



KEEPING REAL HISTORY

For Nakia by Dr. Kathleen Phillips-Lewis



The first thing you noticed about Nakia was that she had unmistakable presence. Nakia was a tall woman – well-fashioned, stately, poised, elegant, serene, beautiful. But not only was she tall physically; she was also tall spiritually. She was tall in personality, in humanity, in humility, in love and in compassion for others – even strangers. I looked up to her in more ways than one. Nakia always had time for others – a listening ear, a kind deed, a comforting or encouraging word, a word of wisdom, an understanding shoulder. She was caring, calm, considerate, clear-headed, confident, and oh so classy! She had style charm and grace.

In her work she was conscientious, efficient, thoughtful, organized, enterprising, principled, ethical, resourceful and resilient. She was loyal and faithful, and not afraid to stand up and speak out for what she believed in and for those she loved. She was indeed a tall, tranquil tower of strength, a safe haven in the midst of the storm for me, as I know she was for many. She was a lighthouse beacon for all of us – leading the way, shedding light on the path ahead. You could not help but love, respect, admire and aspire to be like Nakia. She was indeed my right hand, the daughter I never had, and I grieve for her like I would for a daughter. She was an encouragement and inspiration to me, to our students, our faculty and staff in the History Department, on the fourth floor of Cosby, and here at Spelman College, as she was to her fiancé, family and friends. This was her second home; we were her second family. Nakia left us at the top of her game. She had it all together. She was indeed a TALL woman, and I feel truly blessed to have had the privilege and honor to know her, to work closely with her, to nurture her, to love and be loved by her.

(An excerpt from the tribute read by Dr. James Gillam at the Spelman College Memorial Service for Nakia.)

The Coretta Scott King Funeral: A Fitting

On Tuesday, February 7, I was privileged to attend the funeral of Coretta Scott King. In a word, it was awe-inspiring. Like thousands of others, I waited patiently and at times not so patiently in the cold for the buses to pick us up at Stonecrest Mall. The plan was that they would take us to New Birth Church where the services were being held three miles away. As we waited in the cold, here and there, we talked and chattered amongst ourselves, but mostly everyone on line was somber and focused. We were focused on one thing: getting to this service one way or another. There was such a collective determination in the air it was almost tangible. No one was going to accept no for an answer.

Welcome Back KPL!

Dr. Kathleen Phillips-Lewis returned from her scholar in residence semester at NYU.

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Spring 2006 Calendar

March 2006

3/20/06

Deadline for the AUCHS History Conference call for papers.

3/23/06

Phi Alpha Theta Induction
LLC1 Conference Room; 5:30pm

3/25/06

History Picnic

April 2006

TBA

AUCHS History Conference
LLC1 Conference Room; 9:00am

May 2006

5/14/06

Commencement Services

Fall 2006 Course Offerings

SHIS 203 Historical Methods (Gillam) TR 9:25-10:40am
(Must have instructor's approval to register for class)

SHIS 211 U.S. Survey (Cobb) MWF; 2:00-2:50pm

SHIS 231 African Survey (Staff) MWF; 10:00-10:50am

SHIS 261 History of the Caribbean to 1804 (Phillips-Lewis);
TR 3:50-5:05pm

SHIS 320 Cold War (Cobb) MWF; 12:00-1:00pm

SHIS 322 African American Thought (Cobb); M 4:30-6:45pm

SHIS 358A European Women Toward Equality (Ganz);
MW 3:00-4:15pm

SHIS 373 Africans in Latin America (de Sousa Sheppard); TR
1:00-2:15pm

SHIS 400 Independent Study TBD

SHIS 441 Seminar in Vietnam (Gillam) TR; 2:25-3:40pm

SHIS 453 Victorian England (Phillips-Lewis) W; 4:00-6:30pm
(Seniors only)

SHIS 491 Senior Thesis (de Sousa Sheppard) W; 1:00-1:50pm

Student News...



- ☞ **Grace Brown** is the recipient of a full scholarship to the Summer Intensive Spanish Program at Morehouse College. It will begin in June 2006 and is hosted by the Foreign Language Department at Morehouse.
- ☞ **Robinette Dowtin** is nominated for the Fulbright Grant. Robinette wants to look at the intersection between Islam and Women's Dress in Morocco. She is also one of four Spelman nominees for the Thomas J. Watson Fellowship.
- ☞ **Alyssa Elmore** has been selected to

participate in the Shepherd Poverty Alliance Summer Internship Program this summer. She has also been nominated as one of the representatives of Spelman to the Paul R. Jones Leadership Conference at the University of Delaware in June 2006.

