vienna, Austria, and Sciences Po in Paris.

Roberts is the fourteenth Penn Integrates Knowledge Professor, George A. Weiss University Professor of Law, the inaugural Raymond Pace and Sadie Tanner Mossell Alexander Professor of Civil Rights in the Sociology Department, Professor of Africana Studies, and Director, Program on Race, Science, and Society in the Center for Africana Studies.



Dorothy Roberts

An internationally recognized scholar, public intellectual, and social justice advocate, her path-breaking work in law and public policy focuses on urgent social justice issues in policing, family regulation, science, medicine, and bioethics.

Her major books include *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics, and Big Business Re-create Race in the Twenty-first Century* (New Press, 2011); *Shattered Bonds: The Color of Child Welfare* (Basic Books, 2002), and *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (Pantheon, 1997).

She is the author of more than 100 scholarly articles and book chapters, as well as a co-editor of six books on such topics as constitutional law and women and the law.

Professor Roberts has been a professor at Rutgers and Northwestern University, a visiting professor at Stanford and Fordham, and a fellow at Harvard University's Program in Ethics and the Professions, Stanford's Center for Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity, and the Fulbright Program. She serves

as chair of the board of directors of the Black Women's Health Imperative, on the board of directors of the National Coalition for Child Protection Reform, and on the advisory boards of the Center for Genetics and Society and Family Defense Center.

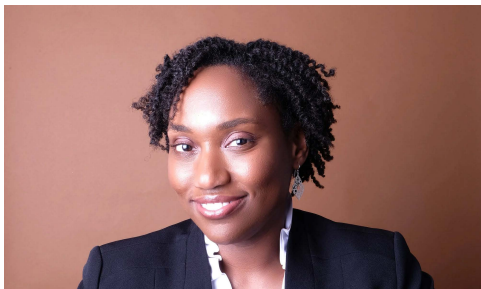
She also serves on a panel of five national experts that is overseeing foster care reform in Washington State and on the Standards Working Group of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (stem cell research). She recently received awards from the National Science Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and the 2010 Dorothy Ann and Clarence L. Ver Steeg Distinguished Research Fellowship.

Her work has been supported by the American Council of Learned Societies, National Science Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Harvard Program on Ethics & the

Professions, and Stanford Center for the Comparative Studies in Race & Ethnicity.

Recent recognitions of her scholarship and public service include 2019 Rutgers University- Newark Honorary Doctor of Laws degree, 2017 election to the National Academy of Medicine, 2016 Society of Family Planning Lifetime Achievement Award, 2016 Tanner Lectures on Human Values, 2015 American Psychiatric Association Solomon Carter Fuller Award.

Chatelain is a Penn Presidential Compact Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. The author of *South Side Girls: Growing up in the Great Migration*, she teaches about women's and girls' history, as well as black capitalism.



Marcia Chatelain

Her latest book, *Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America*, examines the intricate relationship among African American politicians, civil rights organizations, communities, and the fast-food industry. Chatelain has received numerous awards for *Franchise*, including the Pulitzer Prize in History, the Hagley Prize in Business History, the Organization of American Historians Lawrence W. Levine Award, and the James Beard Foundation Book

An active public speaker and educational consultant, Chatelain has received awards and honors from the Ford Foundation, the American Association of University Women, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

She was at Georgetown University for 12 years before joining the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. During that time, she won several awards for her university service, including the 2022 Georgetown Black Alumni Council Distinguished Leader Award, the 2021 Georgetown Alumni James S. Ruby Faculty Appreciation Award, and the 2018 Provost's Distinguished Associate Professorship, among others.

In 2016, the *Chronicle of Higher Education* named her a Top Influencer in academia in recognition of her social media campaign *#FergusonSyllabus*, which implored educators to facilitate discussions about the crisis in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014.

She has held an Eric and Wendy Schmidt Fellowship at New America, a National Endowment for the Humanities Faculty Fellowship, and an Andrew Carnegie Fellowship.

Congratulations to Professors

*Troutt Powell, Hanchard, Roberts,
and Chatelain!*

Charles Wins 2023 Faculty Award of Merit



Camille Z. Charles

Dr. Camille Z. Charles, the Walter H. and Leonore C. Annenberg Professor in the Social Sciences in the Departments of Sociology and Africana Studies, and in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania is the winner of the 2023 Faculty Award of Merit.

The Penn Alumni Faculty Award of Merit recognizes a faculty member who has made outstanding contributions to alumni lifelong learning and engagement at Penn by sharing his/her/ their unique scholarship work with the alumni community.

Special emphasis is placed on a faculty member who goes above and beyond the call of duty by engaging alumni with the University as their intellectual home and educating the faculty community about available alumni engagement opportunities and benefits of their participating.

Dr. Charles' research interests are in the areas of racial inequality, racial identity, racial attitudes, intergroup relations, residential segregation, and higher education.

Professor Charles currently serves as Chair of the Department of Africana Studies. In addition to this role, she is also Faculty Co-Director of Penn First Plus, the University's initiative to support first-generation, low-income Penn students. And, since 2006 she has served as Director of the Center for Africana Studies Summer Institute for Pre-First Year students.

She is author of *Won't You Be My Neighbor: Race, Class and Residence in Los Angeles*, which explores explanations for persisting residential segregation by race, and co-author of *The Source of the River: The Social Origins of Freshmen at America's Selective Colleges and Universities* and *Taming the River: Negotiating the Academic, Financial, and Social Currents in Selective Colleges and Universities*, each based research from The National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen (NLSF), an effort to understand racial differences in the experience of elite higher education in the United States.

Most recently, she is co-author of the recently published book, *Young, Gifted, and Diverse: Origins of the New Black Elite*, which employs a mixed-methods approach and an intersectional framework to explore the varied and multiple dimensions of diversity among Black students in elite higher education.

Professor Charles earned her Ph.D. in at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1996.

The award will be presented at the Alumni Award of Merit Gala, Friday, November 3, 2023.



CFAS Congratulates Provost John Jackson



John L. Jackson Jr.

The Center extends its congratulations to John L. Jackson on his recent appointment as Provost, a testament to his remarkable achievements. His notable contributions to Africana Studies at Penn fill us with immense pride as he embarks on this esteemed role. Jackson's academic journey is adorned with remarkable accomplishments.

He attained his BA in communication, specializing in radio/TV/ film, from Howard University, followed by a Ph.D. in anthropology from Columbia University.

This path led him to a junior fellowship at Harvard University's

Society of Fellows, and subsequently, he assumed the position of assistant professor of cultural anthropology at Duke University.

In 2006, he joined the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania. As Provost, Jackson will undertake the responsibility of overseeing a wide spectrum of university functions, including teaching, research, student engagement, admissions, arts, athletics, libraries, online education, and global initiatives.

Additionally, he will lead the Red and Blue Advisory Committee, a pivotal university-wide effort shaping Penn's strategic trajectory. Under Jackson's stewardship, the committee's recommendations will serve as the bedrock for Penn's future direction.

Jackson's stature as Penn's inaugural PIK (Penn Integrates Knowledge) Professor showcases his influence, fostering interdisciplinary connections among various schools.

