Amigas y Amantes, a new book by Katie L. Acosta, a Georgia State sociologist, fills a gap in current sociology scholarship on what it’s like to be LGBT for Latinas and the work that goes into maintaining strong family relationships in spite of tensions that might occur due to sexual nonconformity.

In her book, Acosta argues that acceptance is not “all or nothing” nor is the process of coming out. Acosta engages the scholarship in sociology that is concerned with whether or not someone is “out.” Acosta points out that this way of thinking is an oversimplification. While some women might be out in public spaces, they might not be out at home or the other way around. “When I started to do a lot of these interviews,” Acosta says, “what I really started to think was interesting - and I thought would be of value to write about - were the ways in which this process of acceptance or not being accepted was really more like a continuum.”

But Acosta didn’t set out to write a book on this topic, she says her research evolved over time before Amigas y Amantes came to be. Acosta always knew she wanted to conduct research on sexuality, but she never intended to focus that research on families until she realized the significant gap in the research, “There was such an emptiness in the scholarship, there was so much of a need for it, that it just felt right, you know sometimes something just feels right and it definitely felt like, ‘alright this is exactly where I can start making a contribution’.”

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Tomeka Davis, an assistant professor at Georgia State who studies racial inequality in education, recently received the American Education Research Association (AERA) Research Grant Award for her latest research titled “Explaining the Black Gender Gap in College Enrollment and Completion.” The idea for her research actually came from her work with a graduate student back in the summer of 2012 when Dr. Davis came across a book that dealt with gender differences in education, specifically looking at those differences as they related to immigration.

Soon the discussion for Davis and her graduate student turned to gender differences in education for black families, which resulted in a paper. From there, Davis wished to delve deeper into the subject and expand upon it by looking at gender differences for black students at the college level. With black males in college being a marginalized number, Davis points out that many policy makers have begun to question how the problem can be fixed. But as Davis tried to research factors that might be causes for the low enrollment, she soon found there was little in the way of scholarship on the topic. “There wasn’t anything out there, so I said, well, let’s do a paper on it.

(continued on page ...8 )

To learn more about our faculty members and their areas of research please visit our website at http://www.gsu.edu/sociology

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Senior Editor: Jim Ainsworth (ainsworth@gsu.edu)  Assistant Editor & Layout Design: Jamie Hayes (jhayes14@gsu.edu) Staff Writer: Sarah Joy Richards
Greetings,

This is my last chair’s letter. I have done more than a dozen of them, and I would like to take this opportunity to pause and reflect on my slightly more than 15 years as chair of the Department of Sociology. Fifteen years sounds like a long time, and in some ways it really is. I became chair in the last century. After my initial appointment in February 1999, I have been evaluated and renewed four times! Also a lot! What these temporal markers don’t capture is that it doesn’t seem like 15 years to me. The joy of the job for me has been that while each and every morning I compose my list of activities for the day, I never know for sure who will walk through my doorway or call me on the telephone, or send me an email. Many days I don’t get past the first or second item on my list. The days fly by. I tend to think in one week (or so) blocks of time; almost never a month at time and rarely in semester-long intervals. In this sense, fifteen years is incomprehensible. What I do vividly remember is the exciting opportunity I have had to get to know students, faculty and staff as well as people across the college and university. The job has been wonderful and thrilling: its uncertainty and variety make it all the more so.

There have been continuities and changes. We are still in the same set of offices on the 10th floor of the now-renamed Langdale Hall—as we have been since in the 1970s when the General Classroom Building opened. There has also been remarkable stability among my colleagues. In 1999, when I became chair, I had been in the department almost 22 years and I was still only the 7th most senior faculty member (out of 16 faculty members). In fact, it has only been since the end of 2011, a little more than two years, that I have been the longest serving member of the GSU sociology faculty. Indeed, we have now gone through a generational change. I believe that of the 23 current faculty members, only four (Dawn Baunach, Elisabeth Burgess, Jung Ha Kim, and Wendy Simonds) were in 2011, a little more than two years ago. Indeed, we have now gone through a generational change. I believe that of the 23 current faculty members, only four (Dawn Baunach, Elisabeth Burgess, Jung Ha Kim, and Wendy Simonds) were in the department in February 1999.

