DAY OF ABSENCE AND DAY OF PRESENCE 2012 BIOGRAPHIES OF PERFORMERS AND GUESTS



DAY OF ABSENCE – OFF CAMPUS

Artee Young, Ph.D. - Dr. Artee Young is both the Executive Director of THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE Tacoma Campus and the 2009-10 recipient of the United Way of Pierce County Community Volunteer of the Year Award award nomination in honor of her passionate, active involvement within the community. Her curricular interests and work include law, public policy, literature and bioethics.

She has 18 years of service at the college where she has developed program modules and taught courses in research methods, public policy, law (The Law of Business Organizations, Constitutional Law, Legal Humanities, Media and the Law, Civil Rights, Ethics and Professional Conduct, Education Law, Bioethics and the Law), public speaking and literature. Her dedication and outstanding leadership skills earned her coveted promotion from faculty to her current position as Executive Director.

Dr. Young earned a B.A. in Speech and Theater, cum laude, from Southern University, 1967; M.A. in Children's Theater, Eastern Michigan University, Ph.D., Speech Communication and Theatre, University of Michigan; J.D., University of Puget Sound School of Law.

As an active board member for Citizens for a Healthy Bay, Western Institutional Review Board (WIRB), Group Health Leadership Advisory Group, The Fulcrum Foundation and the City of Tacoma Civil Services Board, she lends her expertise as an advocate for excellent education and excellent health as fundamental rights for individuals, the local community and the broader international community.

Norma Alicia Pino was born and raised just this side of the Mexican-US border. She speaks the village Spanish of her mother and father and also the mixed Spanish of her friends and the School English she learned to speak without an accent because doing so meant survival for herself and her familia. She loves performing with las hijas, her work as an adviser, writing, reading, art, traveling, psychodrama, hiking, boogie boarding, snorkeling, her two children and, of course, her mama. "May our mothers' stories, may all our stories, be upheld in beauteous clarity; in the darkness and in the light of their truth."

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha: The daughter of a Sri Lankan father and a Irish-Ukrianian mother, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha was raised in Worcester, Mass, an eastern rust belt city known for dirty water and busted buildings. A scholarship baby from the age of 8, she moved to New York at 18 to get a BA from Eugene Lang College / New School for Social Research, but ended up learning a lot more from the student, squatter, spoken word, women of color and queer/trans of color movements. She left New York for Toronto in 1997 hoping to no longer be the only Sri Lankan in the room, and succeeded! She has performed her spoken word all over North America , in front of audiences at Yale and Oberlin and at immigrant rights rallies and benefits for queer youth resource centers. She is the author of Consensual Genocide (TSAR, 2006), is a frequent contributor to Bitch and Colorlines magazines and has had work anthologized in Colonize This!, With a Rough Tongue: Femmes Write Porn, Without a Net, Dangerous Famillies, Geeks, Misfits and Outlaws , and A Girl's Guide to Taking Over the World . She works

to create a Sri Lanka free from war, multinational corporations and queer, women's and cultural oppression with Blood Memory: A Sri Lankan Storytelling Project. Leah has taught writing to queer, trans and Two Spirit youth at Supporting Our Youth Toronto's Pink Ink program for the past four years, work that won her a City Of Toronto Community Service Award in 2004. She produces queer of color spoken word shows through her company, brownstargirl productions, and is the co-creator of the Asian Arts Freedom School , an arts/activism school for API youth in Toronto . She loves her kids, the color fuschia, and being a revolutionary high femme Sri Lankan role model and survivor.

Max Codella Fernandez loves living in the Pacific Northwest, despite being born and raised on the East Coast. They are pursuing a BA with an emphasis in Psychology and Social Justice. Currently Max is doing a contract called *Liberating Psychology: Anti-Oppression and Mental Health* which is devoted to studying how oppression and privilege shape human development, while focusing on the impact this has on healing and relationships. Spring quarter Max will be reading memoirs and creative non-fiction written by mixed people of color, as well as being deeply involved in their own creative writing. Max is excited about several projects they are working on spring quarter, some of which are: a support group for mixed students, organizing a series of events for queer people of color, and a Cuban social. Max is passionate about reading, writing, making workshops, dance parties, and radical health.

MEChA - Movimento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan - MEChA is a student organization that promotes higher education, cultura, y historia. MEChA was founded on the principles of self-determination for the liberation of our people. We believe that political involvement and education is the avenue for change in our society.