Center for Experimental Ethnography and departments like Africana Studies, Anthropology, the Graduate School of Education, and the School of Social Policy & Practice, make him well-equipped for a role that demands an understanding of the demands and dynamics of comprehension diverse disciplines.

Heather Williams Cited in Supreme Court's Opinion on Affirmative Action



Heather Williams

On June 29, 2023, the United States Supreme Court issued its majority opinion in the case of *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. v. University of North Carolina, Et. Al.* This majority opinion marked a significant shift by eliminating the consideration of race as a factor in higher education admissions.

This decision effectively overturned 45 years of established precedent. Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented from the majority, with Justice Sotomayor writing for the minority. She emphasized that the Court's ruling disregarded the lasting significance of racial considerations in the United States.

Justice Sotomayor's dissent directly contrasted the majority's stance by highlighting that race has always been a crucial factor and continues to hold importance in American society. To reinforce her argument, she referenced the scholarly works of notable authors such as W.E.B. Du Bois (*Black Reconstruction*), Eric Foner (*The Second Founding*), and James Anderson (*The Education of Black in the South*).

One of the central sources she cited repeatedly was Heather Williams's book, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*. Sotomayor's choice to prominently feature Williams's work in her dissent was deliberate, as it underscores the agency of Black individuals who were enslaved or formerly enslaved in their pursuit of education and freedom.

Sotomayor stated in the dissenting opinion: "The Constitution initially limited the power of Congress to restrict the slave trade, Art. I, §9, cl. 1, accorded Southern States additional electoral power by counting three-fifths of their enslaved population in apportioning congressional seats, §2, cl. 3, and gave enslavers the right to retrieve enslaved people who escaped to free States, Art. IV, §2, cl. 3.

Because a foundational pillar of slavery was the racist notion that Black people are a subordinate class with intellectual inferiority, Southern States sought to ensure slavery's longevity by prohibiting the education of Black people, whether enslaved or free.

See H. Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* 7, 203–213 (2005) (Self-Taught). Thus, from this Nation's birth, the freedom to learn was neither colorblind nor equal."

Williams's book sheds light on how African Americans, particularly in the challenging environment of the Southern United States, actively contributed to the expansion of public education.

This emphasis on education not only encapsulates the African American community's determination for learning but also showcases their role in redefining democracy's essence and practice within the United States by advocating a vision for democracy broader than what was intended by the framers.

Justice Sotomayor's dissent argued that the majority's decision disregards this historical context and the ongoing significance of racial dynamics in shaping American society.

Rommen receives highest teaching honor



Timothy Rommen

Timothy Rommen, Davidson Kennedy Professor of Music and Africana Studies and Chair of the Music Department, was named one of two recipients of the highest teaching honor in the School of Arts and Sciences at Penn for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Established in 1983, The Ira H. Abrams Award recognizes pedagogy that is intellectually challenging and exceptionally coherent. The award honors faculty who embody high standards of integrity and fairness, have a strong commitment to learning, and are open to new ideas.

Distinguished Presidential Fellow for Casamayor-Cisneros



Odette Casamayor-Cisneros

Odette Casamayor-Cisneros, Associate Professor of Romance Languages, was selected by the University Libraries at the University of Miami as the inaugural Roberto C. Goizueta Distinguished Presidential Fellow for the Cuban Heritage Collection, effective September 1, 2023.

In her role, Casamayor-Cisneros will deliver public lectures, organize symposia and orchestrate performances, and utilize the Cuban Heritage Collection to complete research on her book project entitled "On Being Blacks: Self-Identification and Counterhegemonic Knowledge in Contemporary Afro-Cuban Cultural Production."

April in Paris (Sort Of): in the Jazz Age By Herman Beavers

From April 30 to May 7, 2023, I had the tremendous opportunity to serve as Faculty Lecturer and Host during a trip sponsored by the Penn Alumni Travel Program titled, "Paris in the Jazz Age."

The group of 16 consisted of University of Pennsylvania alumni from graduates of the College, the Law School, the Wharton School of Business, the School of Social Policy and Practice (formerly the School of Social Work), the Medical School, and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

This program was a reprise of the program sponsored by Penn Alumni Travel in the Fall of 2021. This year's larger group reflected a return to normalcy after a global pandemic. As always, spending a week together made for intense conversations about 1920s France in relation to the U.S.

My task was to serve as the Faculty Host and Lecturer, a role I enjoy because it leads to an extension of the conversations that start with my lectures.

The group visited a number of important sites, the first day of the tour involved a visit to the statue and monument dedicated to the Black French author Alexandre Dumas and a visit to the plaque commemorating the life and entertainment career of Josephine Baker.

The group heard about the singer/club owner, Ada Beatrice Queen Victoria Louise Virginia Smith, nicknamed Bricktop. As Langston Hughes mentions in his autobiography, *The Big Sea*, he spent many hours during his time in Paris frequenting her club, which attracted members of Paris society, Americans traveling through Europe. As James Weldon Johnson writes of the 1920s

Though James Baldwin's arrival in Paris was not till the late 1940s, I thought that the group would enjoy discussing his classic essay, "A Stranger in the Village" and a less-well-known short story titled, "This Morning, This Evening, So Soon."

The former describes Baldwin's trip to a small town in Switzerland, where he finds himself the object of great curiosity due to their near-total lack of exposure to Black folk. The short story concerns an African American who has become a national film and recording star in France, about to make his first trip back to the States since leaving to seek fame and fortune abroad.



Tour guide, Julia Fields, who specializes in African American history in Paris. Dr. Beavers is wearing a cap on the left

Dr. Beavers is the Julie Beren Platt and Marc E. Platt President's Distinguished Professor of English and Africana Studies

Many achievements for Vaughn Booker



Vaughn Booker's book, *Lift Every Voice and Swing: Black Musicians and Religious Culture in the Jazz Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2020), was the winner of the 2022 Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities, awarded by the Council of Graduate Schools.

Booker completed a 2022–2023 National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship & a 2022–2023 Stanford University Humanities Center External Faculty Fellowship, with an additional award of the Distinguished Junior External Fellowship.

He was selected as the Steering Committee Co-Chair for the American Academy of Religion's Afro-American Religious History Unit and was invited to be a panelist for *The Sonic Souls of Black Folk: Sacred Sound and Black Religion in America*, a symposium co-sponsored by The Crossroads Project and the Martin

Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, and held at Stanford University on June 2, 2023.

He was an invited author for *Art and Devotion: New Accounts of Religious Culture, Race, and Gender in the United States*, a symposium sponsored by the Department of Religion at Princeton University, and held there on March 25, 2023.

Booker was an invited author for the Humanities @ Home series, produced by New Hampshire Humanities, and held on February 17, 2023 to discuss his book, *Lift Every Voice and Swing*.

He was the organizer and a panelist for "Souls, Sounds, and Sources: A 'State of the Field' Roundtable for African American Religious History," sponsored by the Afro-American Religious History Unit, and held at the American Academy of Religion's Annual Convention in Denver, CO on November 21, 2022.

He was an invited author for *Good—and Beautiful—Reads: A Conversation with Recent Authors on Religion & the Arts*, sponsored by the Society for the Arts in Religious and

Theological Studies, and held in Denver, CO on November 20, 2022 to discuss my book, *Lift Every Voice and Swing*.

