

SOUTHERN

Board of Supervisors

UNIVERSITY



Meetings

9:00 a.m.

Friday, March 30, 2012

3rd Floor - Multi-Media Purpose Room
Southern University Metro Center
610 Texas Street
Shreveport, Louisiana

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

9:00 a.m.

Friday, March 30, 2012

3rd Floor – Multi -Media Purpose Room

Southern University Metro Center

610 Texas Street

Shreveport, Louisiana 71107

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Invocation
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Public Comments
5. Action Items--
 - A. Recommendations to confer Honorary Degrees
 - 1.) Janet Napolitano, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, SUNO
 - 2.) Calvin Moret, Tuskegee Airman, SUNO
 - 3.) Ernest Gaines, Renowned Author, SUBR
 - B. Authorization to award posthumously the Associate of Science Degree in Computer Science to Brandon Hewitt, SUSLA
 - C. Recommendation to delay Tenure and Promotion Recommendations, SUBR
 - D. President's Recommendation of John Delgado's Appeal (Executive Session may be required)
6. Informational Item--
 - A. Monthly Recruitment Update, SUBR
7. Other Business
8. Adjournment

MEMBERS

Dr. Eamon M. Kelly – Chair; Mrs. Ann Smith- Vice Chair
Mr. Calvin W. Braxton, Sr., Atty. Tony M. Clayton
Rev. Joe R. Gant, Jr., Mr. Willie E. Hendricks, Rev. Samuel C. Tolbert, Jr.
Mr. Darren G. Mire - Ex Officio




Southern University at New Orleans
6400 PRESS DRIVE, ADMIN. BLDG., 202/204
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA 70126
(504) 286-5381 or 286-5325

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Victor Ukpolo, Ph.D.
Chancellor

FROM: David Sunday Adegboye, Ph.D. 
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Accreditation Liaison

DATE: March 26, 2012

RE: **Recommendations for the Conferring of Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters**

At its March 26, 2012 meeting the Council of Deans approved the awarding of the Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to two eminent personalities as follows:

- Janet Napolitano
U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security
- Calvin G. Moret
Flight Officer, Tuskegee Airman fame

Janet Napolitano will serve as Speaker for the 2012 Spring Commencement Exercises to be held on May 12, 2012.

We would appreciate your approval of the Council of Academic Dean's recommendations and would like for you to forward to the System President, Dr. Ronald Mason, and the Southern University System Board of Supervisors for necessary action.

The biographical sketches of the two candidates are respectively attached.

Thank you.

"An Equal Educational Opportunity"

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OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

March 26, 2012

Ronald Mason, J.D.
President
Southern University System
J.S. Clark Administration Building
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Dear President Mason,

Enclosed are recommendations forwarded to me by the Office of Academic Affairs. The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, at the recommendation of the College of Arts and Sciences as well as the Council of Academic Deans, is recommending the conferring of Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters to Janet Napolitano, the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, and Calvin G. Moret, Flight Officer and the only surviving New Orleans member of the famous World War II Tuskegee Airmen Team. The biographical sketches of the two candidates are hereby attached.

I request your approval and the approval of the Southern University System's Board of Supervisors. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victor Ukpolo".

Victor Ukpolo, Ph.D.
Chancellor

Approval:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald Mason".

Ronald Mason, J.D., President
Southern University System



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS

6400 Press Drive

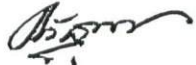
New Orleans, LA 70126

Phone: (504) 284-5352 – Fax: (504) 286-5255

hmokosso@suno.edu

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. David Adegboye
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

FROM: Henry Efeso Mokosso, Dean 
College of Arts and Sciences

RE: **Honorary Degree for Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano**

DATE: March 26, 2012

At its meeting held today, Monday, March 26, 2012, the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences unanimously voted to recommend that Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, the Spring 2012 Commencement Speaker, be awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters for her exemplary public service.

In light of Secretary Napolitano's contributions to the nation and to Southern University at New Orleans and New Orleans generally, it is my distinct pleasure to forward the recommendation for approval. She is worthy of the award and her international standing fits well within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Thank you very much.