- ☞ **Tulani Elisa** is nominated for the Fulbright Grant. Her future plans include teaching English in France.
- ☞ **Nafeesa Muhammad** is the first recipient of the Cracker Barrel Endowed Heritage Scholars

program. Cracker Barrel is proud to assist Nafeesa as a student of history and ultimately as a professor of history. Also, Nafeesa was inducted to the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (NSCS) in 2005.

- ☞ **Tiffany Williams** has been accepted to Stanford University's MA program in Education/History.
- ☞ **Nia Grant** has returned from studying abroad. Welcome back Nia!

Great job ladies!

History Club Update

The Herstory Coalition participated in the Fall Festival on October 23, 2005 and also contributed Thanksgiving Baskets to charity. Both events were hosted by the SGA House of Representatives.



The History Club is planning more great events and activities during the Spring 2006 semester. Stay tuned!

New Faces

The History Department would like to welcome Nicole Smith (Spelman College C'95), the new Administrative Assistant for the Department. Her last position was as Assistant Director of Marketing for Underground Atlanta.

Nicole is currently in graduate school at Georgia State University. She is completing her M.A. in English Literature and will later pursue a Ph.D. Her interests are Post-colonial Literature and Gender Studies.

Student Opportunities

*Check out the great opportunities listed in the student opportunities folder!
Come by the History Department Office and review the book
for more details and additional opportunities.*

- Northfield Mount Hermon School 2006 Teaching Intern Program - No deadline but students are to submit materials as soon as possible
- Smithsonian Institution Internship 2006 - Deadline varies
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund Fellowships for Aspiring Teachers of Color - Deadline varies
- 2nd Annual Atlanta University Center History Students (AUCHS) Conference call for papers - Deadline March 20, 2006

Faculty News...

Dr. Margery Ganz:

- ☞ Spent June 2005 in Italy on a Faculty Development Grant working on her book manuscript "Conspiracy as Civic Responsibility: The 1466 Plot to Oust the Medici".
- ☞ Book Review of Konrad Eisenbichler's book *Girolamo Savonarola's Guide to Righteous Living and Other Works* appeared in *Renaissance Quarterly* 58 (Fall 2005): 909-911.
- ☞ Asked to review E. Eisenach's, *Husbands, Wives and Concubines, Marriage Family and Social Order in 16th Century Verona* for *The Sixteenth Century Journal*.
- ☞ Asked to review A. F. D'Elia, *The Renaissance of Marriage in 15th Century Italy* for *The Historian*.
- ☞ Asked to serve a second year on the National Selection Panel for the US Fulbright for the Ph.D. Committee for Italy and Greece.
- ☞ Gave the closing Plenary Speech as a Point-Counterpoint on "The Value of Long Term vs. Short Term Study Abroad" with Jacqueline Levine of the University of Rochester at the IES Annual Conference.
- ☞ Finished six years of service on the Academic Consortium Board of CIEE in November. Finished 5 years as Coordinator of Worldwide Evaluations for CIEE.
- ☞ Appointed Co-director with Dr. Tinaz Pavri (Chair of the Spelman College Political Science Department) of the Institute for International Public Policy Sophomore Summer Policy Institute to be held at Spelman during the Summer of 2006.

Dr. James Gillam:

- ☞ His book *Life and Death in the Central Highlands 1968-70* is forthcoming by Mellen Press (NY).
- ☞ Presented his paper, "The Cambodian Invasion-1970" at the Southeastern Conference of Asian Studies in Atlanta on January 19, 2006.

- ☞ Was invited by Dr. Bill Carrigan to Rowan University (New Jersey) in March to give a lecture and participate in a reading of Dr. Gillam's upcoming book.
- ☞ Invited to be the keynote speaker at the Phi Alpha Theta conference at Rowan University in New Jersey in March.
- ☞ Will teach a class at the summer session of the Modern Chinese History for Minority Students Abroad Program at the Beijing Language Institute.

Dr. Kathleen Phillips-Lewis

- ☞ June 6–July 15, 2005 - participated in NEH "Roots" – The Transatlantic Slave Trade" Faculty Seminar, Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, UVA, Charlottesville, VA.
- ☞ July 15 – August 14, 2005 – conducted research on women in Afro-Caribbean folklore in Trinidad, Tobago, Grenada, and Carriacou, with the benefit of a Faculty Development Small Grant.
- ☞ September 2 - December 16, 2005 – Scholar in Residence, Faculty Research Network, NYU.
- ☞ Organized panel, "Crossing Over with Beads Asunder: Women, The Transatlantic Slave Trade, Social and Cultural Transformations" and submitted paper "‘They Brought their Gods on Board with them:’ West African Goddesses, Gender, Social and Cultural Transformations in the Caribbean" (both accepted) for the 2nd International Conference of the Transatlantic Group, Gender Transformations: Gender, Globalization and State Transformation in Africa and the African Diaspora, to be held in Okwerri, Nigeria, July 28-30, 2006.
- ☞ October 5-7, 2005 – organized and chaired panel, "Engendering Anansi: Black Women and Strategies for Resistance, Liberation and Empowerment" for Third Biennial

ASWAD Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Also presented paper, "Miss Nansi and the Door of No Return: Women Negotiating the Middle Passage."