He was co-editor for an edited volume on African American Religious History with Dr. Judith Weisenfeld of Princeton University, Dr. Ahmad Greene-Hayes of Harvard Divinity School, and Dr. Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh of Stanford University.

Accolades for Anita Allen



Henry R. Silverman Professor of Law and Professor of Philosophy Anita Allen received the 2023 Privacy Papers for Policymakers Award at the "Future of Privacy Forum." She also delivered the keynote to the American Society for reproductive Ethics in New Orleans. Her keynote was on the "Evolution of Abortion Rights in the United States." This was the second keynote delivered by Allen this year as she gave the keynote address for the Harvard University Tech Ethics Conference in May 2023.

Professor Allen had multiple publications including a journal article on "Dismantling the 'Black Opticon': Privacy, Race, Equity and Online Data-Protection Reform," in the Yale Law Journal Forum and a book chapter, "Getting Close: Philosophers Engage with Government NGOs," published in the Blackwell Companion to Public Philosophy (2022).



GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Undergraduate

Bonnie Samantha Maldonado

4th year Doctoral Candidate

Bonnie Samantha Maldonado (she/ella series) is a fourth-year PhD Candidate in Africana Studies. Bonnie Samantha is currently based in San Cristobal, Dominican Republic conducting ethnographic and archival research for her dissertation. She seeks to understand how Black women and femmes used and continue to use food—as object, embodied practice, and source of knowledge—to care for one another transnationally and transtemporally. Bonnie Samantha is adjusting to being back home, living amongst family members, and learning how to navigate public transportation.

Alexandra Sanchez Rolon

4th Year Doctoral Candidate

Alexandra Sanchez Rolon is a fourth-year Ph.D. Candidate investigating the contemporary methods by which Puerto Rican Island residents make living possible amidst the island's position as a colonial property of the United States. Through a reimagining of the sovereignty/non-sovereignty dialectic that concerns questions of freedom, Alexandra is, instead, imagining freedom as a kind of in-betweenness, one that is alternate to yet nested within the bounds of modern life that hinges on the everyday, affective relations found at the level of the community. Alexandra is currently re-building her childhood home in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, which has been a long-held dream of hers. Additionally, Alexandra is enjoying the fourth book in *The Giver* series by Lois Lowry, titled *Son*, and watching the new Fionna and Cake series spinoff of *Adventure Time*.

Gabriela I. Noles Cottio

5th year Doctoral Candidate

Gabriela I. Noles Cotito is an Afroperuvian woman with Japanese, Chinese, and Indigenous ancestry. She completed a doctorate of medicine at Cayetano Heredia University, Peru, and a master's in public health from Harvard. She is currently a 5th year Ph.D. candidate in Africana Studies, where her research explores Black citizenship and political mobilization within the Agrarian Reform of 1969 in Peru. Gabriela also continues providing clinical care in the Afro-Peruvian community of El Carmen and developing health literacy projects in Peru. During her free time, Gabriela enjoys zombie studies (yes, you read that correctly) for their epidemiology and social sciences applications.

Joshua Reason

Joshua Reason was awarded a Mellon/ACLS (American Council of Learned Societies) Dissertation Innovation Fellowship. Joshua is one of 45 early career doctoral students to be named to the inaugural cohort. The goal of the fellowship is to support "bold and innovative approaches to dissertation research." Their dissertation is "Brazil After Dark: Memory, Haunting, and Desire in Northern-Northeastern Brazil."

Zhangyang "Charlie" Xie

Senior

Zhangyang worked as an assistant community curator at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at Van Pelt and as a research assistant for Professor Michael Hanchard at Africana Studies during the summer. He intends to pursue a PhD degree in STS after graduation.

Mathias Chukwudi Isiani, Africana PhD Student, presents paper at European Conference of African Studies (ECAS) in Germany

Mathias Chukwudi Isiani, second-year PhD Student in Africana Studies presents a paper entitled 'Gbaa ya oku: exploring dark humour, spaces, necklacing, and social media in everyday life of Onitsha City' at the European Conference of African Studies (ECAS) held at University of Cologne, Germany, on June 2, 2023.



In the presentation, he explored the use of spaces in urban areas of Nigeria for "necklacing". Onitsha, the main study area that Mathias investigated, is a densely populated commercial hub in Southeast Nigeria, which is now a troubled metropolis marked by armed hoodlums and groups. In response to insecurity, Onitsha people resort to *gbaa ya oku*, colloquially known as "necklacing." "Necklacing" is a local practice entailing the capture, injury, and incineration of criminals, particularly thieves. Such acts are frequently sensationalized on social media, propagating their iteration of extrajudicial killings and mob justice.

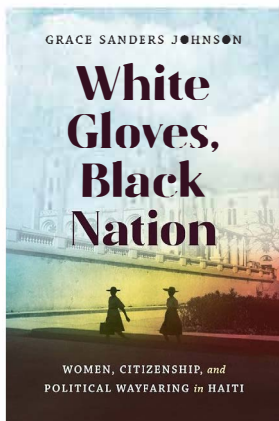
These extrajudicial killings are seen on social media, displaying the community mob jubilating and humorous comments about the incompetence of Nigerian security agencies. The use of spaces such as roundabouts, intersections, religious center's entrances, and bridges are significant for the necklacing practices. This practice affects the social order in contemporary urban formations in Nigeria.

Mathias Isiani during his presentation at the ECAS Conference in Cologne, Germany.

Mathias emphasized that the victims of necklacing, as well as the mobs engaging in the killings in postcolonial Onitsha city, are mainly comprised of young people aged between 18 and 35. These individuals, through their social media comments, seem to express frustration with their daily lives in Nigeria, particularly when it comes to unemployment and the ability to sustain themselves amidst widespread social and economic crisis.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Faculty,
Affiliates
& Alumni



Grace Sanders Johnson's *White Gloves, Black Nation*

Africana faculty member Grace Sanders Johnson, first sole-authored book, *White Gloves, Black Nation: Women, Citizenship, and Political Wayfaring in Haiti* (University of North Carolina Press), was published in 2023. *White Gloves, Black Nation* won the 2023 Haitian Studies Association Book Prize.

Described as an "ambitious transnational history," the book considers Haitian women's political life during and after the United States occupation of Haiti (1915-1934).

The two decades following the occupation were some of the most politically dynamic and promising times in Haiti's modern history, but the history of women's political organizing in this period has received scant attention.

Tracing elite and middle-class women's activism and intellectual practice from the countryside of Kenscoff, Haiti to Philadelphia, the Belgian Congo, and back to Port-au-Prince, this book tells the story of

Haitian women's essential role as co-curators of modern Haitian citizenship.

Set in a period when national belonging was articulated in philosophies of African authenticity, revolutionary nostalgia, and working-class politics, Grace Sanders Johnson considers how an emerging educated and professional class of women who understood themselves as descendants of the Haitian Revolution established alternative claims to citizenship that included, but were not limited to, suffrage and radicalism.

Sanders Johnson argues that these women's political practice incorporated strategic class performance, extravagant sartorial sensibilities, and an insistence on self-promotion and preservation that challenged the exceptional trope of the martyred male revolutionary hero.

