THE FACULTY SPEAKS

Volume 1, Issue 2

Friday, October 30, 2009

Headliners

NATIONAL SOCIETY OF COLLEGIATE SCHOLARS

Dr. Haiping Sun

On Friday, October 16th, 2009, The National Society of Collegiate Scholars- TSU Chapter held its Annual Induction to welcome more than thirty new members. NSCS is a national honor society for college students, whose members have GPA 3.4 and above and are dedicated to promoting academic success on campus. Initiated in 2005 with 5 members, the TSU chapter now has more than 120 members campus-wide.

Provost Dr. Sunny Obia attended the induction as keynote speaker and distinguished member. Mr. Hasan Jamil, who has been helping this organization, also received distinguished membership. Guests among supporters and parents of the event also include: Dr. Betty Cox, Interim Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Behavioral Sciences, Dr. Robert Ford, Professor of Chemistry and Advisor of TSU students' Chemistry Club, Dr. Ronda Saldivar, Chair of the English Department and Sponsor of the literary honor society, LIT, Dr. Louis Browne, Professor of Communications, Dr. Fengxiang Qiao, Professor of Transportation Studies and Advisor of CSSA-TSU, Dr. Lacy Reynolds, Professor of Education, and Dr. Haiqing Sun, from Foreign Languages, Advisor of NSCS-TSU.

On The Table

TSU Murals

Dr. Sarah Trotty

Few people realize that the 160 plus campus student murals and the three murals by Dr. John Biggers make Texas Southern University the only institution in this country with such large quantity and quality of mural paintings in one location. The murals, dating back to 1949 through August of 2009, deal with cultural themes from social inequality and civil rights injustices to the educational and religious impact on the lives of U.S. and world citizens. They form a great body of history topics for discussion. Visitors from Houston and as far away as China have toured the murals.

The mural requirements, along with individual exhibitions, were measures of student success initiated by Dr. John T. Biggers, Art Department founder, painting teacher, noted muralist and Griot, and Professor Carroll H. Simmons, noted sculptor and ceramic artist and first and long-time, ceramics and sculpture teacher. Together they designed a strenuous art degree program unrivaled at other universities. Efforts are now under way to conserve many of the murals that are in the greatest state of dete-

(Continued on page 4)
Town and Gown

Shoe Shines and Safe Houses

Mr. E. Nash earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in Business Administration at Texas Southern University and went out into the community to carry on an important tradition. “These little neighborhood shops,” Mr. Nash explains, “used to be community safe houses. When you went into another city or another state, you looked for the barbershop or the shoe shine parlor, and from there you made all your connections with the community. These shops were the gateway to the community and, at the same time, the hub of the community, and it was from here that everything political and spiritual, all change that benefited the community, got done.”

Mr. Nash’s Shines is just that—a vibrant hub of Houston’s dynamic African American community. Shines, located at 5106 Dowling Street, is an unprepossessing leather care and repair shop. Be prepared to slow down and search for it carefully before crossing Southmore. For this community center and memorabilia museum is housed in a very historic-looking bayou-style dwelling that looks like the grassroots prototype for the Texas Information Center off Highway 10, coming West from Louisiana.

If Mr. Shines, as his long-time customers call him, is on the property when you visit Wednesday through Saturday, he and his associates will greet you courteously and offer a tour of the premises, including the amazing collection of historical artifacts in the conference room upstairs.

TSU History

History of the Faculty Newsletter

Dr. Thorpe Butler

When I told the new editor of the faculty newsletter, Dr. Alexis Brooks de Vita, that I had been associated with the newsletter off and on for over thirty years, she asked me to write something about that history. My memories are relatively few and vague, but I can offer a few remarks. In the ’70’s, a small group of activist faculty members did what they considered valiant battle against an administration and Board of Regents that seemed indifferent at best and often downright hostile towards faculty concerns. One Board member boasted in public that he didn’t listen to faculty. The Administration routinely made unilateral decisions affecting faculty and academic issues without consulting faculty. The activist faculty officers and Senators, led by longtime Faculty Chair Dr. Timothy Cotton, used the newsletter to inform and arouse faculty members about what we considered abuses of faculty rights by administration and the Board.

Dr. Cotton was something of a firebrand; his rhetoric sometimes edged over into invective. As sometime editor, I would try to tone down the language of his newsletter articles, but he would insist on having the last view of his articles and often put his smok ing language back in. For him the conflicts often had a personal edge: he felt a strong personal rivalry with Dr. Robert J. Terry, who was the Vice President for a number of years, and Dr. Cotton was not above personal attacks. As he said, he had no compunction about throwing everything he had against his enemies. And he said that the only reason that the administration never tried to fire him, as it did other bothersome faculty, was that he had (Continued on page 3)

Book Review

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Professor William Miller, Reviewer

Ernest Gaines’ A Lesson Before Dying (1993) delivers a poignant message to the living. The irony embedded in Gaines’ novel is that through death we can learn many of life’s lessons. Gaines’ novel centers on the pending execution of Jefferson who had been an innocent bystander during a robbery murder. Fittingly, the reader is never made privy to Jefferson’s last name. In telling the story of the activities leading up to Jefferson’s execution, Gaines’ portray the bond forged between two black men sentenced to death in rural Louisiana in the late 1940s. Jefferson is sentenced to death for being a black man who is the only witness to the murder of a white store owner committed by two men with whom Jefferson was acquainted. Although innocent, Jefferson’s condition and circumstances make him an obvious participant in the crime.