HEM/bar

Janet Napolitano, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security

Janet Napolitano is the third Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and is leading our nation's collective efforts to secure our country from the threats we face - from terrorism to natural disasters.

Napolitano first visited SUNO in March 2009 with a large delegation which included Shaun Donovan, U.S. Secretary of HUD, U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu and Governor Bobby Jindal. During a follow-up visit to the campus in August of that year, Napolitano announced more than \$32 million in funding for the reconstruction of four buildings at SUNO that were damaged by both Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita.

To counter the threat of terrorism, Napolitano has forged new partnerships with international allies, and expanded information sharing with federal, state and local law enforcement - building a collaborative effort to detect and disrupt threats early on.

She has initiated a new, more strategic course to strengthen security along our southwest border, deploying additional personnel and advanced technology, while working closely with Mexico to combat violent international drug cartels - resulting in increased seizures of illegal contraband along the border and throughout our country's interior.

Napolitano also has forged a smart and effective approach to enforcing our immigration laws and prioritizing public safety while targeting criminal aliens and aggressively pursuing employers that knowingly take advantage of illegal labor.

She has strengthened the nation's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters by cutting through red tape and expediting decision-making along the Gulf Coast, providing new resources to build resilient communities and bolster their response capabilities, and calling on all Americans to play a role in the shared responsibility of making our homeland secure.

In each of these areas - counterterrorism; border security; immigration enforcement; and disaster preparedness, response and recovery - Napolitano is building upon the skills and resources of this young department by deploying the best that science and technology have to offer; reinvigorating partnerships with state, local and tribal governments and the private sector - our nation's first detectors and first responders; and implementing a bold Efficiency Review that is making the Department a leaner, smarter agency better equipped to protect the nation.

Prior to becoming Secretary, Napolitano was in her second term as Governor of Arizona and was recognized as a national leader on homeland security, border security and immigration. She was the first woman to chair the National Governors Association and was named one of the top five governors in the country by Time Magazine. Napolitano was also the first female Attorney General of Arizona and served as U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona.

Napolitano was born in New York City and grew up in Pittsburgh, Penn., and Albuquerque, N.M. She graduated from Santa Clara University, where she won a Truman Scholarship and was the university's first female valedictorian, and received her Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law. Before entering public office, Napolitano served as a clerk for Judge Mary M. Schroeder on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and practiced law in Phoenix at the firm of Lewis and Roca.




SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY AT NEW ORLEANS

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. David Adegboye
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

FROM: Henry Efeso Mokosso, Dean 
College of Arts and Sciences

RE: **Honorary Degree for Tuskegee Airman Calvin G. Moret**

DATE: March 26, 2012

At its meeting held today, Monday, March 26, 2012, the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences unanimously voted to recommend that Tuskegee Airman, Mr. Calvin G. Moret, will be awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters for his exemplary public service.

In light of Mr. Moret's contributions to the nation and to Southern University at New Orleans and New Orleans generally, it is my distinct pleasure to forward the recommendation for approval. He is worthy of the award and his international standing fits well within the College of Arts and Sciences.

Thank you very much.

Attachment: Biography

HEM/bar

Calvin G. Moret

Calvin George Moret was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on August 15, 1925, the fourth of five sons of Adolph J. Moret, Sr. and Georgiana Perez Moret. Moret attended Corpus Christi Elementary Catholic School and graduated from Xavier Preparatory School in 1942. He entered the military in 1943 and trained as a military pilot at Tuskegee, Alabama, receiving his wings and commission as a Flight Officer there on November 20, 1944.

His preparation for overseas combat duty continued through the end of the war in Europe and then through the end of the war in the Pacific. During his military career that ended on January 31, 1946, he acquired a commercial pilot's license.

Following his discharge from military duty he returned to the family printing business started by his father in 1932. The need for an in-house linotype machine, which also required training, prompted him to seek a school for this purpose outside of New Orleans, because the segregation laws at the time would not allow him to study at Delgado Trade School.

