Celebrating Bunche Centenary & 50th Anniversary of the Brown Decision
RESEARCH

Established as an organized research unit (ORU) in 1969, the UCLA Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies has a primary commitment to undertake and sponsor research which enhances our understanding of the history, lifestyles, material conditions, and socio-cultural systems of women and men of African descent in the Americas, and in the Diaspora.

Prime Time in Black and White
This research project, a five-year longitudinal study of diversity on prime time network television, entered its third year with an exploration of the commercials airing between prominent television dramas and situation comedies. The goal of the project is to analyze the relationship between televised images of blackness and the American racial order. Previous studies have suggested that television both reflects and shapes public consciousness in interesting ways. In the realm of television commercials, studies have shown that white characters are not only overrepresented, but that they are also more likely than other-race characters to be featured. When black actors are featured, studies show, it is often as objects of sexual desire. Are these patterns still evident in prime time commercials? Are there differences between commercials airing around black-oriented situation comedies and those airing with more mainstream programs? Has the rise of UPN (which features a disproportionate share of all black TV characters) resulted in any new patterning of black images in commercials? These are just a few of the questions that will be addressed by this phase of the study, which examines more than 1000 commercials airing over a week-long period, on ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, WB, and UPN. The final report is scheduled for a June 2005 release.

College Access Project for African Americans (CAPAA)
The highlight of the past year for CAPAA has been the successful completion of the second round of mini-grants distributed as part of this five-year, Ford Foundation-funded $700,000 initiative. Five scholars (one from UC Davis, two from the Bay Area's Equal Justice Society, and two from UCLA) were given a total of over $40,000 to continue research projects that are trying to solve the problem of diminished access and equity for African-Americans to the University of California System. The April release of the project's 2003 findings, Separate But Certainly Not Equal, received national media publicity with the assistance of Podesta Mattoon, the public affairs firm employed by the Ford Foundation. The CAPAA also undertook significant outreach activities at the American Educational Research Association annual convention in April and the San Diego Inter-Agency Coalition in October.

Institute of American Cultures (IAC)
Each year the IAC, an administrative entity composed of UCLA's four ethnic studies centers, with oversight from the UCLA Graduate Division, sponsors a competitive fellowship and grant program to support research by faculty, visiting post-doctoral scholars, and graduate students.

IAC Award Recipients 2004-2005

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<th>Postdoctoral Fellowship</th>
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Director Darnell Hunt, Chancellor Albert and Mrs. Carnesale at the Bunche Center Renaming Ceremony October 9, 2003
Carlos Moore Archive
The Carlos Moore Collection includes the documents, records, and papers of international scholar-journalist Carlos Moore concerning issues and topics in Latin America, the United States, Africa and Europe since 1961. The collection contains: 53 audio tapes of lectures and interviews (e.g., Malcolm X, Cheikh Anta Diop, Fela Kuti); 29 video tapes of the 1987 Conference on Negritude, Ethnicity and Afro Culture in the Americas; 248 post graduate research papers on race and politics in Latin America supervised by Carlos Moore; 57 academic documents and records; 119 essays and articles by Carlos Moore; 33 articles in Jeune Afrique (1981-1982) by Carlos Moore; personal correspondence (e.g., Maya Angelou, Stokley Carmichael); a list of his presentations and lectures; and a list of his monographs, essays and book chapters.

The Carlos Moore Collection is available through the online finding aid at the UCLA Digital Library, and will be made available for research in the Instituto de Estudios Americanos (IEA) at the University of Puerto Rico. The Carlos Moore Collection is held at the UCLA Library, Special Collections.

