

Leadership Changes and Transitions

Welcome to our inaugural edition of the School of Cultural and Critical Studies Bi-Annual Newsletter! We hope this space will be a way for faculty, staff, students, and alumni to share news and stay connected.

The School of Cultural and Critical Studies has been under the award-winning leadership of Dr. Susana Peña for nine years! Dr. Peña was the first Director for the School, and she ended her tenure by winning the Faculty Senate award for “Leadership as a School Director.” We are so thankful for her service and guidance over all these years.

We are thrilled that Dr. Angela Nelson has been appointed as our new School Director! Dr. Nelson is an Associate Professor in Popular Culture and Chair of Ethnic Studies. Dr. Nelson is a strong consensus builder and mediator, and is ready to help our School develop closer and more meaningful connections and a renewed vision!

Dr. Tom Edge’s term as the School’s Director of Undergraduate Studies has also come to an end, and we thank him for his service, providing outstanding student advising and mentorship. Dr. Sarah Rainey-Smithback has stepped in as Interim Director of Undergraduate Studies for this year, and will be focused on increasing enrollments and encouraging our students to complete internships.



Caption: Mood™

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Caption: Dr. Sarah Rainey-Smithback and WGSS Graduate Assistant Gwyn Burns at the Big Gay Welcome

From the Director

Greetings! I am Angela Nelson, the new Director of the School of Cultural and Critical Studies (CCS). For alumni, students, friends, and allies of the school who do not know me, I have been a faculty member within the Department of Popular Culture for 28 years. Housed within the school along with the Popular Culture Department is the American Culture Studies Program, Department of Ethnic Studies, and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program. I have witnessed many changes over the years, some good and some not so good. Overall, I feel blessed and fortunate to be a part of the department, school, and college here at Bowling Green State University.

I must admit that serving in this position within my school *now* has caused my head to spin with conflicting thoughts from time to time. Part of the conflict has been living with COVID-19 for the past 18 months. This global pandemic has brought with it sadness, challenges, and opportunities. It has changed my life personally and professionally in both negative and positive ways. Even so, I have been amazed at the things our faculty have accomplished to meet the challenges needed and how they have not only thought and acted outside the box but how they broke free of the box.

I believe we are in a time when academic units such as CCS (and the liberal arts in general) is required to justify its existence both inside and outside of their

campus communities. With the competitive nature of first-year student recruitment, decreasing state funding for state universities, increasing emphasis on procuring external funding sources, the imposition of state legislature philosophies on what is taught in K-16 classrooms, and the embracing of degree-to-job frameworks on college campuses, CCS is in a challenging environment.

During the next four years, I endeavor to help the school to fulfill its vision to educate "scholars of the future through engaged teaching that emphasizes high impact practices, critical research, and service to the broader BGSU community." Further, I endeavor to support the faculty as best I can to keep the school's commitment to the public good through teaching, research, service and leadership relating to equity, diversity and inclusion. This will be exciting to witness because CCS faculty are excellent at using multi-disciplinary approaches to assist students in engaging in critical and cultural analysis fostering media literacy and an understanding of how cultural, national, economic, racial, gender and sexual differences are constructed and expressed.

Finally, I thank Dr. Sarah Rainey-Smithback for stepping up to coordinate the production of this newsletter, which I think is the first for the school! The newsletter will be yet another mechanism to share the good work of our students and faculty.

Messages from Our Chairs and Directors

American Culture Studies Program

Despite the global pandemic, the American Culture Studies' Program continues to thrive. The greatest testimony to our success is our students' successes. Be sure to check them all out in the "Accolades and Accomplishments" section on page 10. Our PhD executive committee and our undergraduate committee has been hard at work examining our curriculum and considering updates. We're excited about possible changes to come.



Dr. Kim Coates
Director, American Culture Studies

Ethnic Studies

Greetings from the Department of Ethnic Studies. On September 23, 2021, at 1:30p.m., a Veranda Dedication event will be held in honor of Dr. Robert L. Perry, founding chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies. In this Board of Trustees ceremony, the Shatzel Hall Porch will be renamed the Perry

Veranda. The Bowling Green State University community is welcome to attend. Also, on November 5 and 6, 2021, the department is excited to host the 2021 Association for Ethnic Studies (AES) conference and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of BGSU's Ethnic Studies program, both in-person and via Zoom. This will be an opportunity to look back upon the history of the scholarly field of ethnic studies. The conference is organized by Dr. Timothy Messer-Kruse, Professor in the department as well as a member of the AES Board. Detailed conference information including registration and schedule is located at the link below: <https://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/cultural-and-critical-studies/news-events/association-for-ethnic-studies-conference.html>.



