



EMORY UNIVERSITY

Department of African American Studies

Emory College of Arts and Sciences

Fall 2018

Dianne Stewart will assume the role of interim chair of the Department of African American Studies for academic year 2018–2019. Please enjoy reading more about her below.

I was born in Kingston, Jamaica, and grew up in Hartford, Connecticut, among one of the larger Jamaican immigrant communities in the United States. I earned a BA in English and African American Studies from Colgate University, where I studied with 2016 Pulitzer Prize–winning poet Peter Balakian and worked on his poetry journal staff, *Graham House Review*. Although I loved studying the poetic and literary imagination, I was even more enthralled by the religious imagination and decided that I could incorporate literature into religious studies more easily than I could integrate religious studies into English.

And so I went on to pursue an MDiv from Harvard Divinity School, followed by a PhD in systematic theology from Union Theological Seminary in New York City. I had turned down a more sizable fellowship package and admission to Harvard's PhD program in the Committee on the Study of Religion to work with the pioneering and

world-renowned father of black liberation theology at Union, James H. Cone, the Charles A. Briggs Professor of Systematic Theology. At Harvard, my studies included theological aesthetics and American culture with the late Richard Reinhold Niebuhr

(son of the prominent Christian ethicist H. Richard Niebuhr), and at Union the Niebuhr legacy remained influential, as I learned under the tutelage of feminist ethicist Beverly Harrison, the protégé of the other prominent Reinhold Niebuhr (uncle to RRN and brother to HRN).

Union has held its reputation as one of the top three seminaries in the world for good reason. During the 1930s, it not only hosted Dietrich Bonhoeffer as visiting professor but went on to hire another premier German theologian, Paul Tillich. It was Union that first launched Cornel West's career back in the 1970s; and then, some 40 years later, Union would welcome him back to its faculty to help shape the academic and ministerial leaders



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of the 21st century. When I arrived in 1993, I had the opportunity to work extensively with prominent public scholars such as James Melvin Washington, editor of *A Testament of Hope*, the most comprehensive collection of Martin Luther King Jr.'s sermons and speeches. When Washington passed away just two weeks before I defended my dissertation in 1997, President Bill Clinton commented on his death, telling the world that he kept a copy of Washington's *Testament* on the nightstand by his bedside.

My career in the professoriate took me from a visiting professorship at Macalester College to an assistant professor appointment at the College of the Holy Cross. After four years in Worcester, Massachusetts, I relocated to Atlanta to assume a position at Emory University, where I am currently associate professor of Religion and African American Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. I also teach and advise doctoral students in the Laney Graduate School's Graduate Division of Religion in addition to administering Emory's Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) Program. Sponsored by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, MMUF is an international initiative that aims to diversify the academy by helping students from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups to earn the PhD degree and secure teaching positions at tertiary institutions across the United States and South Africa.

My research and teaching interests cover a wide range of topics under the umbrella of Africana religions—namely, religious cultures of the African diaspora with particular emphases upon African heritage religions in the Americas and the Caribbean; women and religion in Africa and the African diaspora; African religions; black, womanist, and Caribbean liberation theologies; theory and method in Africana religious studies; and interreligious dialogue among communities in the African diaspora.

I published my first book, *Three Eyes for the Journey: African Dimensions of the Jamaican Religious Experience*, with Oxford University Press in 2005. My second book project, *Obeah, Orisa and Identity in Trinidad: Between and Beyond Colonial Imaginations*, is under contract with Duke University Press.

Beyond my work in Trinidad and Jamaica, I have studied and lectured in a number of African, Latin American, and Caribbean countries, including Nigeria, the Benin Republic, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Bermuda. In 2006–2007, I spent a year and a half conducting archival and field research as a Fulbright Scholar in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where I focused on the history of religions in Central Africa during the slave period and prophetic religious movements in Congo today.

As a 2017–2018 Senior Fellow at Emory's Bill and Carol Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry, I worked to complete my related book project, *Local and Transnational Legacies of African Christianity in West-Central Africa and the Black Atlantic World* with the aim of publishing it with Oxford University Press. In addition to numerous consulting and public intellectual projects, I serve as coeditor, with Jacob Olupona (Harvard University) and Terrence Johnson (Georgetown University), of the Religious Cultures of African and African Diaspora People series at Duke University Press.

