Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
Minorities and Women Section
Hosts Awards Reception

On Friday, April 1, 2016 the Minorities and Women Section met in Denver, Colorado and the Sheraton Downtown for its annual Awards Reception. This year the awards committee of Dr. Jaya Davis, University of Texas at Arlington, and Dr. Faith Lutze, Washington State University, received several strong letters of nomination for the Section awards. We congratulate this year’s recipients.

Dr. Alida V. Merlo, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, received the Coramae Richey Mann Leadership Award. The Coramae Richey Mann Leadership Award is the highest honor of the MWS. The recipient must be a contributor to the ethnic and racial diversity in criminal justice education. In addition, the recipient must endeavor to advance critical thinking concerning women and must have made substantial contributions to the emerging body of knowledge about gender issues in criminology and criminal justice.

Dr. Jennifer Cobbina, Michigan State University, received the Becky Tatum Excellence Award. The recipient of the Becky Tatum Excellence Award must be committed to the conceptual or empirical contributions to the study of minorities as victims, professionals in criminal justice, or offenders.

Dr. Denise Paquette Boots, University of Texas at Dallas, received the Evelyn Gilbert Unsung Hero Award. This award is given to an individual who is committed to ethnic and racial diversity in criminal justice education. The recipient must have made substantial contribution to the emerging body of knowledge about gender issues in criminology and criminal justice.
Greetings Friends and Colleagues:

Congratulations to the recipients of the MWS Awards from our meeting in Denver. I would like to thank LeAnn Cabage for helping to organize the MWS Awards Ceremony. I would also like to thank my graduate students, Andrey Mojica, Patrick Kelly, Patrick Morrissey, and Anna Nieto for acting as ushers during the event.

As I’m sure many of you are aware, the success and growth of our section is the result of a lot of hard work behind the scenes. Thank you to the MWS Executive Board: Fran Bernat, LeAnn Cabage, Lorna Grant, Schannae Lucas, and Sean Wilson for helping to improve our visibility by suggesting improvements to our webpage, attending formal and informal board meetings at ASC and ACJS, helping to write the Section reports, and planning the Awards Ceremony. I’m truly thankful to work with such a dedicated and energetic group of people.

Our meeting in Kansas City, MO will be here before you know it. It is the 25th Anniversary of the Minorities and Women Section! We have a great Awards Ceremony planned and there will be gifts and door prizes given this year. Please plan on joining us to visit with friends and colleagues and to celebrate the accomplishments of the scholars and students-scholars we will honor. Thank you to Jaya Davis and Rosemary Gido for serving as the Co-Chairs of the MWS Awards Committee. Also, thank you to Jason Williams for serving as the Chair of the Student Travel Awards Committee.

Finally, thank you Janice Joseph for working on the MWS and Police Sections Featured Panels for ACJS in Kansas City. ACJS President Lorenzo Boyd spearheaded this collaboration but it was Janice who brought it to fruition. We will be sending out a reminder about the featured panels and hope that you will attend as many of these as time permits.

See you in Kansas City!

Kim

Message from the Editor

LeAnn N. Cabage, Ph.D. Candidate
Iowa State University

The Minorities and Women Section recently released our new blog, “Equal Justice Blog.” For those that participated in the contest to name the Blog, your participation is greatly appreciated. The suggestions were sent to the membership earlier this year and through a vote we decided on the name of the Blog. The winner of the name the blog contest was Dr. Elizabeth Quinn.

Our inaugural blog was released on November 5, 2016. The blog written by Dr. Allison M. Cotton, entitled “Dear White Feminist Sisters in Academia: Our Struggle is not the Same” was a great start and her work on the project is greatly appreciated. A copy of the blog is included on page six of the newsletter.

We look forward to seeing everyone in Kansas City.
Dr. Alida V. Merlo graduated with a Ph.D. in Sociology from Fordham University in 1980. She joined the faculty at Westfield State University (WSU) in Massachusetts where she taught and mentored students for twenty years. In 1995, she joined the faculty at Indiana University Pennsylvania (IUP). In her time as an educator, she has mentored minority and female students.


Dr. Merlo is a former ACJS President (1999-2000). In addition, she has served ACJS in varying capacities. She served as Region One Trustee and Trustee-at-Large, Chair of the Awards Committee, on the Nominations and Elections Committee, the Tellers Committee, and the Budget, Finance, and Audit Committee. She has also been an active member of the MWS for a number of years.

She has received a number of awards in her career. In 2009, she received the MWS Becky Tatum Excellence Award. ACJS recognized her in 2010 with the Outstanding Mentor Award and the Minority Mentorship Grant Award in 2012. In 2014, Dr. Merlo received the Founder’s Award from the Northeastern Association of Criminal Justice Sciences.