Looking back I believe there have been at least three important accomplishments. First, over the last 15 years we have maintained a collegial environment that has enabled faculty, staff, and students to be productive and successful in their individual activities and to work together in the best interests of the department. We were cohesive in 1999 and are cohesive in 2014. Second, we have in place, and have had in place for twelve years, an extraordinary program to prepare graduate students for college-level teaching. Under Mindy Stombl’s direction, students begin with a comprehensive pedagogy course followed by a teaching internship and ongoing instructional assistance provided by a teaching associate. The quality of our undergraduate instruction has improved markedly and our graduate students enter the job market as experienced teachers. Third, we have maintained our commitment to high quality teaching and research. Our faculty continues to be excellent classroom instructors and actively engaged in the individual instruction of undergraduates and graduate students. I am particularly impressed by faculty who mentor their students in the active and exciting process of collaborative research from data collection to scholarly presentations and publications.

I conclude with two challenges, an opportunity, and a fond memory. It now has been almost six years since the legislature has authorized raises for university personnel, and even with a small raise this year, we face the daunting problem that at almost every rank our faculty are paid below the salaries of faculty at comparable universities. We also face salary compression and inversion—we should be able to get faculty salaries increased by more than newly appointed or promoted faculty. Morale has become a problem and we face the risk of losing some of our most accomplished colleagues. The second challenge is grant funding is getting more competitive, as federal and foundation budgets are getting squeezed and more people are applying for the limited funds. I also believe that competition for journal space is getting fiercer and that it is harder to get manuscripts accepted in excellent and outstanding journals. We must effectively make use of departmental, college, and university mentoring resources and assistance. The opportunity that I see is for us to take advantage of our urban location and international connections to work with government, businesses, and social service organizations on projects that are both sociologically significant and have policy implications. Atlanta’s diverse populations and community organizations are untapped resources as partners for our research. I look forward to our future and new directions.

Last and maybe least—I will always remember with fondness when Al Gore, on campus for a talk, paused as he walked to the podium to tell me that I had a nice beard.
In a recent article, Georgia State University Assistant Professors Dan Carlson and Ben Kail, along with graduate student Marlaina Dreher, examine the health implications of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) dependent coverage provision that has expanded dependent health insurance coverage to young adults up to age 26. Prior to the ACA, young adults not enrolled in college were often dropped from their parent’s insurance at age 19, while those in college were typically dropped after age 22.

Referencing data for 2007-2012 from the Current Population Survey which is linked to the U.S. Census, the authors found that increased access to dependent coverage is linked to improved health among young adults in recent years, helping alleviate some of the lingering effects of the Great Recession.

According to Carlson, “Although we are several years removed from the worst of Great Recession, the economy has yet to fully recover and there remain significant challenges for young adults. The employment rate among young adults remains twice that of the general population and what jobs have come back are often part-time, non-benefits eligible. This lack of access to employer-sponsored insurance has made young adults very vulnerable.”

Another benefit of the provision, Carlson argues, is the alleviation of financial pressure on young adults by allowing them access to their parents’ resources. “That’s important because health issues can derail our future plans, it can derail our education, and it can derail our occupational attainment. So, having this provision really helps families and parents protect their children as their children make the step into adulthood and become independent.”

Carlson continues to explain that, the larger implications of ACA center on the new policy changes that open up “additional pathways” to young adults who are still enrolled in college. “In the past, if you were at crucial ages such as 23, 24, 25 you would lose your health coverage, but now, the ACA has provisions that allow continued dependent health coverage well into these crucial years of development for young adults “which ultimately, is essential in protecting their health, because young adults will now have assurances that in case something goes wrong, heaven forbid, they can get the care that they need.”

The article, "Affordable Care Act, Dependent Health Insurance Coverage, and Young Adults’ Health," is published in the Journal of Sociological Inquiry, the official journal of the Sociological Honor Society, Alpha Kappa Delta.

To speak with Professor Carlson, please contact him directly at (404) 413-6528 or dcarlson@gsu.edu; or contact Georgia State University’s Office of Public Relations and Media at 404-413-5047.

For more information about Sociology at Georgia State University, please visit our website at www.gsu.edu/sociology/.