Dr. Angela Nelson
Chair, Department of Ethnic Studies
Director, School of Cultural and Critical Studies

Popular Culture Studies

Though we are still hampered by the restrictions due to Covid, the Popular Culture Department still has a few exciting events planned for this academic year. In March we will be hosting the annual Ray Browne Culture Studies Conference. The theme this year is Horror in all of its various formats. The Center for Popular Culture Studies will be home for a new visiting Fulbright scholar, Dr. Anuradha Dosad from Adamas University in India. Dr. Dosad's research project addresses queerness in modern comic books and will make use of the extensive collection in the Popular Culture Library. Dr. Dosad will also be delivering a public lecture on the topic before wrapping up research.



Dr. Jeff Brown
Chair, Department of Popular Culture Studies

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

WGSS is growing at BGSU. Our enrollment numbers are on the rise as students are finding that our

programs speak to current climate in which issues around gender, sexuality, and diversity are becoming increasingly prominent. I'm excited to help grow our program over the next few years. The WGSS Steering Committee and I will be examining our curriculum this year, and we'll be working on growing a strong support network of our 45 affiliated faculty! This fall, the WGSS program, along with the Center for Women and Gender Equity, will be hosting our annual Reception for New and Newly Appointed Faculty who identify as cisgender women, transwomen, or nonbinary people that are comfortable in a space that centers the experiences of women. The Reception is scheduled for September 28th at 4:00 p.m. in the Dorothy Uber Bryan Gallery.

Dr. Sarah Rainey-Smithback
Director, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Faculty on Leave

Dr. Rebecca Kinney

Associate Professor, School of Cultural and Critical Studies and American Culture Studies

What project are you working on during leave?

Hello CCS! I am on a partially unpaid leave from BGSU for AY 2021-2022 during my appointment as a Fulbright Scholar at Ewha University in Seoul, South Korea. My research project, "Adult Korean Adoptees Making Home and Building Community in Seoul" is an ethnographic study of the multinational community of adoptees that are living longterm in Seoul. This project intends to gather and record individual and community history in relationship to home for this diasporic community.

I was inspired to formally study this community based on my own experiences living in Seoul as a returning overseas adopted Korean in the early 2000s and again in the early 2020s. Hopefully COVID doesn't wreak too much havoc on my research plans. Right now all group and community gatherings are in a COVID holding pattern. However, I have been able to begin collecting 1-on-1 interviews and the stories and community histories that participants have shared are amazing. Even with COVID, it is great to be back in Seoul and I'm excited to see where the project goes.

The Fulbright Research Scholar Award supports 10 months of research in Seoul. I'm also applying for additional research support to travel to other cities to recruit participants and collect interviews outside of Seoul.

Are you going anywhere for the project?

I'm in Seoul right now 😊

When will you return?

I'll be back in the U.S. next summer and look forward to talking with you and catching up with you all once I'm back on a full contract at BGSU beginning August 2022.

Dr. Thomas Edge

Associate Teaching Professor, Ethnic Studies

Do you have a project you'll be working on during FIL?

A few years, I began researching the history of lynching in the United States through a different lens: the efforts to care for and remember the deceased. While there is a good deal of work on historical memory and lynching, very little attention has been paid to the funeral rites accorded to them and how that connects with our national memory of lynching. I want to see what these practices reveal about the immediate response to a lynching from the families and communities of the victims. Such reactions range from those who distanced themselves from what happened to those who used the opportunity to raise public awareness of lynching as a political issue.

The project was inspired primarily by two interests of mine: graveyard photography and the resurgence of lynching imagery in our own time. I have been interested in graveyard photography for more than a decade, mostly in connection to my work in genealogy and family history. I have volunteered for the website Find-A-Grave, photographing graves at the request of others and creating online memorials. This gave me a lot of time to consider the importance of death rites, including the physical

space of the cemetery itself, and to think about the ways that people are remembered, celebrated, and mourned there. As for lynching imagery, some of my previous research focused on the ways we frame discussions of racist violence today, including the use of nooses and the language of lynching to intimidate African Americans today. Thus, this effort combined these interests into one project.