Dr. Merlo’s dedication to expanding diversity in the field and to her students is exceptional. In 1995, she co-authored the first edition of *Women, Law, and Social Control* with Dr. Joycelyn Pollock. As Dr. Bratina noted in her nomination letter, “Dr. Merlo strives to utilize every available ‘platform’ in her efforts to advance diversity and gender in education and beyond.” She has an unending passion for issues pertaining to gender and racial/ethnic inequality, and her scholarship, teaching, and service reflect the passion. She has presented papers and written on topics such as women and crime, the relationships between race and gender, the disproportionate confinement of minorities, youthful offending and policy, and bringing gender into criminology.

“Dr. Merlo was a member of my dissertation committee. Since that time, I have been given the opportunity to become acquainted with Dr. Merlo both academically and personally. I have observed her to be an excellent teacher, scholar, and mentor to me and others with whom she has graciously assisted in the navigation of early careers in academia. Thus, I feel confident and honored to make this recommendation.” Dr. Michele P. Bratina
Dr. Jennifer Cobbina was recently promoted to Associate Professor at Michigan State University, School of Criminal Justice. Dr. Cobbina brings both qualitative and quantitative method skills to the study of women offenders and more recently minority community members affected by the recent police shootings of Black men in Ferguson, Missouri and Baltimore, Maryland.

In her dissertation, “From Prison to Home: Women’s Pathways in and Out of Crime,” Dr. Cobbina produced outstanding scholarship on prisoner reentry. Her dissertation was supported by the National Institute of Justice.

Dr. Cobbina is currently a co-PI on a National Science Foundation and MSU internally supported project. Findings from the initial analysis of the grant data shows that Black women disproportionately live in crime-ridden neighborhoods, where there options for avoiding criminal involvement are limited to isolating themselves socially.

In addition, Dr. Cobbina has taken steps to extend her scholarly work into educational social change efforts. In 2011, she took part in a week long training on the “Inside-Out prison Exchange.” Since completing the training she has taught several classes as part of the first “Inside-Outside” course in the state of Michigan.

“Her work with students has had an electric effect by drawing them into scholarship on gender, race, and crime. The time and effort she puts into teaching and one-on-one interactions with students is inspiring them to think through and develop their ideas about crime and justice, and to in many cases apply for graduate program study.”

“To sum up, I think Dr. Cobbina exemplifies a scholar who, from the start, pursued research and publication that enhances understanding and practice that serves women of different races. She has generously shared her knowledge through teaching and mentoring activities, and has prepared herself to extend these opportunities to incarcerated women. She pays attention to the effects of race as it operates independently or in combination with gender.”

- Dr. Merry Morash
Dr. Denise Paquette Boots has made many scholarly contributions to the field. Dr. Boots work spans many different subfields, including capital punishment, juvenile offenders, domestic violence and mental health. However, gender plays a central theme in these subfields on inquiry. For example, her work has investigated the gender gap on public opinion about the death penalty, the differences by gender on mental health and violence and gender issues in domestic violence. In addition, Dr. Boots links her scholarship with the needs of the community through consulting work as both a program evaluator and speaker.

Through collaboration with the Dallas Domestic Violence Task Force, she provided a report with her colleague Dr. Timothy Bray, that provides key data to the city on the extent of domestic violence and the response of the criminal justice system to these incidents. The report also highlighted the need for services for the men, women, and children who attempt to flee an abusive situation. Their work was applauded by Mayor Mike Rawlings as “critical in the city’s effort to end domestic violence.”

Dr. Boots passion expands beyond her research. Her students describe her as someone who not only “has a passion for what she does” but “changes your way of seeing the world.” She has received the Regents’ Outstanding Teacher Award from the UT System and dual nominations for the Chancellor’s Council Outstanding Teaching Award.

“It is without reservation that I recommend Dr. Denise Paquette Boots for this award. As one who regularly does for others through her research, teaching, service and mentorship, she is indeed an unsung hero well deserving of such recognition.”
- Dr. Stacy Mallicoat
Dear White Feminist Sisters in Academia: Our Struggle is not the Same

Dr. Allison M. Cotton
Metropolitan State University of Denver

Have you ever watched the movie, Glory, starring Denzel Washington? Remember the scene when Denzel Washington’s character, Private Trip, is being whipped by Sergeant Mulcahy because they thought that he had tried to desert the Army? Turns out, he had only gone across the river to look for a new pair of shoes. But, the determination and steely strong stare of the former slave (turned soldier) as they whipped him in front of the entire company of soldiers only intensified the final moments of the scene when a single tear fell from Private Trip’s eye. That’s how women of color inhabit your campus. Our gestures, tone of voice, clothing, size, hair, skin hue, sexuality, and motives are relentlessly scrutinized by the administration, students, faculty, and staff. The subsequent whippings (also known as “microaggressions”) flatten us and make us retreat into our offices for music therapy. But you will describe this behavior in evaluations as uncollegial, particularly if we decline an invitation to an office party. Sometimes, it is the white feminist scholars who wield the lash as they confidently lecture about how “women” make .78 cents to every dollar that a man makes, for example, knowing full well that the pay gap for “women of color” is far greater. Shouldn’t we all be reporting that the pay gap is actually .56 cents to every dollar that a white man makes because that is what Latinas earn?