There you will find faculty research & teaching interests, CVs, program and course descriptions, alumni information, admission requirements and sociological links.
On Public Sociology

Recently, Nicholas Kristof, in a New York Times Op-Ed (“Professors, We Need You!” 2/15/14), bemoaned the lack of public intellectuals in America, singling out sociology as an especially egregious offender. Kristof stated that although sociology should be central to many national issues, it is not because our liberal politics lead those on the political right to dismiss us and our findings out of hand. Although he claims our leftist politics marginalize us, this characterization couldn’t be further from the truth. Rather, evidence abounds that public sociology is alive, well, and thriving. Indeed, in the legal battle over same-sex marriage and parenthood it is sociology that is shaping public discourse and it is sociological research, demonstrating the strengths of LGBTQ families that is helping pave the way to marriage and parenting equality. Moreover, counter to Kristof’s claim, it is conservative sociologists like Mark Regnerus and his shoddy, ideologically driven research that threaten the public reputation of sociology not the “liberal” sociologists who have stood en masse to debunk his lies and extol the virtue of rigorous social research. All of this is not to say that sociology has arrived publically. Indeed, as long as people like Jenny McCarthy dismiss our research on The View by remarking that “sociologists are not scientists” we clearly have work to do. Nonetheless, the lesson to learn from the marriage equality fight and the sociologists who have guided this debate is that public sociology’s future lies in the realization that our politics are secondary to our dedication to science and that our findings should inform our politics, not the other way around.

Daniel L. Carlson, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Georgia State University

Globalization, fast travel, the Internet, and modern communication technology have opened novel avenues for people to find a significant other, but only for people whose socioeconomic status is relatively high. Through interviews with 20 long-distance couples I found out that these relationships are still linked to class privilege. While many of my subjects complained about the cost, most of them could afford frequent visits. When money is abundant, distance can easily be conquered. However, limited resources led to nearly insurmountable difficulties, such as a solely online relationship, saving up for a visit for months or even years, long hiatuses in-between visits, and not being able to afford taking time off, changing jobs, and relocation. Such difficulties affected international couples to an even greater extent. The pursuit of happiness is an inalienable right, but long-distance relationships illuminate one example how differences in socioeconomic status create unequal opp ortunities for it.

Orsolya Kolozsvari, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Sociology
School of Arts and Sciences
College of Coastal Georgia
Identity and Social Control: Examining the murder of Jordan Davis

“We are part of a fraternity no one wants to be in.” These words were spoken by Tracy Martin during a conversation with Ron Davis. Though Tracy and Ron live different lives, they share an unfortunate commonality; both of these men are fathers who have had to endure the heartbreaking task of burying their teenage sons. Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis, sons of the aforementioned fathers, were victims of gun violence. What makes these stories controversial, though not unique, is that both victims were unarmed African American boys killed by non-black assailants. Examining the murder of Jordan Davis devoid of racial identity and social control leaves observers with a limited understanding of its significance to social interaction. Structure is given to the argument when one delineates these notions within the framework of systemic racism theory. After the investigation was complete and the case was tried in a court of law, Dunn was convicted of attempted murder but was not convicted of murder. So does that mean that he is being punished for NOT killing the other people in the car? Had he actually killed them, would he have been acquitted of all charges? Is he being punished from the powers that be for not exterminating black life, but being rewarded for the one he actually killed? These kinds of questions help us see how much racism is systematically ingrained in all the nuances of society.

Jonathan Grant
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STAY IN TOUCH WITH GSU SOCIOLOGY

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In 2003 (in Grutter v. Bollinger) the Supreme Court decided that race sensitive college admissions policies were necessary to address racial inequality, and recommended that the court not consider this issue for another 25 years. Well, it only took ten years before the current, conservative court essentially weakened schools ability to consider race as a plus factors when admitting students (Fisher v. The University of Texas at Austin). While affirmative action practices were not found to be unconstitutional, as some advocates feared, the court made it more difficult to implement in practice. Now universities can only use affirmative action policies if they are "narrowly tailored," and courts will only approve such plans if no realistic, race neutral, alternative can create a diverse student body. In her dissenting opinion, Justice Ginsburg wrote "only an ostrich could regard the supposedly race neutral alternatives as race unconscious." So the colorblind ideology continues to threaten the gains made by affirmative action over the past two generations. Sadly, the trend seems to be reinforcing inequality.

James Ainsworth, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Georgia State University

Congratulations to undergrad Soci major, Amanda J. Smith, for receiving the Sociology Excellent Undergraduate Award for overall academic performance! Here, Undergraduate Director, Dr. Deirdre Oakley, presents Amanda with her certificate.
My dear friends,

Each time I started to write this thank-you letter to the greatest people on earth, something new and wonderful happened to make me ‘put a pin in it’. So, I decided to wait and thank everyone for all the love and generosity you have shown me since my last official day in the Sociology Department.

