



THE UNIVERSITY OF
ALABAMA IN HUNTSVILLE

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES **NEWS**

Fall, 2017

Volume 28, Number 1

You may like to know...

- ▶ **Save the Date!** The Huntsville Feminist Chorus will offer their spring concert on Saturday, April 14, 7:30 PM, Roberts Recital Hall.
- ▶ **Save the Date!** Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality will return Tuesday, April 17, 6-8 PM, CTC Exhibit Hall.
- ▶ **Date Change:** Charged Up for Change! EXPO will be held in Spring 2019.

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Big Achievements for Women's and Gender Studies Minor Roxie Brookshire

Aislinn "Roxie" Brookshire, a Sociology major and WGS minor, is the recipient of the "Live Your Dream" scholarship from Soroptimist International (SI). A global volunteer organization, SI features 1,275 clubs in 20 countries, working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. Brookshire won the scholarship at the local, regional, and federation levels for a total scholarship package of \$20,000.

A Madison County native, Brookshire was a SOTA (*Student Over the Traditional Age*) when she began attending college. She said, "I kept thinking college is not for people like me. I'm over thirty. I have a family, and I am poor. The anecdotes about people from these circumstances are uplifting exceptions but the statistics are grim facts. When I stepped foot in the university library and saw all the books I could read I cried. While other students complained about lectures or studying I felt lucky and in awe of my good fortune."

Dr. Christina Steidl, Assistant Professor of Sociology, and Brookshire's advisor said, "In nine years of teaching, Roxie is one of the best students I have ever had the pleasure to teach. She moves fluidly between theory and practice, makes connections that oth-

ers have missed, and raises important disciplinary questions. Moreover, she genuinely works to transform the classroom into an educational community—

organizing study groups, drawing her peers into discussion, and challenging everyone to see the material in new ways."

Dr. Molly Johnson, Associate Professor of History and WGS Director, said, "I have had the pleasure of teaching Roxie in three different classes and supervising her work as the Women's and Gender Studies Student Intern. I deeply appreciate Roxie's enthusiasm for the work of our program. Roxie is passionately committed both to the academic study of gender and the advancement of gender equality in society. She has a wonderful future ahead of her as both a scholar and a leader."

Brookshire is a recipient of two UAH scholarships, the Kathryn L. Harris Scholarship for Women's and Gender Studies minors and the Department of Sociology Scholarship. Last spring, she won Sociology's Outstanding Under-



graduate Student award, and in the summer she received a grant from the UAH Research Creative Experience for Undergraduates Program to work with Steidl on the research project, "Gender Performance and Gendered Perceptions in the U.S. Military."

Brookshire juggles her academic work at UAH with raising a 10-year-old daughter, Winter, and taking care of her husband, James, who was diagnosed with end-stage renal failure last year. She is currently applying to graduate programs in sociology. She plans to specialize in gender, work, and organizations with a specific interest in women's experiences with labor markets and inequality.

Adapted from UAH News: <https://www.uah.edu/ahs/departments/sociology/news/12127-uah-sociology-major-recipient-of-20k-soroptimist-international-scholarship>

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS



Dr. Molly Johnson,
Women's and Gender
Studies Director

Message from the Director

Greetings from the Women's and Gender Studies Program at UAH!

In this newsletter, you can read reports and see photos from our events from last spring and earlier this fall, including a feature on our **"Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality"** event series. Thanks to all of you who participated in and supported that initiative!

Women's and Gender Studies also presented a table at the annual **"Soaring for Social Justice" Community Kite Festival**, at John Hunt Park, sponsored by Asha Kiran and the City of Huntsville Office of Multicultural Affairs.

We had a great turnout for the Fall Week of Welcome event that offered pizza and treats to students, a chance to meet WGS faculty and staff, and campus and community resources that support diversity and gender equality.

We celebrated student accomplishments, including several honors achieved by the Women's and Gender Studies Program's student intern, **Roxie Brookshire**. In addition, we introduce our newest faculty member, **Dr. Jennifer Sims**.

Congratulations to **Dr. Christina Steidl**, Assistant Professor of Sociology and member of the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program Advising Committee, on winning the UAH University Distinguished Teaching Award in a campus-wide competition.

WGS co-sponsored two events with Global Ties Alabama and other UAH units. **Angela Peabody**, CEO Global Women Peace Foundation, offered a public talk, "Eradicate Gender-Based Violence: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)," sponsored by Global Ties Alabama, with the support of the UAH Office of Diversity and Mul-

ticultural Affairs and the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program.

Daniela Fuentes Moncada, Executive Director of Manos de Colores: Artesanías del Ecuador, spoke on "Machismo and Marianismo: Patriarchy in Latin America," co-sponsored by Global Ties Alabama and the UAH Women's and Gender Studies, Global Studies, and Latin American Studies programs.

