

Today's Hooks

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Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change

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**Teaching,
studying,
and promoting
civil rights and
social change**



Hooks Institute Selects *Hands on the Freedom Plow* for National Book Award

In the long battle for racial equality, wrote Victoria Gray Adams, white segregationists typically thought that “if you controlled the men, you got the rest of them covered.” But this community organizer and political leader from Hattiesburg, Mississippi, realized their mistake: “They didn’t know the power of women.”

Hands on the Freedom Plow keeps reminding us about the power of women. Its fifty-two personal narratives from workers for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) stand as more than a collection of experiences; they are an achievement. Edited by SNCC veterans Faith S. Holsaert, Martha Prescod Norman Noonan, Judy Richardson, Betty Garman Robinson, Jean Smith Young, and Dorothy M. Zellner, the book gathers the voices of women who provided the civil rights movement’s backbone. It provides an instructive and even inspiring example, lending its readers a sense of empowerment.

We learn about the diverse nature and experiences of SNCC women. They were black, white, Latina, northern, southern, young, old, urban, rural, religious, secular, liberal, radical, idealistic, and cynical. We meet women such as the white southerner Joan Mulholland, who attended Tougaloo College and joined the Freedom Rides because “integration shouldn’t be a one-way street.” We meet Prathia Hall, who joined the Albany Movement in southwest Georgia because “it was God’s work and also my sacred calling.” We meet Gloria Richardson

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COMMUNITY CORNER

Hattiloo Arts Symposium, July 23, 2011, 9 to 5 pm.

Hattiloo Theatre, 656 Marshall Avenue, 38103. This free event, sponsored by Hattiloo and Gibson Companies, will feature eight panel discussions that will explore the importance of nurturing a local community of professional black artists.

COMING EVENTS

◆ The Hooks Institute’s Annual Open House.

September 14, 2011, 2:30 to 4:00 pm, University of Memphis, Michael D. Rose Theatre Entertainment Lobby. Mark your calendars for this event! The Hooks Institute welcomes U of M faculty, students, and members of the greater Memphis community to its annual Open House. Other exciting news to be shared include an upcoming documentary, *The Memphis 13* (working title), which will explore the personal experiences of students who were the first in 1960 to desegregate Memphis City Schools. *The Memphis 13* is being produced and directed by Daniel Kiel, a U of M faculty member. Electrifying still are more details about the upcoming one-hour documentary on our namesake, Benjamin L. Hooks, titled, *Duty of the Hour* (working title), scheduled for release in April 2012. *Duty of the Hour* is being directed by Reece L. Auguiste, a U of M faculty member, and is being produced by the Hooks Institute and its Director, Daphene R. McFerren.

◆ *Hands On The Freedom Plow* Lecture

Stay tuned for the fall date to hear a lecture from the editors of *Hands On The Freedom Plow*, winner of the Hooks Institute National Book Award. This will be an exciting and informative lecture on the role of women in shaping the Civil Rights Movement.

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Dandridge, an adult working mother who led the movement in Cambridge, Maryland – a tough and dedicated organizer who gained strength from courageous local students, as well as the example of Malcolm X. And we meet the editors themselves, such as Judy Richardson, a soft-spoken African American woman from Tarrytown, New York, who illustrates the journey of SNCC women as she embraces the organization’s “circle of trust,” draws inspiration from Gloria Richardson and freedom songs and Africa, berates FBI men and convinces airline towers to delay flights, comes to see politics as less about morality than about power, and endures confusion and disillusion as SNCC splintered in the mid-1960s.

“The women of SNCC were tough-minded yet sensitive, grounded in a vision that freedom was not only external in terms of defining a space in the SNCC collective and larger society, but also internal in terms of defining who we were as females,” writes Gwen Patton in the concluding essay. For all their myriad experiences, the contributors to this accessibly written, impressively organized volume share an expansive vision of freedom that communicates the ideals of the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change.

In this inaugural effort to revive its Book Award, the Hooks Institute

received over thirty nominations. The other four finalists were Maurice Berger, *For All the World to See: Visual Culture and the Struggle for Civil Rights* (Yale University Press); Blair L. M. Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson* (University of North Carolina Press); J. Todd Moye, *Freedom Flyers: The Tuskegee Airmen of World War II* (Oxford University Press); Thomas Sugrue, *Not Even Past: Barack Obama and the Burden of Race* (Princeton University Press).

A panel of five judges representing different disciplines and Memphis institutions made the difficult decision of choosing the winner. The panel comprised Dr. Femi Ajanaku, Associate Professor of Sociology at LeMoyne-Owen College; Dr. Aram Goudsouzian, Associate Professor of History at The University of Memphis; Dr. Charles McKinney, Associate Professor of History at Rhodes College; Dr. Ladrica Menson-Furr, Associate Professor of English at The University of Memphis; and Dr. Wanda Rushing, Professor of Sociology at The University of Memphis. The judges and the Hooks Institute congratulates the editors and contributors of *Hands on the Freedom Plow*, as well as the University of Illinois Press, for this book that advances understanding of the American civil rights movement and its legacy.

—Aram Goudsouzian, PhD



RESEARCH WATCH

Congratulations to Latrice C. Pichon, PhD, and Chunrong Jia, PhD, faculty members in the School of Public Health, on their research awards this spring from the Hooks Institute. Dr. Pichon was awarded \$5,000 to conduct research on African American faith-based organizations’ institutional readiness to engage in community-based participatory HIV prevention research in the city of Memphis and Shelby County.

Dr. Jia’s award of \$5,000 will be used to research environmental disparities in African American communities in Memphis. These research projects further the Hooks Institute’s mission of *teaching, studying, and promoting* civil rights and social change by seeking to improve the health outcomes of community members.

*Challenging
each of us to make a profound
difference*

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