This 20-year career as a scholar, author, classroom professor, and public intellectual is, I hope, indicative of an unwavering commitment to the vocation of teaching and research with the intention of inspiring students and other audiences (whether in the classroom, church, temple, mosque, prison, or community center) to commit to a life of critical, healthful, and progressive thinking about religion, politics, and social formation.

Sincerely,

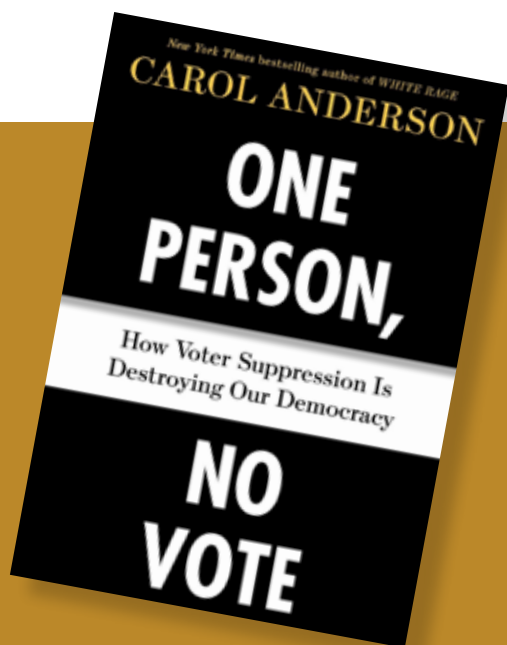
Dianne Stewart

Interim Chair, African American Studies

From the award-winning, *New York Times*–bestselling author of *White Rage*, the startling—and timely—history of voter suppression in America, with a foreword by Senator Dick Durbin.

In her *New York Times* bestseller *White Rage*, Carol Anderson laid bare an insidious history of policies that have systematically impeded black progress in America, from 1865 to our combustible present. With *One Person, No Vote*, she chronicles a related history: the rollbacks to African American participation in the vote since the 2013 Supreme Court decision that eviscerated the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Known as the Shelby ruling, this decision effectively allowed districts with a demonstrated history of racial discrimination to change voting requirements without approval from the Department of Justice.

Focusing on the aftermath of Shelby, Anderson follows the astonishing story of government-dictated racial discrimination unfolding before our very eyes as more and more states adopt voter-suppression laws. In gripping, enlightening detail, she explains how voter suppression works, from photo ID requirements to gerrymandering to poll closures. With vivid characters, she explores the resistance: the organizing, activism, and court battles to restore the basic right to vote to all Americans as the nation gears up for the 2018 midterm elections.



Accolades for One Person, No Vote

Carol Anderson is one of our most incisive and cogent thinkers regarding history's fingerprints on current affairs. With One Person, No Vote, she has produced a crucial examination of a critical issue: voter suppression.

—Jelani Cobb, author of *The Substance of Hope*

One Person, No Vote

- The first book to examine in its full, insidious scope and breadth the systematic suppression of the vote—and it’s a shocking, explosive story.
- Remember the news articles that explained how black voters just did not turn out for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election, unlike the turnout earlier for Barack Obama? This disappearing minority voter may well be the 2016 presidential campaign’s most misunderstood story. In truth, millions of American voters and votes were excluded from the 2016 ballot box, vanishing behind the firewall of hate and partisan politics that is voter suppression.
- We think we know about voter ID, gerrymandering, poll closures—but when it comes to the insidious voter-suppression policies that have systematically impeded black progress in America, we have been woefully ignorant—until now.
- Anderson’s narrative lays out and explains for the first time exactly how every one of these voter-suppression techniques works, how they are cloaked in the language of “ensuring the integrity of the ballot box” while systematically undermining democracy, corrupting our elections, and ensuring that officials are selected and not elected.
- The book also proposes a blueprint for how citizens fight back—using the impressive ground game that civil society executed in Alabama to overcome every voter-suppression method that the state had erected (voter ID, voter-roll purges, 66 polling stations closed, gerrymandering, disfranchising 15 percent of African American adults because of “moral turpitude”) to ensure that Roy Moore did not become a US senator.
- Readers will encounter a chilling history—from the massive disfranchisement efforts of the Mississippi Plan of 1890, through Jeff Sessions’s prosecution of voting rights activists in the 1980s, to the Supreme Court’s gutting of the Voting Rights Act in 2013 that led to a 7 percent decline in black voter turnout in the 2016 presidential election.