Ultimately, *White Gloves, Black Nation* disrupts familiar narratives of radical Haitian politics, which have tended to rely on class and color stratification, economic suffering, and authoritative nationalist leadership by instead attending to political experimentation, intellectual wit, diasporic belonging, and practices of repair.

Bringing her subjects vividly to life through her reading of archival documents and oral histories in Krèyol, French, and English, she reveals women's politics of wayfaring, in which they moved, sometimes counter effectively, but always deliberately through the radical milieu of the twentieth century.

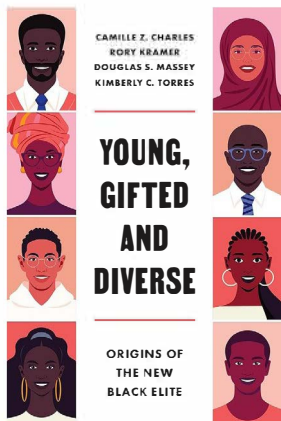
Lara Putnam of University of Pittsburgh described the book as "an incandescent work of scholarship – a brilliant, creative, original book that has much to offer people interested in the history of Black nationalism and the twentieth-century African diaspora, the contributions of women to those histories, and the ways political action is envisioned and expressed in how we live and move throughout the world."



Grace
Sanders-Johnson and
Africana alumna
Eziaku Atuama
Nwokocho

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Faculty,
Affiliates
& Alumni



Charles and others examine the Origins of the New Black Elite

In their new book *Young, Gifted and Diverse: Origins of the New Black Elite*, Camille Z. Charles, Rory Kramer, Douglas S. Massey, and Kimberly C. Torres, take a deep dive into exploring the characteristics and life experiences of Black students on America's elite college campuses.

At the turn of the 20th century, with the emergence of a new elite professional class, the scholars are driven by questions regarding: Who constitutes the Black leaders of tomorrow? What are their demographic characteristics? And how are they similar or different from one another and the general population? Drawing from representative data collected from over 1000 Black students in the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshman, the book answers all these questions and more about the interracial heterogeneity found among Black students on college campuses.

Despite the breadth of their diversity, studies have traditionally researched the Black population as a monolithic group characterized by disadvantage. However, *Young, Gifted, and Diverse* challenges stereotypes regarding a singular identity or Black experience. Using a vast array of data sources including survey responses, in-depth interviews, and focus groups, the book highlights the unique pathways Black college students take before, during, and after they arrive on campus.

With a critical intersectional lens, the book goes beyond class and gender comparisons to explore other intersections of identity such as nativity, parentage, experiences of childhood segregation, and skin tone. By highlighting the multidimensional nature of student experiences, this book unites the literature on race, higher education, interracial diversity, inequality, and mobility.

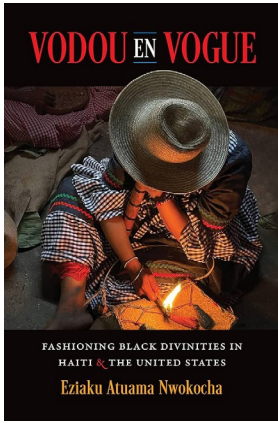
At the dawn of the 21st century, college campuses reflect shifts in larger society, such as increasing rates of intermarriage, upward trends in Black immigration, and expanded access to opportunity. As college campuses become more diverse, it is necessary to turn a critical eye to how Black students experience these elite environments. Indeed, students on campus are not representative of the larger Black population in the US. They are more likely to be female, of mixed race, or have foreign roots.

Differences in students' backgrounds and social identities also have significant effects on how students perceive themselves and the world around them. While Black students may diverge across axes of difference regarding ideas about identity and racism at the beginning of their college careers, by the end, they develop a shared group consciousness.

This heterogeneity prompts us to reconsider pre-existing ideas about racial diversity and the future of Black political solidarity. By uncovering the origins of Black students on elite college campuses, *Young, Gifted and Diverse* goes beyond simply telling their stories to further complicate our preconceptions of who and what it means to be a member of the emergent Black elite class.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Faculty,
Affiliates
& Alumni



Africana Alum,
Nwokocha out
with first book:
*Fashioning Black
Divinities in Haiti
and the United
States*

Africana alumna, Eziaku
Atuama Nwokocha, is out with
her first sole-authored book,

Vodou en Vogue: Fashioning Black Divinities in Haiti and the United States (University of North Carolina Press).

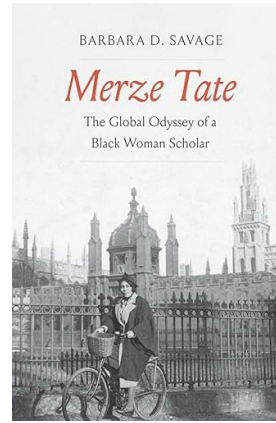
The “innovative book centers on fashion and other forms of self-presentation, yet it draws together many strands of thought and practice, showing how religion is a multisensorial experience of engagement with what the gods want and demand from worshippers.”

The book hopes to “challenge and enrich readers’ understandings not only of Vodou and its place in Black religious experience but also of religion’s entanglements with gender and sexuality, race, and the material and spiritual realms.”

Dianne M. Stewart of Emory University, in her endorsement, states that “Nwokocha’s superb work offers a much-needed corrective to previous scholarship that presents Vodou as a religion defined by poverty and precarity.

Her skillful observations and thoughtful descriptions of the thoughts, desires, and delights of deities and devotees reveal the rich thought-world of Vodou as it is practiced today.”

Eziaku is currently an assistant professor of religion at the University of Miami



Savage's Merze Tate

Barbara D. Savage's latest book, *Merze Tate: The Global Odyssey of a Black Woman Scholar* (Yale, 2023), is an intellectual biography of Merze Tate, a trailblazing Black woman scholar and intrepid world traveler.

Born in rural Michigan during the Jim Crow era, the bold and irrepressible Merze Tate (1905–1996) refused to limit her intellectual ambitions, despite living in what she called a “sex and race discriminating world.”

Against all odds, through her brilliance and hard work, Tate earned a graduate degree in international relations from Oxford University in 1935 and a doctorate in government from Harvard in 1941.

She then joined the history faculty of Howard University, where she taught for three decades of a long life spanning the tumultuous twentieth century.

This book revives and critiques Tate’s prolific and prescient body of scholarship, with topics ranging from nuclear arms limitations to race and imperialism in India, Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. She published five books and many dozens of articles. Tate credited her success to other women, Black and white, who helped her realize her dream of becoming a scholar. Her quest for adventure took her around the world twice, traveling solo with her cameras.

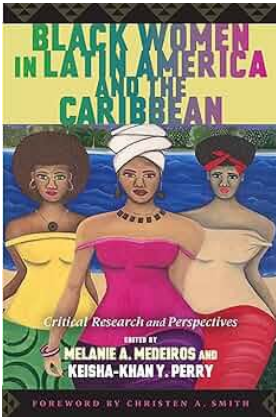
The book’s lucid and skilled rendering of Tate’s personal and professional story is built on more than a decade of research. Tate’s fascinating life and interdisciplinary work challenge provincial approaches to African American and American history, women’s history, the history of education, diplomatic history, and international thought.

