

## **DR. SHANNEN DEE WILLIAMS**

Assistant Professor  
University of Tennessee  
Department of History  
915 Volunteer Boulevard; 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Dunford Hall  
Knoxville, TN 37996-4065  
Office Number: (865)-974-7088  
Email Address: swill132@utk.edu

### **EDUCATION**

Ph.D. Rutgers University, New Brunswick, May 2013. African-American, United States History.  
Graduate Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies.

Dissertation Title: "Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate Catholic America after World War I." Advisor: Deborah Gray White.

M. A. University of Wisconsin at Madison, 2006. Afro-American Studies.

B.A. (*magna cum laude*, Phi Beta Kappa) Agnes Scott College, 2004. History.

Honors Diploma. Craigmont High School, Memphis, TN. Salutatorian.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

#### **Books**

*Subversive Habits: Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate Catholic America after World War I* (manuscript in progress)

Co-authored with Simone Campbell, S.S.S., Adrienne Alexander, and Rev. Joseph Nangle, O.F.M. *Waking Up to God in Our Midst: Reflections for Advent 2014*. Washington, D.C.: Pax Christi, 2014.

#### **Refereed Journal Articles**

"Desegregating the Habit: Black Nuns and the Long Struggle to Integrate Female Religious Life in the U.S. Catholic Church" (currently under review)

"Do Black Lives Really Matter in the Catholic Church?" (in progress- invited submission by the *Journal of Africana Religions*)

"The Real Sister Act: Black Nuns, Contested Memories, and the Limitations of the White American Racial Imagination" (in progress)

## **Online and Magazine Articles**

“Dear U.S. Catholic Theologians: The Lives of Black Women and Girls Always Matter,” *Patheos*, December 12, 2014. \*Reprinted on *ForHarriet.com* on December 13, 2014.

“What Must Never Be Forgotten,” *United States Catholic Conference of Bishops Blog*, August 25, 2014. \*Reprinted in *USCCB Rebuilding the Bridge: Reflections* online in November 2014.

“‘Influential’ Ugandan Nun Shines Light on Sacred Tradition of Black Catholic Women,” *Patheos Catholic Channel*, May 14, 2014

“Celebrating Unsung Black Catholic Women in U.S. History,” *U.S. Catholic Magazine Blog*, February 24, 2014.

“Jesus, Santa, and Now Sound of Music’s Mother Abbess,” *Religion Dispatches*, December 17, 2013.

“Segregated Sisterhoods and the Mercurial Politics of Racial Truth-Telling,” *The Feminist Wire*, October 24, 2013.

“Black Catholic Sisters in the United States: A Historical Reflection,” *In A Word: A Publication of The Society of the Divine Word, Southern Province* 30 (March 2012): 2-3.

## **Edited Volume**

Editorial Assistant, *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 5, *Their Place Inside the Body-Politic, 1887 to 1895*, ed. Ann D. Gordon. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009.

## **Book Review**

Review of *Roy Wilkins: The Quiet Revolutionary and the NAACP* by Yvonne Ryan. (forthcoming in 2015 in the *Journal of Southern History*)

## **Encyclopedia Entries**

“The Sisters of Loretto,” “Sister Patricia Haley, SCN,” and “Father Mary Simon (Vincent) Smith,” in *The Kentucky African American Encyclopedia* (forthcoming in 2015)

“Free African Americans” and “Slavery” in *Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History*. Vol. 1. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2010.

“Rosa Parks” in *Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History*. Vol. 6. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2010.

## **FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS**

Postdoctoral Fellowship in African-American Studies, Department of History, Case Western Reserve University, 2013-2014