Like Private Trip, no one asks us why we ran across the river and what we were intending to get when we got there. We are not only interested in pay equity and maternity leave. We are also interested in uplifting the race of people that we represent; our race and our gender are inextricably linked. The fact that we still publish in journals that represent our ethnicities, even though we know that those publications won’t count for tenure, should tell you that we are playing at both ends of the field; that we are trying to score for both teams. But that’s not what some of you hear when we tell you that. Like every scholar of color, I receive numerous invitations to publish with white scholars on the topic of racism. But sometimes, after I have submitted my portion, my tone and the anecdotal evidence that I used have been dismissed as unscholarly – which is strange because why would a black woman ever need quantitative data to report results about racism in the US? Our data on race will always be somewhat ethnographical.

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Dear White Feminist Sisters in Academia: Our Struggle is not the Same

Some white women fear me because I don’t back down when they cry. I’m not sure why that evokes fear, but what it really means is that I don’t interpret your tears as weakness, but rather as a form of strength and a desire to carry on. I realize that tears release pressure; I’ve cried a lot of them myself. I think if Harriet Tubman were alive today, she would be in favor of reproductive rights, including abortion. I think if Pocahontas were alive, she’d still be single. I think if Benazir Bhutto hadn’t been assassinated, she’d have voted for Hillary Clinton. And I think that if white feminist scholars would acknowledge the multi-layered dimensions of our lives as women of color and if they would stop trying to separate our race from our gender, we could truly have a women’s movement. But first, you would need to understand that when society arrests our men, they, in turn, arrest us. When the economy turns downwards, we fall the farthest. When you interrupt me at faculty meetings, ignore me at faculty meetings, ask me to get the coffee, call me by my first name (when everyone else is called “doctor”), put me on every committee for diversity, reject my manuscript because it is better suited for an “ethnic” journal, try to touch my hair, give other white women comfort when their feelings have been hurt, but call me “strong” for enduring what you now know to be microaggressions on a daily basis, I become like Denzel Washington in the movie Glory when he threw off his shirt and grabbed the wheel but refused to cry or to beg or to crumble as he suffered the indignities of a whipping that he did not deserve. That is a struggle that you don’t have. We are similar but not the same.

You should ask me what I mean before you assume that I meant what you thought. You should ask me if I feel included, heard, and valued rather than assuming that because I sat at the table and my ears were open that my silence equaled consent. That alone would make the whippings less painful even though the wounds will still bleed. By the way, I don’t hate you. And I love myself with all of my thick, kinky, brown curves and loud defiance. I wish that we could work together without one of us having to become the other. But I guess that would be like running for the river in the middle of the night to get shoes……some of you will misinterpret why I’m running and I will be whipped in front of the entire company anyway.

You can visit the blog at http://www.acjs-mws.org/equal-justice-blog. If you are interested in writing a blog, please contact Dr. Kimberly Dodson at dodsonk@uhcl.edu or LeAnn Cabage at lncabage@iastate.edu.
Dr. Denise Paquette Boots was named as the 2016 University of Texas at Dallas President’s Teaching Excellence Award recipient. This annual award recognizes an outstanding tenured/tenure-track faculty member at the University for their contributions to teaching, mentorship, and dedication to excellence in undergraduate education. Dr. Boots will be recognized by the UT Dallas President and presented her award at the Honors Convocation ceremony on May 12, 2016.

LeAnn Cabage with her coauthor Dr. Anastasia Prokos had their article, “Military Veteran Women, Disability, and Employment” profiled in the Syracuse Institute for Veterans and Military Families research brief.

Dr. Kimberly Dodson has been appointed as the Criminology Program Director at the University of Houston-Clear Lake in the Department of Social and Cultural Sciences.

Dr. Lorenzo Boyd named University of Maryland Eastern Shore Criminal Justice Department Chairman.

Dr. Faith Lutze was elected 2nd Vice President of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences.
Janice Joseph
Robin Haarr
Mary Stohr
Faith Lutze
George Wilson
Susan Noonan
Vernetta Young

Coramae Richey Mann
Roslyn Muraskin
Esther Madriz
Evelyn Gilbert
Becky Tatum

Rosemary Gido
Zelma Henriques
Dorothy Taylor
Kaylene Richards-Ekeh
Frances Bernat
Robert Chaires