Moret was able to gain admission as a student in the printing department at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. After completing the course and acquiring a linotype machine he was able to train five linotype operators, one of whom became a union linotype operator for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

Moret's flying experience did not stop at the end of his military stint. In the spring of 1949 Calvin and his brother Adolph, who had learned to fly before the war, and who was a civilian primary flight instructor at Tuskegee from early 1942 till his acceptance of a commission as a second lieutenant in 1944, formed a flying club.

They, along with about 20 other men, purchased a 3-place Piper Super Cruiser airplane and stored it in a hanger at Lakefront Airport in New Orleans from then until the summer of 1953. They taught a number of the members to fly. One of them went on to acquire a private pilot's license, then a commercial, with instructor, instrument and twin engine ratings.

In September, 1954, Moret married Berenice Delery Rouege, a widow with a 5 year old son, William E. Rouege, Jr. In time they became the parents of Maria and Patrice Moret. On March 28, 2007, the Tuskegee Airmen were presented the Congressional Gold Medal in a beautiful ceremony in the rotunda of the nation's capital. Moret and other airmen hadn't seen each other in more than 60 years. The heroism displayed by Moret and other Tuskegee Airmen was recently chronicled in the critically acclaimed film, *Red Tails*, produced by noted filmmaker George Lucas, and the 1995 film, *Tuskegee Airmen*.



Office of the Chancellor
P.O. Box 9374
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813

Voice: (225) 771-5020
FAX: (225) 771-5075

March 9, 2012

President Ronald Mason, Jr.
Southern University System
J. S. Clark Adm. Bldg.
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Dear President Mason:

In its action on Wednesday, March 7, 2012, the SUBR Council of Academic Deans voted unanimously to endorse a recommendation from the College of Arts and Humanities to confer upon renowned author, Mr. Ernest Gaines, the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. The Interim Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor and I enthusiastically endorse this recommendation, and I now request your approval and the approval of the Southern University Board of Supervisors.

We have attached all of the appropriate support documents so that this request can be included as an item for the Board's March meeting.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

James L. Llorens
Chancellor, SUBR

JLL/swm



Office of Academic Affairs
P.O. Box 9820
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813

Voice: (225) 771-2360
FAX: (225) 771-2018

March 9, 2012

Dr. James Llorens
Chancellor
Southern University
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Dear Dr. Llorens:

At the March 7, 2011 meeting of the Academic Council, the College of Arts and Humanities, proposed that the renowned writer and Louisiana native, Ernest Gaines, be awarded an Honorary Doctorate (Doctor of Humane Letters or Doctor of Letters-Litt.D), during Southern University's Spring Commencement Exercises, May 18, 2012. (See attachment).

This recommendation was approved by the Academic Council and I concur. If more information is needed, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Janet S. Rami, Ph.D.

Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

INCORPORATED 1880 RELOCATED 1914

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

And
Agricultural & Mechanical College

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
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(225) 771-3696 (Fax)

March 7, 2012

TO: Members of the Academic Council

FROM: The College of Arts and Humanities

RE: Honorary Degree for Ernest Gaines

We, the undersigned, do hereby propose that the renowned writer and Louisiana native, Ernest Gaines, be awarded an Honorary Doctorate, (Doctor of Humane Letters or Doctor of Letters-Litt.D.), during Southern University's Spring Commencement Exercises, on May 18, 2012. The legendary Ernest J. Gaines, Professor of English and Writer-in-Residence at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, a Mac Arthur Fellow (1993), Louisiana Humanist of the Year (1993), Chevalier in the Order of Art and Letters (awarded by the government of France), member of The American Academy of Arts and Letters, holder of the National Humanities Medal (all in 2000), has lived in Lafayette since 1984. (See biographical materials attached.)

