

# DIASPORA



# NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Department of African American and  
African Diaspora Studies at Indiana University



*Welcome to Diaspora, the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies' electronic newsletter. We are all connected to AAADS in one way or another, yet we are spread far and wide throughout the university, the community, and even farther afield. We are the AAADS Diaspora.*

## Faculty Spotlight

Each month, the *Diaspora* newsletter features an individual student or faculty member's accomplishments. This month we highlight Simone Person, who is working toward a dual MFA/MA in Fiction and African American and African Diaspora Studies.

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## Student Spotlight: Simone Person

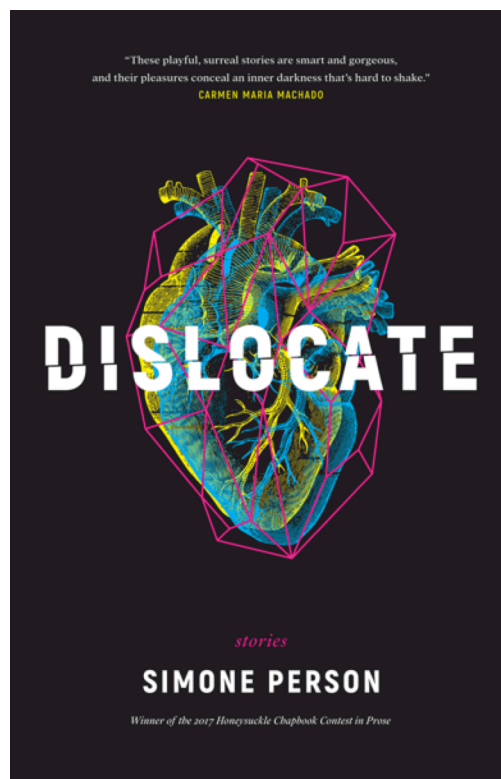
**Simone Person** is a Graduate Scholars Fellow and dual MFA/MA in Fiction and African American and African Diaspora Studies. Her work has appeared in or is forthcoming from *Cosmonauts Avenue*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Gigantic Sequins*, and *Yemassee*, among others, and been anthologized in *Crab Fat Magazine: Best of Year Three*.

Simone was named the Prose Winner of the 2017 Honeysuckle Chapbook Contest for her chapbook, *Dislocate*, which is now available at

<https://www.honeysuckle.press/books/dislocate>

Honeysuckle Press describes the book as follows:

"The stories in *Dislocate* are lamentations of the desperate and devoted, featuring ravenous fish lovers and dream-filled runaways marked by lightning. Equally surreal and mundane, the characters in these stories both devastate and are devastated in their claustrophobic yearnings for connection. *Dislocate* explores the things that force our bodies and selves out of space in time, navigating breakups, sleepovers, and the banality of a dinner party. Simone Person's prose is both haunting and hilarious, her characters ever grasping for something real, the love they seek as elusive as clouds of smoke. This book questions: what happens to us when we want to exist in the world, but can't?"



## Faculty News

In March 2018, *TIME* magazine online interviewed **Dr. Carolyn Calloway-Thomas** on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s death. She selected the top five most important speeches of Dr. King and provided a rhetorical commentary on each speech for the history section of *TIME*. On May 11, she gave a presentation on empathy at the international virtual Music-Business-Peace Conference. Professor Calloway-Thomas has been invited to present a series of lectures and seminars on intercultural communication to faculty and students at Shanghai University of Traditional Medicine in Shanghai, China on June 25, 2018. While in China, she will also give a seminar on the pedagogy of empathy at the China University of Communication and National Communication Association's joint conference in Beijing, June 23-24. Her article on empathy will appear in a forthcoming edition of the *Music Education Journal*, and her book on communication between North Americans and Chinese is scheduled for publication in late 2018. In addition, Dr. Calloway-Thomas is working on a book-length manuscript tentatively titled "Race (isms), Class, and Side-Dancing in America." The book is designed to shed light on the rising inequality in America between the rich and the poor, with a keen emphasis on how we can increase upward mobility for Black Americans.