Special thanks to those of you who made contributions to the Women's and Gender Studies Program and to the Rose Norman Women's Studies Award for Scholarship in Action this past year. Your contributions help us support diverse and creative events that bring greater understanding of women's and gender issues to our community.

Please remember to check out our website at uah.edu/wgs and to "like" "Women's and Gender Studies at UAH" on Facebook to keep up to date with us before the next newsletter goes out in the spring! You can also sign up for our Online Newsletter at <http://www.uah.edu/la/departments/womens-studies/news/subscribe>.

All the best,

Molly Wilkinson Johnson

Associate Professor of History

Director of Women's and Gender Studies



From top: Representative from Free2Be at the Week of Welcome event; Daniela Fuentes Moncada; Angela Peabody (left) with Kathy L. Chan; Molly Johnson, WGS Director, with her children Thomas and Leah at the Kite Festival; Christina Steidl (left) and Roxie Brookshire.



Save the date! The next Interfaith Panel and Community Conversation on Women's Spirituality will be Tuesday, April 17, 2018.

Harris Paper Contest Rewards Academic and Creative Writing

Women's and Gender Studies will sponsor the 18th annual Kathryn L. Harris Women's and Gender Studies Writing Competition, which awards cash prizes for undergraduate or graduate written work that deals substantially with women, women's issues, or the study of gender. The contest accepts academic and creative submissions from students at UAH.

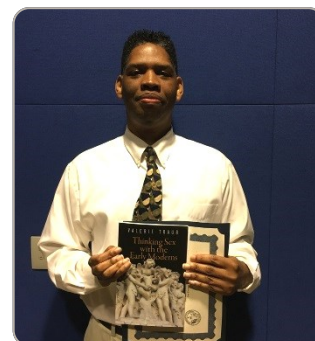
Last year's winners were: First Place, **Brooke Barber**, "The Impossible Scholar: An Analysis of

Hypatia of Alexandria's Rise to Famous Scholarship," for the course *Craft of History*; and Second Place, **Mia Milne**, "Male and Female Pleasure in Pornographic Videos," *Experimental Psychology*.

Honorable mentions went to **Emma Donnelly-Bullington**, "The Final Girl and the Feared Girl," for *Honors English Seminar*, and **Autumn Shackelford**, "V for Vendetta: Vouchsafing Feminine Volition," for *Honors English Seminar*.

Entries for this year's contest are due by February 1 to Erin Reid, WGS Program, 344 Morton Hall, reide@uah.edu. Contest coordinators are Dr. Susan Friedman, Department of English, and Dr. Jeremy Fischer, Department of Philosophy. Winning entries must follow competition guidelines in content and format.

For more information, contact molly.johnson@uah.edu or visit www.uah.edu/wgs.



Women's and Gender Studies Students Receive Honors and Awards

Women's and Gender Studies gave the 2017 Outstanding Undergraduate Achievement Award to **Quintin Walton**, an English major and WGS minor. Walton was recognized for exemplary achievement in WGS classes. The centerpiece paper of his capstone portfolio, "Antonio's Lament: 'Mightily Abused' in *Twelfth Night*," was published in *Perpetua*, UAH's undergraduate research journal.

The 2017 WGS Outstanding Emerging Woman Artist Award, presented at the UAH Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition, went to Art major **Badiah**

Almutairi for "Wait," wood, strings, and paint. The award of \$100 recognizes and supports emerging women artists who show exceptional work. Almutairi said, "The project was inspired by a space that I chose which was the traffic light between Salmon Library and Charger Union. The sculpture was created to capture the movement and cross lines that students make in that space."

For more information, contact molly.johnson@uah.edu.



Harris Scholarship Awards Academic Achievement

The Kathryn L. Harris Scholarship in Women's and Gender Studies is awarded annually to a Women's and Gender Studies minor with demonstrated academic performance. Other considerations include participation in WGS activities and clubs or in community

activities that benefit women and girls. The 2017 scholarship went to **Roxie Brookshire** (pictured on page 1 and 2), a Sociology major and WGS minor, who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance and serves the Women's and Gender Studies

Program as a student intern in the resource center. The scholarship award offered each year is approximately \$700.

For more information, contact molly.johnson@uah.edu.

From top: Harris Competition winners (left to right) Brooke Barber, Mia Milne, Autumn Shackelford, Emma Donnelly-Bullington; Outstanding Undergraduate Quintin Walton; 2017 graduate Danielle Hill, following her capstone conference; 2017 graduate Holli Waldon (left) pictured with Molly Johnson, at commencement. Inset left: "Wait" and Emerging Woman Artist Badiah Almutairi.

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES NEWS

Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality

The Women's and Gender Studies Program hosted a new event series, "Interfaith Conversations on Women's Spirituality," this spring with a terrific turnout and plan to host interfaith conversations again.

