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**Some Notable Writers, Editors, and Publishers Affiliated with TSU over its First
100 Years**

Compiled by TSU Reference & Special Collections Librarians¹

Laura Averitte (1889 -1975) was a poetess, playwright, and teacher/professor of English at TSU for 48 years; she is best remembered as the writer of the lyrics to the University's *Alma Mater*, and founder of the University's distinguished tradition in theater as organizer of the Dramatics Club in 1925, which later became the Tennessee State University Players Guild.

Henry Allen Boyd (1876-1959) was a minister and founder/editor of the *Nashville Globe* newspaper in 1905 (to voice support of the streetcar boycott the same year by black Nashvillians, fifty years before the Montgomery Bus Boycott which helped the launch the modern civil rights movement) until his death in 1959. Along with Ben Carr, James C. Napier, Rev. Preston Taylor, and others, Boyd successfully lobbied the Tennessee Legislature in 1908-1909 to establish the State Normal School for Negroes (now Tennessee State University) in Nashville/Davidson County, and published numerous articles and reports on the University's early years and subsequent development.

T.B. Boyd III is a 1969 graduate of TSU and CEO of the R.H. Boyd Publishing Company (formerly the National Baptist Publishing Board), headquartered in Nashville and founded by his great-grandfather, Richard H. Boyd. Dr. T.B. Boyd III represents the fourth generation of his family to head the company, which has been in continuous operation from the late 19th through the 21st/present century.

Karen Brown Dunlap is a professor of communications at TSU early in her career; Dunlap is also an alumna of the University who became a scholar, professor, trustee, and president of the Poynter Institute for Journalism in St. Petersburg, Florida. Dr. Dunlap also worked as a professional journalist with newspapers including the *Macon News* (GA), *Nashville Banner*, and *St. Petersburg Times*; is a board member of the St. Petersburg Times Publishing Company, Eckerd College, and the Newspaper Association

¹ This collection is neither exhaustive nor complete but is part of an ongoing project.

of America; and has been a Pulitzer Prize jurist on three occasions during her distinguished career in journalism.

Merl R. Eppse (1893-1967) was a distinguished professor of history at TSU from 1928 until his retirement in 1960 and authored *The Negro, Too, in American History* and *An Elementary History of America Including the Contributions of the Negro Race*, which were both adopted for use in public education by the Tennessee State Textbook Authority, and *A Guide to the Study of the Negro in American History*. He was also editor of *The Christian Plea* newspaper, published by the National Christian Missionary Convention from 1943 to 1948; member of the board of directors for the National Educational Publishing Company based in Nashville; and active in numerous professional and scholarly organizations, including the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, where he corresponded with such notable figures as W.E.B. DuBois, Carter G. Woodson, Charles S. Johnson, and W.C. Handy. The University honored Professor Eppse by naming a men's residence hall for him, and his papers and other writings/memorabilia are housed at the Tennessee State Library and Archives and TSU Special Collections.

Arie Halachmi is a longtime TSU professor of public administration who has become an internationally recognized authority on organizational performance and productivity in the governmental/public sector. Halachmi has authored and/or edited more than twenty books (some which have been translated into French and Chinese) and dozens of scholarly articles in public administration journals. He is also Research Professor at the Center for Public Administration Research at Sun Yat-sen University (China); 2010-2011 Distinguished Fulbright Professor; and 2010 winner of the Paul van Riper Award for Excellence and Service from the American Society for Public Administrators (ASPA) in recognition of his significant contributions to public administration theory and practice.

Robert Hampton was the first provost in the University's history and professor of sociology during his tenure at TSU from 2005-2010; Hampton has published numerous articles and authored/co-authored several books related to domestic violence and/or health issues in African-American communities, including the *Handbook of African American Health* (2010). Dr. Hampton is also one of the founders of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community.

Geraldine Heath, who although her degrees from TSU (B.S., 1972; M.S., 1982) were in home economics, helped to establish the *Nashville Pride* newspaper in 1988 with founders Dr. Larry Davis and Dr. Cynthia Hodge, who sought to address a void in local news coverage as related to the African-American community. She continues as managing editor of the publication, which is an active affiliate of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

Robert Hudson (1921-2006) was Native Nashvillian and TSU alumnus (B.S., 1946; M.A., 1947); Hudson retired after 35 years of service to the University as an English professor, Shakespearian scholar, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and coordinator of University commencement exercises and other ceremonial activities.