Caption: Ida B. Wells-Barnett was the first person in the United States to systematically study and analyze lynching, helping to elevate anti-lynching activism in the United States and Great Britain. This new statue acknowledges Wells someone who greatly advanced our critiques of lynching and other forms of racist violence. Photo courtesy of Dr. Edge.

The research itself is two-fold. First, I am compiling a database of lynching cases in which I can find

funeral or burial information. Much of this comes from a careful review of old newspaper accounts of lynchings, looking for information on the funeral itself, who was responsible for planning it, references to a specific undertaker or cemetery, and so forth. It can also include cases where people have created physical or virtual monuments to their deaths. A few histories of lynching, especially those focuses on specific cases, also offer some details. With that information, I am trying to visit a variety of sites associated with these cases. Most of the time, if possible, I am concentrating on cemeteries. In other cases, however, I am also visiting sites where lynchings occurred, museums, public memorials, churches, and so forth.

So far, I have been very interested in the variety of ways that people reacted to tragedy. In some cases, families and communities refused to bury a lynching victim, insisting that those responsible for the murder should also be responsible for giving the deceased a dignified funeral. Others embraced the moment, creating public protests against lynching through the funeral itself. Families often feared that a grave with a headstone would be defaced, and thus left them unmarked. But others used the gravestone to publicize what happened, while some communities belatedly provided a headstone as a step towards recognition and reconciliation.

Finally, I want to look at the roles played by some key figures to whom we should pay more attention. Lynching victims themselves sometimes made specific requests regarding the treatment of their bodies in death; at times, these requests were honored. Likewise, I want to look at the undertakers, especially Black undertakers, who played an unheralded role here. Not only did they try to provide dignity in death, but they served as

key sources of information to law enforcement and civil rights groups investigating lynching deaths.

Initially, I hope to revise a paper I previously drafted and submit it for publication. Ultimately, I plan to write a book proposal and want to create a longer work on this subject.

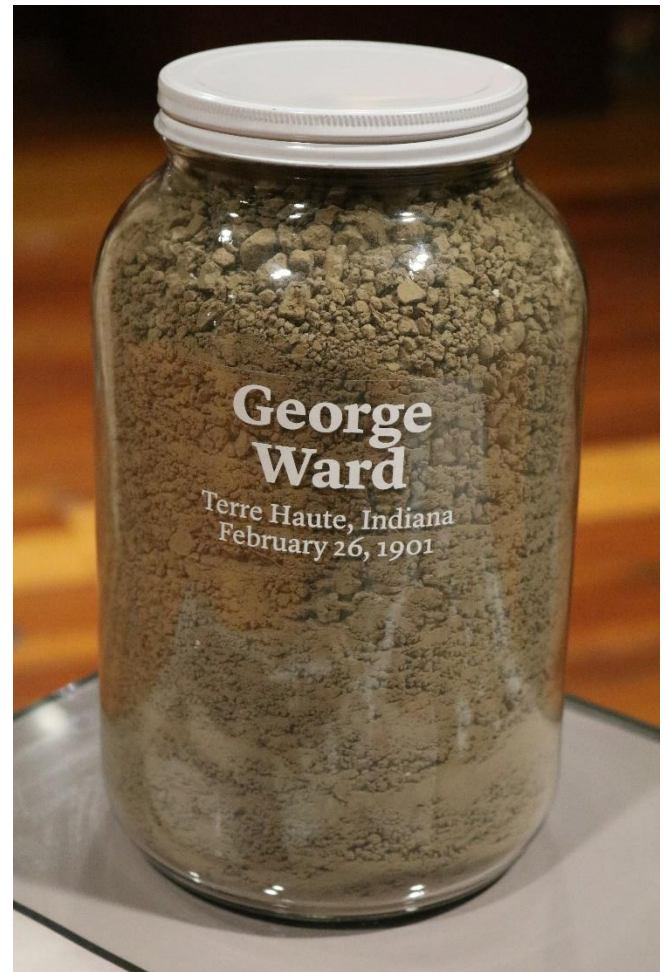
Funding for the project comes from the School of Cultural & Critical Studies, as well as from the ALLIES program here at BGSU.