Department of English-David Porter, Ph.D. Chair

Department of Foreign Languages-Irma Cobb, Ph.D. Chair

Department of History-Shawn Comminey, Ph.D. Chair

Department of Mass Communication-Mahmoud Braima, Ph.D. Chair

Department of Music-Charles Lloyd, Chair

Department of Speech and Theatre-Erma W. Hines, Ph.D. Chair

Department of Visual Arts-Addie Dawson-Euba, Chair

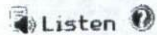
Dean of College-Joyce W. O'Rourke, Ph.D.

David Porter
Irma Cobb
Shawn Comminey
Mahmoud Braima
Charles Lloyd
Erma W. Hines
Addie Dawson-Euba
Joyce W. O'Rourke

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Ernest J(ames) Gaines

Contemporary Novelists , 2001 ▲



Born: January 15, 1933 in United States, Louisiana, Pointe Coupee Parish
Nationality: American
Occupation: Novelist

Publications Novels

- *Catherine Carmier*. New York, Atheneum, 1964 ; London, Secker and Warburg, 1966 .
- *Of Love and Dust*. New York, Dial Press, 1967 ; London, Secker and Warburg, 1968 .
- *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. New York, Dial Press, 1971 ; London, Joseph, 1973 .
- *In My Father's House*. New York, Knopf, 1978 .
- *A Gathering of Old Men*. New York, Knopf, 1983 ; London, Heinemann, 1984 .
- *A Lesson Before Dying*. New York, Knopf, 1993 .

Short Stories

- *Bloodline*. New York, Dial Press, 1968 .

Uncollected Short Stories

- "The Turtles," in *Transfer* (San Francisco), 1956 .
- "Boy in the Doublebreasted Suit," in *Transfer* (San Francisco), 1957 .
- "My Grandpa and the Haint," in *New Mexico Quarterly* (Albuquerque), Summer 1966 .

Other

- *A Long Day in November* (for children). New York, Dial Press, 1971 .
- *Porch Talk with Ernest Gaines*, with Marcia Gaudet and Carl Wooton. Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1990 .

Nationality: American. **Born:** Oscar, Louisiana, 15 January 1933. **Education:** Vallejo Junior College; San Francisco State College, 1955-57, B.A. 1957; Stanford University, California (Stegner fellow, 1958), 1958-59. **Military Service:** Served in the United States Army, 1953-55. **Career:** Writer-in-residence, Denison University, Granville, Ohio, 1971, Stanford University, Spring 1981, and Whittier College, California, 1982. Since 1983 professor of English and writer-in-residence, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette. **Awards:** San Francisco Foundation Joseph Henry Jackson award, 1959; National Endowment for the Arts grant, 1966; Rockefeller grant, 1970; Guggenheim grant, 1970; Black Academy of Arts and Letters award, 1972; San Francisco Art Commission award, 1983; American Academy award, 1987; National Book Critics Circle award, 1994, for *A Lesson Before Dying*. D.Litt.: Denison University, 1980; Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1985; Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, 1985; Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge 1987; D.H.L.: Whittier College, 1986. **Agent:** JCA Literary Agency, 242 West 27th Street, New York, New York 10001. **Address:** 128 Buena Vista Boulevard, Lafayette, Louisiana 70503-2059, U.S.A.

Ernest J. Gaines comments:

I have tried to show you a world of my people--the kind of world that I came from.

The fictive world of Ernest J. Gaines, as well as certain technical aspects of his works, might be compared to that of William Faulkner. But useful as such a comparison may be, it should not be pursued to the point of obscuring

Gaines's considerable originality, which inheres mainly in the fact that he is Afro-American and very much a spiritual product, if no longer a resident, of the somewhat unique region about which he writes: south Louisiana, culturally distinguishable from the state's Anglo-Saxon north, thus from the nation as a whole, by its French legacy, no small part of which derives from the comparative ease with which its French settlers and their descendants formed sexual alliances with blacks.