Professor of the Year, Award given by the Black Affairs Council and the Black Graduate Student Association at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, May 2013  
Consortium for Faculty Diversity Pre-/Postdoctoral Fellowship in History and Africana Studies, Luther College, 2012-13 (Declined)  
Visiting Scholar, The Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, University of Memphis, 2011-12  
Charlotte W. Newcombe Doctoral Fellowship for Religion and Ethics, Woodrow Wilson National Foundation, 2011-12  
Erskine A. Peters Dissertation Fellowship, University of Notre Dame, 2011 (Declined)  
Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship, 2011 (Declined)  
Huggins-Quarles Award, Organization of American Historians, 2011  
Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis Graduate Research Fellowship, Rutgers University, 2010-2011  
Albert J. Beveridge Research Grant, American Historical Association, 2010  
Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism Research Travel Grant, University of Notre Dame, 2010  
Lord Baltimore Research Fellowship, Maryland Historical Society, 2010  
Dorothy Mohler Research Grant, Catholic University of America, 2010  
John Tracy Ellis Dissertation Award, American Catholic Historical Association, 2010  
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Grant, Rutgers Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, 2009  
Drusilla Dunjee Houston Memorial Award for Best Graduate Essay in History, Association of Black Women Historians, 2008  
Pre-Dissertation Research Travel Award, Rutgers History Department, 2008  
“Memphis State Eight” Best (First Place) Paper Prize, 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Graduate Conference in African-American History, University of Memphis, 2007  
Ralph J. Bunche Fellowship, Rutgers University, 2006-07 & 2009-10  
Tom W. Shick Award for Excellence in the Study of African-American History, UW-Madison, Dept. of Afro-American Studies, 2005  
Michael J. Brown History Prize, Awarded to Outstanding Senior Student in History, Agnes Scott College, 2004  
Phi Beta Kappa, Elected to Beta Chapter of Georgia, Agnes Scott College, 2004  
National Museum Fellowship, Atlanta History Center, 2002-03  
Phi Alpha Theta, National History Honor Society, Agnes Scott College, 2002

## **FACULTY SERVICE**

### **University of Tennessee at Knoxville**

Co-founder and Administrator of the Fleming-Morrow Endowment in African-American History Fall 2014 to Present  
Founded (with Dr. Brandon Winford) the Fleming-Morrow Endowment in African-American History, which will provide annual funding for a distinguished lecture in African-American history and two student awards in African-American and military history. Raised initial \$17,500 for endowment.

## **RELEVANT TEACHING, GRADING, AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

### **University of Tennessee at Knoxville**

Assistant Professor of United States and African-American History  
June 30, 2014 to Present

Courses Taught: HIST 376: African-American Women's History – Fall 2014; HIST 346: African-American Religious History – Spring 2015

**Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH**

Postdoctoral Fellow in African-American Studies and History  
January 13 – May 10, 2014

Taught HSTY/ETHS/WGST 318: The History of Black Women in the United States, a cross-listed undergraduate course in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Supervisor: Dr. Rhonda Y. Williams, Associate Professor of History

**Southern Illinois University at Carbondale**

Lecturer in United States and African-American History  
August 16, 2012-May 15, 2013

Taught two courses per semester in the history department. Courses included: U.S. History to 1877, History of the Civil Rights Movement, and History of Slavery

Supervisor: Dr. Kay J. Carr, Chair of the History Department

**Christian Brothers University, Memphis, TN**

Adjunct Instructor of History  
May 31-July 1, 2011

Taught an upper-level history course, "The Long Civil Rights Movement, 1880-1980," during the first summer session.

Supervisor: Dr. Neal Palmer, Chair of the History and Political Science Department

Adjunct Instructor of History  
June 1-July 2, 2010

Taught an upper-level history course, "History 496: 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century African-American Women's Political Activism," during the first summer session.

Supervisor: Dr. Neal Palmer, Chair of the History and Political Science Department

**Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility, Annandale, NJ**

Team Instructor  
March 17, 2009

Led session on "Civil Rights and Black Power" for team-taught course entitled, "Narratives and Counter-Narratives in Modern United States History (1865 to the Present)," designed for the residents of the Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility. Upon successful completion of the course, residents earned three hours of college credit to be transferred to Rutgers University-New Brunswick.

Supervisor: Dr. Donald Roden, Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University-New Brunswick

## **Rutgers University-New Brunswick**

Grader

Spring 2011

Graded three sets of quizzes, a mid-term examination, a 3-5 page analytical paper, and the final examination for “Hip-Hop Culture and History,” an undergraduate course in the American Studies department.

Supervisor: Dr. Nicole Fleetwood, Assistant Professor of American Studies

Grader

Fall 2010

Graded final papers for “American Culture of the 1960s,” an undergraduate course in the history department.

Supervisor: Dr. Norman Markowitz, Professor of History

Grader

Fall 2008

Graded two sets of exams for the “United States Development I” undergraduate course in the history department.

Supervisor: Dr. James Livingston, Professor of History

## **The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton & Susan B. Anthony Project**

Editorial/Research/Graduate Assistant

July 1, 2007 to May 31, 2009

Duties included transcribing letters, researching annotations, bibliographic database entry, and indexing for volumes five and six of the *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* published by the Rutgers University Press.

