

FEATURES



Dr. J. Lee Greene

Staff photo by James Parker.

J. Lee Greene: man of many accomplishments

EDNA BROWN
Staff Writer

Besides producing "Down Home" and "Great Jones Street," two stage performances, and making English 84, American Negro literature, one of the most popular courses at UNC, Dr. J. Lee Greene, associate professor of English, has also written a book, "Time's Unfading Garden."

The 1977 edition, published by the Louisiana State University Press, is about the life and poetry of Anne Spencer, a Black American poet from 1882-1975.

"Anne Spencer was associated with some of the most prominent Black figures in the 1920s and on up to the '60s," says Greene. "She was a close friend of people such as Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and W.E.B. DuBois. The book deals with the whole experience of being Black by looking at one person."

Greene met Spencer at her home in Lynchburg, Va., after he chose her as a subject for his master's thesis.

"I knew her when she was 89 years old and until the time she died," Greene said. "She was one of the most brilliant persons I had ever met. She was never senile and was very independent."

"I wanted to write about her because not much had been done on her before. She was a very private woman and didn't want

people writing about her because she was afraid they would distort the truth about her. Anyway, she was kind enough to let me write about her."

Greene had no severe problems in writing the book. He collected the material from 1972 to 1975. Spencer died before the book was published, but she did read some of the manuscript.

"There were certain kinds of information that I wanted to use and was unable to, like the history of her ancestry," Greene said, "but there was so much more interesting information I could use. Very few people in the town would talk about her to me. Some said she was an agitator because she fought discrimination. She was one of those persons who would refuse to sit at the back of the bus."

The reviews, appearing in "American Literature," "Black American Literature" and other magazines, have been favorable. Greene relates Spencer's life with her work. She wrote about love and freedom that surpassed the era in which she lived. Because the book is scholarly, Greene feels it will not be a best seller.

Appended to the book are 42 of Spencer's poems. Greene's favorite poem, "White Things," is about the glorification of the color white.

Although his book applies to some of the subjects covered in his English 84 classes, Greene does not plan to use it as a text.

Afro-American Studies

Not only a curriculum, but a fact of life

By JOYCE BASS-EDWARDS
Staff Writer

While the University of North Carolina has numerous departments within its academic system, there is a major offered to students yearly through a curriculum rather than a department.

The Afro-American Studies Curriculum was initiated on the UNC campus in 1969 by the late Dr. James Brewer, who was also its first director. This Spring 1979, the Afro-Am curriculum will celebrate its tenth year on the campus as a "curriculum" rather than as a stable department.

According to the Afro-Am co-directors, Dr. Sonya Stone and Dr. Roberta Dunbar, only students can make the hope of departmental status come true.

"We encourage double majors in this curriculum. We feel that Afro-Am studies compliments any field of study, particularly for those who will spend their lives serving the black community. Students may have majors in Political Science, Radio, Television and Motion Pictures, as well as History," said Dr. Stone.

Dr. Dunbar said attracting more students to the program is one objective for the immediate future.

"Because we have two component parts, African Studies and Afro-American Studies, our objective is to use the resources we have to their fullest poten-

tial," said Dr. Dunbar.

She said the curriculum staff tries to provide courses which will expose students at an introductory level with emphasis on special interest and the problems in the African Culture.

"The African studies courses we have are not found elsewhere on this campus. We want our humanity courses institutionalized so they will no longer be just seminars," said Dr. Dunbar.

Students who declare themselves Afro-Am majors enroll into the program which has six to eight core courses designed to introduce students to basic African Culture. Through its interdisciplinary curriculum, the Afro-Am student may take such courses as Black Literature, Foundations of Black Education, Anthropology, Psychology, History and the Black Press.

As a junior and senior, the student is involved in seminars, which are designed to let the student work closely with his major professor and acquire research skills as well as a certain professionalism. This part of the program falls under the direction of Dr. Carolyn Stroman, who joined the staff in September of 1978.

"The senior internship allows the student to work in the community. By giving service to the Black community, the student gets a first hand look at the real world," said Dr. Stroman.

She said the internship assignments are made according to the interest of the student. She too agrees with the idea of

combining the Afro-Am major with another academic area.

"Right now we have four students in the community as interns. In the future we hope all Afro-Am students, regardless of classification will be able to get out into the field and experience the real work routine of their chosen field," said Dr. Stroman.

Despite the advances in course offerings within the curriculum, there are still problems which began with the initial founding of the curriculum which have yet to be solved according to Dr. Dunbar.

"We're still in a period of transition. We saw what students focused on in 1969 and what Dr. Brewer tried to do. Some of the priorities set then have not been met such as support services for blacks and the increased recruitment of blacks. Some attention has been given to these areas, but not enough to erase insecurities," said Dr. Dunbar.

All three professors agree that the departmental status of the program would be one of their greatest achievements.

"We would be strengthened by the departmental status. Because we are an interdisciplinary program, we depend heavily on faculty from other departments. Most programs across the country are departments. They afford autonomy and integrity," said Dr. Stone.

Dr. Dunbar agrees with Dr. Stone about consistent faculty within the curriculum and its influence on the students.

"The biggest frustration has been

consistent and irregular staffing. We only have one year appointments, which we used to know about only one month in advance. We then had to devise our course offerings. Now, we know one year in advance which has greatly eased some of that pressure," said Dr. Dunbar.

Another aspect of the program which influences student enrollment is the prospect of employment following graduation from the curriculum.

"Many students (undergraduates) feel pressure from all over the United States about what they will do after graduation. These are not just liberal arts students, but professional school students as well," said Dunbar.

Dr. Stone feels that an Afro-Am major can choose practically any career.

"No liberal arts degree leads to a job. We've found that Afro-Am majors are considered good prospects for employment in school systems, social agencies, such as half-way houses where there is a black clientele and equal opportunity offices," said Dr. Stone.

Two offsprings of the Afro-Am curriculum which Dr. Stone feels have added to the overall attraction of the program are the Southern Black Press Institute (SBPI), held in the summer for high school students interested in journalism and second, the opportunity for juniors to spend a year in Africa. There is presently a student in Sierra Leone.