Harriette Bias-Insignares was a professor of communications at TSU from 1977 until her retirement in 2006; Insignares holds the distinction of being the first African American Poet Laureate/Ambassador of Letters for the State of Tennessee and first official Poet Laureate for the city of Nashville. She also created “Juba,” an original character/persona which she used to dramatize her original works based on the African-American storytelling tradition at regional and national storytelling festivals, and published a variety of motivational books and other works, including *Power and Glory: Brothers On the Journey* in 2008, a book compilation of poetry profiling notable African-American men in the Nashville, Tennessee, area as well as selected national figures.

Donald F. Joyce (1934- 2001) served as librarian, professor, and coordinator of the Avon Williams Campus Library during his tenure at TSU from 1981 until 1987, when he left the University to become professor and first African-American director/dean of the Felix G. Woodward Library at Austin Peay State University. Joyce researched, wrote, and published extensively on African Americans in the humanities and the history of African-American publishing in the United States, becoming a nationally-recognized authority in these areas. Before his final illness, Joyce was researching and planning to publish a new work on the lives and careers of academically-trained African-American philosophers in the modern era.

Dwight Lewis retired as a professional journalist in 2011 after 40 years as a writer, columnist, and editorial page editor at the (Nashville) *Tennessean* newspaper. Lewis, a former TSU baseball athlete, editor of *The Meter* (the TSU student newspaper), and 1972 graduate, reported on local, regional, national, and international issues and events. He

interviewed and wrote articles on numerous famous and infamous personalities including James Earl Ray, the convicted assassin of Martin Luther King, and co-authored the book *A Will to Win*, a history of TSU athletics, with colleague Susan Thomas in 1983.

Lewis Laska is an attorney, author, and longtime professor of business law at TSU, who has authored several texts related to legal/medical malpractice issues, but most notably published in 2011 his extensive study of capital punishment in Tennessee, titled *Legal Executions in Tennessee: a Comprehensive Registry, 1782-2009*.

Crawford B. Lindsay (1905-1988) enjoyed a fifty-year career as a professor of literature with tenures at Morehouse College, Florida A&M University, and TSU, where he served as chair of the English Department for twenty years. Lindsay, who received the Ph.D. in literature from Cornell University (1950) and a law degree from the Evening Law School of Nashville (1958), was also president of the College Language Association and a visiting professor at Meharry Medical College and the University of Tennessee, Nashville.

Bobby Lovett recently retired as professor of history and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at TSU, and is also a distinguished author of books and other works on African-American history, publishing, civil rights, and education, focusing primarily on Nashville and Tennessee. His most recent publication is *America's Historically Black Colleges: a Narrative History, 1837-2009*, and his book on the first 100 years of Tennessee State University is scheduled for publication in conjunction with the University Centennial in 2012.

Patricia and Frederick McKissack are a husband-and-wife literary team who met while students at TSU; these TSU alumni are internationally renowned authors of juvenile and children's literature. Their numerous works include both fiction and nonfiction, and have highlighted notable persons and events in African American history as well as reworkings of classic stories such as *Cinderella* and *The Three Bears* for multicultural audiences of readers.

Nkem Nwankwo (1936-2001) was originally from Nawfia, Nigeria. Nwankwo received his master's and Ph.D. from Indiana University and taught at Michigan State University before becoming a professor of English/literature at TSU until his death. He was well known in literary circles as the author of three novels, *Danda* (1964); *My Mercedes Is Bigger Than Yours* (1975); and *The Scapegoat* (1984). He also wrote poetry

et al.: Some Notable Writers, Editors, and Publishers Affiliated with TSU over its First 100 Years and short stories, some of which were compiled in a collection titled *Tales Out of School*. His creative writing and scholarship reflected the influences on and transitions in Nigerian/African culture due to colonialism, independence, and interactions with other races and ethnicities, including African Americans.

Phil Petrie is a former track athlete and writer/editor for the TSU *Meter* during his student years; Petrie, a 1959 graduate, has written for and edited numerous publications over a professional career of more than 50 years. Most notably, in 2007 he served as interim Editor-in-Chief for *Crisis* magazine, the official NAACP journal founded in 1910 by W.E.B. DuBois.