Supervisor: Dr. Ann D. Gordon

Hourly Research Associate

Jan. 2007 to June 30, 2007

Duties included transcribing letters, researching annotations, and bibliographic database entry for volume five of the *Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony* published by Rutgers University Press.

Supervisor: Dr. Ann D. Gordon

Substitute Instructor

October 22, 2007

Taught one session of an honors SAS seminar entitled, “Race Matters,” in the American Studies Department. Directed class discussion on Jennifer Ritterhouse’s *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race* and evaluated student discussion leaders.

Supervisor: Dr. Leslie Fishbein

## **Teaching American History Summer Seminar on the American Revolution at the Newark Museum, NJ**

Instructor

August 13-15, 2008

Led a one-and-a-half hour session entitled, “America’s Black Founding Fathers and Mothers: The

American Revolution as the First Mass Slave Rebellion in U.S. History,” for TAH seminar on “The American Revolution” for Newark public middle and high school teachers sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the Newark Museum in New Jersey.  
Supervisor: Elizabeth Aaron

**NJ Council for the Humanities’ Teachers Institute/ Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ**

Instructor

July 9, 2008

Led a three-hour session entitled, “The Civil Rights Movement and Black Power,” for seminar on “The 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the African-American Experience” for New Jersey social studies and history teachers sponsored by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities and the Rutgers Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience. (\*Created as a result of the New Jersey’s Amistad legislation.)

Supervisor: Dr. Clement Alexander Price, Professor of History at Rutgers University-Newark

**U. S. History High School Saturday Academy at Rutgers University-Newark**

Instructor

Sept. 2007 to May 2009

Designed and taught four elective courses, “Dreaming Out Loud: The Black Radical Imagination in Post-World War II America;” “Shattering Silences: Black Women in America from Slavery to the Present;” “Furious Seeds: The Harlem and Chicago Renaissances in 20<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. History;” and “In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: A History of Feminism among Women of Color in the United States,” to Newark public and private high school students as a part of the National Saturday Academy of American History program sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience at Rutgers-Newark.

Supervisors: Elizabeth Aaron; Dr. Clement Alexander Price, Professor of History

**University of Wisconsin at Madison**

Teaching Assistant

Jan. 2006 to May 2006

Led four sections, totaling approximately sixty students, for “Women, Culture, and Representation,” an undergraduate introductory course in the Women Studies Department at UW-Madison.

Supervisor: Anna Nekola

Teaching Assistant

Sept. 2005 to Dec. 2005

Led four sections, totaling eighty-six students, for “Introduction to Black Women’s Studies,” an undergraduate Afro-American Studies course that provided an introductory overview of Black women’s efforts in the areas of society/politics, history, literature, and art/theatre.

Supervisors: Dr. Stanlie James, Dr. Christina Greene, and Professor Freida High W. Tesfagiorgis

**Schools of St. George, Collierville and Memphis, TN**

McMurry Diversity Teaching Fellow

Jan. 2004 to June 2004

Worked as a teaching apprentice for seventh-grade U.S. history classes, Monday-Thursday on Collierville campus. Served as teaching assistant to senior kindergarten class in Memphis on Fridays. Also served as assistant track and field coach for middle and high school teams.

### **Atlanta History Center, Atlanta, GA**

National Museum Fellow

August 2002 to August 2003

Conducted research on convict labor in Atlanta and African-American participation in World War II for the gardens and education departments, respectively.

Supervisors: Anthony B. Knight, Jr. and Billie Gaines

### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

“‘Liberation Is Our First Priority:’ Black Nuns, Soul Politics, and the Formation of the National Black Sisters’ Conference,” at the “Nun in the World” Conference at University of Notre Dame, London Centre (**Scheduled: May 8, 2015**)

“‘You Could Do the Irish Jig, But Anything African Was Taboo:’ Catholic Sisters and the Forgotten History of Racial Segregation and Exclusion in Female Religious Life,” Organization of American Historians Annual Meeting, Saint Louis, MO, (**Scheduled: April 16, 2014**)

“‘Troubling the Waters and Shifting Paradigms: Making the Case for Centering Black Nuns in the Fight for Racial and Educational Justice in Twentieth-Century (Catholic) America,’” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C. (January 3, 2014)

“‘Desegregating the Habit: Portraits of Five Pioneering Black Sisters in Historically-White Congregations in the United States,’” Ninth Triennial Conference on the History of Women Religious, St. Paul, MN (June 24, 2013)