The Conciliation Project (TCP) - As The Conciliation Project moves forward in the fight toward a more just society, the civil rights anthem by June Jordan rings in our ears...

WE HAVE COME TOO FAR
WE CAN'T TURN AROUND
WE'LL FLOOD THE STREETS WITH JUSTICE
WE ARE FREEDOM BOUND

At the Conciliation Project, We understand the temptation to ignore history and whitewash the present with niceties. But just saying "we live in a post-race world" or "the glass ceiling has been shattered" does not make this true. And even if we choose politeness over candor, that doesn't mean centuries of hurt have been healed.

As a creative social justice organization, our nine dramatic works challenge audiences to rethink their beliefs and prejudices by:

- Presenting previously hidden historical accounts
- Encouraging candid conversations, rather than tired rhetoric.
- Replacing misconceptions with genuine understanding and acceptance.
- Igniting dialogues that have been stifled and silenced by political correctness, misunderstandings, inaccurate historical accounts and fear.

Representing our country's cultural landscape, our dramatic productions illuminate the distortions of America's racial history and provide an honest interrogation, while including marginalized, under-represented and unheard voices. Our engagements are geared toward businesses, organizations and communities to help in the process of eliminating racial and cultural stereotypes and the movement toward a more just and equal world.

For individual bios of members of TCP - please see Day of Presence pages

BSU – **Black Student Union** - The purpose of the Black Student Union (BSU) is to provide unity amongst those who identify with Black Peoples, while engaging the Evergreen community through cultural, educational, and entertaining activities.

Day Of Absence Play - Douglas Turner Ward's *Day of Absence* (1965) is set in any small town in the Deep South. The action begins on a quiet street where Clem and Luke, two country townspeople, are seated on a sparse stage talking, when they suddenly realize that something is wrong. It finally occurs to them that none of the town's black people have been seen since the previous evening. When this fact becomes general knowledge, the establishment comes to the brink of chaos. Without its black labor force, the town is paralyzed because of its dependence on this sector of the community.

Despite the serious message about the underlying economic importance and potential power of black people to this country, *Day of Absence* invites an audience to share in the experiences of these white townpeople through the devices of storytelling and slapstick dialogue. The text is interwoven with seemingly unrelated and fragmented actions, which move from farcical humor through sociopolitical propaganda to melodramatic insights that dramatize the subtext of what would be possible if black people just disappeared for one day.

DAY OF ABSENCE – ON CAMPUS

Lori Blewett is a long-time social justice activist. She has been teaching courses related to communication and social change at TESC since 2001. She holds a PhD in Communication Studies from the University of Illinois. Her dissertation is titled *White Anti-racist Identity: A Communication Case Study*.

Faciliators Andrea Seabert Olsen and Justin Reuter will be facilitating this program. They are white folks who continue to educate themselves on issues of diversity, power, and privilege. Andi works in the Vice President for Student Affairs office and has been at Evergreen for almost 13 years. She has a Master's in Social Work, and credits her mom with instilling her with a social justice framework as a child. Justin is a Resident Director, working in his second year at Evergreen on issues of sustainability and student leadership.

Fishbowl seminar participants: **Sfirah Madrone** from POWER, **Colleen Dixon** from Stonewall Youth, **Carolyn Prouty** and **Zoltan Grossman** from the Evergreen faculty, Evergreen students TBA

Molly Bess is a student at Evergreen. She is a Resident Assistant (RA) in the First Year Student dorms, and enjoys working with queer youth. Lauren Wong is also an Evergreen student, in her second year, and also an RA in the dorms. Her organizing work includes planning White Privilege Awareness week this year for RAD services along with Molly Bess.

Martin Friedman is a 1988 Evergreen graduate. He is currently the Associate Director for Social Justice Initiatives at the YWCA of Seattle, King and Snohomish Counties. Martin is a cofounder of the coalition of antiracist whites (CARW) and has been training and organizing with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond for over ten years; he is a core trainer with PINW.

DOA/DOP RELATED PROGRAMMING

Joe Kadi is a writer, teacher, and editor who lives in Canada's Rocky Mountains. He edited the groundbreaking anthology *Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists in 1994.* This book, the first of its kind, gave voice to the histories, experiences, and visions of Arab feminists. Kadi is also the author of *Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker*, a book of essays and poetry addressing issues of race, gender, sexuality, and class. He contributed to the recent anthology *Arab and Arab American Feminisms*, edited by Abdulhadi, Alsultany, and Naber.