Are you going anywhere for the project?

I am going on a series of short trips this summer and fall to aid my research. I already completed one weekend trip through Indiana and Illinois that included stops in Marion, Indianapolis, Terre Haute, Alsip, and Chicago. Right now, I am making arrangements for trips to Kentucky and Tennessee, Minnesota, and Georgia. Hopefully, if time permits, I would like to take one trip to Alabama, including a visit to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, our first national memorial dedicated to lynching victims. One other trip to the East Coast, mainly New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, will also help serve as a reminder that lynching was a national phenomenon. And of course, I will visit a few sites here in Ohio that are relevant to the research.

When will you return?

Outside of my trips, I will spend most of the Fall 2021 semester here in Bowling Green, completing my research and writing. I'll be back in the classroom in January 2022.



Caption: To Dr. Edge's knowledge, there is no known grave site for George Ward, killed by a lynch mob on the banks of the Wabash River in Terre Haute, Indiana in 1901. In recent years, however, groups like the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) have worked with local communities, activists, historians, and public officials to erect markers honoring lynching victims. They have also collected soil from lynching sites to put on display as part of their effort to show the enormity of lynching as a historical practice. Photo courtesy of Dr. Edge.

Accolades and Accomplishment

If you would like your achievements to be shared in our newsletter, please email ccs@bgsu.edu with the details!

Faculty Accomplishments

Jeff Brown

Popular Culture Faculty

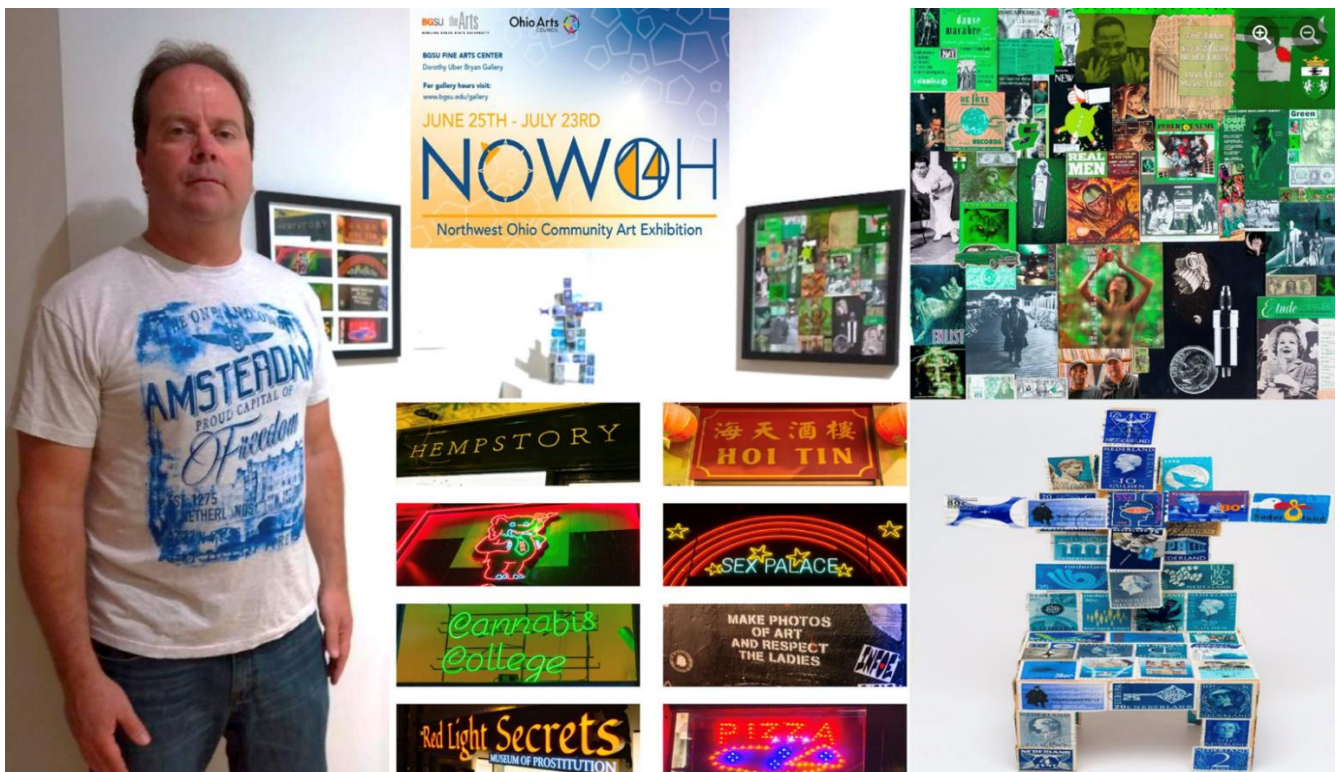
Dr. Brown's latest book, *Love, Sex, Gender, and Superheroes*, will be published in November and features chapters on queer superheroes, trans characters, homosocial spaces, orgasms, and other