This series was conceptualized as a way to showcase women's voices, honor the role spirituality plays in women's lives, contemplate the

complexity of women's experiences of spirituality, and celebrate the religious diversity of Huntsville and North Alabama.

Our series began with the visit of Dr. Judith Plaskow and Dr. Carol Christ, who gave two public lectures, "Goddess and God in the World: Conversations on Women's Spirituality," and "Conversations about the Divine in the Modern World." Plaskow and

Christ are leading theologians in feminist spirituality and are particularly expert in examining the continuities between their own very different faith traditions: Plaskow's Judaism and Christ's goddess-centered spiritual practice. The UAH Humanities Center supported the visit of Plaskow and Christ through its Eminent Scholars Program.

The next event in the series was the annual spring concert of the Huntsville Feminist Chorus (HFC), titled "All of Us." The program explored how the uniqueness of every human being can be brought together in shared aspirations to create something bigger and spiritually deeper than any one individual. Through a diverse array of musical expressions HFC engaged itself and the audience in conversations of the soul.

This was HFC's 22nd spring concert at UAH. Members were very pleased to be able to perform in

Roberts Recital Hall for the first time in a number of years.

The series concluded with an Interfaith Panel and Community Conversation, co-sponsored by the UAH Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. The panel featured six local women of diverse faith traditions sharing their experiences about how their spirituality shapes their lives. All guests then engaged in roundtable conversations on topics including Reconciling Religious Identities and Experiences, Practicing Religion in a Secular World, Faith and Social Action, Spirituality Outside the Boxes, Religious Tradition in an Interfaith Community, and Gender, Sexuality, and Religion.

We were delighted by the community attendance at and participation in these events and the many thought-provoking, respectful, and often inspiring conversations we shared as we listened to and learned from each other.



From top: Carol Christ and Judith Plaskow; "Conversations" coffeehouse in the Wilson Gallery; the Huntsville Feminist Chorus; panelists at the Interfaith Panel and Community Conversation: (left to right) Kay Campbell, Mona Foroughi, Shani Kapoor, Dr. Na'ila Marilyn Lewis-Alim, Reverend Earla Lockhart, Pam Rhodes; moderator Dr. Molly Johnson. **At right:** participants in the panel and community conversation.

Women's and Gender Studies Featured Faculty: Jennifer Patrice Sims

Dr. Jennifer Patrice Sims is an Assistant Professor of Sociology in the UAH College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. Originally from Nashville, TN, she received her PhD in Sociology from The University of Wisconsin (UW)-Madison in 2014 and then taught as an Adjunct Visiting Professor at UW-River Falls before coming to UAH in 2017.

Sims specializes in the study of race/ethnicity, social psychology, and gender and sexuality. This fall she is teaching SOC330: Race and Ethnicity. Examining race/ethnicity from a sociological perspective, the course develops students' ability to analyze how race/ethnicity structures society and influences group and individual experiences as well as articulate sociologically informed solutions

to inequality. In the spring she will teach a special topics course on the Sociology of Sexuality. A big proponent of collaborative learning, Sims includes group discussions and in-class activities every class period.

Taking mixed-race people as her focus, Sims' research examines racial construction, perception, and identity in the US and UK. She has conducted statistical analysis of survey data to examine perceptions of mixed-race attractiveness and qualitative interviews to study mixed-race people's everyday experiences. Her most recent articles offer empirically grounded theoretical insights into mixed-race identity development (2016), especially regarding how gender, sexuality, and race intersect for men (under review). Sims' current

project is an experiment testing the influence of hairstyle on the racial perception of women. Looking forward, she will continue this research in collaboration with UAH's new VUE Lab.

In addition to teaching and research, Sims frequently writes essays for public outlets in which she discusses race/ethnicity in pop culture and the media. A huge Harry Potter fan, as a graduate student she led an international team of scholars to produce the first book-length sociological analysis of Harry Potter, *The Sociology of Harry Potter* (2012). Last year, Sims was the featured speaker at Edinboro University's (Edinboro, PA) annual PotterFest delivering a talk entitled "Harry Potter and the Promise of Sociology."



Dr. Jennifer Sims joined the UAH Department of Sociology in 2017.



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Become a Friend of Women's and Gender Studies!

Friends of Women's and Gender Studies (FWGS) is an organization of people who support the UAH Women's and Gender Studies Program. The goals of FWGS include:

- Supporting community involvement in Women's and Gender Studies events
- Sponsoring cultural activities and events that honor and empower women
- Supporting women scholars, artists, and performers
- Fostering discussion of issues affecting women's lives

Annual Contribution (October 1 – September 30)

- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10-24 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25-49 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50-99 Matron | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100-249 Sponsor |
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