Thomas E. Poag (1907-1974) was originally from Gastonia, North Carolina. Poag enjoyed early success in drama as part of the cast of the film version of Eugene O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, starring the legendary artist/activist Paul Robeson. In academia, Poag became the first African American to earn the Ph.D. in speech and drama (at Ohio State University), then utilized his talents as actor, director, playwright, producer, and professor to create a number of original dramatic works and re-stage dramas from every period of theater history. During his more than thirty years at TSU, Poag founded the Tennessee State University Players Guild (renamed in his honor/memory as the T.E. Poag Players Guild); undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the Speech and Drama Department he founded in 1943; and served as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Ted Poston (1906-1974) was A native of Hopkinsville, KY, and wrote for his family's local weekly newspaper, *The Contender*, as a teenager before coming to Tennessee A&I State College, where he graduated in 1928. He then relocated to New York City, where he launched his professional career as a writer and journalist, working as a speechwriter for presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith; columnist for the *Pittsburgh Courier*; and writer/city editor for the *New York Amsterdam News*, covering historical events such as the Scottsboro Boys trials in Alabama before he was fired for union-organizing activities in 1936. Poston secured a position with the *New York Post* in 1937, where he remained for the next 35 years. As a highly respected and influential journalist, he also became a member of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's informal "Black Cabinet" in 1940 and covered the 1950s/1960s civil rights movement before his retirement in 1971. Poston also wrote and published short fiction in magazines such as the *New*

Engaged: The journal of Tennessee State University, Vol. 1 [2013], Art. 1 Republic; a collection of his short stories, *The Dark Side of Hopkinsville*, was published posthumously in 1991.

Carl T. Rowan (1925- 2000) was one of the most well-known and highly honored journalists of the 20th century; Rowan was a native of Ravenscroft and McMinnville, TN, and a TSU student from 1942 to 1943. In his 1991 autobiography, *Breaking the Barriers: A Memoir*, Rowan cited the profound influence of TSU English professor Alma Dunn Jones, art professor Frances Thompson, history professor Merle Eppse, and Dean George W. Gore, who saw his potential, encouraged him, and recommended him to the Navy V-12 midshipman/ROTC program, where he became one of the first African-American naval officers prior to his wide-ranging career in government service and journalism. Rowan's many achievements include being the only black reporter to cover the Montgomery Bus Boycott for a national newspaper; government appointments as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, delegate to the United Nations, ambassador to Finland, director of the U.S. Information Agency, and member of the National Security Council; nationally-syndicated columnist from 1966-1998; television news panelist from 1967-1996; lifetime achievement award from the National Association of Black Journalists (1980); Pulitzer Prize for commentary (1995); and Fourth Estate lifetime achievement award from the National Press Club (1999). Rowan was the only journalist granted an interview by Justice Thurgood Marshall during his tenure on the U.S. Supreme Court, and later authored the 1993 book *Dream Makers, Dream Breakers: The World of Thurgood Marshall*.

Jessie Carney Smith is a TSU librarian early in her career; Smith (now William and Camille Cosby Professor of the Humanities and University Librarian at Fisk University) is a prolific writer and editor of numerous reference works related to the African-American experience, including multiple volumes of the *Notable Black American Women*, *Notable Black American Men*, and *Black Firsts* series; *Epic Lives: 100 Black Women Who Made a Difference*; *Freedom Facts and Firsts: 400 Years of the African American Civil Rights Experience*; *Statistical Record of Black America*; *Encyclopedia of African American Business*; and the *Encyclopedia of African American Popular Culture*.

Reginald Stuart is a native Nashvillian and 1968 graduate, who began his professional career the same year as a general assignment reporter with the (Nashville) *Tennessean* newspaper, then became the first African-American television news reporter

et al.: Some Notable Writers, Editors, and Publishers Affiliated with TSU over its First 100 Years at Nashville's ABC affiliate, WSIX (now WKRN)-TV. Stuart then returned to print journalism, where he has worked in various capacities for 40-plus years, becoming a nationally-respected journalist who has written for the *New York Times*, *Philadelphia Daily News*, Knight-Ridder Newspapers, *Emerge* magazine, and *Diverse Issues in Higher Education*. He has received numerous awards and recognitions, including the National Association of Black Journalists Ida B. Wells Award (2005) for his work in recruiting professional journalists of color, and from the Society of Professional Journalists (*Sigma Delta Chi*), including election as its first African-American national president (1994-95), and Fellow of the Society (2006).