Kadi lived in the Twin Cities for most of the 1990's and participated with arts organizations such as Asian American Renaissance and Mizna, A long-time member of the GLBTQ community, Kadi now lives as a transgender man. He is a musician, a yoga student, environmentalist, and a teacher of Women's Studies at two Canadian universities.

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha – Please see Day of Absence Off Campus

FIST! (Feminists in Solidarity Together!) is a radical feminist student group at The Evergreen State College. We are founded on principles of collective liberation, solidarity, mutual aid, and consensus decision making. Our mission is to bring these values to feminism on campus. Our goals include: providing educational resources on anti-oppression and allyship; creating a network of activist student groups on campus for meaningful collaboration; solidarity with social movements that share our values; and bringing radical feminist events and speakers to campus. FIST! prioritizes the needs, voices, and experiences of those most targeted by oppression.

DAY OF PRESENCE

Multicultural Counseling Program – Counseling from theory, practice and application. Practice of counseling, applied cultural competency skills and evolving one's skills as a counselor will be developed throughout the yearlong program. Learning goals include acquiring a theoretical and applied understanding of psychological theory and practice from developmental, biological, cultural, emotional and social contextual perspectives. Expressive arts therapy practice and experience will be integrated in the program throughout the year. We will incorporate diverse pedagogical strategies including lecture, discussion, dialogue, seminar, films, videotaping and expressive arts therapy laboratories.

Writing Across Borders: A film written and directed by Wayne Robertson - Writing Across Borders is a 3-year documentary project funded by Oregon State University's Center for Writing and Learning and its Writing Intensive Curriculum Program. The documentary's purpose is to help faculty, writing assistants, and other professionals work more productively with international students in writing environments.

The film's goal is to address some of the most significant challenges international students face when writing for American colleges and universities. In addressing these challenges, it asks the following questions:

1. How does culture play out in writing, and how are our expectations shaped by cultural preferences?

- 2. How do we assess international student writing when we have to grade it alongside the writing of native speakers, and how can we think about surface error in a fair and constructive manner?
- 3. What kinds of teaching and testing practices disadvantage international students and which help them improve as writers?

Identity project – We invite you once again to share your ideas with us. Last year we had much success when we asked individuals to write about themselves with a prompt from our office. This year we are repeating the exercise with a different prompt. We invite you to share your viewpoints with us and be part of our project.

Assignment/prompt: If everyone understood or respected your culture how would things be different?

- Submission guidelines:
- (at TESC or in general)?
 - -1 typed page or shorter emailed to Salinasr@evergreen.edu
 - -We would also like to include a simple photo of the author
 - -There will be an opportunity to enter your piece in a campus show if you wish or perhaps on our website.

Joe Kadi – Please see DOA/DOP Related Programming

Panel members:

Mimi Alcantar: Is a student at The Evergreen State College and a member of the student group MEChA and is also a staff member at First Peoples Advising Services. She also works for the office of CCBLA and for the Office of Upward Bound.

Talcott Broadhead is the Coordinator for the Office of Sexual Assault Prevention and maintains Office of Crime Victims Advocacy compliance as a Professional Advocate.

Chris German is a student at The Evergreen State College and a member of the Black Student Union (BSU).

Jimee Lowe is a longtime Evergreen State College staff member and considers himself a historian, an educator and entertainer. He has been at Evergreen for almost 15 years and has performed or lectured in over 20 classes using spoken African American history and music. He has also presented at the Staff and Faculty of color conference and prior to his time here, he spent 13 years in the Airforce. He has mc'ed for Super Saturday, and lectured at Greenhill and Maple Lane facilities through the Gateways program.

Naima Lowe is a 33 year old Queer, African-American artist and educator based in Olympia, WA. Her films, videos, performances and writings have been seen at the Athens International Film and Video Festival, Ann Arbor Film Festival, Anthology Film Archive, The Knitting Factory, The Stella Elkins Tyler Gallery, The International Toy Theater Exhibition, and Judson Memorial Church. Her first film "Birthmarks" was a Student Academy Awards Finalist, won Best Experimental Film at the Newark Black Film Festival and was honored for Best Sound Design in the NextFrame International Student Film Festival. Her collaborative performance and installation *Mary and Sarah and You and* Me made its New York debut at the historic Judson Memorial Church. She taught video production and film history courses at Temple University, and was on the faculty of Goddard College. She is currently a member of the faculty at the Evergreen State College.