Patricia Owens of the University of Oxford describes the book in this way: “Finally, Merze Tate has the biographer she was waiting for. In this exceptionally well-researched and fascinating book, Barbara Savage returns Merze Tate to her rightful place as one of the most important, sophisticated and unjustly neglected international thinkers of the twentieth century.”

Farah Jasmine Griffin, Columbia University describes it as “[a] beautifully written [and] meticulously researched biography.” She adds that the book “contains a depth of insight into a daring and boundary breaking Black woman intellectual who consistently refused the limitations others placed upon her. Cinematic in scope, and as learned and extraordinary as its subject, this book allows us to follow Tate’s global travels as well as her groundbreaking intellectual contributions.”

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Faculty,
Affiliates
& Alumni



Perry's Co-Edited Volume on Black Women in Latin America and the Caribbean

Black Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: Critical Research and Perspectives (co-edited by Melanie Medeiros and Keisha-Khan Y. Perry) is an intersectional and interdisciplinary collection of essays that examines Black cisgender

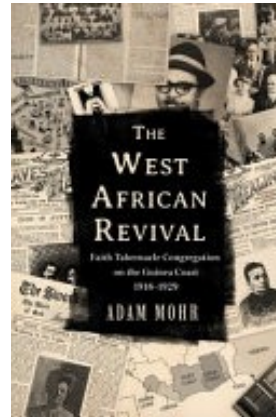
women's social, cultural, economic, and political experiences in Latin America and the Caribbean.

While there are a few single-authored books focused on Black women in Latin American and Caribbean, the vast majority of this scholarship has been published as theses, dissertations, articles, and book chapters.

The volume contributes a transnational perspective to contemporary conversations on the continued relevance of Black women's social conditions, offering a critical empirical perspective on Black women's innovative, theoretical, and methodological approaches to activism, class-based gendered racism, and Black politics. When read together, the chapters offer a hemispheric framework for understanding the lasting legacies of colonialism, transatlantic slavery, plantation life, and persistent socio-economic and cultural violence. Additionally, the book explores the role of the social sciences in documenting anti-Black violence and forging hemispheric struggles against that violence.

Intellectual work by and about Black women sheds light on the sociopolitical conditions that shape their participation and leadership in political struggles for citizenship rights and resources. *Black Women in Latin America and the Caribbean* comes at a critical juncture in history, in which social movements such as *Vidas Negras Importam* (Black Lives Matter) and #NiUnaMenos (Not One Less) are increasing global awareness of the physical and structural violence that threatens Black women in the Americas.

At the same time that the rise of authoritarianism threatens to dismantle Black women's hard-won recognition and rights, the world is witnessing an uptick in mass popular mobilizations and Black women in political leadership, such as environmental activist Francia Márquez who was recently elected as Vice-President of Colombia. Black women's experiences and perspectives merit critical analysis to understand how historical, social, and political economic factors impact their everyday lives, confine them to marginality, and mobilize them politically for democratic and just societies.



Mohr's West African Revival

In eleven short years, from 1918 to 1929, Faith Tabernacle Congregation, a small divine healing church in Philadelphia, spread over the Guinea Coast, garnering over 250 branches and nearly 11,000 members without ever sending missionaries from the United States.

Communications were made solely through the exchange of literature, letters, money, and the occasional radiogram across the Atlantic. This rapid expanse constituted a great revival: the West African Revival.

In *The West African Revival: Faith Tabernacle Congregation on the Guinea Coast, 1918-1929* (Baylor University Press, 2023) Adam Mohr, a Senior Lecturer, in Penn's Critical Writing Program, compiles historical documents from Faith Tabernacle's archive in Philadelphia as well as several other churches that branched from Faith Tabernacle in West Africa (mainly Ghana and Nigeria) and the United States such as the First-Century Gospel Church, the Apostolic Church, the Christ Apostolic Church, and the Church of Pentecost.

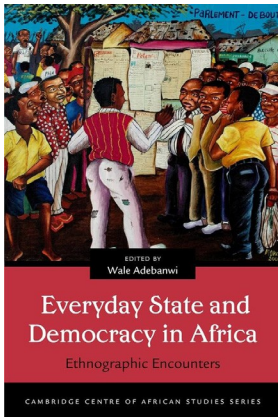
Writing for an audience of scholars from the fields of African Christianity, Global Christianity, and African Studies, Mohr engages literature from the Influenza Pandemic of 1918–1919, African Traditional Religion (predominantly anti-witchcraft cults), the relationship of capitalism to Christianity, political and social conflict, and early Pentecostalism in West Africa.

Significantly, the West African Revival was the predecessor to Pentecostalism in West Africa—Ghana and Nigeria particularly. Mohr's findings compel scholars to rethink the historical relationship of African indigenous churches to Pentecostalism in West Africa in addition to the historical relationship between South African Zionism and Nigerian Aladura.

J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu, Baëta-Grau Professor of Contemporary African Christianity & Pentecostal Theology, Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana, describes the book as one that "very brilliantly fills an existing gap between Pentecostalism in West Africa and the important healing movement called the Faith Tabernacle Church."

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Faculty,
Affiliates
& Alumni



Adebaniwi's Everyday State and Democracy in Nigeria and Africa

Wale Adebaniwi's edited volume, *Everyday State and Democracy in Africa: Ethnographic Encounters* (Ohio University Press) was published in 2022 while another edited volume, *Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic: Governance, Political Economy, and Party Politics 1999-2023* (James Currey, UK, 2023) was published recently.

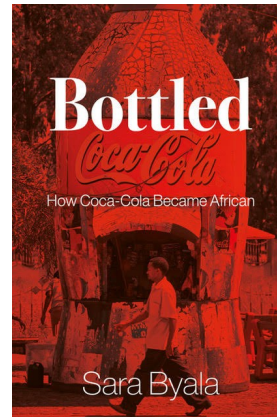
Everyday State and Democracy in Africa "examines contemporary citizens' everyday encounters with the state and democratic processes in Africa. The contributions reveal the intricate and complex ways in which quotidian activities and experiences—from getting an identification card (genuine or fake) to sourcing black-market commodities to dealing with unreliable waste collection—both (re)produce and (re)constitute the state and democracy.

This approach from below lends gravity to the mundane and recognizes the value of conceiving state governance not in terms of its stated promises and aspirations but rather in accordance with how people experience it."

With contributions from both new and established scholars based in Africa, Europe, and North America, the book covers "a wide range of examples from across the continent, including bureaucratic machinery in South Sudan, Nigeria, and Kenya, infrastructure and shortages in Chad and Nigeria, disciplinarity, subjectivity, and violence in Rwanda, South Africa, and Nigeria, the social life of democracy in the Congo, Cameroon, and Mozambique, and education, welfare, and health in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burkina Faso."



Democracy and Nigeria's Fourth Republic "examines Nigeria's challenges with consolidating democracy and the crisis of governance arising from structural errors of the state and the fundamental contradictions of the society in Nigeria's Fourth Republic reflect a wider crisis of democracy globally."



