



NEWSLETTER OF THE
**Department of
Philosophy & Religion**

Spring 2000

Imam Warith Deen Mohammed Speaks



The Department of Philosophy and Religion in conjunction with Office of Minority Affairs and the Tauheed

Islamic Center had the pleasure of bringing **Imam Warith Deen Mohammed** to UNCW on February 1, 2000. Imam Mohammed is the leader of the Muslim American Society and approximately 2.5 million American Muslims. Imam Mohammed was acclaimed the leader of the Nation of Islam when his father, the **Honorable Elijah Mohammed** who had led the movement for four decades, died in 1975. He moved rapidly away from the racial teachings and unorthodox beliefs and practices of his father.

In his talk Imam Mohammed suggested that **Wali Fard Muhammad**, thought by the Nation of

Islam to be an incarnation of God, brought Islam in a form required by African Americans but that he actually hoped that the movement would move towards Islamic orthodoxy as it matured. In reinterpreting Wali Fard Muhammad as a mystic who hoped that the Nation of Islam would eventually become Islamic, Imam Mohammed seems to be reaching out to the hitherto adversaries in the new Nation of Islam under the leadership of Louis Farrakhan.

The Imam's goals are to continue to teach Islam in its true form and to foster tolerance, understanding, and cooperation between Americans of different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

The Passing of a Notable Alumnus

A distinguished UNCW alumnus, the **Reverend Doctor Aaron Adel McCrae, Sr.**, died on December 10, 1999, just a few weeks after his 79th birthday. He was a native Wilmingtonian who graduated from Williston in 1938. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps and later in the U.S. Air Force, where as a Master Sergeant he received a General's commendation for outstanding service as a flight inspector.

After a medical discharge in 1959, he returned to Wilmington and took up a very active role in the East Wilmington community. He and **Elizabeth**, his wife of 57 years, had four children, one of whom was Aaron Jr. In August 1962 they courageously took the initiative to break the color line by petitioning the

New Hanover County School Board to allow their son to be assigned to the all-white Chestnut St. Junior High School. **Aaron Jr.** was thus the first black child to enter a white Wilmington school and he did so several years before the system saw fit to end its "Massive Resistance".

Among his many talents Dr. McCrae was also a gifted musician with a rich bass voice, and over the years he trained literally hundreds of young people on both piano and organ, giving lessons to all who desired them.

Ever eager to increase his own skills, he came to the UNCW Dept. of Philosophy & Religion in the early 1970s to see what it might have to offer. Founding chairman, **Dr. B. Frank Hall**, already a friend, became his mentor, and he took virtually all Dr.



Hall's classes, working in a few others taught by **Drs. Shinn, McGowan, and Megivern**. In May 1975 not only did

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Greetings

Joe Wilson,
Chair

The last six months have been good ones for philosophy and religious studies at UNCW. Cultural events on

campus have included the visit of the **Imam Warith Deen Muhammad**, arranged by **Dr. Berg**, as well as a sold-out performance by Tibetan Buddhist monks, a visit arranged by UNCW students. Several department members are active in race and social justice issues regionally and nationally. Our annual B. Frank Hall lecture was delivered in October by **Dr. Fitzhugh**

Brundage, again focusing on the area of race and social justice, but from a historian's perspective. Looking forward, nineteen P&R majors will graduate UNCW this May and we welcome them to their new lives as UNCW P&R alumni. Please continue to keep in touch with us and to send us news of other alumni as well.

Current Major Presents Paper at Conferences

Jeremy Morris '00 presented a paper entitled "The Puzzle of Non-Being" to the North Carolina Philosophical Society -- South Carolina Society for Philosophy Joint Conference held at Duke University on February 25-26, 2000, and to the North Florida Philosophical Conference at the University of North Florida on March 24, 2000. The entire department congratulates Jeremy on being the first undergraduate to present a paper at a conference.

The paper examines the problem of negative existential statements. It outlines the problem from several philosophical perspectives and argues that it poses a challenge to direct referential semantics of proper names. The problem is of great importance to the Philosophy of Language and its relation to Classical First Order Logic and Quantified Modal Logic is featured. The paper then discusses several possible solutions that favor the direct referential theory.

The paper developed out of



Jeremy's Departmental Honors Project with **Ferenc Altrichter** on logical semantics (see picture above).

Getting to Know Us Better: George Zervos



Our department's newest member, **George Zervos**, will be familiar to many of you already. George has been teaching in the department as part-time adjunct faculty since 1992, as a full-time lecturer in 1999, and now as an assistant professor in Early Christianity.

George received his B.A. from UNC-Greensboro in 1973, his M.Th. from the University of Athens in Greece in 1977, and his Ph.D. from Duke University in 1986. His research has focused on the Greek manuscripts of the Protevangelium of James, a

very early and important non-canonical gospel. It, for example, is a source for such doctrines as the Immaculate Conception and the Perpetual Virginity of Mary. George has been able to integrate student research into this project. **Megan Maranuk '99** did a departmental honors thesis entitled "Mary, from Woman to Goddess" which traced the development of Marian doctrines in the early church. **Danny Reeves '01**, a double major in P&R and Computer Science, is also working with George on a departmental honors thesis that involves the computerization of Greek collations and setting up a critical edition of the Protevangelium materials online. (Our photograph features, George, Megan, and Danny).