November 22, 2013 - I could not have imagined how hard this day would be although it was much anticipated but much dreaded at the same time. This day marked the end of my 27+ years as Business Manager in Sociology. Little did I know, on April 21, 1986, that I would not only make so many dear and lasting friends but would be honored in the manner that you treated me to on Nov. 22. Your kind and touching words filled my heart to bursting and brought me (and a few of you!) to tears as I listened to you share ways that I had somehow touched your life or encouraged you, most times unaware by me. And your overwhelming generosity made me feel truly special. The beautiful cards, gifts, surprises (Regina - so unexpected, so truly appreciated; Romney - great to see you, even greater to see Asher; Grace - my dear Alabama friend!), friends and university family who took time to share, and the delicious and huge cake, were also highlights of this special day. Thank you so much from all corners of my heart.

December 6, 2013 - One of the most enjoyable evenings I've had in my life! More so because it was for me! I will never ever forget how you captured me in ways that were funny and endearing. Many thanks to Deirdre and Charlie who, respectively, portrayed me in an orange jacket and a red cape, and allowed me to laugh at myself with pure joy! The laughter and love made it a night to remember forever. Thank you, Charlie and Cindy, for your gracious hospitality. Thank you, Erin and Ralph, for the wonderful and hilarious skits! My heartfelt thanks for the farewell wishes in my scrapbook that I will read often and cherish forever. Thanks for the flowers, gifts, cards, and desserts (although I was too excited to eat anything, I was told how great everything was. And, Toshi, you know me well!). Most importantly, thanks for the love and appreciation shown to me throughout this night.

December 13, 2013 - Although one of the most anticipated times of the year for Sociology, this holiday luncheon was my last officially organized event, after 27 occasions of menus, requesting different times ('we've got enough brownies!'), wonderful food, and fantastic fellowship. But this will not be the last holiday luncheon I will attend. I may even have to offer my help from the sidelines. Old habits are hard to break! And, once again, you made me feel special with your generosity and warm spirit. Thanks for everything you do to fill this occasion with fun, laughter, and good wishes all around. Believe it or not, many other departments envy Sociology's uniqueness and collegiality. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your world for these last 27+ years.

I wanted to take this opportunity to convey to you just how honored and grateful I am to have worked with you as your colleague and friend while doing the absolute best job I've ever had in my life. And if I had one wish to make (Anya, are you listening?), it would not be to undo the present, but to continue, in the future, being your colleague and friend. I wish you all peace, prosperity and many blessings now and foreverymore. And as my mentor, Sheriff Andy Taylor, would say 'I'll be seeing ya'all! Much obliged!'
Beyond Basic Ideals: Fathering Above What is Expected by Clinton Boyd Jr.

The term ‘Father’ is more than a title, it is a responsibility, better yet a moral obligation that extends beyond the basic ideals of paternal support. Public debates over what constitutes a responsible, well-to-do, and wholesome father have historically been dominated by the misguided logic that a father’s sole duty as a parent is merely a financial one.

Current research from the National Health Statistics Report on overall fatherhood involvement is helping to debunk this myth, specifically within the Black community. This study in particular has highlighted the emergence of strong father-child involvement patterns within the Black community, regardless of the parents’ relationship status. These informative findings help to challenge many general views embodied by the American people claiming that Black fathers are simply “deadbeats”. These widespread notions tend to paint a very dim portrait about the everyday experiences of Black fathers in our society; especially those Black fathers who despite their unfortunate economic and social circumstances are deeply committed to the day-to-day responsibility of parenting.

In respect to the topic of Black fatherhood, I must wholeheartedly admit that I share both a personal and professional attachment to this subject in ways seldom seen or understood by the general public. At the tender age of 16 I was blessed with the birth of my daughter A’mari Jha’ale Boyd, which is my only child to date. I use the word blessed because I truly believe her birth provided me with the focus, drive, and determination that was so desperately lacking during my adolescent years. From the time her mother informed me of her pregnancy, I have taken a great deal of pride in knowing I am responsible for the healthy development of someone else’s life.