gender related themes. Use the order code RFLR19 at rutgersuniversitypress.org for a 30% discount.

Matt Donahue

Popular Culture Faculty

This past spring, Dr. Donahue presented his new project, The Amsterdam Sign Project, which explores "commercial archeology," at Grounds for Thought (BG), the BGSU Library, and the Ray Browne Conference at BGSU. He has also recently exhibited his collage art at the 14th Annual NOWOH Exhibition and the Martin Porter Gallery at the Toledo School for the Arts.



Caption: Dr. Donahue's presentation at the NOWOH Exhibition



Caption: Dr. Miller presents her talk upside down

Montana Miller

Popular Culture Faculty

In June, Dr. Miller presented new ethnographic research at the 33rd Annual *Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference* in a multi-media talk titled "Our Next Death-Defying Feat: How Circus Performers Have Experienced and Adapted to the Pandemic Crisis." She delivered the introduction to this talk upside down, in order to draw her audience in and demonstrate her authentic insider knowledge of the circus industry.

Jolie Sheffer

American Culture Studies Faculty; Director,
Institute for the Study of Culture & Society

The BG Ideas podcast was named to Volt Magazine list of one of "11 Must-Listen Higher Ed Podcasts." Season 4 episodes will be released weekly, from September 1st through November 10th! You can find BG Ideas on all major podcast platforms (Apple podcasts, Google Podcasts, Stitcher, Spotify, etc.), as well as on our ICS webpage (www.bgsu.edu/ics). Please subscribe via your favorite platform so you never miss an episode! You can follow ICS on Twitter ([@icsbgsu](https://twitter.com/icsbgsu)), Instagram ([@icsbgsu](https://www.instagram.com/icsbgsu)), and Facebook ([@bgsuics](https://www.facebook.com/bgsuics)) to learn about new episodes as soon as they drop. This is truly an exceptional season of *BG Ideas* because of their diverse group of guests who were willing to share their expertise, perspective, and vision on topics related to caretaking, equity, performance, identity, and so many more. The ICS team are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to listen to and learn from them, and they are sure you will feel the same.

Sarah Rainey-Smithback

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Faculty

Dr. Rainey-Smithback's essay on Betty Dodson appears in *Death Never Dies: An Illustrated Anthology Mourning 2020* (released fall 2021).

Student Accomplishments

Muhammad Taufiq Al Makmun

American Culture Studies, PhD Student

Mr. Al Makmun, who is here from Indonesia on a Fulbright Grant and in his 2nd year of the PhD program, had his article "The Images of Donald Trump on Online News Media in Indonesia Through Photojournalism: Media Construction and Readers' Perception" published in *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* (2020) and a co-authored "Maintaining Politeness in Film *Tilik: A Study of Social Distance and Power Relations on Javanese Women*," International Conference on Language Politeness (ICLP 2020), published in the conference proceedings in *Atlantis Press: Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research* (2021).

Emily Edwards

American Culture Studies, PhD Alumna

Dr. Edwards, a recent graduate, was hired this year as Assistant Professor of Digital Humanities and as an Educational Technologist at St. Francis College.

Marlena Graves

American Culture Studies, PhD Student

Ms. Graves, who is currently in her 2nd year of the PhD program, will be receiving the Northeastern Seminary's Distinguished Alumna Award on September 20, 2021.

Gizen N. Iscan

American Culture Studies, PhD Student

Ms. Iscan, who is in her 3rd year of the PhD program, published her article "Open Doors and 'Open Wounds': Bearing Witness to Borders and Changing Discursive Formations on Refugees and Migrants in Turkey," in the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* this September.