Oxford University Press Book Series
The first volume in a four-volume series on African Americans and media was completed this year. Channeling Blackness: Studies on Television and Race in America, edited by Bunche Center Director Darnell Hunt, features fifteen classic and contemporary studies of the shifting, complex relationship between popular television and blackness. Using a variety of methodological and theoretical approaches, these chapters examine four key issues that have framed popular and scholarly inquiries into the nature of race on television: the black-white binary; the power of media; distinguishing between “negative” and “positive” images; and the relative importance of markets versus racial motives in television. Subsequent volumes will focus on news and African Americans, film and African Americans, and how interactions between different media forms result in the images of blackness in circulation today.

Black Los Angeles Project
The Center’s effort to develop a comprehensive research program, database and multimedia resource on the Black past, present and future of Los Angeles got off the ground in 2004 with the drafting of the Black L.A. project’s first initiative. No Hay N i d e P o r A c í a (T h e r e A r e N o B l a c k s H e r e ) will be an hour-long documentary on Afro-Latinos in the city. The work is an important start for the Black L.A. project for two main reasons. It focuses attention on the fact that more than half of the original settlers in 1781 of what was to become Los Angeles were of African descent, as were many others who still live on in popular street and place names, such as Pío Pico, the last Mexican governor of California. Also, it provides an intellectual space to ponder the identity politics of contemporary Los Angeles.

Diversifying Hollywood: Practices, Priorities and Policies
“I don’t want governmental policy to lead the industry. I want the industry to lead the policy and have input. ... I want the concerns of the industry to be considered and policy go from there...”

From comments by UCLA alumnus and Congresswoman Diane E. Watson during the Bunche Center forum examining diversity and policy in the entertainment industry on February 17, 2004

DEGREE PROGRAMS IN AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

Undergraduate Program
The Interdepartmental Program in Afro-American Studies (IDP) had approximately sixty undergraduate majors, the highest number in one year. The IDP had forty-six minors and two non-matriculating international scholars. In spring, ten majors and seven minors matriculated. In the summer an additional ten majors and minors completed the program. Two students availed themselves of the Education Abroad Program in Brazil and Barbados. There was also one honors student.

Graduate Program
The two-year M.A. Program in Afro-American Studies continues to attract a wide range of top young graduate level scholars who wish to ground themselves in key theoretical issues regarding African Americans and the Diaspora. This year the IDP admitted ten M.A. students. At least three of the 2004 graduating cohort have gone on to Ph.D. programs, with the others entering the work force.

Interdisciplinary Focus
From a pedagogical standpoint, one of the major strengths of the IDP continues to be its interdisciplinary, interdepartmental approach to education. As the world becomes an increasingly interconnected place, students need training that will equip them to analyze and negotiate across many kinds of boundaries: geographical, social, political, educational, and economic. IDP-trained students develop critical thinking skills that allow them to analyze African American issues and situate them within the matrix of global concerns.

Program Administration
In order to facilitate the admissions process, Chair Dr. Brenda Stevenson maintains an IDP Admissions and Awards Committee, composed of affiliated faculty. This group formally reviews files of students seeking admission to the Program and makes recommendations for admissions and awards to the Graduate Division. To strengthen and facilitate interaction between the IDP and students, the Program has also reestablished the Afro-American Studies Student Association.
It is a great pleasure to be a Thurgood Marshall lecturer this year, celebrating fifty years after Brown vs. Board of Education. I thought I would recount a conversation I had with Justice Marshall toward the end of his life.

Born in 1908 in Baltimore, Maryland, when school segregation was part of the fabric of life, Thurgood Marshall wanted to go to the nearby University of Maryland Law School, but the school did not accept people of color, so Marshall did not even apply. Instead, he attends Howard University Law School and has to get up at 5 a.m. to take the train to Washington D.C.

When he shows up in 1930, Thurgood Marshall’s one of thirty-six students lined up that morning to meet the dean, a man named Charles Hamilton Houston. Houston was about creating a boot camp for black warriors, a proving ground that would produce the very best black legal talent America had ever seen.