At the April 17, 2018 Mentoring Services and Leadership Development Spring Recognition Ceremony, Carolyn received recognition for her support of IU scholars. In addition, Professor Calloway-Thomas gave a lecture on "Unpacking the Different Concepts of Slavery on the African Continent and Beyond" in Professor Nyama McCarthy-Brown's Summer 2018 Study Abroad Program class. The title of the course is Historical and Contemporary Culture of Ghana (AAADS-A398). In April, Dr. Calloway-Thomas also gave a faculty perspective talk during Red Carpet Days, a program that is designed to lure high school graduates to Indiana University. As a part of Carolyn's continuing research interest in the nexus between empathy, global immigration and conflict, she will tour parts of Switzerland in late May and early June.

Finally, the College of Arts and Sciences will provide funding for Professor Calloway-Thomas's signature project for "Globalizing Black Studies," an inaugural venture that will include faculty from China and the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies. Vice President James Wimbush's office will also provide funding for the project. According to Professor Calloway-Thomas, the mission of the project is to "globalize basic, underlying philosophies and practices about the nature of black culture, how it works, as well as how it has shaped the world we live in."

As a testament to his outstanding scholarship and contributions to AAADS, the history department, and the university at large, the College has appointed **Dr. Jakobi Williams** as a Ruth N. Halls Professor, effective July 1, 2018. This titled, prestigious award represents Dr. Williams' scholarly importance and speaks beautifully for the department.



Dr. Williams recently contributed a publication to the National Civil Rights Museum's programing for the 50th commemoration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. Below is a link to his piece on the Museum's website which will be published in book format later this year.

<http://mlk50.civilrightsmuseum.org/50-voices-50-years/posts/the-legacy-of-kings-influence-from-black-power-to-black-lives-matter>

Below is a link to a publication co-authored by Dr. Williams and doctoral student Andrea Sterling. It is the fourth installment to a scholarly roundtable focused on Ashely Farmer's new book, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*, and is published online via the African American Intellectual Historical Society Journal *Black Perspectives*. This December it will be published in the *Journal for Civil and Human Rights*.

<https://www.aaihs.org/black-power-and-the-gendered-imaginary/>

**Dr. Tyron Cooper** performed at the retirement party for Drs. Ruth M. Stone and Mellonee Burnim on Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. The event can be viewed at the following URL:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9B0LN-smU8E>

Dr. Cooper has also been selected to receive a Trustees Teaching Award in the At-Large Tenure Track Faculty competition this year.





*Obsidian: Literature & Arts in the African Diaspora* (Issue 43.2) published **Dr. Maria Hamilton Abegunde's** essay "A *Lectio Divina* for Gwendolyn Brooks: Honoring the Ancestor, Contemplating Healing." The essay is part of a special issue commemorating Cave Canem's 20th anniversary and what would have been Ms. Brooks' 100th birthday. The essay includes a previously unpublished poem by Dr. Abegunde and previously unpublished handwritten comments about the poem and a card from Ms. Brooks.

COGzine extended a special in-studio invitation to Dr. Abegunde to read and record her poems that Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera selected as a 2016-2017 finalist. Listen to the reading [here](https://www.cogzine.com/copy-of-jacob-appel-issue-6).

Read the award-winning poems

here: <https://www.cogzine.com/copy-of-jacob-appel-issue-6>

Dr. Abegunde was accepted as one of 8 poets nationwide to participate in the March 2018 Tupelo Press 30/30 project. Tupelo is an award-winning literary press. As part of the project, participants commit to writing 1 poem a day for 30 days and to fundraise donations for the press. Dr. Abegunde achieved 294% of her original pledge.

The Office of Mentoring Services & Leadership Development (part of the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, & Multicultural Affairs) awarded Dr. Abegunde a Certificate of Recognition for "...outstanding dedication and commitment to student success and Faculty Mentoring Initiatives programming" during the 2017-2018 academic year.

The Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA) named Dr. Abegunde the 2018 Mentor of the Year and the 2018 Faculty of the Year at the Evening of Black Excellence.