The irony embedded in Gaines’ novel is that through death we can learn many of life’s lessons.
Updates from the Chair

Work Load at Texas Southern University

Dr. Lalita Sen, Faculty Senate Vice Chair

The Faculty Senate has fought a long hard battle to reduce workloads. Thanks to the persistence of officers and faculty members who were members of the workload committee, the load reform was passed by the board during fall '06 and is being incorporated into the revision of the faculty manual. To clarify any misinterpretation, here is the current status of work load:

The following is a schedule for proposed implementation of the new faculty workload policy:

- **Fall 2008**: 21 hours per academic year – When teaching undergraduate courses only, without regular graduate status
- **Spring 2008**: 18 hours per academic year – When teaching undergraduate courses only, with regular graduate status
- **Fall 2007**: 15 hours per academic year – When teaching a combination of undergraduate and graduate courses, with regular graduate status
- **Spring 2007**: 12 hours per academic year – When teaching doctoral courses only or doctoral courses plus post-master's courses, with regular graduate status

The above policy has been adjusted where needed to meet accreditation requirements for professional programs.

A workload committee is being convened to complete the revision needed to allow our work load to be in line and consistent with research-extensive state institutes in Texas.

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**History (Continued from page 2)**

There were serious issues. For instance, in the mid-70's the administration summarily fired several faculty who had received their terminal degrees from an allegedly dubious institution in Mexico. The fired faculty sued in federal court, and the judge ruled in their favor, arguing that they had been fired without due process and that they had de facto tenure, because the Faculty Manual at the time specified only that seven years service was required to be eligible for tenure. Consequently over forty percent of the faculty received tenure at a single stroke because they met that single criterion: before that judicial decision almost no one at TSU had official tenure. From that experience I learned the critical importance of the Faculty Manual as a legal document and the importance of following proper procedure: the judge didn't consider the administration's charge that the faculty members' degrees did not meet TSU standards, but only that they had not been offered a hearing at which to defend themselves.

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**Review (Continued from page 2)**

It is important to Jefferson's godmother that Jefferson be seen as a man... before he dies.

Grant Wiggins, the plantation school's teacher, feels that the conditions and circumstances of an educated black man living in rural Louisiana is sucking his very life from him. Grant becomes involved with Jefferson when Jefferson's nannan pleads with Grant to make Jefferson a man before his date with executioner. As a favor to nannan Grant accepts the challenge. The prosecutor referred to Jefferson as a hog, not a man, during his trial, and it is important to Jefferson's godmother that Jefferson be seen as a man, especially to the white folks, before he dies. During the ensuing month, as Grant attempts to make Jefferson believe that he is not a hog, Grant comes to know and somewhat understand that there is little difference between he and Jefferson. Grant begins to understand that the conditions and circumstances confronting black men in rural Louisiana can be overcome with a strong belief in God and himself. In the end Grant states, "what else is there?"
EDITOR'S CHOICE

THE DAY OF THE DEAD

Annually since November, 2004, the Hispanic Student Association and the Department of Foreign Languages have offered TSU a celebration of “El dia de los muertos,” known in English as The Day of the Dead.

Deanna, the Day of the Dead as “a festival of welcome for the souls of the dead which the living prepare and delight in,” the Hispanic Student Association and the Department ofForeign Languages this year make it even easier for the entire university community to join the celebration in the Sterling Student Life Center.

On Wednesday, November 4, an altar will be set up on the main floor of the Center, along with treats, sweets, student entries in the miniature altar competition, and other festivities. Dr. Antonio Gonzalez, who has collected TSU Day of the Dead memorabilia such as its archived programs, says that the only festive element missing this year may perhaps be the mariachis; but the opportunity to feel united again with loved ones and ancestors, who come to “enjoy for a few brief hours the pleasures they once knew in life,” promises to be as vibrant and educational as ever.

For those unable to take part in this “joyous occasion” on November 4th, the main altar will remain on view in the lobby of the Robert J. Terry Library. The miniature altars will return home to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanities Building, where they will be available to be viewed on the third floor, in the Department of Foreign Languages.

- The Editor

TSU - DR. JOHN BIGGERS MURAL CONSERVATION PROJECT

YES! I want to help conserve and preserve Dr. John Biggers’ mural Family Unity for future generations.

GIFT INFORMATION

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Thank you! Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

The voice of the TSU Faculty Senate.

Coming Soon:
We're on the Web

A Reunion
Texas Southern University
Tanzania Study Abroad
Alumni

Please honor us with your presence for a reunion and photo swap including a buffet of Tanzanian foods and a silent auction/sale of East African crafts.

Friday, November 13, 2009 from 7pm until 10pm in the University Museum

All proceeds will benefit the TSU Study Abroad Program

CONTACT: Dr. Gregory Medley, Dean of the Graduate School or Dr. Alvin Wardlaw, Director of the University Museum

TSU FACULTY SENATE NEWSLETTER