Once Marshall graduates, it’s the post depression era, and a young black warrior can’t get much work. Houston, who is working with the NAACP to look at the disparate conditions of schools available to black and white students throughout the country, invites Marshall to take a trip with him down South. They get down into the Mississippi delta, way down into the South, just before the Louisiana border in rural Mississippi. They come to an old shack of a school. No roof. Just four wooden walls and tar paper stretched over the top. No carpet, no floor, just dirt. The teacher didn’t have a blackboard. She had a piece of coal that she would scrawl on the wall with. These were the conditions for Black children in this small community in terms of education.

While Dean Houston was inside the building taking pictures, taking notes, talking with the teacher, Marshall was outside eating a sandwich. A little boy approached and stared at him. Thurgood tears off a piece of the sandwich, but the child doesn’t want the sandwich. The kid points at an orange that Marshall had been saving for his dessert and had placed on the hood of the car. Marshall didn’t want to give up that orange, but he gives it to the child, who bites at it right through the rind and, reacting to the bitter taste of the rind, pulls the orange from his mouth. The juice goes spraying across his cheeks and chin. Some of it gets into his eye and stings and the kid takes the orange and flings it down on the ground in disgust. Thurgood Marshall goes epileptic, says, “What the hell is wrong with you? Are you crazy? Wasting my orange!”

Dean Houston, hearing the commotion, comes raching out of the building and asks, “Thurgood, why are you screaming at this child?” Marshall says, “Dean Houston, you don’t understand. This kid took my orange, bit at it right through the rind like he’s a crazy person, smashed it all over his face, and now he’s thrown the orange on the ground and wasted it.”

Dean Houston looks at him and says, “You know Thurgood, I signed your law degree, but I don’t think you understand what is going on here. When these families take us in for a night and we have to go to the bathroom, they have open troughs right there in the backyard filled with human waste, because these people have no plumbing. If people here want a job they have to go to the man in the big house and ask him for a piece of land in which they can be sharecroppers. That’s all they have in terms of economic opportunity. When it comes to educating the next generation in this community...” He turned and pointed at this shack behind him, “this is what these people have to offer their children. You’re going to stand here and scream at this little boy because he doesn’t know anything about peeling an orange, slicing an orange, picking the seeds out of an orange? Damn it, Thurgood, this kid has never seen an orange and you’re doing nothing but embarrassing me, yourself and this child.”

Thurgood Marshall was stunned. He writes home to his mother, “Dean Houston has been telling us that a lawyer who is not a social engineer is nothing but a social parasite. I didn’t know what he was talking about. I went to law school to make you proud, to make some money, but today I met an eight year old who didn’t know what an orange is. I am struck by the idea that somebody should be a voice for that child in American life.”

Marshall goes back to Baltimore, with a grudge he desperately wants to satisfy against the University of Maryland Law School. He gets a friend, Donald Gaines Murray, to fill out an application to the school. When it comes back, it’s stamped “denied”. Marshall encourages Murray to send a letter to the university president asking why someone who’s an honors graduate of Emerson, a life long resident of the state of Maryland, would be denied admission to the state’s law school.

A few weeks later a handwritten letter comes back from the president saying that the University of Maryland Law School does not accept people of color. Marshall is ecstatic because now he’s got the policy explicitly stated, signed by the university president, and he uses it as the basis for a lawsuit against the University of Maryland Law School. Thurgood Marshall stands up and says, “Your honor, under the 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision, separate but equal is the law of the land. If you don’t have a separate and equal law school for educating young black people in the state of Maryland, then you must integrate the existing facility.” The next day the judge announces that Donald Gaines Murray is to be admitted to the University of Maryland Law School.

Dean Houston uses that case as a precedent, and begins to challenge segregation of graduate professional schools; first in Missouri, then in Oklahoma, then Texas.
Finally, when the Supreme Court gets these cases on appeal, the Court says that even if you created a black law school, how can it ever be the equal of a long-standing state institution with its faculty, libraries, alumni networks and all the rest? The Supreme Court does everything but overturn “separate but equal” Plessy v. Ferguson.