Gaines's Afro-American perspective enables him to create, among other notable characters both black and white, a Jane Pittman (*The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*) whose heroic perseverance we experience, rather than a housekeeping Dilsey (*The Sound and the Fury*) for whom we have little more than the narrator's somewhat ambiguous and irrelevant assurance that "She endured." In general, Gaines's peculiar point of view generates a more complex social vision than Faulkner's, an advantage Gaines has sustained with dramatic force and artistic integrity. Gaines's fictive society consists of whites, blacks, and creoles, presumably a traditionally more favored socio-economic class of African American given to fantasies of racial superiority to those of darker skin, fantasies of the kind the Martinican psychiatrist Frantz Fanon explores in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

The Gainesian counterparts of the Sartorises and Snopeses (the moribund aristocracy and parvenu "poor white trash" respectively of Faulkner's mythical Mississippi county) are the south Louisiana plantation owners, mostly of French extraction, and the cajuns, of French extraction but of lesser "quality." The cajuns are inheriting and spoiling the land and displacing the creoles and blacks, the former tragically though not irrevocably doomed by a persistent folly, the latter a people of promise who have never really betrayed their African heritage.

All Gaines's works reflect the inherent socio-economic intricacy of this quadruplex humanity, though we are never allowed to lose sight of its basic element of black and white. In his apprentice first novel *Catherine Carmier*, for instance, we see the sickly proscribed love of Jackson, who is black, and Catherine, daughter of an infernally proud creole farmer, as a perverted issue of the miscegenation that resulted from the white male's sexual exploitation of black people. This mode of victimization assumes metaphoric force in Gaines's works, figuring forth in historical perspective the oppression of black people generally. The fictive plantation world, then, is uniquely micro-cosmic. It is south Louisiana, the south, the nation as a whole. This aspect is explored, for example, in the title story of *Bloodline*. Copper, a character of mythopoeic proportion, the militant young son of a now deceased white plantation owner and a black woman field hand, stages a heroic return, presumably from his education in school and in the world at large, to claim his heritage: recognition of kinship by an aristocratic white uncle and his rightful share of the land. In *In My Father's House*, and for the first time, Gaines deals with the black father-son relationship, and explores a neglected aspect of African American life: the perplexities of the public vs. private person relative to individual responsibility. The Reverend Phillip Martin, a grass roots Civil Rights leader in the fictional south Louisiana town of St. Adrienne, is forced to confront his wayward past when his estranged son Etienne, reminiscent of Copper, comes to claim paternal recognition and redress of grievances.

In *A Gathering of Old Men* Gaines extends the thematic concerns of his earlier novels into a new South setting, employing a multiple first-person point of view in the manner of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. The conflict between blacks and cajuns comes to a cinematically stylized, somewhat surrealistic climax and resolution as several old black men gather in mutual militant defense of one of their number who has been accused of killing Cajun farmer Beau Boutan, confronting the local sheriff as well as the slain man's avenging father, "retired" nightrider Fix Boutan. The result is a gripping allegorical tale of race relations in the new South resonant with the Gainesian theme of individual responsibility, this time for holding ground in the wake of the civil rights gains of the 1960s and 1970s.

In Gaines's 1993 novel *A Lesson Before Dying*, set in 1940, individual responsibility is highlighted again. Wiggins, the novel's narrator, is a young school teacher and one among a number of Gainesian tutelary figures. Wiggins is pressured by his elders into assuming the responsibility of mentor to Jefferson, a young black manchild who awaits execution for having taken part in the murder of a white storekeeper, a crime for which he is apparently unjustly convicted in a racist environment. A National Book Critics Circle award winner in 1994, *A Lesson* chronicles the young Jefferson's gradual assumption of responsibility, under Wiggins's increasingly committed mentorship, for assimilating the attributes of manhood before he dies in the electric chair. In one of

Gaines's characteristic ironies, Wiggins's mentorship of Jefferson contributes to his own edification as well.

Further Readings

Manuscript Collection

- Dupree Library, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette.