Carol Anderson

“Readers will encounter a chilling history—from the massive disfranchisement efforts of the Mississippi Plan of 1890 . . .”

Keeping Up with Vanessa Siddle Walker

Vanessa Siddle Walker, Samuel Candler Dobbs Professor of African American and Educational Studies at Emory University, has been voted president-elect of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). An international research society, AERA strives to advance knowledge and scholarly inquiry related to education and to promote the use of research to improve education. Walker's term as AERA Council president will begin next year at the conclusion of AERA's annual meeting on April 9, 2019. Walker received this honor after also being elected to the National Academy of Education earlier this year.



During her president-elect year, Walker is committed to learning the structure of the organization as she transitions from the role of a member and fellow to president of AERA. "I've been attending [the AERA meetings] since I was a doctorate student at Harvard in 1988," she said. "It's one thing to go to the meetings, present [lectures] at the meetings, and even be awarded by the organization. But it's another thing to really think about how to run it." Walker says she has initiated conversations with previous leadership to gain an understanding of the organization itself as well as her new role as president. Through these meetings, she plans to formulate a comprehensive programmatic direction for AERA during her term.

Horace Tate Scholars Program

In addition to her new role as president of AERA, Walker is excited to begin running a new pilot program for Emory undergraduate students who are seriously interested in education studies. The Horace Tate Scholars Program, named after the late Georgia state senator and educator who was instrumental in bringing about the desegregation of schools in Georgia, will begin in fall 2018 and run through spring 2019.

This program was borne from Walker's concern about the paucity of courses that revolved around education studies and research. During the fall semester, the students will be doing community mapping with site visits to learn about secondary education academic support; in the spring, the students will use their research to conceptualize solutions for community education. The goal of the program is to create an undergraduate experience for students interested in education studies that will facilitate their admission into graduate programs in education and harness their potential to influence public school communities.

Walker credits her commitment to education studies to the students themselves: "The undergraduate students in African American Studies have taught me so much and they have given me so much energy because their passion ignites my desire to both share my knowledge with them and to think with them on how they can make a difference in their generation."

Anderson Awarded a Guggenheim



Carol Anderson, Charles Howard Candler Professor and chair of African American Studies, was awarded the prestigious 2018 Guggenheim Fellowship for her work in constitutional studies. As a nationally acclaimed scholar, Anderson focuses her research on how policy is made and unmade and how racial inequality and racism affects that process. Her most recent publication, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*, has drawn praise from critics and is a National Book Critics Circle Award and a *New York Times* bestseller. At Emory, Anderson's unmatched commitment to scholarship has been recognized by both colleagues and students.

With her Guggenheim Fellowship award, Anderson plans to begin research on her current project: her third book with Bloomsbury. In the fall, she will be working with primary sources in the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and the George Bush Presidential Library before she begins writing.

Each year, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation awards fellowships “intended for individuals who have already demonstrated exceptional capacity for productive scholarship or exceptional creative ability in the arts.” The Guggenheim Foundation receives about 3,000 applications and only about 175 are selected as fellows after going through a rigorous vetting process.

Christell Roach, an AAS major, received the Hurston/Wright Foundation's Award for College Writers in May 2018 for her poetry collection *Mango Season*. The mission of the Hurston/Wright Foundation is to discover, mentor, and honor black writers. Named for literary geniuses Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright, the foundation preserves this legacy and works to ensure the future of black writers and the literature they produce. The award encourages college creative writers through support early in their writing careers.



2018 Graduating Class



Sariyah Benoit

Sariyah graduated with a degree in African American Studies. She was a Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry Fellow and Social Action and Community Service chair for the Omicron Xi chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, her research involved black motherhood during the Atlanta Child Murders of 1979 to 1981, with a particular focus on how the media and local politicians maligned mothers' activism on behalf of their missing and murdered children.



River Bunkley

River graduated with a degree in African American Studies. Named a part of the 100 Senior Honorary, he was an intern and Executive Committee Fellow for the Commission on Racial and Social Justice. He was also a John Lewis Humanity in Action Fellow, the Caucus of Emory Black Alumni liaison and the historian intern for the Emory Black Student Union.



Sofia Charlot

Sofia graduated with a degree in African American Studies and was involved with the Commission on Racial and Social Justice.



