Alumnae & Students of Color

CONFERENCE 2007

Defining Our Future  November 2–4

Nuestro Camino, Our Path:
Students of Color at Mount Holyoke College

Curated by
Krysia Lycette Villón ’96
Hortense Parker, Class of 1883
*First African American woman known to attend MHC.*

Martha Rolston
Class of 1898

Frances Williams
Class of 1919

Ruth Muskrat
Class of 1925

Alice Elizabeth Stubbs
Class of 1926

Verna Nori
Class of 1932

Laura Lee
Class of 1936

Mabel Murphy
Class of 1937

Kim Anne Chung Hi
Class of 1938

Yoshi Nakayama
Class of 1938

Evelyn Yellow Robe
Class of 1942

Hattie Kawahara
Class of 1943

Lillian Russell
Class of 1945

Astrid Ramirez
Class of 1948
On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. U.S. citizens feared another attack and war hysteria seized the country.

On February 19, 1942 Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. Under the terms of the Order, some 120,000 people of Japanese descent living in the U.S. were removed from their homes and placed in internment camps. The U.S. justified their action by claiming that there was a danger of those of Japanese descent spying for the Japanese. However, more than two thirds of those interned were American citizens and half of them were children. None had ever shown disloyalty to the nation. In some cases family members were separated and put in different camps. During the entire war only ten people were convicted of spying for Japan and these were all Caucasian.

Three Mount Holyoke students lived through this experience.

Hattie Kawahara Colton '43 was born in Portland, OR and lived in an internment camp in Idaho before completing her undergraduate degree at MHC. After receiving her BA from MHC, she stayed on to complete a Master’s degree in Political Science and also served as an assistant in the Political Science Department. She received her PhD from the University of Minnesota. She served for decades in the Foreign Institute of the Department of State, advancing in academic and administrative appointments. Her scholarly research and published writings are numerous. She was awarded the Superior Honor Award from the Department of State in 1980 and was awarded the Sesquicentennial Award from MHC in 1987.

Hiromi Matsumoto Dye '45 was born in California and attended the University of California, Berkeley, until the war broke out. She then enrolled at Mount Holyoke College in March of 1943 and majored in mathematics and zoology. She did her graduate work in physiological psychology at Cornell University and then in mathematics and engineering at UCLA. Her family owned an orchard in Winters, California, before being interned in Arizona. Dye, now retired in Los Angeles, dedicated thirty-three years to work at Planning Research Corporation, where she became president, the highest ranking position on its professional staff.

Michiko Nishiura Weglyn '48 was born in Stockton, CA and was interned in Arizona before coming on full tuition scholarship to MHC in 1944. She attended Mount Holyoke from 1944-1945 and Barnard College from 1947-1948. After moving to New York City, she designed costumes for The Perry Como Show for eight years. She is the first and only Japanese American to achieve national prominence in the field of theatrical costume design. In 1976, she published an influential account of the treatment of Japanese-Americans during World War II entitled “Years of Infamy: The Untold Story of American’s Concentration Camps,” for which she won the Anisfield-Wolf Award in Race Relations in 1977. She was the first Japanese American woman to receive an honorary degree, Doctor of Humane Letters, in an U.S. institution of higher learning and to give its commencement address. She also received an honorary degree from MHC in 1994. Michi Weglyn, as she was known professionally, passed in May of 1999.
The cultural center was established in 1973 and was originally known as the Martha Rolston Perkins Cultural Center. Ms. Perkins was, at the time, the oldest living African American alumna (class of 1898). In 1980 the name of the center was changed to the Betty Shabazz Cultural Center to honor the wife of slain civil rights leader Malcolm X.

The Betty Shabazz Cultural Center provides cultural space for students of African descent. The space is used throughout the academic year for members of the Mount Holyoke College community to gather and to hold classes, lectures, or social events.
The Eliana Ortega Cultural Center provides cultural space for students who identify as Latina or whose heritage is Latina. Classes, lectures, receptions, and a variety of social events are held there. The center was opened in the fall of 1995.

The Zowie Banteah Cultural Center provides cultural space for students who identify as Native American or have Native American ancestry. During the academic year, students host various programs, both academic and social, in the center. The center was opened in the fall of 1995 and was originally known as Native Spirit. In the spring of 1997, the center was renamed the Zowie Banteah Cultural Center to honor the alumna who was instrumental in founding the house.

The Asian Center for Empowerment serves the needs of the Asian and Asian American student community as well as providing space for the International Students Club. The center opened in 1999.

The Jeannette Marks House provides a safe space and community center for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and allied students. The space’s resources include a queer-friendly library. The house, established in 1999, is named after Jeannette Marks, a Mount Holyoke professor and partner of former president Mary Woolley.
First Black Alumnae Conference
March 1973

Letter to the Editor, Mount Holyoke
Alumnae Quarterly, Summer 1973

Seventh Black Alumnae Conference
February 1990

First Latina Alumnae Conference
April 1993

Second Asian/Asian American Alumnae
Conference, March 2001

Fourth Latina Alumnae Conference
November 2001

Eleventh Black Alumnae Conference
November 2003

Fifth Latina Alumnae Conference
November 2005

Fourth Asian/Asian American Alumnae
Conference, November 2006
2006-2007

Students:
Nonresident Aliens 354
Black 84
Native American 15
Asian or Pacific Islander 241
Latina 118
White 1103
Race unknown 234
TOTAL 2149

Faculty:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professor</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>58</td>
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<td>194</td>
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Staff:
12.9% of all staff are people of color

A sampling of the 70 countries represented at MHC:

Afghanistan  Bangladesh  Colombia
China         Ghana        India
Jamaica       Japan        Kenya
Lebanon       Mongolia     Nepal
Nigeria       Peru         Singapore
South Korea   Sri Lanka    Tanzania
United Arab Emirates  Venezuela  Zimbabwe

There are close to 30 cultural organization for students of color that serve as support groups, art performance groups, and faith-based groups, among other things.