Critical Studies

- "Human Dignity and Pride in the Novels of Ernest Gaines" by Winifred L. Stoelting, in *CLA Journal* (Baltimore), March 1971
- "Ernest J. Gaines: Change, Growth, and History" by Jerry H. Bryant, in *Southern Review* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), October 1974
- "Bayonne ou le Yoknapatawpha d'Ernest Gaines" by Michel Fabre in *Recherches Anglaises et Américaines 9* (Strasbourg), 1976
- "To Make These Bones Live: History and Community in Ernest Gaines's Fiction" by Jack Hicks, in *Black American Literature Forum* (Terre Haute, Indiana), Spring 1977
- "Ernest Gaines: 'A Long Day in November'" by Nalenz Puschmann, in *The Black American Short Story in the 20th Century* edited by Peter Bruck, Amsterdam, Grüner, 1978
- "The Quarters: Ernest J. Gaines and the Sense of Place" by Charles H. Rowell, in *Southern Review* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), Summer 1985 .
- *Critical Reflections on the Fiction of Ernest J. Gaines*, edited by David C. Estes. Athens, University of Georgia Press, 1994 .
- *Wrestling Angels into Song: The Fictions of Ernest J. Gaines and James Alan McPherson* by Herman Beavers. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995 .
- *Ernest J. Gaines: A Critical Companion* by Karen Carmean. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1998 .

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Ernest J. Gaines

Concise Dictionary of American Literary Biography, October 15, 1989

Born: January 15, 1933 in United States, Louisiana, Pointe Coupee Parish

Nationality: American

Occupation: Novelist

- *Catherine Carmier* (New York: Atheneum, 1964; London: Secker & Warburg, 1966).
- *Of Love and Dust* (New York: Dial, 1967; London: Secker & Warburg, 1968).
- *Bloodline* (New York: Dial, 1968).
- *A Long Day in November* (New York: Dial, 1971).
- *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (New York: Dial, 1971; London: Joseph, 1973).
- *In My Father's House* (New York: Knopf, 1978; London: Prior, 1978).
- *A Gathering of Old Men* (New York: Knopf, 1983).
- *A Lesson Before Dying* (New York: Knopf, 1993).

Ernest J. Gaines has since the publication of *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* in 1971 established himself as one of the most prominent of contemporary African American writers. The CBS television presentation of Gaines's most famous novel on 31 January 1974 helped bring to public awareness a history of black Americans that had been too long ignored. Two other works have also been made into televised dramas: "The Sky is Gray," a story from the *Bloodline* collection (1968) that was produced for public television in 1980, and *A Gathering of Old Men*, which appeared on CBS (10 May 1987). Gaines has received many awards, most recently a MacArthur Foundation award in recognition of his achievements (1993) and the 1994 National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction for *A Lesson Before Dying* (1993). Like one of his models, William Faulkner, Gaines has chosen to focus his fiction on a small portion of the South, discovering in his mythical Bayonne, Louisiana, a great richness of human experience. The fact that it is a world that had been largely ignored simply adds to his importance as an interpreter of American culture.

Gaines was born on the River Lake Plantation near Oscar, Louisiana; his parents, Manuel and Adrienne Gaines, were sharecroppers. Gaines has described digging potatoes as a young child for fifty cents a day. His paraplegic aunt, Augusteen Jefferson, managed to feed, clothe, and discipline him and his brothers while their parents worked in the fields. The world of the plantation and nearby town, with its mixture of blacks, black and white Creoles, and Cajuns, has served as the setting for all of Gaines's fiction. His aunt has served as the model for the recurring figure of the strong older woman whose endurance, faith, and sacrifice have aided generations of struggling African Americans.

Gaines's parents separated when Ernest was eight, and he lost contact with his father, who served in World War II and then moved to New Orleans. After the war his mother moved to California to join her new husband, who was in the merchant marine. Ernest remained in Louisiana to help Aunt Augusteen with the younger children. In 1948, at the age of fifteen, he joined his mother and stepfather in Vallejo, California, because there was no black high school in Pointe Coupé Parish. While in high school he began extensive reading. The kind of people he had grown up knowing were missing from the stories of America and the South he read, and, while still relatively young, he began writing about their experiences. Some of his early models were nineteenth-century Russian

novelists -- Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Nikolay Gogol -- who focused on the lives of rural people. His literary apprenticeship continued through his time at Vallejo Junior College and two years in the army. In 1956 his first stories were published in *Transfer*, a San Francisco little magazine, while he was studying at San Francisco State College. After he graduated in 1957, Gaines accepted a Wallace Stegner fellowship in the creative writing program at Stanford University (1958-1959).

