

Clyde A. Woods: Friend and Scholar



I was shocked to read in *The Journal of Blacks In Higher Education* (July 21, 2011) of the passing of my friend Clyde A. Woods (1957-2011). I had the pleasure of meeting, knowing and working with Clyde while he was a doctoral student at UCLA and I was the head librarian at the Center for African American Studies Library and Media Center at UCLA. Clyde was a personable person with a sincere persona that articulated intelligence and ‘street smarts’. His insight will surely be missed. Clyde was an associate professor in the Department of Black Studies at the University of California in Santa Barbara (UCSB), and in 2009 he became acting director of the Center for Black Studies Research at UCSB.

Clyde has been memorialized by the UCSB Department of Black Studies as ‘a valiant soldier in the struggle for social justice teaching and scholarship’, indeed he was such. Clyde’s research engaged social and public policy issues by examining the cultural practices of those oppressed by such policies. His book, *Development Arrested: Race, Power and the Blues in the Mississippi Delta*, is a model of interdisciplinary research that reframed the history of the Mississippi Delta by unearthing and interpreting the blues epistemology of its residents. At the time of his passing, he had just published *In the Wake of Hurricane Katrina: New Paradigms and Social Visions* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), a book version of his special edited *American Quarterly* (September 2009) issue on Katrina, and he was also working on three additional books—*Development Drowned and Reborn* on post-Katrina New Orleans (under review at University of California Press), a book on Black California that emerged from funded research at the Center for Black Studies Research, and a revised and updated version of *Development Arrested*.

In addition, Clyde was also working on a study that would address the role social forces in the construction of Black Los Angeles, from 1781 to the present; and he had a focus on the philosophical and analytic contributions of Blues, Jazz, and Hip Hop. Hence, he recently co-edited *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place* with Katherine McKittrick, an anthology that interrogates the intersection between space and race (e.g. Tulsa’s “Black Wall Street” and the African Burial Ground in New York City). Furthermore, he initiated two long-term-research projects to first examine and support the rebuilding efforts in New Orleans, and a second project designed to create a network of community members and scholars who are studying Black Los Angeles and developing innovative policy solutions.

6.3

Clyde earned his Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Planning from UCLA, a Master of City and Regional Planning (M.C.R.P.) from Morgan State University, and a B.A. in Government from Oberlin College; and in addition to serving as a professor at UCSB, he also taught at Pennsylvania State University and the University of Maryland.

Clyde will be deeply missed, but he leaves a legacy of being an original thinker and prolific scholar who 'believed the purpose of public social science was to explore and suture the links between knowledge embedded in communities of color and the knowledge disseminated by universities', according to his colleagues in the Department of Black Studies at UCSB. He also leaves behind his son, Malik, and countless friends, students, and colleagues who love him. Rest in eternal peace my brother.

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