Bass trombonist and tubaist **Bill Lowe** has been a major force in the music world for over thirty years as a performer, composer, producer, and educator. He has worked with most of the masters of African-American creative music, across all genres and musical cliques, from musical legends like Dizzy Gillespie, Eartha Kitt, and Clark Terry, to the leaders of the avant-garde like Muhal Richard Abrams, Henry Threadgill, and Cecil Taylor, to under-heralded greats like George Russell, James 'Jabbo' Ware and Bill Barron. He has co-led the Boston Jazz Repertory Orchestra, the Bill Lowe/Phillipe Cretian Quintet, and JUBA, co-produced Boston's annual John Coltrane Memorial Concert, and composed several major works, including his opera, Reb's Last Funeral, his ongoing interdisciplinary project Signifyin' Natives, and the music/theater piece Crossing John at the Crossroads. As an educator, Lowe has taught at several major universities, lectured throughout the world from Cuba to Paris, and mentored countless young musicians.

Birthmarks is an experimental non-fiction film about how Bill Lowe got beat up by the Newark Police during the riots in 1967, and how he spent much of his life telling the tale to his daughter. Using archival footage, interviews, video, 16mm film, performances and writing by Bill and Naima Lowe, this film is about how fathers and daughters make beauty out of trauma and art out of living.

The Conciliation Project Members: Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Pettiford-Wates' Ph.D. in (1992) is in the Dramatic Arts with an emphasis on the use of Ritual Poetic Drama within the African Continuum and Theatre as a Tool for Social Change. She currently teaches Advanced Acting and Solo Performance to upper level undergraduate performance majors and graduate pedagogy students. A key focus in her work is the self empowerment of the dramatic artist through the creation of original work based on personal story that actively engages the psychological barriers created by race, class, gender and identity that are traditionally ignored by classic theatre training in the conservatory model.

Dr. Pettiford-Wates is the artistic director and founder of The Conciliation Project (TCP), a non-profit social justice theatre company whose mission is "to promote through active and challenging dramatic work open and honest dialogue about racism in America in order to repair its damaging legacy."

Dr. T is a playwright, director, actor, poet, writer/scholar-activist and teacher. She has appeared with the Tony Award Winning company in the New York Shakespeare Festival's Broadway production of "For Colored Girls who have considered Suicide / when the rainbow is enuf" performing in both the National and International Touring Companies. Her television, film, industrial, voice over and commercial credits are extensive. She has directed and performed at most of the major theatres in Seattle including the Seattle Rep, ACT (A Contemporary Theatre), the Intiman Theatre, Seattle Group Theatre, Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center and the Empty Space Theatre. In Minneapolis she has directed at the Mixed Blood Theatre and the Pillsbury House Theatre. Tawnya includes "Les Liaisons Dangereuse" with several other productions for Theatre/VCU including "For Colored Girls..." and last season our first collaboration with the Barksdale Theatre "The Grapes of Wrath." As Director she was awarded an Excellence in Directing Award for "The Grapes of Wrath." by the (KCACTF) Kennedy Center American Theatre Festival. She was honored to receive the 2011 PACME and the Rise Melton Award winner presented by President Rao of Virginia Commonwealth University.

For over 30 years her most favorite film and television credits include "Life or Something Like It" with Angelina Jolie, David Lynch's "Twin Peaks", and "Twice in a Life Time" with Gene Hackman. She was featured performer on "Under One Roof" with James Earl Jones and the ABC television series re-make of "The Fugitive" with Tim Daly. She is a featured voice talent on the inaugural X-Box video game HALO as well as other video card games by Hoyle. Most recently she revived and performed her award winning one woman play "Nappy Edges: a choreopoem." As Artistic Director of TCP she has worked with HOME to create an original play based on real life cases of housing discrimination in Virginia titled "Unequal Access: a journey toward HOME" which premiered at the Virginia Holocaust Museum. Collaborations with several nonprofits and advocacy agencies, such as The Daily Planet and The Healing Place, have resulted in dramatic and evocative theatre pieces including SPADES: a book without a cover" addressing homelessness in Richmond performed at the Firehouse Theatre and "The Bottom Line" about addiction and recovery performed at the Empire Theatre.

