

September 2011 - Department of Anthropology, 316 Manning Hall., University of Memphis, Memphis Tennessee 38152
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... from the Chair



This fall marks the beginning of the 36th year of the Anthropology Master's Program and 50 years of Anthropology course offerings at the University of Memphis. This past April's celebration of our graduate program's first 35 years was an outstanding success. Over 150 alumni, students, and friends gathered for a welcome reception, a Department-hosted conference with poster session and workshops, a gala dinner with silent auction and special entertainment at the Peabody, and a keynote address by Malinowski Award winner Dr. Jean Schensul. The weekend wrapped up with an Anthropology Student Club-sponsored farewell picnic at Chucalissa. It is a testament to the success and vitality of our program that so many alums traveled hundreds and in some cases thousands of miles to participate in the weekend celebration. But we do not just celebrate the past. Watch for future monthly issues of the *Anthropology News* to hear about current department projects and awards of both our faculty and students.

This fall also marks the retirement after 30 years of exemplary service of Dr. Charles Williams. The article in this issue of the *Anthropology News* highlights the accomplishments of Dr. Williams over the years. We are most fortunate that he will continue to teach courses at the University, but with his retirement will be able to spend more time with his growing grandchildren and watch more St. Louis Cardinals baseball games. We congratulate Charles on his accomplishments and years of service at the University as he looks forward to a long and well deserved reduction in his workload.

With the retirement of Dr. Williams, we have been given the go ahead by the University to begin a search for a new tenure-track position. We will keep you updated on this process.

- Ruthbeth Finerman

Dr. Williams Retires after 30 Years of Service at the University of Memphis



This year marks a major change in the Anthropology Department at the University of Memphis. Dr. Charles Williams, a long-time faculty member and a dear friend to many, is retiring.

Dr. Williams joined the University of Memphis' Department of Anthropology in 1979. He earned his M.A. in 1976 and Ph.D in 1981 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, collaborating on the Holmes County Health Research Project, and substance abuse research. Dr. Williams is a master of mixed-methods approaches and participatory ethnographic techniques. He has conducted a wide range of ethnographic investigations on Black culture and communities, African American heritage and the diaspora, religion and urban Black churches, mutual aid societies, poverty, homelessness, educational programs, foodways and hypertension, neighborhood revitalization, and archaeology and cultural resource surveys in African American cemeteries and historic sites. A major focus has been his effort to document relationships between the physical and social environment and health outcomes.

He is recognized for his initiation of collaborative research and evaluations of alcohol and drug behavior in the Mid-South through two state-funded projects, including the Tennessee Outcomes for Alcohol and Drug Services (TOADS) and the Tennessee Alcohol and Drug Prevention Outcomes Longitudinal Evaluation (TADPOLE). The projects provided annual outcome evaluations of all treatment and prevention services funded by the Tennessee Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services (TBADAS).

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TADPOLE also provided conferences and workshops to train agency staff and to educate parents on alcohol and drug risks among youths. The initiative offered a more holistic approach to understanding treatment and prevention from the client's perspective. It successfully promoted policies and funding for site-appropriate, dignified, and effective services, and improved access for underserved populations.

In addition to his work on alcohol and drug evaluations, Dr. Williams collaborated with the Tennessee Department of Health's HIV/STD Division to evaluate HIV prevention programs statewide, and with a range of schools and universities, community leaders and health agency partners to improve public education, awareness, and responsiveness to the needs of underserved populations. He published more than 150 reports, monographs, book reviews, and scholarly articles, shaping the scholarly knowledge base and public policy approaches to neighborhood development, education, cultural heritage, and community health.

Dr. Williams has served on a number of campus committees and community boards. He has been honored for his teaching and research, receiving the University of Memphis's "Millionaire" award for producing more than one million dollars in research grants. He is also a diligent and beloved mentor and advisor to generations of undergraduate and graduate students. He is known for his tendency to look for strengths, assets, and potential in individuals, and to help develop that talent. Many former students remain lifelong colleagues and research collaborators.

There is no doubt that Dr. Charles Williams has been extremely successful, and all his accomplishments cannot possibly fit in this tribute. As Dr. Hyland said, "We look at one's accomplishments as things and products rather than relationship building. Dr. Williams as an educator makes relationship building his highest priority, and that is what makes him special."



Veterans who attended the 2012 Black History Month Celebration at the C.H. Nash Museum that focused on African-Americans in the U.S. Military.

Chucalissa Renewed - Museum Studies in Memphis

If you grew up in Memphis or were a student in Anthropology Department 25 years ago, the C.H. Nash Museum and the Chucalissa Archaeological site were synonymous with members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw, archaeological field excavations, the display of human remains, and a reconstructed Native American village. Those who return for the first time in 25 years notice that much has changed. The burial exhibit was closed in the late 1980s and the last remnants of village removed in 2003. Particularly in the 1990s, the Museum struggled to find a path forward.

Today, that path is more clearly defined. Dr. Robert Connolly, the current Director of the Museum, is very optimistic about the future on several fronts. He notes, "We have reworked all of our programming to align with the state curriculum standards of the educational systems. Our hands-on archaeology lab is a unique opportunity in the Midsouth for visitors to handle prehistoric artifacts. In response to visitor requests, we have dramatically increased the programming along our nature trail with an arboretum and medicinal plant sanctuary."

Chucalissa has thoroughly embraced the notion of being a Participatory Museum. Connolly explained "We see the Participatory Museum as more than just a hands-on experience. Instead, we see that participation extends to all aspects of our Museum operations so that the visitor truly becomes a part of the experience. For example, in 2010 nine high school students created a permanent exhibit at the Museum on the African American Cultural Heritage of Southwest Memphis. Now the Museum also incorporates the story of the historic occupation of Chucalissa landscape."

The C.H. Nash Museum now more than ever serves as an integral component of the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program. Connolly, who also serves on the faculty of the Anthropology Department and teaches courses in Museum Studies reported "We see ourselves today as a true research and learning opportunity for U of M students and the general public. We currently average 10 internships per year. The College of Arts and Sciences funds four Graduate Assistants each semester who receive on the job training in everything from community engagement to exhibit design. Our unique volunteer program regularly receives national attention. In fact last year, our student and volunteer hours at the museum actually exceeded our paid staff hours!"

The C.H. Nash Museum also engages in community service learning. Chucalissa is currently hosting their second eight-week AmeriCorps Team through a collaborative arrangement with T.O. Fuller State Park and the Westwood Neighborhood Association. For more information on current projects at Chucalissa check the [recent issue of Profiles](#) from the College of Arts and Sciences. The Museum also maintains a [Facebook Page](#), a [blog](#), [website](#), and a monthly [e-newsletter](#).