John King

American Culture Studies, PhD Student

Mr. King, who finished his MA in Popular Culture Studies this summer and is in his 1st year of the ACS PhD program, was named Class Studies Area Chair for the Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Annual Conference.

Lauren O'Connor

American Culture Studies, PhD Alumna

Dr. O'Connor, a recent graduate of the ACS PhD program, has just published a book called *Robin and the Making of American Adolescence* in August with Rutgers University Press.

Hai Ly Tran

American Culture Studies, PhD Alumna

Dr. Tran's dissertation, *Sojourners in the Country of Freedom and Opportunity: The Experiences of Vietnamese Women with Non-Immigrant Dependent Spouse Visas in the U.S.*, was selected as the recipient of the 2021 Graduate College Distinguished Dissertation Award and was submitted to the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) Distinguished Dissertation Award competition as the nominee for Bowling Green State University in their Humanities and Fine Arts category.

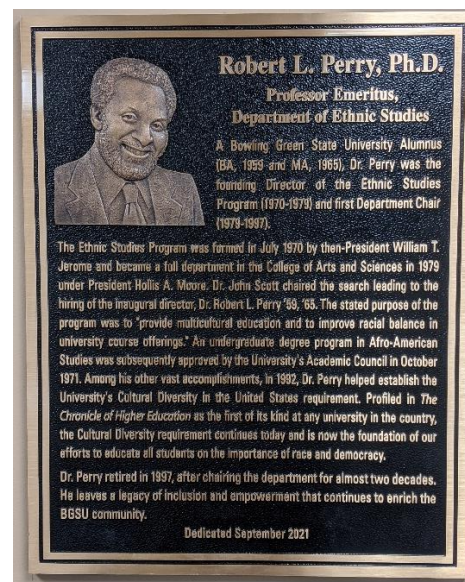
Tabby Violet

American Culture Studies, PhD Candidate, WGSS Graduate Certificate

Ms. Violet was awarded the Access and Opportunity Fellowship with Suffolk University in Boston! She will be at Suffolk University for the 21-22 academic year, completing her dissertation, teaching at Suffolk, and participating in Center for Teaching and Scholarly Excellence.

Upcoming Events

- September 23rd at 1:30pm
Veranda Dedication for Dr. Robert L. Perry, founding chair of the Department of Ethnic Studies.
Location: Shatzel Porch.
- September 23rd at 5:00pm
Screening of *The White Helmets* followed by addresses from ACS PhD student Ben Thomason and Professor Emeritus of Journalism, Dr. Oliver Boyd-Barrett, that discuss the Syrian Civil War and 21st century propaganda techniques.
Location: BTSU Theater, Room 206.
- September 28th at 4:00pm
Reception for Newly Appointed Faculty who identify as cisgender women, transwomen, or nonbinary people that are comfortable in a space that centers the experiences of women.
Location: Dorothy Uber Bryan Gallery.
- November 5-6th
2021 Association for Ethnic Studies Conference
For more information, please visit <https://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/cultural-and-critical-studies/news-events/association-for-ethnic-studies-conference.html>.



Caption: Robert L. Perry, PhD
Professor Emeritus
Department of Ethnic Studies

A Bowling Green State University Alumnus (BA, 1959 and MA, 1965), Dr. Perry was the founding Director of the Ethnic Studies Program (1970-1979) and first Department Chair (1979-1997).

The Ethnic Studies Program was formed in July 1970 by then-President William T. Jerome and became a full department in the College of Arts and Sciences in 1979 under President Hollis A. Moore. Dr. John Scott chaired the search leading to the hiring of the inaugural director, Dr. Robert L. Perry '59, '65. The stated purpose of the program was to "provide multicultural education and to improve racial balance in university course offerings." An undergraduate degree program in Afro-American Studies was subsequently approved by the University's Academic Council in October 1971. Among his other vast accomplishments, in 1992, Dr. Perry helped establish the University's Cultural Diversity in the United States requirement. Profiled in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* as the first of its kind at any university in the country, the Cultural Diversity requirement continues today and is now the foundation of our efforts to educate all students on the importance of race and democracy.

Dr. Perry retired in 1997, after chairing the department for almost two decades. He leaves a legacy of inclusion and empowerment that continues to enrich the BGSU community.

Dedicated September 2021