Chelsea Jackson

Chelsea graduated with a BA/MS in Political Science and a minor in African American Studies. She is a six-time Dean's List recipient and a member of the 100 Senior Honorary and numerous honor societies. Chelsea was a member of the Omicron Xi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the music director of Ahana A Capella, and the senior Diversity Initiatives Fellow in the Office of Admission. She cofounded ATLBSU, a student organizing collective, and served on the Executive Committee of the Commission on Social and Racial Justice. She is a Harry S. Truman scholar and a 2018 Rhodes Scholar, the first African American selected from Emory for both awards.



Deion Love

Graduating with a degree in African American Studies and Human Health, Deion was the vice president of the NAACP chapter at Emory and on the Volunteer Emory staff. He was also a member of Alpha Kappa Psi, a coed business fraternity; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity; Emory Impact Investing Group; and the Brotherhood of Afrocentric Men. He is the recipient of the Hiliary H. Holloway scholarship. After graduation, he began work as a strategic management consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton's Financial Service Market in Washington, D.C.



Kristin McFadden

Kristin graduated with a degree in African American Studies and Anthropology. She was an Oxford continuee, and while at Oxford, she participated in the Voices of Praise Gospel Choir and Interfaith Council. Kristin was also a Peer Assistance Leader and an Oxford College Research Scholar. On the Atlanta campus, Kristin was involved in the NAACP and the Black Student Alliance and as an Orientation Leader. She was a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow and a member of the Lambda Alpha National Anthropology Honor Society. During summer 2017, she interned at the Penn Center in St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Kristin is currently taking a gap year before applying to PhD programs in Anthropology or African American Studies.



Keisha Michel

Keisha graduated with a degree in African American Studies and Sociology after beginning her Emory career at Oxford, where she was on the merit list each semester. In summer 2017, she interned at Case Western Reserve Medical School through the Heart, Lung, and Blood Summer Program. She worked in a pharmacology lab researching triple-negative breast cancer and testing novel compounds for their ability to hinder its growth. The focus of the

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Class of 2018 continued

research was to produce a new form of medication that would be beneficial and accessible to African American women, as there are high rates of triple-negative breast cancer going untreated and undiagnosed among black women. Keisha is a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation General Mills Health Scholarship recipient and a Congressional Black Caucus Spouses Education Scholarship recipient. She also received the Sara McDowell Gregory Memorial Scholarship at Oxford College, which is awarded to a student library assistant demonstrating merit. Additionally, Keisha was a member of the Voices of Inner Strength Gospel Choir and the NAACP. She is currently taking a gap year working as a medical scribe before pursuing a joint MPH/MD.



Jayla Palmer

Jayla graduated with a degree in African American Studies and Media Studies.

During her time at Emory, she was admitted to the T. Howard Foundation Final Talent Pool. She is a 1915 Scholar and was also a part of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and a contributor to *404 Magazine*. She is now working as an account project manager at Indie Co., a start-up tech company focusing on media and entertainment partnerships.



Monae Reid

Monae graduated with a degree in African American Studies. She was a recipient of the Kids Chance of Virginia scholarship. At Oxford College, she was the historian for the Black Student Alliance. She was also an Emory Student Ambassador and is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.



Simone Senibaldi

Simone will graduate in fall 2018 with a degree in African American Studies and a minor in Dance and Movement Studies.

She is an intern with the Emory Black Student Union and also is involved with the NAACP, Black Student Alliance, and Persuasion dance crew. After graduation, she will work at City Hall for the mayor in the Human Resources department of Everett, Massachusetts.



Monet Timmons

Monet graduated with a degree in African American Studies and English. She was the inaugural recipient of the Rudolph P.

Byrd scholarship, which supports an Emory College student who demonstrates leadership activities that address social, political, cultural, and professional issues in the African American community at Emory. She was also an active member of the NAACP, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, and the Emory Pipeline Mentoring Program, which allowed her to reach out to high school students in the Atlanta public school system and inspire them to apply to college. Monet now is pursuing her PhD in English at the University of Delaware as an African American Public Humanities Initiative Fellow.



Daijah Walker

Daijah graduated with a degree in African American Studies and Anthropology and Human Biology.

She is the recipient of Hamilton E. Holmes Award from Campus Life and was a part of Voices of Inner Strength, Ngambika, and the Minority Pre-Med Society. She is now taking a gap year before going to osteopathic medical school.

Other Class of 2018 graduates are Nellie Hernandez (major), Nia Bilal (minor), Melissa Koelsch (minor), and Shera Galan (minor).