Byala's Bottled examines how 'Coca-Cola Became African'

Sara Byala's *Bottled: How Coca-Cola Became African* (Hurst, 2023) examines how Coca-Cola "became ubiquitous across [Africa] and what this reveals about the

realities of globalization, development and capitalism."

The book is the "first assessment of the social, commercial and environmental impact of one of the planet's biggest brands and largest corporations, in Africa. Sara Byala, a Senior Lecturer in Penn's Critical Writing Program and scholar of modern African history, "charts the company's century-long involvement in everything from recycling and education to the anti-apartheid struggle, showing that Africans have harnessed Coca-Cola in varied expressions of modernity and self-determination: this is not a story of American capitalism running amok, but rather of a company becoming African, bending to consumer power in ways big and small."

Caroline Elkins, Professor of History and African and African American Studies, Harvard University, described the book as "Brilliantly conceived, entertaining, and important, *Bottled* will unquestionably take its place as one of the most important social histories of Africa."

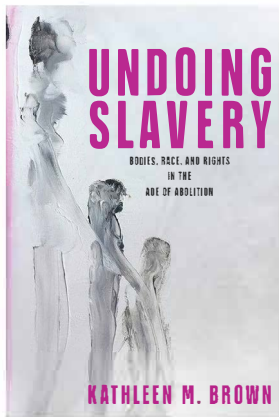
Elkins add that "With Byala's storytelling gift and eye for narrative detail, this account is a masterclass in how to integrate individual stories from around the continent with broader socio-economic and political events."



Sara Byala in conversation with Fayyaz Vellani, Senior Lecture in Critical Writing at UPenn, during a book presentation hosted by PWH

NEW PUBLICATIONS

by Faculty,
Affiliates
& Alumni



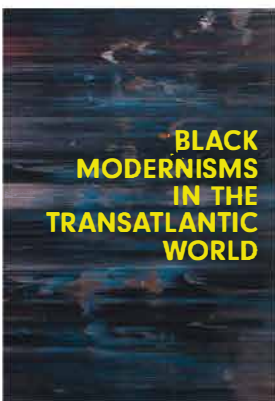
Brown's Undoing Slavery is out

Kathleen Brown's latest book is entitled *Undoing Slavery: Bodies, Race, and Rights in the Age of Abolition* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023). Brown is the David Boies Professor of History at Penn. The book "excavates cultural, political, medical, and legal history to understand the abolitionist focus on the body on its own terms."

Motivated by their conviction that the physical form of the human body was universal and faced with the growing racism of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century science, abolitionists in North America and Britain focused on undoing slavery's harm to the bodies of the enslaved.

Their pragmatic focus on restoring the bodily integrity and wellbeing of enslaved people threw up many unexpected challenges. This book explores those challenges."

Richard Newman, Professor of History at Rochester Institute of Technology, New York, described the book as one that "offers a powerful, sophisticated, and timely re-examination of the American antislavery struggle that focuses on the central importance of both bodily emancipation and embodied freedom," while Ariela Gross, John B. & Alice R. Sharp Professor of Law & History at the University of Southern California, states that *Undoing Slavery* "arrives at the perfect moment for all who need to understand what's at stake in the current battles over reproductive rights."



Copeland on Black Modernisms in the Transatlantic World

Huey Copeland, BFC Presidential Associate Professor in the History of Art – along with Steven Nelson – just published a co-edited volume, *Black Modernisms in the Transatlantic World* (NGW-Stud Hist Art, 2023).

The volume, in which "ten leading scholars examine the contradictions of modernity and Black agency that continue to define the Western art world," "broaden[s] our understanding of modernism by centering Black artists and experiences."

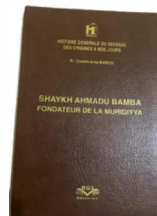
Copeland also organized the *Scenes of Subjection* 25th Anniversary Conversation and Book Launch with Saidiya Hartman, author of the famous book, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford, 1997)

Cheikh Babou's books on Islam, Migration, and the Muridiyya movement



In *The Muridiyya on the Move: Islam, Migration and Place Making*, Cheikh Anta Babou, History department faculty member and affiliate of Africana Studies explores the vast world of the African diaspora by focusing on a West African immigrant group – The Muridiyya.

Babou seeks to understand how elements of Murid culture empower migrating disciples to prosper in any location they choose. Murids constitute a third of Senegal's population and comprise over half of the Senegalese diaspora, spanning communities in Africa, Europe, and North America, and their influence now extending to South America and Asia.



The second book entitled *Ahmadud Bamba: the Founder of the Muridiyya*, [published in French], is an intellectual biography of Shaykh Ahmadu Bamba, the founder of the Muridiyya Sufi order in Senegal. The Muridiyya is the most influential religious organization in Senegal.

Based primarily on internal Murid sources, the book offers a reconstruction of the history of the Muridiyya from within. It explores Murid history from its inception in the late 19th century to 1913 when Ahmadu returned from exile from French Equatorial Africa and was assigned a residence in the colonial town of Diourbel in West Central Senegal.

Welcome to New Africana Faculty Members

Marcia Chatelain



Chatelain, a dynamic and accomplished public speaker, boasts a remarkable track record of accolades and recognitions, including prestigious awards from the Ford Foundation, the American Association of University Women, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Over her twelve-year tenure at Georgetown University, Chatelain garnered

numerous accolades for her exceptional teaching and dedicated university service. These accolades include the esteemed 2022 Georgetown Black Alumni Council Distinguished Leader Award, the 2021 Georgetown Alumni James S. Ruby Faculty Appreciation Award, and in 2018, the distinguished honor of being named a Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor, among others.

In 2016, Chatelain achieved national recognition when *The Chronicle of Higher Education* identified her as a prominent figure in academia, particularly for her impactful social media campaign known as #FergusonSyllabus. This campaign encouraged educators to facilitate crucial conversations about the 2014 crisis in Ferguson, Missouri. Additionally, Chatelain has held esteemed fellowships, including the Eric and Wendy Schmidt Fellowship at New America, a Faculty Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and an Andrew Carnegie Fellowship.

Chatelain's educational journey began at the University of Missouri-Columbia, where she majored in Journalism and Religious Studies and was named a Harry S Truman Scholar in 2000. She furthered her academic pursuits by earning an A.M. and a Ph.D. in American Civilization from Brown University, solidifying her expertise and commitment to advancing knowledge and discourse in her field.

The author of *South Side Girls: Growing up in the Great Migration* (Duke University Press, 2015), she specializes in teaching subjects related to women's and girls' history, the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, and black capitalism. Her most recent publication, *Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America* (Liveright Publishing Co./W.W. Norton, 2020), delves into the intricate connections between African American politicians, civil rights organizations, communities, and the fast-food industry.

For her remarkable work on *Franchise*, Chatelain has garnered numerous prestigious awards, including the 2021 Pulitzer Prize in History, the Hagley Prize in Business History, the Lawrence W. Levine Award from the Organization of American Historians, the Hurston Wright Legacy Award, the Hooks Institute National Book Award, the Alfred and Fay Chandler Book Award, and the James Beard Foundation Award for Writing.

Vaughn Booker



Vaughn A. Booker holds the position of George E. Doty, Jr. and Lee Spelman Doty Presidential Associate Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to his appointment at Penn, he served as an Associate Professor of African & African American Studies and Religion at Dartmouth College.