Rosemary Theriot is a professor in the TSU College of Health Sciences since 1991, and where she has also served as interim dean of the college; president of the National Society of Allied Health; and editor of multiple volumes/issues of the *National Society of Allied Health Journal*.

Abu N. M. Wahid is a professor in the Economics and Finance Department, College of Business at TSU, who has published four books; authored a number of articles in refereed journals; has been a Fulbright Fellow and Senior Fellow, American Institute for Bangladesh Studies; member of the editorial advisory board for the *Global Journal of Finance and Banking Issues*; and for nearly a decade has been editor of the *Journal of Developing Areas*, a publication devoted to scholarly research on international economic development.

Getahn M. Ward is originally from the country of Liberia; Ward came to the United States to continue his education, earning BBA (1994) and MBA (1997) degrees from TSU. During his undergraduate years he served as editor of the *Meter* student newspaper, and is presently a business writer/columnist with the (Nashville) *Tennessean* newspaper, specializing in the health-care industry. Ward has also "given back" by serving as an adjunct instructor in the Africana Studies and Communications departments of the University.

Jamye Williams was a professor of communications at TSU from 1959 until her retirement in 1987; Williams was also a community and African Methodist Episcopal (AME) denominational activist whose writings "reflected her profound interest in the civil and social reform movements of the 1960s." She and her husband, fellow TSU professor McDonald Williams, demonstrated great courage as adult supporters of

Nashville/TSU student participants in the sit-ins and freedom rides. Williams also made history in the AME church and religious publishing, as the first woman elected to major leadership in the denomination and as editor of the *AME Church Review*, “the oldest black journal in America,” from 1984 to 1992.

Juanita V. Williamson (1917-1993) was an adjunct professor at TSU early in her career; Williamson went on to research and write extensively on American English/black dialects during her long and distinguished tenure at LeMoyne-Owen College. She received research support from the American Council of Learned Societies and the United Negro College Fund, special honors from the Ford Foundation, and later became a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow. Her major work, *A Various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects*, achieved required reading status at a number of American universities. An archival collection including samples of her research and a recorded interview are now part of the Amistad Research Center at Tulane University.

Oprah Winfrey is one of the most famous and influential personalities in the world and the University’s most famous living alumna; Winfrey studied speech communications and theatre at TSU during the 1970s while beginning her professional career in Nashville as a news announcer/anchor with radio station WVOL-AM and CBS television affiliate WLAC-TV (now WTVF-TV). Alongside her phenomenal success as television talk show host, Oscar-nominated actress, philanthropist, winner of multiple Emmy Awards for television excellence, Kennedy Center Honoree and special honorary Oscar/Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award (both in 2011), numerous honorary doctorates, citations, and other awards, Winfrey also became a publisher when she founded and successfully launched *O, the Oprah Winfrey Magazine* in January 2000. She continues as the magazine’s editorial director, as well as activities connected with the Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN) since ending her internationally-syndicated Oprah Winfrey Show after twenty five years (also in 2011).

Samuel F. Yette (1921- 2011) was a native of Harriman, TN, who came to TSU as an upperclassman after two years at Morristown College. He successfully lobbied TSU President Walter S. Davis to establish the *Meter* student newspaper in 1950 and served as its founding editor-in-chief before his graduation from the University in 1951. Yette covered the civil rights movement as a reporter for the (Baltimore) *Afro-American* newspaper and *Ebony* magazine; received the M.A. in journalism from Indiana

et al.: Some Notable Writers, Editors, and Publishers Affiliated with TSU over its First 100 Years University (1959); held government positions as executive secretary for the Peace Corps and special assistant for civil rights at the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity; made history in 1968 as the first African-American correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine; and generated controversy with his 1971 book, *The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America*. Yette then became a professor of journalism at Howard University and owner of his own publishing company, Cottage Books, which reprinted *The Choice* as well as subsequent works, including *Washington and Two Marches, 1963 & 1983: the Third American Revolution*.

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