

Editor's Note

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of our beloved colleague and friend, Carroll Mills Young, in the early morning of Monday, September 25, 2006. A cherished member of the faculty of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Carroll died after a protracted battle with cancer. Carroll earned a B.A. from North Carolina Central University, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia. She was a Fulbright scholar at the Universidad de San Miguel Tucumán in Tucumán, Argentina, and the Universidad de Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Carroll was a frequent and valued contributor to the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, and a founding member of the Afro-Latin American Research Association and its publication PALARA. She attended many of ALARA's biennial conferences, including those in Puerto Rico, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. In addition, Carroll was the College Language Association Treasurer. Carroll specialized in Afro-Uruguayan literature, and her work has earned her a permanent place in this area of Afro-Hispanic literary criticism.

Carroll Young was a bright scholar and, equally importantly, a generous and loving individual. I had the pleasure of getting to know her well in Montevideo, Uruguay, when she, Marvin Lewis, Carlos Guillermo Wilson, and I accepted Beatriz Santos Arrascaeta's invitation to attend the Primer Encuentro Internacional: Cultura Negra en Acción, sponsored by the Centro Cultural por la Paz y la Integración (CECUPI), in October of 1991. At that meeting, I came to understand the depth of the Afro-Uruguayan contributions to Afro-Hispanic and Spanish-American literatures, and this was done mainly through Carroll's optic lens. I also witnessed a heated exchange between Carroll and Marvin, on the one hand, and Alberto Britos, on the other, regarding the authenticity of Virginia Brindis de Salas's poetry. Britos attempted to persuade me to his side of the argument by inviting me to his home and sharing *mate* out of the same *bombilla*, and showing me a room full of unpublished manuscripts written by Afro-Uruguayan authors.

While all the presentations were of the customary high quality, conferences on race tend to be uniquely different, especially in countries that do not want to overtly recognize an African heritage or contribution to the construction of a so-called national, or Eurocentric, identity. I clearly remember Beatriz Santos's apprehension one morning when she told us that the exhibit on race had been vandalized, an abhorrent act some of us who work in a different context had difficulty grasping.

During that same trip, and to my dismay, Pan American Airlines had diverted my luggage to New York. I soon realized that the mistake was a better alternative than having it disappear in Buenos Aires, as we had feared. As experience has shown me, when in need, real friends come forward and that was the case with my male col-

leagues, who shared their clothes and personal items with me, and Carroll, who accompanied me to numerous stores and helped me buy articles of clothing, some of which can still be found in a remote corner of my closet. More importantly, throughout the trip Carroll shared her profound knowledge of Afro-Uruguayan culture and society, suggested places to visit and dine, and introduced us to her Uruguayan friends, who deeply cared for her. We also traveled together to Buenos Aires, where we shared many memorable experiences.

In some respects, Carol became the younger sister I wish I had. At conferences and other meetings, Carol and I always looked forward to spending time with each other. She shared with me her thoughts about the profession, including offers and counteroffers, and family, her husband Robert, and in particular her children, Rabi and Robert, whom I knew well through Carroll's stories but never met. I cherish most the moments when Carol asked me to accompany her on her shopping trips to buy beauty products, among other things. Carroll was always candid and careful to explain to me the purpose of the creams, soaps, hair gels, and other difficult-to-find personal items, and how these products were different from those sold to or used by Caucasian women. She also revealed to me what it was like growing up in Shelby, North Carolina, and how everyone knew his or her own fixed geographic, racial, and cultural space that could not be violated without paying a hefty price. I also conveyed aspects of my childhood in New York, and how New Yorkers like me could not help but transgress defined boundaries. To Carroll, I dedicate this issue of the *Afro-Hispanic Review*.

The partnership between the *Afro-Hispanic Review* and the Bishop Joseph Johnson Center has produced a number of on-campus events that are reflected in the journal. For the *Día de la Raza* celebration, we invited the talented Nuyorican poet and playwright Tato Laviera. I am grateful to Tato for allowing us to publish some of the poems he read, and others included in his next collection of poems, *Mixturao Review*. The present issue also includes Assistant Editor Pablo Martínez Diente's interview with Tato, and reproduces for the first time his play, *The Spark*, staged in the summer of 2006 at The Juan Antonio Corretjer Puerto Rican Cultural Center, located on Paseo Boricua, in the heart of Chicago's Puerto Rican community.

The *Afro-Hispanic Review* and the Bishop Joseph Johnson Center also co-sponsored the visit of the *babalawo* Nelson Freires, in November of 2006. This event constituted a first in the history of Vanderbilt. Mr. Freires spoke of the complex philosophy of Yoruba religion and even demonstrated how the *babalawo* uses the Tablero de Ifá to consult Orúnmila and look into the future. Mr. Freires is the author of *El cielo sabe que te salva* (2006), on the philosophy of Yoruba culture, based on the

hermeneutics of the religion and the phenomenology of the soul and the spirit. He is a consecrated priest of Ifá, and a member of the Sociedad Egbe Ifa a ti Orisa. Mr. Freires was born in Cuba, but resides in Mexico. Mr. Freires's visit was accompanied by his *ahijado*, Prof. Narciso Hidalgo, of the University of South Carolina-Aiken, a Cuban and Caribbean scholar in his own right. The 2007 Spring Issue of the *Afro-Hispanic Review* will be dedicated to African religions in the Caribbean and Brazil. Prof. Hidalgo will be the Guest Editor, and this issue will feature his interview with Mr. Freires. I encourage scholars interested in the subject to submit relevant contributions for consideration to Prof. Hidalgo.

William Luis
Editor