Although she enjoys creating "new works," her repertoire includes everything from Classical African before the *Greeks* to the Contemporary Spoken Word. Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates is working on a book "*The Spirit of the Process*" which interrogates "professional training institutions" for theatre artists and the exploration of new methodologies that embrace the influence of culture and race on the contemporary arts community. Last summer she lead a group of Theatre VCU students and members of TCP to the Edinburgh Arts Festival to perform "*uncle tom: de-constructed*" in The Fringe Festival as a part of the International College Theatre Festival. The play was nominated for an Humanitarian Award by Amnesty International. The play received 4 and 5 STAR reviews and was met enthusiastically by the Fringe audiences.

Dr. Archana Pathak

Assistant Professor, Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Virginia Commonwealth University

Dr. Pathak's Ph.D. (1998, University of Oklahoma) is in Communication with an emphasis in intercultural communication, international communication, and qualitative methodologies with focus on intersectional feminisms and postcoloniality. Her dissertation title was "To Be Indian-American: Communicating Diaspora, Identity and Home." She currently teaches introduction to women's studies, the politics of race, class, & gender and feminist methodologies at VCU. A key focus of her research is on diasporic communities as they navigate multiple identities of race, nation, class, gender and sexualities. Her academic career has spanned the United States teaching and lecturing at the University of Richmond, University of Oklahoma, and California State University, Fullerton.

Dr. Pathak is sought after nationally as a key presenter in conferences and workshops dealing with the intersection or race, gender and politics. Recent presentations have included: "The validity of one: Radical interventions in methodology" at the 2011 National Women's Studies Association Conference, Atlanta, GA. "The canary's call: Dismantling the master's house – A staged reading and facilitated dialogue" with Dr. T. Pettiford-Wates, at the 2011 National Women's Studies Association conference in Atlanta, GA., and "Teacher as text: Utilizing autoethography in the feminist classroom" with Dr. Pettiford-Wates, at the 2010 National Women's Studies Association Conference in Denver, CO.

Dr. Pathak has been broadly published with her most recent articles including: "Opening my voice, claiming my space: Theorizing the possibilities of postcolonial approaches to autoethnography", the Journal of Research Practice, 2010. "Being Indian in the U.S.:

Exploring the hyphen as an ethnographic frame", The International and Intercultural Communication Annual, vol. XXXI. And, "The Sita syndrome: Examining the communicative aspects of domestic violence from a South Asian perspective", in The Journal of International Women's Studies.

As an author she is expanding her credits to include these works in progress. "*Desi sistahs*", an essay examining the ways in which U.S South Asian diaspora women navigate Blackness in terms of the U.S. race matrix, and "*The Validity of One: Postcolonial Feminist interventions into scientific imperialism*" which is a theoretical essay exploring methodological questions endemic to humanities research.

In the community Dr. Pathak is extremely involved in several organizations outside of her academic pursuits. She is the current President of the Board of Directors for The Conciliation Project, a non-profit social justice organization that works to facilitate dialogue about oppression through theatrical performance. She is an Advisory Board Member for A More Perfect Union a project on developing anti-bias education for the greater Richmond Metro area to decrease bias against Muslims, Arabs and South Asians, including coming up with effective projects for the grant, implementing these projects and assessing the effectiveness of these projects. And, she is a Board Member for the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

Dr. Pathak brings her expertise in feminist methodologies and engagment with underrepresented communities in humanistic research to this grant. Specifically, she will design and implement the various research components of the course. She will also co-teach with Dr. Pettiford–Wates about the role of racism and oppression in the U.S. South, connecting these theories with a larger global context of colonialism and imperialism, specifically in terms of the politics of urban geography.

Joseph Carlson holds a BFA in performance and an MFA in Acting directing pedagogy specializing in Ritual Poetic Drama within the African Continuum. He has worked with The Conciliation Project as a board/ensemble member, assistant director, facilitator, and guest lecturer for seven years.

Amelia Margaret Wood holds a BA in Cultural Studies and Performing Arts from The Evergreen State College and has been a company member since 2002. She identifies as a world citizen raised by Caucasian parents.

Brandon Crowder holds a BFA in Theatre and has been a company member since 2006. He has since performed in numerous TCP plays, and has also helped create two of the plays in the company's repertoire.