**Dr. Phoebe Wolfskill** presented her paper "Photographic Appropriation in the Early Work of Romare Bearden," at the annual meeting of the Midwest Art History Society (MAHS) in Indianapolis in April 2018. This semester she received grants from CAHI and CRRES to fund research for her article on Romare Bearden's early work (c. 1940-42), and her next book, which focuses on images of African Americans in Farm Security Administration (FSA) photography and the uses of this imagery within public and artistic discourses. Dr. Wolfskill's research will include study at archives and libraries in Washington, DC, New York City, and Cambridge, MA. In May 2018, Dr. Wolfskill was a fellow of CITL's Transforming Learning Community (TLC), a program at IU designed to help faculty gain new perspectives on the challenges faced in teaching undergraduate courses. She also received a Primary Source Immersion grant, which will feature a three-day program that runs from July 25-July 27th. The program involves sessions with representatives from different primary source collections at IU, with the goal of better enabling faculty to incorporate primary sources into their classes. The grant fortunately also comes with research money.

On Sunday, May 20th, from 4-6PM in the Frangipani Room of the IMU, AAADS celebrated the career and retirement of Professor **Fred McElroy**. Dr. McElroy received his PhD from IUB in 1987 and stayed on as a faculty member in AAADS to further build and support the department. He has been an inestimable teacher and colleague. In the words of his former PhD student Ade Doss, Dr. McElroy, "exemplifies what a true educator is." Dean Singell, Dr. Calloway-Thomas, Dr. Grim, Dr. Abegunde, and Dr. Doss all provided reflections on Dr. McElroy's influence, and doctoral student Bobby Davis and accompanying musicians performed Teddy Pendergrass's "Wake Up Everybody" and a song Bobby composed for the event.



# African American Arts Institute (AAAI)

During the month of April, the three ensembles of the African American Arts Institute performed their spring concerts to enthusiastic audiences at the Buskirk Chumley Theater. Professor **Stafford Berry** directed his first spring performance for the African American Dance Company (AADC) on April 7th, Professor **James Strong** conducted his first Soul Revue spring performance on April 14th, and Dr. **Raymond Wise** led the African American Choral Ensemble on April 28th.



After the spring concert, AACE made a Post-Concert Recording of eight of the songs performed. Dr. Wise had them recorded for archival purposes, but he is considering having them available on CD for sale. This semester, Dr. Wise also recorded an original gospel song with his A399 Black Gospel Music Production class.



The AACE performing for IU's first Thursdays concert series in April

Professor James Strong delivered the keynote address at an IU East post-commencement event to celebrate online graduates. Strong was invited to serve as the inaugural speaker because the IU East Distance Education officials have been impressed by his "journey and accomplishments."





Dr. Wise recently served as the guest workshop clinician at St. Paul Baptist Church in West Chester, PA. He presented three sessions on vocal technique and music ministry for the men's choir, the SATB choir, and the children's choir. Dr. Wise rehearsed the choir and led them in performance for Sunday morning worship. He also conducted workshops on dance technique, sign language, and acting technique. Both ensembles performed during the Sunday morning worship.



Two of Dr. Wise's compositions, "We're Marchin' To Zion" (an original composition) and "There Is A Balm in Gilead," have been accepted for publication by Hinshaw Publications. Hinshaw is one of the leading publishers of choral music in the nation. The songs are a spiritual arrangement written for the Ohio State University Chorale and will go into production this fall. They are scheduled for release and performance by a National Honors Choir concert at Carnegie Hall in March 2019. Dr. Wise has had a third composition, the original composition "Lord Send Your Spirit," accepted for publication by GIA Publications, another leading publisher of choral music in the nation. The song will be included in the African American Choral Music Series and is scheduled for release this fall.

On Friday, March 23rd, Professor Stafford Berry presented "Black Dance, Global Dance: Artist Panel Discussion" at the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center. The panel of master dance artists and percussionists included Anthony Artist, Alfred Baker, Evelyn Yaa Bakyore, Rogelio Kindelan-Nordet, Raul Padro, Milagros Ramirez, Clifton Robinson, Andre Rosa-Artis, Iris Rosa, and Cesar Valentino.