Booker received his AB in Religion from Dartmouth College, his MDiv from Harvard Divinity School, and his MA and PhD in Religion from Princeton University, while also earning the Certificate in African American Studies.

Booker is a distinguished scholar in the field of religious history, with a primary focus on twentieth-century African American religions. His research and teaching revolve around the study of individuals who simultaneously engage in the practices of reshaping religious and racial identities, fostering communities, and establishing forms of authority.

His teaching interests are wide-ranging, incorporating intersectional perspectives, and encompass topics such as Black religion and culture during the Jim Crow era, the role of religion in the Civil Rights movement, contemporary Black religious and spiritual memoirs, religion in the context of mourning, and Booker's debut book, titled *Lift Every Voice and Sing: Black Musicians and Religious Culture in the Jazz Century* (NYU Press, 2020), earned significant recognition, including the Council of Graduate Schools' esteemed 2022 Gustave O. Arlt Award in the Humanities. It also achieved finalist status for the American Academy of Religion's 2021 Religion and the Arts Book Award.

Currently, Booker is immersed in multiple scholarly endeavors. One of his ongoing book projects, "From the Back of the Church," delves into the history of irreverent religious and spiritual expressions within African American life. Furthermore, he is collaborating as a co-editor on a forthcoming volume dedicated to African American Religious History, alongside esteemed scholars Dr. Judith Weisenfeld, Dr. Alexis Wells-Oghoghomeh, and Dr. Ahmad Greene-Hayes.

In addition to his notable book achievements, Booker's academic contributions extend to various esteemed publications, including *The Journal of Africana Religions*, *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, and the open-access journal *Religions*.

Gale Garrison Retirement Celebrations

On Monday, September 25, 2023, the Penn Africana community came together for one of our own, Gale Garrison who retired in 2022 after 29 years of service to the community and UPenn.

The event was a joyful and emotional one as three long-serving faculty members paid tribute to the service that Gale rendered to the students, faculty and staff of the university for almost three decades.

Professors Tukufu Zuberi, Barbara Savage, and Camille Z. Charles each rendered specific details of the nature of Gale's immense service to the university and the Africana community. Zuberi recalled the efforts that it took gain recognition for Africana Campus at UPenn and acknowledged that Gale was there every inch of the way. Savage recalled that Gale welcomed her to UPenn when she joined the university in 1995.

She added that "Gale has been a partner in everything we have accomplished since then, working with dedication and devoted to organization and detail whether in curriculum (before we had a department) or in programming or in keeping track of budgets. She was there and with us when we moved from program to Center to department, as well as when we moved from space to space to our existing home in 3401 Walnut Street."

In addition, Savage, who read from a prepared short speech, added: "One of the things I have valued most about Africana is the team mentality of cooperation and support for one another, for each and all of us, regardless of our particular roles and our unified support for our students, for seeing them into and through this place, whether undergraduates or graduate students.

That ethos of love and support extends outward from Africana to the rest of Penn, and to the community at large. No one does a better job of creating a welcoming and inclusive place and space than Africana. And at the center of that is our great administrative staff, which is why we are here today to celebrate with Gale and to thank her for her service and her commitment to our mission."

Charles also thanked Gale for her sacrifices and commitment. On behalf of CFAS, she presented a parting gift to Gale. Others who paid tribute to Gale by recorded video included Professor Herman Beavers, a former student Kassidi Jones and Dr. Clemmie Harris.

In her response to the tributes, Gale said she was overwhelmed. She added that she could have accomplished all that she did without the support of faculty, staff and students. She was accompanied to the event by her husband Dr. Arthur Garrison and other family members.



Africana: Eve Trout Powell, Camille Z. Charles, Gale Garrison, Barbara Savage, and Tukufu Zuberi



Gale and guests at the celebration



Gale and Carol Davis in an embrace



Gale sharing her appreciation



Gale and her husband, Arthur Garrison



Gale with a former colleague



Gale and Camille share a funny moment



Gale taking in reflections from family, colleagues, and friends



Joann Mitchell, Camille Z. Charles, Eve Trout Powell, Tukufu Zuberi, and Gale Garrison



Barbara Savage with Gale



Dorothy Roberts and Gale



Vivian Gadsden with Gale



Gale mingling with friends



Gale listening intently as guests share reflections

CFAS Outreach

The Center has proactively undertaken several significant measures to enhance our engagement with the community. Our approach involves providing instructional sessions led by the Senior Staff Director to both churches and the Philadelphia Prison system. This initiative began with the delivery of a course focusing on the History of the Civil Rights Movement at the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens (FBCLG) in Somerset, New Jersey.

Additionally, we are in the process of arranging a similar educational program for Mt. Pisgah church in West Philadelphia. The success of our endeavors at First Baptist has catalyzed interest in another upcoming class this fall, centered on the history of the Black Panther Party.

During the recent summer, we conducted an instructive session at the Riverside Correctional Facility, aimed at adolescents aged 15 to 17 who are awaiting trial. The Senior Staff Director led a session that delved into the life of Malcolm X, igniting extensive discussions regarding Malcolm's transformative use of his incarcerated period to equip himself for life beyond confinement.

A prominent facet of our evolving outreach efforts is the Model Gary Convention, an innovative educational model specifically tailored for Africana Studies. Drawing inspiration from both the Model UN and the 1972 National Black Political Convention in Gary, Indiana, this model encourages high school students to tackle issues spanning local, state, national, and international realms that hold particular significance for individuals of African descent.

The distinctive strength of this model lies in its approach of involving students in crafting position papers and formulating actionable resolutions, thus providing them with firsthand insight into the mechanisms underlying the formulation of public policies.

In preparation for May 2024, we are actively orchestrating the convention at UPenn, in partnership with the Philadelphia Public Schools and New Jersey Public Schools. Notably, the African American Resource Center and Makuu: The Black Cultural Center have expressed a willingness to collaborate, facilitating the engagement of UPenn students as moderators for the convention.

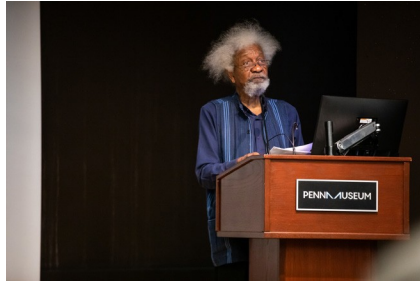
Lastly, the Center has contributed its voice to the public discourse through the publication of statements concerning the Supreme Court's decision on Affirmative Action. We have taken a leading role in formulating a statement addressing Florida's AP African American Studies course, in addition to aligning with local civic and religious leaders to voice opposition against the decision of the Philadelphia Union League to bestow their highest honor upon Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

Images from the first Distinguished Lecture in African Studies Delivered by Wole Soyinka