(Continued on page...12)
Acosta next needed to find participants for her study, which she did as she completed her Ph.D at the University of Connecticut. Acosta’s call for participants spanned the Northeast reaching out to community groups and organizations. However, getting people to speak comfortably was a challenge for Acosta: “I could find women who were eligible, but not necessarily willing to share so much about themselves. And so, I realized it was going to be about the amount of work that I would do in community groups to get people to trust me.” A further hurdle for Acosta was the language in which the interviews were conducted varied from interview to interview, with some participants more comfortable in Spanish. Being an academic in a different language was something Acosta had not previously anticipated, “I had to really train myself to be able to connect with my community members in the language that they are comfortable with.”

Language barriers were not the only hurdles Acosta had to overcome in writing Amigas y Amantes. Acosta had to fight to even get out in the field to begin her research. She admits getting her research approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was one of the biggest challenges for the project. Problems arose because some participants in Acosta’s study were undocumented residents, meaning signatures on consent forms for interviews could create a certain level of vulnerability. Both Acosta and IRB were tasked with coming up with a way around this. A solution was eventually reached in which Acosta presented consent forms to participants but verbally asked their permission and gained their consent. Though this appeased IRB in the final stages of the project, publishers in fear of liability were uncomfortable with the verbal consent procedure. The challenges on both ends were unexpected, but Acosta says they were just “kinks” in the process to work through.

Bigger than the challenges was what Acosta said she learned through her research, and what she hopes others will take from her book, which is that family is something you do. Whether that family is biological is beside the point, “It was really important to not just talk about family as something that exists that we can all take for granted” Acosta explains, “but to understand that family relationships are something that we nurture that we make sacrifices for, that we compromise for, that we work for, those connections that we have with people exist not just because of some biological tie but because we make them exist.” Acosta says that distinction was important when talking about the women she interviewed. “They’re creating their family, at every step of the way this entire process is created…I really wanted to make it clear throughout the book that we take this work for granted.”

Davis also adds that it was a spur of the moment decision to apply that led to her getting the $20,000 grant. “It wasn’t hastily put together,” Davis assures, “but with other grants I had worked on them for months and had been unsuccessful, but with this one, when I looked to see if I was on track to meet any of the early winter deadlines for funding agencies, I realized the closest deadline was only three weeks away. That didn’t give me much time to put together the grant application.” Though it might have been a last minute decision to apply for the funding, the preparation, Davis asserts, actually began back in graduate school. With two of the most competitive dissertation grants for graduate students in Sociology of Education already under her belt, Davis had already showed a talent for obtaining funding. This experience, she says, is where she learned to train herself to think like a policy maker when applying for funding or even picking topics to research. “I learned to think how funders think,” Davis explains because “funding agencies are [essentially] looking to fund projects that have policy relevant outcomes in some way. Funding agencies are saying, ‘We’re going to give money to people who are asking questions that are policy relevant. So we can shape policy in some way to change these outcomes’.”

Davis continues to examine other policy relevant questions in her current projects. One of those projects is a paper that takes a closer look at accountability policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act and segregation. With the focus being on how these policies have effected black and white segregation since their implementation.
The Georgia State University Departmental Facebook page was selected by the American Sociological Association as a national model for other Department Chairs to consider as they begin to implement their own social media. Department Chair Don Reitzes and Academic Advisor Jamie Hayes presented a talk called "Using Social Media to Raise the Profile of Your Department" at the August 2013 ASA Department Chairs Conference. This was a unique honor for our department and we look forward to using social media to further our department’s mission in the coming years.
Sociology Club News

By Maura Ryan

The sociology club’s goal is to enhance the experience of being a GSU sociology major. We do this by providing volunteer opportunities in the Atlanta community, as well as career and graduate school planning sessions for majors. We also seek to create social opportunities for sociology majors, as our undergraduates tend to be highly social individuals who think about the world around them, and enjoy the company of likeminded people.

This year we have worked diligently on our goal of being a liaison between faculty and students. That is, we have designed events that provide opportunities for students to engage with faculty outside of the classroom environment. For example, we offered a “faculty meet and greet” where students and faculty shared a breakfast of doughnuts and coffee as they socialized.

Lakendra Fort has served as president of the club for the 2013-2014 academic year. In her year of service, she has created dynamic intellectual events that provide students with an opportunity to think sociologically and engage in some complex discussions about the social world. Her passion for social justice has made this an especially successful year for our “public lectures.” In fall 2013 the club held a session on racial microaggressions on college campuses, led by faculty member Dr. Rosalind Chou. In spring 2014 Dr. Anthony Hatch offered a lecture titled, “Silent Cells: Psychotropics and Intersections of Race, Gender, and Citizenship in American Prisons.”