Thurgood Marshall succeeds Dean Houston as the head of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Now comes the challenge of how to confront segregation in elementary and secondary schools. The idea is that they shouldn’t directly challenge Plessy’s “separate but equal,” but reach out to the Constitution, to the 14th Amendment, to the requirement of equal protection under the law for all citizens regardless of race, and say that segregated schools at the elementary and secondary levels is a violation of that 14th Amendment.

Marshall and the lawyers from the NAACP make this case. His opponent, John W. Davis, explains that integration would sacrifice a system of separate education appropriate for the children, the grandchildren, the great grandchildren of slaves. He says that black children wouldn’t feel welcome in integrated schools. Marshall comes back and responds in the second set of hearings, in December of ’53, by saying, in essence, that John W. Davis wants to simply confirm an inferior status on all black people for all time.

Fifty years ago on May 17, 1954, Chief Justice Earl Warren seated on that bench at the Supreme Court in Washington D.C., accompanied by the all other eight justices of the high court on that day, said the unanimous ruling, that in the area of public education, “separate but equal” is so damaging in ways unlikely ever to be undone that it’s illegal and must be ended. That day truly marked a landmark in terms of Supreme Court history.

It’s doubtful, given all the press lately about the continuing integration of higher education, whether most Americans know of the crisis facing African Americans in higher education. Here in the UC system, for example, at our governor’s request, admissions across the board are down 7%. African Americans constitute only 2.3% of admitted California students into UC schools. This number is down from the prior two years, when our levels of acceptance were 2.8% and 3.3% respectively. In raw numbers, this amounts to admissions of 199 African American students at UCLA. To put this in perspective, we’re talking of having just twenty-four non-athlete black males in a freshman class of nearly 4,000. These declines are taking place relative to classes that have already experienced a decline in the aftermath of Prop 209. The situation is not one that is likely to improve without drastic intervention. We are not talking about a slowed pace of advancement. We are talking about an absolute reversal.

Research today suggests a host of barriers that continue to shape the life chances of African Americans. Barriers that have little to do with talent and competitiveness, and everything to do with flawed measures of merit, and false beliefs about the race neutrality of our existing educational practices.
Claude Steel, for example, finds that the fear of confirming a negative racial stereotype against one's own group, which causes anxiety, heightened blood pressure, and even panic, actually suppresses the performance of African Americans on standardized tests such as the LSAT and the SAT, tests that they could otherwise perform on par with whites, absent this threat. Other cognitive researchers suggest that there are an infinite number of subtle messages and practices that suppress the classroom performances of African Americans, or, worse still, repress their teachers' recollection of their superior performances while highlighting negative performances. Other research suggests that tests alone, which count for a lion share of the chances of admission to a competitive school, can predict less than 18% of a first year grade. Yet, a poor test score can account for 100% of the likelihood of being admitted.

The belief that education is, either in its process or measure, race neutral is becoming increasingly falsifiable. Nonetheless, affirmative action policies, a modest correction for the lack of race neutrality in higher education, are routinely and, I would contend, inaccurately called racial preferences. Considering the factor of race in admission might not be considered preferential at all, in light of all the evidence that shows it is the failure to take race into account that is preferential.

Martin Luther King, the century's most gifted orator, fell to the bottom quintile in his verbal GREs. Something is definitely wrong when potential like that is missed. When one's entire future may rest on one high stake test or the sheer luck of a personal connection, both qualifications are heavily shadowed by apartheid in the past and unthinking, exclusive, institutional cultures of higher education today.
The Bunche Center has worked throughout the year to enhance our relationship with all types of media representatives. As a result, the Center has been featured in numerous publications and media outlets, such as:

- Associated Press
- National Public Radio
- UPI
- KNX AM
- KFWB AM
- KJZZ FM
- KJLH FM
- Los Angeles Times
- Los Angeles Watts Times
- Los Angeles Wave Newspapers
- Los Angeles Sentinel
- La Opinion
- Watts Star Review
- Precinct Reporter
- Washington Times
- KTLA-TV
- KNBC-TV
- Numerous local radio stations
- Various national local newspapers

AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

The Julian Cannonball Adderley Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in 1976 to honor the memory of the renowned jazz musician. Awards are made on a competitive basis to undergraduate students specializing in Afro American Studies, music and related areas. Joshua Duron, Ethnomusicology (Jazz Studies) and Akemefuna Asimonye, Communications and Ethnomusicology, were the recipients of the award for the 2003-04 academic year.

On Friday, October 17, the Bunche Center co-sponsored with Borders Westwood, an evening with legendary guitarist and UCLA professor Kenny Burrell. Professor Burrell celebrated the release of his latest CD, Blue Muse. During the event, he also discussed the Kenny Burrell Archive of African American Music, which is housed at the Center.

Several Bunche Center faculty and staff released new books during the 2003-04 academic year. Dr. “Berky” Nelson, Director of the UCLA Center for Student Programming and a Lecturer in Social Sciences, wrote a book entitled The Rise and Fall of Modern Black Leadership: Chronicle of a Twentieth Century Tragedy. Scot Brown, Assistant Professor of History and Afro-American Studies at UCLA, wrote a book entitled Fighting for Us: Maulana Karenga, the Us Organization, and Black Cultural Nationalism. Mark D. Alleyne, Associate Director in charge of Research at the Bunche Center, released a book entitled Global Lies? Propaganda, the UN and World Order.

UPDATES

CAAS PUBLICATIONS

The CAAS Publications unit oversees the editing, production, marketing, and sales of texts relevant to the culture and history of people of African descent.

We are proud to announce the release of Resistance, Dignity, and Pride: African American Artists in Los Angeles by Paul Von Blum. In the words of art historian Al Boime, the book is “A ground-breaking effort” which offers a “systematic analysis of several generations of living artists and their visual representations.” This book is crucial for any scholars of African American Art and Los Angeles History as well as those interested in visual culture and civil rights more generally. The price is $25 + tax, shipping and handling. Cash, check or charge are accepted.

Check our website for order forms: www.bunchecenter.ucla.edu

LIBRARY & MEDIA CENTER

The Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies Library & Media Center (LMC) supports academic programs and research projects in African American Studies, and provides specialized reference, collection and information services on diverse aspects of African American life, history and culture in the Diaspora.

The 2003-2004 fiscal year has involved consolidating the vertical file, integrating the reference material into the entire collection, selective print collection development, and increased multi-media digital source development with particular focus on the Kenny Burrell Archive of African American Music. This activity and others has allowed for an expanded research opportunity and contributed to the resource base of the university.

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

Development highlights are as follows:

A donor contributed $5,000 towards the graduate research endowment fund that was established in 2000.

A donor contributed $2,500 to the Burrell Archive Project.

The fifth Jazz at the Bakery, featuring Kenny Burrell, was held in February 2004.

FEATURED 2003-2004 GUESTS:

Octavia Butler – Discussion
February 19, 2004

Ralph Bunche Jr. – Discussion
February 21, 2004

Kathleen Cleaver – Lecture
November 8, 2003

CENTER STAFF (2003-2004):
Darnell Hunt, Director; Mark Alleyne, Associate Director, Research; Jan Freeman, Management Services Officer; Veronica Benson, Financial Officer; Elmer Almer, Accounting Assistant; Alex Tucker, Special Projects & Development Coordinator; Maria Ligon, Front Office Manager, CAAS Publications; Raymond Guan, Tech Support; Lisbeth Gant-Britton, Student Affairs Officer; and Itibari Zulu, Librarian

Bunche Review, Vol. 3 edited by Darnell Hunt and Candace Moore

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