The courses that George teaches include Introduction to Religion, New Testament Greek, Introduction to the New Testament, and History of Early Christianity. Though the goal of the New Testament Greek course is to

help students to achieve the ability to interpret early Christian texts and the historical Jesus in depth, George has also been developing a Greek Language Studies Program for UNCW to help students who are interested in Greek because disciplines such as linguistics, history of grammar, philosophy, and science are so indebted to Greek concepts and terms.

George's main goal is to set up an integrated program for the study of Early Christianity involving the teaching of the primary research language (Greek), critical study of the basic early Christian documents, canonical and non-canonical (Introduction to the New Testament), and the historical background (History of Early Christianity). He uses a two-pronged approach: one with a personal face-to-face interaction with students, and the other is technologically oriented. Two of his courses are web and computer based and part of UNCW's Technology College.

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... Notable Alumnus

he proudly receive his diploma from the department at Commencement, but in doing so he also won the distinguished university-wide Hoggard Achievement Medal.

His honorary Doctor of Divinity degree was conferred upon him in 1998 by the Emmanuel Baptist University in recognition of his life-long commitment to preaching, teaching, and helping others in every way he could.

P&R majors from those early days will undoubtedly remember the impressive, stately demeanor, and the friendliness of Dr. McCrae, both in and out of class, but what they will probably best recall is that voice of his which sounded like it was coming down from Mount Sinai, even when he was merely making a passing observation. We are all proud to have had him in our program and extend our condolences to Mrs. McCrae and the rest of the McCrae family.

Faculty News

Herb Berg presented a paper entitled "Competing Paradigms in Islamic Origins: Manufacturing Islamic Salvation History" at the *American Academy of Religion 1999 Annual Meeting* at Boston. He also received a Charles L. Cahill award to continue his research on Islamic origins.

Walt Conser attended the conference "Religion in the American South," at Emory University in October 1999.

Jim Megivern wrote the entry on Capital Punishment in the *Encyclopedia of Contemporary American Religion*, and had an article entitled "Stop this killing," published in *The Tablet*.

Samuel Murrell gave a paper entitled "Ethopia and Rastafarian Hope" at the *Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion* in Atlanta.

Carol Thyself received a travel

award from the UNCW Office of International Programs to deliver an invited formal response to a panel of papers at the conference "Moments of Change" in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Oct. 8, 1999. The conference, sponsored by the Danish government in cooperation with the University of Copenhagen, brought together an interdisciplinary network of international scholars to begin work on a history of the relationship between Christianity and the arts during the past millennium.

Joe Wilson presided over the Yogacara Buddhism Seminar at the *American Academy of Religion 1999 Annual Meeting* at Boston. He continues to serve as co-chair of the American Academy of Religion's Seminar on the Study of Yogacara Buddhism.

Walt Conser, Joe Wilson, Herb Berg, Sam Murrell, and Jim

Continued on next page . . .

Alumni! We want to hear from you!

Name: _____
 Dr./Mr./Ms./Mrs. First Middle (Maiden) Last Suffix

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News for the next newsletter: _____

You can also update your information or send us news for our next newsletter by emailing alumnews@uncwil.edu or fill out the form at www.uncwil.edu/alumni

I want to support the UNCW Department of Philosophy & Religion

Please consider a donation in support of UNCW's P&R department. Your gift will help supply equipment for classrooms, support student services and extracurricular activities as well as provide needed scholarship support for students. Your help and generosity will allow us to continue to provide a meaningful education for Philosophy and Religion students.

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McGowen presented a series of lectures for the Christian Education Adult Forum of St. John's Episcopal Church in Wilmington in January and February of 2000.

Alumni News

John (Jay) Wright Coker, Jr. '75 is the pastor at the First Presbyterian Church in Fayetteville, N.C.

Kevin Campbell '95 teaches English and American Culture at the Lion Cambridge School of English Studies in Katowice, Poland.

We know that we have missed many of you in this update. We are eager to hear about your academic and career accomplishments. After all, you are our best measure of program, and the best examples for our current students of the benefits of being a Philosophy and Religion major. So please stay in touch and keep us up to date on your lives. A lifelong relationship with our alumni is vital to the success of the department.

Majors . . .

Three P&R majors graduated in Fall 1999. **Megan Maranuk** (with Honors), **Melissa Reece**, and **Molly Whitaker**.

Crystal Lubinsky '00 was accepted into graduate school at the University of Chicago's Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

A P&R club has recently formed. It is beginning to have regular monthly meetings. The goal of the club is to encourage discussion on various philosophical and religious issues, particularly between the P's and the R's. The club is currently organizing a debate between two faculty members on the question, "Does God exist?" All P&R majors, minors, faculty, alumni, and anyone else who is interested is welcome to attend all meetings. For more information please e-mail **Matt Newby** at mcn2946@uncil.edu or **Luke Richey** at lmr2058@uncwil.edu.

The Web . . .

If you would like to see what a particular faculty member is up to, one of the best ways is to check out our many web pages. Most of these pages contain course, professional, and often some personal information. Of course, our email addresses can also be found there. So, please check us out at the following URLs:

<http://www.uncwil.edu/p&r> (for the department)

<http://www.uncwil.edu/people/bergh> (for Herb Berg)

<http://www.uncwil.edu/people/gauthierc> (for Candace Gauthier)

<http://www.uncwil.edu/people/stanley> (for Maurice Stanley)

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<http://www.uncwil.edu/people/wilsonj> (for Joe Wilson)

<http://www.uncwil.edu/people/zervosg> (for George Zervos)

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