The club has also made strides in collaborating with other organizations active in Georgia State’s community. In spring 2014, the sociology club worked with BlackOut, an organization for Black LGBTIQ students and their allies, to help sponsor a screening of the new cutting edge documentary, “Al Nisa: Black Muslim Women in Atlanta’s Gay Mecca,” with an accompanying discussion with the filmmaker Red Summer. Additionally in spring 2014, the sociology club joined with Faces of Feminism for a community discussion on “Race in Feminism.”

As part of the club’s commitment to intellectual growth, students have developed an annual sociology paper competition. In the spring of 2013 the conference theme was an intersectional perspective on health disparities, offering students the writing prompt, “How do race, class, and gender explain health inequalities?” The club received a number of smart and creative entries, but of these the club’s executive committee was able to choose three distinguished winners. The first place winner was Danielle Dailey-Weiser, second place was awarded to Khadijah Holloway, and third place went to Eugenie Stephenson.

The club is currently planning its 2014 paper competition on the topic of inequalities in education. This year during the student awards ceremony the executive committee has invited students to award faculty members with their own awards. You can look out for awards in the areas of “Most Likely to Start a Revolution,” “Best Lecturer,” “Best Dressed,” “Most Interesting Research,” and “Best Personality!”

Welcome
New Sociology Club
President
Lakendra Fort!
Joe Barry Carroll: A Special Guest

By Donald C. Reitzes

On Tuesday, April 8th the Sociology Department hosted a talk by a guest celebrity, Joe Barry Carroll. Mr. Carroll was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Carroll, the tenth of thirteen children. He attended Denver East High School in Denver, Colorado and graduated from Purdue University’s Krannert School of Management with a degree in economics. Carroll was selected to the NCAA All-American First Team while playing basketball at Purdue and was the No 1 overall draft pick in the 1980 National Basketball Association Draft, selected by the Golden State Warriors. During his first season with the Warriors, Carroll was selected NBA All-Rookie First Team Center, and over the next seven seasons with Golden State he was a member of the NBA All Star Team, Western Conference (1987) and averaged more than twenty points per game. He regularly appeared in NBA playoff games over his eleven-year professional career with the Warriors, Milano (Italy), the Houston Rockets, New Jersey Nets, Denver Nuggets, and Phoenix Suns.

Upon retiring from the NBA in 1991, Carroll relocated to Atlanta, Georgia where in 1993 he founded The Carroll Group, a wealth advisory company serving high-net-worth families. While still in the NBA, Carroll established the BroadView Foundation in 1985 to financially support and participate in organizations and programs that serve lower socio-economic groups and individuals in communities of color. In addition to establishing college scholarships, Carroll and BroadView have funded afterschool programs, elder care, Aid to Children of Imprisoned Mothers, Kenny Leon’s True Colors Theatre, Task Force for the Homeless, The Georgia Innocence Project, and WABE, Atlanta’s NPR station. In 2013 Carroll expanded his support of The Georgia Innocence Project by fully funding the salary for a full-time staff position.

Joe Barry Carroll is clearly multi-talented. Over the past few years, he has begun to paint and has developed a fascinating style that often incorporates family photographs, newspaper clips, and other memorabilia with vivid designs and expressionist interpretations of personal moments and events in his past. Recently, he has added a narrative and published *Growing Up: In Words and Images* to integrate beautiful images of his seventy paintings with background text and auto-biographical commentary. In his talk, he read passages from the book, accompanied by slides of his paintings, with fresh comments and observations. The pictures and commentary provided a vivid account of family dynamics and the very real intersection of race and class in a small town in rural Arkansas, as well as the glamour and stress of big-time college and professional sports, and the challenges and opportunities encountered after the conclusion of his NBA career.