- ☞ October 3-29, 2005 – member of site evaluation team, CIEE Study Abroad Program, PUCMM, Santiago de Caballeros, Dominican Republic.
- ☞ February 22, 2006 – presented paper, "Under the Silk-Cotton tree: Images of Women in Afro-Caribbean Folklore" at Spelman College's Faculty Brown Bag Forum, Women's Center.

Dr. Dalila de Sousa Sheppard:

- ☞ Was the official translator for the First Lady of the Republic of Cape Verde during her visit to Atlanta, specifically when she met with Mayor Shirley Franklin, and at the Luncheon that Dr. Beverly Tatum hosted in her honor at Spelman College on Sept 20, 2005.
- ☞ Paper proposal on "Race, Class, and Culture in the creation of Health or Death in the African Diaspora: the cases of Brazil and the United States" accepted for presentation at the SECOLAS (Southeastern Council for Latin American Studies) conference. The conference will take place at UNC-Charlotte on April 6-8, 2006.
- ☞ Attended lectures by Reverend James Cone (September 18) and spoken word/conversations with Sonia Sanchez and Amiri Baraka (October 28).



No one would be turned away. Everyone was intent -- intent on paying homage to someone upon whose shoulders we literally stood.

That was indeed the theme of the whole day. It was a time to say thank you. It was not just a time to bury the dead; it was a time to say thank you for all the times we took for granted when we entered a bus and could sit or stand where we pleased; when we applied to a school or a job and had the reasonable expectation that our application would not be discarded out of hand because of the color of our skin; when we traveled up and down and even moved to various parts of the country at will without a thought to legal or social restrictions. For these and so many other reasons, we were thankful, and not just for Coretta Scott King and for Martin Luther King Jr. but for Malcolm X, Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clarke, Kwame Ture and the countless not so famous marchers and protesters who worked for the same cause. Yes, this was a time to celebrate their legacy and we would not be turned back.

In the end, I, along with many others, walked the three miles to the church and narrowly escaped being turned away. The church (with its 25,000 seats) was just about full and the overflow rooms were also quickly being filled. By this time, we were in a state of euphoria. We were there. We had not been turned back. We got in! Even the very walk to the church reminded us of the reason we came. Hadn't they walked countless hours in rain or shine for us? The Montgomery boycott alone lasted over 365 days - a full year of winter, spring, summer and fall. They did not have the luxury to protest only on the sunny days. And they had done this in the face of death threats, curses, burning crosses and attack dogs. We had no such opposition on this bright yet cold Atlanta day. We only had to get there and get there we did.

As for the speakers, one after another they came with glowing words and sincere tributes. We could feel the intensity of emotion. This moment for many brought back memories of the past, good and bad. We could see that it was sometimes difficult for some speakers to recall those times, but so important to recall for this expectant crowd. We were reminded of the hardships that Martin and Coretta had to endure- the bombing of their house, the wiretapping, his imprisonment. Some of the stories we may have read in books, but others we were hearing for the first time because some things just don't end up in the history books. All in all, this event was more like a town hall meeting than a traditional funeral. It had me thinking that it is too bad that we don't have this kind of conversation and dialogue more often; that we needn't wait for someone to die to recall some of the great moments in our history; that we needn't wait for a funeral to tell our children about their past. Many that watched this service with me felt the same way. It was important, it was cathartic, it was healing, it was joyful.

And it was necessary. It was, in spite of what some of the pundits have said, necessary for some to speak up against this era in which the pursuit of violence is considered before all other avenues of non-violence have been explored. It was necessary for some to speak about the tactic of illegal surveillance which was utilized against King and others and is still a tactic today. The fight for freedom does not take a holiday. A funeral, especially the funeral of one who stood for freedom and non-violence, is no exception.

In the end though, this was a tribute to Coretta Scott King and it was a fitting tribute. It was marvelous to remember with all in attendance how Coretta, only a few days after her husband died, traveled to Memphis and led the march he was to lead on behalf of sanitation workers and later supported the SCLC's Poor People's campaign. It was as if she had long ago decided that come what may, she would continue this legacy. It is no surprise then that she did and that that mantle is now passed on to us- the other major theme of the event.

What will we do now? It was a question for February 7 and my hope is that it will remain a question for all of us collectively 365 days of the year. How do we continue to say thank you for what these people accomplished? And how do we continue where they left off?

SPELMAN COLLEGE

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