“‘Service First! Service Now! Service Always!’: Black Nuns, Civil Rights, and the Resurrection of Black Catholic Protest after Vatican II,” American Catholic Historical Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA (January 5, 2013)

“‘You Could Do the Irish Jig, But Anything African Was Taboo’: Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate U.S. Catholic Sisterhoods after World War II,” American Catholic Historical Association Spring Meeting, New Orleans, LA, (March 23, 2012)

“‘Subversive Habits: Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate Catholic America after World War I,’” Heidelberg Center for American Studies Spring Academy 2011, Heidelberg University, Germany, (March 21-25, 2011)

“‘Nothing Is Too Good for the Youth of Our Race’: Black Nuns and the Struggle for Catholic Education in the Jim Crow South,” 125<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Boston, Massachusetts, (January 6-9, 2011)

“‘Nothing Is Too Good for the Youth of Our Race’: Black Nuns and the Struggle for Catholic Education in the Jim Crow South,” at Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis as a part of the 2010-2012 “Narratives of Power” Project Seminar, (November 16, 2010)

Commentator for “The Radical Other: Sojourner Truth and Revolutionary Feminism,” a paper presentation by Agatha Beins at the Rutgers Center for Historical Analysis as a part of the 2010-2012 “Narratives of Power” Project Seminar, (October 12, 2010)

“‘Nothing Is Too Good for the Youth of Our Race’: Black Nuns and the Struggle for Catholic Education in the Jim Crow South,” Eighth Triennial Meeting of the Conference on the History of Women Religious, University of Scranton in Pennsylvania, (June 27-30, 2010)

“Black Nuns and the Veiled Struggle to Desegregate the American Catholic Church: Preliminary Thoughts on the Politics of Anonymity in the Jim Crow South,” Eighth Southern Conference on Women’s History, sponsored by the Southern Association for Women Historians, University of South Carolina at Columbia, (June 4-6, 2009)

“Black Nuns and the Veiled Struggle to Desegregate the American Catholic Church: Preliminary Thoughts on the Politics of Anonymity in the Jim Crow South,” Institute for Research on Women Graduate Student Forum on Feminist Scholarship, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, (April 3, 2009)

“‘To Be Celibate, Black and Committed’: Sister M. Martin de Porres Grey, R.S.M. and the Formation of the National Black Sisters’ Conference, 1968-1974,” Black Women and the Radical Tradition: A National Conference, City University of New York Graduate Center and Brooklyn College Graduate Center for Worker Education, New York, New York, (March 28, 2009)

Commentator for *Political Voices of American Women* panel at 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Warren I. Susman Graduate Student History Conference at Rutgers, the State University of New Brunswick, New Brunswick, NJ, (April 5, 2008) Conference Theme: Sites of Culture, Challenges of Encounter

“‘Liberation Is Our First Priority’: Black Nuns, Soul Politics, and the Modern African-American Freedom Struggle,” 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Organization of American Historians, New York, New York, (March 28-31, 2008) \*Part of the *Gender and Black Power Politics* panel.

“‘Liberation Is Our First Priority’: Black Nuns, Soul Politics, and the Modern African-American Freedom Struggle,” 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Women’s History Month Conference at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, NY, (March 7-8, 2008) Conference Theme: Black Power, Black Feminism: Black Women’s Activism and Development of Womanist/Feminist Consciousness in the Black Power Era

“‘Liberation Is Our First Priority’: Black Nuns, Soul Politics, and the Modern African-American Freedom Struggle,” 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Graduate Association for African-American History at the University of Memphis, (September 12-14, 2007) \*Awarded first place prize.

## **INVITED TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS**

“The Real Sister Act: Black Nuns, Contested Memories, and the Limitations of the American Racial Imagination,” *UTK Africana Studies Spring Symposium*, (**Scheduled: April 6, 2015**)



“Decentering MLK in the History of the Civil Rights Movement,” *UT History Workshop* at East Tennessee Historical Society, **(Scheduled: March 7, 2015)**

Panelist, *Ferguson Verdict: The Misconceptions of Social Media Worldwide* at the Annual Black Issues Conference, University of Tennessee (February 7, 2015)

“Desegregating the Habit: Black Nuns and the Long Struggle to Integrate Catholic Female Religious Life in the U.S. Church,” *Imago Dei Conference*, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria, VA (January 29, 2015)