I met Joe Barry Carroll 10 years ago. He is one of the most intellectually curious, perceptive, and thoughtful people that I know, and I think that his talk provided an opportunity for others to be introduced to him. His warmth and good natured humor were evident as he informally sat on his stool and answered questions. I especially enjoy the guilty pleasure of walking into a room—a restaurant, reception, or lobby with him. Often, other people stop talking and gaze at him. We saw this after the talk when he stood up and his full 7-foot tall frame became apparent. It’s fascinating how comfortably he acknowledges and puts people at ease, sometimes answering the obvious questions about his height, and brings everything back to normal. He handles these situations like he handles the rest of his life with grace, good spirits, and intelligence. Of course, he stayed afterwards and signed copies of his book, *Growing Up in Words and Images*. It was a joy and privilege to have him with us.
However, while I felt my daughter’s birth afforded me the luxury of tackling my newfound responsibility of fatherhood head-on, there were naysayers who quickly placed me in the category of “deadbeat father” before giving me an opportunity to prove them otherwise. Disregarding my resilient desire to father beyond my circumstances, many people believed I would fail miserably as a parent due to my youthful age. Overcoming the obstacles of being a young father was a constant challenge of mines during my high school and undergraduate collegiate years. Nevertheless, during those years, I managed to navigate my way through parenthood by stubbornly refusing to provide only financial necessities to my daughter. My fathering technique has always been grounded in the foundational belief that children benefit more from socio-emotional support than those paternal parenting practices derived from traditional “breadwinner” norms. This position has become more concrete in my latter years.

Now at the age of 25, I feel more confident than ever before in my ability as a father, and also my obligation as a parent. Even though I am temporarily removed from the physical day-to-day pleasures of parenting due to me attending Georgia State University for my Ph.D. program, I am honored to say my presence is still felt in my daughter’s life. I am fortunate enough to video chat with her several times per week via FaceTime to help with homework, provide fatherly guidance, and nurture her personal ambitions as she blossoms into an outstanding young lady. While I must openly admit financial means do play a central role in shaping the life opportunities of my daughter, it is more important for me to emphasize through my parenting practices that with the appropriate amount of encouragement, reassurance, nurturing support, and love my daughter will become a productive adult, fully capable of making sound and confident decisions. I strongly believe that a father who can honestly say he has raised his child or children to think independently and rationally, regardless of the situation, deserves to call himself a great parent. Hopefully, when my daughter comes of age I will be privileged enough to consider myself a great parent.

A recent Supreme Court decision, Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010) that gives corporations the right to donate unlimited amounts to political candidates, has its roots in court decisions from the late 19th century. Courts began granting certain personal constitutional rights to corporations, such as equal protection under the law, rights to own property, protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, and freedom of speech. These allowances did not impede the democratic process, but the more recent decision in Citizen’s United does. By classifying financial contributions to campaigns as free speech (Buckley v. Valeo, 1976), the final groundwork for this nation-changing decision was fully set. In litigious logic, if a corporation is a person with the right to free speech and free speech is campaign donations, then corporations can donate as much as desired to candidates. Given that corporations are controlled by the small elite class, this change contributes to inequality in political influence between the elite class and those in the middle and lower classes. The repercussions of this are yet to be seen.

by
Marcie Hambrick, MSW & PhD candidate
Degrees Awarded

RECENT M.A. THESES & PH.D. DISSERTATIONS

M.A. Theses

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Give Me That Online Religion: Religious Authority and Resistance Through Blogging. Erin V. Echols

Public Housing Relocation Of Older Adults In Atlanta: Challenging The Aging In Place Concept. Laquanda Jackson

The Cost of Dropping Out: An Examination of State-level Vocational Funding on High School Dropout Rates. Artis Lang Bruttig

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Diversity within Discrimination: Does Victim Nativity and Discriminator Race Matter for the Mental Health of Blacks? Aja Simpson Zulfiqar

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Coloring Outside The Lines: An Intersectionality Approach To Understanding The Homeschooling Experiences of Black Families. Taura Taylor

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Unbearable Fruit: Black Women's Experiences with Uterine Fibroids. Ranell L. Myles

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Congratulations to undergraduate Soci major, Andrew Whyte, on receiving the Sociology Department’s Outstanding Undergraduate Award!

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The Sociology Department would like to announce that graduate student Cory Albertson is this year’s recipient of the Jacqueline Boles Teaching Fellowship. This award, established in honor of former GSU professor Jackie Boles, recognizes excellence in instruction among our graduate student instructors.

Congratulations to graduate student Stephanie Hansard on successfully defending her M.A. Thesis “Religion and Depression: Examining the Nature of the Relationship” chaired by Mathew Gayman.

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Zhanlian Feng, Xinping Guan, Xiaotian Feng, Chang Liu, Heying Jenny Zhan, Vincent Mor, (Feb. 2014). Long-Term Care in China: Reigning in Market Forces through Regulatory Oversight, Regulating Long Term Care Quality: An International Comparison, edited by V. Mor, T. Leone, and A. Maresso (eds.), Cambridge University Press.
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