Photos by Eddy Marengo



Acting President Pritchett welcomes Wole Soyinka



Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka



Soyinka and the audience



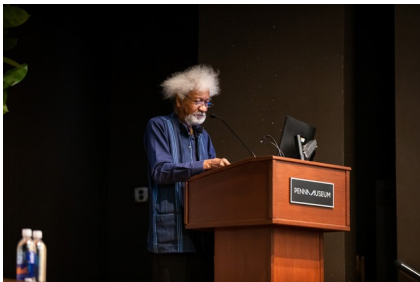
Audience in rapt attention



Soyinka and Adebawbi in conversation



Soyinka at book signing



Soyinka delivering his lecture



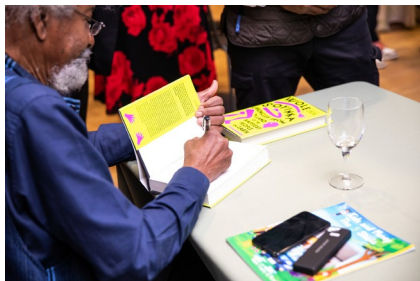
Soyinka and Osagie Imasogie chatting during dinner



Soyinka and Zuberi chatting during dinner



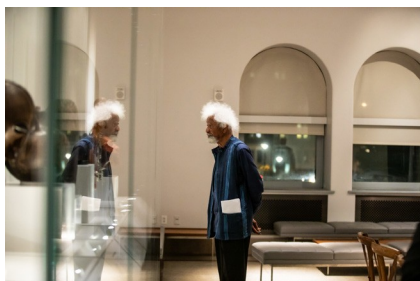
Soyinka and Adebawbi in conversation



Soyinka autographing his book



Soyinka making a point



Soyinka standing in front of his reflection



Acting President Wendell Pritchett



Acting Pres. Pritchett addressing the audience



Acting Provost Winklestein, Soyinka, and Prof. Charles chatting before dinner



Dinner for Wole Soyinka



Profs. Michael Hanchard and Zita Nunes in the audience



Wole Soyinka responds to a question by Wale Adebawo

Images from the second Distinguished Lecture in African Studies Delivered by President Masisi of Botswana

Photos by Eddy Marengo



President Magill presents a gift to



President Masisi and President Magill



Amy Gadsen, LaShawn Jefferson, Pres. Masisi and Spencer Northcutt



President Masisi making a point



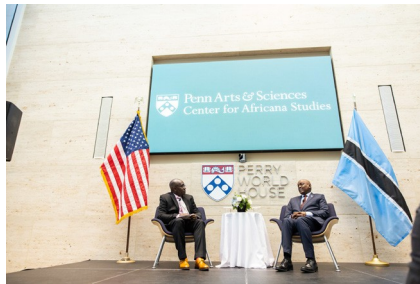
President Masisi giving his remarks



President Magill gives welcoming remarks



President Masisi presents a gift to President



President Masisi and Prof. Adebawo have a conversation



President Masisi and Profs. Charles and Adebawo



President Masisi with UPenn students from Botswana



LaShawn Jefferson and Spencer Northcutt of PWH with President Masisi



President Masisi and Wharton Student, Leungo Norman, Touring the campus



President Masisi and Prof. Adebawo at the end of the conversation



Two Presidents



Wale Adebani, President Masisi, Penn President Liz Magill And CFAS Interim Director, Camille Z. Charles



President Masisi delivering his keynote lecture



President Masisi during his lecture



Camille Z. Charles talks to the audience



President Magill welcoming Botswana's Ambassador to the U.S, Onkokama Kitso Mokaila



Perry World House Senior Executive Director, LaShawn Jefferson, greets President Masisi



President Masisi and Wale Adebani at end of the conversation



President Masisi, Botswana's Ambassador to the U.S., Onkokama Kitso Mokaila, with Wharton Student, Leungo Norman



The President and his old schoolmate, Marc Papé of the Lauder Institute



President Masisi and his team meeting a team from the Perelman School of Medicine, led by Amy Gadsden of Penn Global



CFAS Faculty and staff with President Masisi



President Masisi with Botswana students



Audience members



The President presents a gift to CFAS Director



Camille Z. Charles presents a gift to the



President Masisi and the audience



The President and his old school mate, Marc Papé from the Lauder Institute.



Student pose for photograph after the event



Dinner for President Masisi



President Masisi and Prof. Zuberi clink glasses



President Masisi greets Prof. Michael Hanchard



President Masisi and SAS Assoc. Dean Jeffrey Kahlberg



Prof. Charles and President Masisi clink glasses



Prof. Acebanwi introducing Osagie Imasogie to the president



Joann Mitchell, Senior Vice President for Institutional Affairs and Chief Diversity Officer, greets President Masisi



A toast to the President



Toast!



At the dinner for the President



Brigid Dwyer, Timothy Rommen, and other



Camille Z. Charles giving remarks at dinner



SAS Assoc. Dean Jeffrey Kahlberg and the President



Mr. Imasogie and President Masisi in a tête-à-tête



President Masisi and Wharton student Leungo Norman showdance moves



President Masisi greeting Teya Campbell

Images from a Special Lecture in African Studies delivered by VP Osinbajo of Nigeria

Photos by Eddy Marengo



Interim Provost Beth A. Winkelstein



Africana Faculty and Staff with the VP



VP Osinbajo tours the Africana Gallery



Africana students, VP and Ambassador Emenike



Wale Adebanwi, Tukufu Zuberi, and the VP

Dean of Penn Carey Law, Ted Ruger, Tukufu Zuberi of Africana and Sociology, Wale Adebanwi of Africana, VP Osinbajo, Interim Provost Beth A. Winkelstein, and Associate Vice Provost for Global Initiatives, Amy Gadsden



CFAS Associate Director, Teya Campbell, greets the VP



CFAS Sr. Staff Director, Kelly Harris, greets VP Osinbajo



Amy Gadsden greeting VP Osinbajo



Interim Provost Beth A. Winkelstein presents a gift to VP Osinbajo



Penn Carey Law School Dean Ted Ruger and VP Osinbajo



Amy Gadsden, Tukufu, VP Osinbajo and his wife



Tukufu Zuberi and VP Osinbajo tour the African collection at the Penn Museum



Tukufu and VP Osinbajo



Wale Adebawo and Tukufu Zuberi present gift to the VP



VP Osinbajo greets students



Africana and Wharton Students with VP Osinbajo





Tukufu and the VP discuss an artifact



UPenn Faculty and Staff with the VP and Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S., Uzoma Emenike



UPenn students with the VP and Ambassador



Brigid Dwyer, Vice-Dean for DEI, speaking with the VP



VP Osinbajo and Interim Provost Winklestein

Images from Africana Studies 50th Anniversary Celebration

Photos by David DeBalko



Tukufu welcoming the audience



Tukufu Zuberi, Charisse Burden Stelly, Molefi Asante



Charisse Burden-Stelly making a point



Molefi Asante making a point



Panel and the audience



Dorothy Roberts chatting over dinner with Kelly Harris



CFAS Assoc. Director Teya Campbell chatting with Molefi Asante



CFAS Senior Lecturer Ali Dinar with Molefi Asante



Students in the audience



Audience members at 50th anniversary



Sarah J. Jackson, Camille Z. Charles, and others at the celebration



Student asking a question during Q&A



Audience members



Audience members



Vanicleia Silva Santos and Dorothy Roberts are with Molefi Asante and his wife



Africana faculty and students at 50th Anniversary reception




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