“Harriet Tubman: An American Hero,” at Norwood Elementary School, Knoxville, TN, (December 14, 2014)

Panelist, UTK NAACP Chapter Forum, “‘What’s Happenin:’ A Currents Events Forum for the Minority College Student,” (October 30, 2014)

“Sister Act: An Exploration of the Black Nun,” Texas A& M University, MSC Carter G. Woodson Black Awareness Committee, (September 11, 2014)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Sisters in United States History” and “Celibacy as a Radical Act of Black Liberation” Workshops at Ninth Archbishop James P. Lyke Liturgical Conference, New Orleans, LA, (June 12-15, 2014)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Nuns in American History,” Postdoctoral Guest Lecture, Case Western Reserve University Department of History, Cleveland, OH (April 22, 2014)

“Desegregating the Habit: Black Nuns and the Long Struggle to Integrate Female Religious Life in the U.S. Catholic Church,” Conversations on Transnational Blackness, Texas A & M University Program in Africana Studies, College Station, TX, (March 24, 2014)

“Excellence Is Your Greatest Weapon: Rules and Tips for Surviving and Thriving in College,” Presentation for Who’s Who Wednesday in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH (March 19, 2014)

Introduction to “Living the Dream: 10 Black Women Activists You Need to Meet” program at Memorial Nottingham Branch of the Cleveland Public Library for Women’s History Month, Cleveland, OH (March 8, 2014)

Introduction to “Living the Dream: 10 Black Women Activists You Need to Meet” program at Case Western Reserve University for MLK Week Celebration, Cleveland, OH (January 22, 2014)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Nuns in U.S. History,” Black Catholic History Month Speaker, Institute for Black Catholic Studies at Xavier University of Louisiana, New Orleans, LA (November 5, 2013)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Nuns in U.S. History,” Special Guest Lecture in “The Black Catholic Experience” course taught by Dr. Chris Pramuk at Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH (October 22, 2013)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Sisters in United States History” and “Women in the Black Catholic Freedom Struggle in the United States” Workshops at Eighth Archbishop James P. Lyke Liturgical Conference, Tinley Park, IL, (June 21-22, 2013)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Sisters in United States History,” Organization of American Historians: New Directions in ALANA History Panel, Milwaukee, WI, (April 19, 2012)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Sisters in United States History,” National Civil Rights Museum “Lunch and Learn” Seminar, Memphis, TN, (March 21, 2012)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Sisters in United States History,” Theology on Tap by the Diocese of Memphis, TN, (February 20, 2012)

“‘You Could Do the Irish Jig, But Anything African Was Taboo’: Black Nuns and the Struggle to Desegregate U.S. Catholic Sisterhoods after World War II,” American Catholic Studies Seminar, University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, (November 3, 2011)

“Still Mining the Forgotten: Black Catholic Sisters in United States History,” EDPR 7561: Qualitative Research Methods, University of Memphis, TN, (September 19, 2011)

“History as Contested Terrain?” Guest Speaker for Contemporary Issues: Introduction to Urban Studies course at Frederick Douglass High School, Memphis, TN, (January 14, 2011)

“Black Nuns in the ‘60s and ‘70s: An Untold Story of the Black Freedom Struggle in the U.S. Catholic Church,” Black History Month Speaker at Caldwell College in Caldwell, NJ, (February 24, 2010)

“Black Nuns in the ‘60s and ‘70s: The Untold Story of the Black Freedom Struggle in the U.S. Catholic Church,” Speaker at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Program at St. Peter Claver Roman Catholic Church, Montclair, NJ, (January 17, 2010)

## **RADIO INTERVIEW**

“The Role of Black Catholic Nuns in Desegregation,” Across the Nation with Bob Dunning, on the “The Catholic Channel” on Sirius XM 129, (June 20, 2011; 2:30-2:45pmCST)

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Catholic Historical Association  
American Historical Association  
Association for the Study of African-American Life and History  
Association of Black Women Historians  
Conference on the History of Women Religious  
Organization of American Historians

## **REFERENCES**

Deborah Gray White, Board of Governors Professor of History at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, dgwhite@rci.rutgers.edu, (848)-932-8367

Nancy A. Hewitt, Professor Emeritus of History at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, nhewitt@rci.rutgers.edu, (848)-932-8252

Donna Murch, Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, dmurch@history.rutgers.edu, (848)-932-8379

Dr. Cynthia Griggs Fleming, Professor Emerita of History, University of Tennessee at Knoxville, cfleming@utk.edu