Professor Berry posed the following for conversation: "The recent Black Panther movie allowed us to envision an imagined, technologically and culturally advanced African society free from colonial tampering - Wakanda forever! By the end, we were left to ponder the idea of global resource sharing. Let us posit that our cultural dances—black dance—are our natural cultural resources. So, in an age where technology continues to rapidly expand our lives beyond our own geographic and virtual borders, what are the realities, possibilities, and challenges associated with black dance forms and culture in 2018 transnational society?"

# AAADS 2018 Graduation and Congratulatory Award Ceremony

Many AAADS graduate students were recognized for their diligent work at our 2018 Graduation and Congratulatory Award Ceremony. This year, PhD student **Zeba Khan-Thomas** won the William Wiggins Associate Instructor of Record Award. Outstanding Associate Instructor of discussion section awards went to **Amelia Smith** and **Dhakhir Abdullah**. **Caralee Jones** won the Phyllis Klotman Outstanding Thesis/ Dissertation Award. The Winona Fletcher Outstanding Leadership Award went to **Andrea Sterling**. **Bobby Davis** won the Medal of Honor for Community Outreach. The Medal of Honor for University Outreach Award went to the AAADS 2018 spring colloquium organizers for their hard work on what proved to be an outstanding symposium.



AAADS undergraduate students were given awards for their diligent research and other scholarly activities. **Noni Barrett** and **Camille Beck** received Dean's List recognition. Senior seminar final project awards were given to **Noni Barrett**, **Camille Beck**, **Laurin Embry**, and **Ke'Jhua Gooden**. **Eliza Craig** and **JeWaun Kenreich** won the AAADS GPA award for majors. The A113 Atkins Foundational Course Highest Performance Award went to **Celena Williams** (fall 2016) and **Brooklyn Hill** (spring 2017). The Joe Russell Leadership Award went to the **Thomas I. Atkins Living Learning Center Leadership Group**. **JaWaun Kenreich**, **Imari Beasley**, and the **Atkins Newsletter Group** received A. B. Assensoh Undergraduate Research/ Creative Activity Awards.





The Janice Wiggins Staff Mentor Award went to **Mary Stephenson**, Director of the Groups Scholars Program. The William H. Wiggins Faculty Award in Support of Teaching and Mentoring in AAADS was awarded to **Dr. Stephanie Power-Carter** and **Dr. Marvin Sterling**.



# Graduate Student News

On March 31st, the AAADS Graduate society sponsored the 12th annual **Herman C. Hudson symposium**. The event featured a keynote talk by Dr. **Marsha N. Horsley** (PhD IU AAADS, 2016) and four panels exploring the themes of black studies, critical theory, black feminism, and aesthetics and culture. Panelists included Khadijah Edwards, Zeba Khan-Thomas, Amelia Smith, Andrew Staderker, Kennedy Johnson, Andrea M. Sterling, Shadia Siliman, Marquese Carter, Maurisa Li-A-Ping, Simone Person, Bobby Davis, Samantha Horton, and Katrina Overby.



## Graduate Student News, continued...

Doctoral student **Khadijah Edwards** won an Institute for Digital Arts and Humanities Incubator Award (IDAH) and a HASTAC Scholarship, both for 2018-2019. The IDAH award helps scholars, “identify digital tools and publishing platforms” to enhance and circulate their research. The Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Advanced Collaboration (HASTAC) program is a “national alliance of more than 11, 500 humanists, artists, social scientists, and scientists and technologists working together to transform the future of learning for the 21st century.”

PhD student **Samantha Horton** won a Spring (January 2018 through August 2018) College of Arts & Sciences Travel Award.

**Kennedi Johnson** was accepted into Southern Foodways Alliance's Oral History Workshop this summer, alongside a scholarship to cover all of her expenses. Kennedi also won a Marie Turner Wright Folklore Grant and a Ronald R. Smith Fellowship, both funded by the Department of Folklore and Ethnomusicology.

On April 24th, **Anne Mahady-Kneller** passed her doctoral proposal defense and became ABD. **Zeba Khan-Thomas** passed her doctoral proposal defense and became ABD on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

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