

ABAFAZI: The Newly Formed Simmons College Review of Women of African Descent

By Becky Bennett
Contributing Reporter

It means "women" in Ndebele, a language spoken in Southern Africa. But at Simmons College, Abafazi also is the name a new biannual scholarly journal about, but not exclusively for, Black women.

Michael Williams, director of the African-American studies program at Simmons, is the editor of Abafazi. Published for the first time last spring, Abafazi was well-received by the Simmons community as a whole, and by the numerous subscribers whose generous funding helped to make this publication possible.

"Abafazi will not only make a significant contribution toward enhancing the academic quality of our institution; it will at the same time meet a very important need of providing a forum for the legion of scholars interested in sharing and testing their ideas and research findings regarding women of African descent," Williams stated in an April 24, 1991 letter to Simmons' faculty and administration.

The new ideas raised will challenge old traditions and perhaps give birth to new schools of thought regarding African-American women, Williams said.

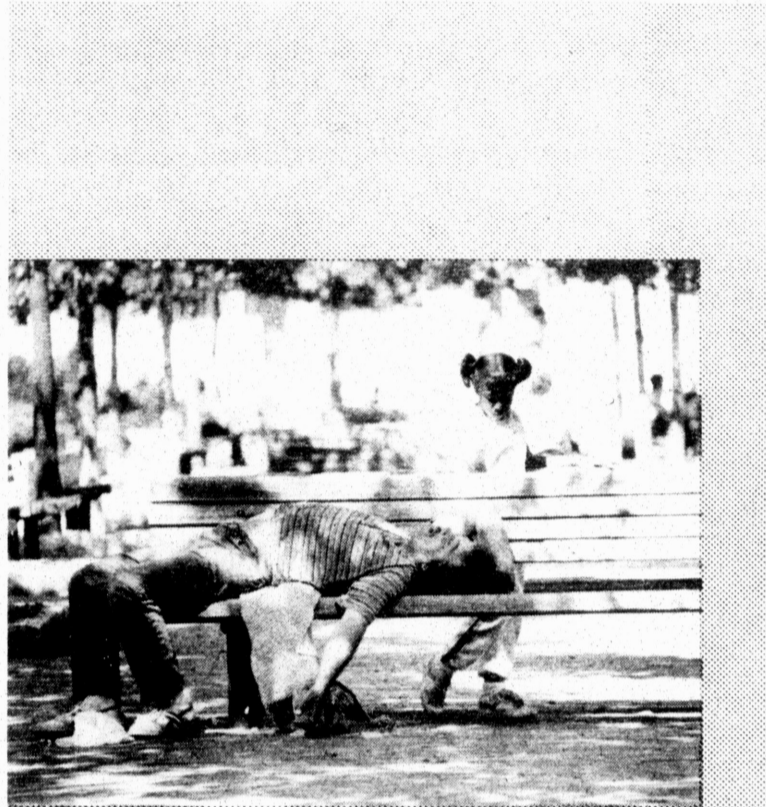
The only journal similar to Abafazi in the United States is Sage from Spellman College in Atlanta, Ga. Sage and Abafazi are supporting one another through advertisements in each other's publication.

Contributors in the spring 1991 issue of Abafazi included Communications Professor Reginald Jackson who presented a photo-essay on "Women of African Descent Throughout the Diaspora." (Some of which are featured on this page.)

Professors from Holy Cross College, University of Missouri at Columbia, and Lincoln University of Pennsylvania. The permanent cover design was created by distinguished Washington, D.C. artist Julee Dickerson-Thompson, a 1975 Simmons graduate.

Williams said he was very excited to see Simmons standing at the front of the movement to learn more about women of African descent.

"Journals are critical to the development of new fields of studies," he said. "All [contributions] are welcome regardless of [the author's] perspective."



No Place to Be, The Homeless Series taken in Boston. Reginald L. Jackson



Morning Portrait taken Bluefields, Nicaragua. Reginald L. Jackson



Mama Jato of Ghana, West Africa. Photo taken by Professor Reginald L. Jackson

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Michael Williams
Director of African-American Studies



Sonja + Lisa, Simmons College, Boston. Reginald L. Jackson