His fiction focuses on the folk culture of rural Louisiana, including the small town he calls Bayonne. His characters are primarily those blacks who work on the plantations, but he also treats Cajuns and Creoles. Unlike other storytellers of the region, such as George Washington Cable, Kate Chopin, and Walker Percy, Gaines takes the perspective of ordinary black residents, often semiliterate and ignorant of the larger world. Nonetheless, the world he creates is richly multicultural, and he renders with care its complex race and class tensions and interactions. His decision to focus on the early and mid twentieth century means that he can examine racial oppression and also the methods blacks used to endure it during a time of transition. His world is one in which the modern problems of alienation and social change are played out in local terms.

Gaines depicts an organic society in which blacks and whites are both culturally and socially conservative. Strong figures, usually black males, emerge to challenge the existing order, especially on matters of race. They face resistance not only from whites, whose authority and sense of superiority are questioned, but also traditional blacks, who assume both the futility and danger of social disruption. Gaines refuses to simplify these struggles into categories of good and evil; instead, he explores the human meanings and implications of resistance and endurance. While those seeking change are depicted as heroic, they also are shown to endanger themselves and others. Those who endure rather than fight are often shown to preserve the stories of the heroes to inspire another generation. Thus, Gaines seeks to present a varied and complicated history of his small part of the South.

This complexity is evident in his first published novel, *Catherine Carmier* (1964), which is patterned after Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* in its depiction of rural life and the tensions between generations. Its protagonist, Jackson Bradley, has returned to the plantation after years of education. This training has alienated him from the values of the rural black community and especially his Aunt Charlotte, a very religious woman who had hoped that he would return to teach in the local school. Jackson wishes to leave but finds himself imprisoned by his inability to tell Charlotte the truth and by the rekindling of his love for Catherine. The title character is the daughter of a black Creole farmer, Raoul, who believes himself racially and socially superior to blacks and who has forbidden his daughters to have anything to do with them, including Jackson. This isolates Catherine, who nonetheless feels a deep love for her father, a man she sees as courageously resisting the Cajun takeover of all the good farmland. Though she loves Jackson, she cannot leave Raoul. Thus, both Catherine and Jackson are immobilized by the pressures of this rural community.

These twin themes of isolation and paralysis give the novel an existential quality. Characters must face an unfriendly world without guidance and must make crucial choices about their lives. Raoul, an embittered, lonely man, works his land and restricts his daughters, not out of hope for a better future but because he defines his manhood in terms of his resistance to both Cajun greed and to what he sees as black acquiescence to that greed. He takes pride in both his family history and in his own ability to work hard and productively. His increasing age and lack of a son cause him despair over the future; though doomed to ultimate failure, he continues to struggle because it is the struggle that has given his life meaning.

Aunt Charlotte seems in many ways the opposite of Raoul. She has had two sources of hope in her life: her religion and Jackson. Her religion has given her the strength to endure the difficulties of her life because she

believes that there is an underlying spiritual meaning to everything that has happened. Unlike Raoul, she puts her faith in something outside herself. Her initial crisis comes when Jackson refuses to attend church services with her; she sees this as a possible judgment on her own faith and on the efficacy of her prayers. But because Jackson has returned, she has confidence that he will eventually completely reenter the community, including the church. The greater crisis occurs when he finally announces to her that he will not remain. We discover that Charlotte, like Raoul, has staked all of her hopes on a son. Her frustration is in some ways even greater because she has the son (psychologically if not biologically) and he fails to live up to her expectations. She feels so deeply betrayed that not even her religious faith can give her real relief from despair. She becomes physically ill, and even after she recovers she cannot fully accept the meaning of the experience.

Jackson, though he intends no harm to Aunt Charlotte, cannot help but hurt her because of his own lack of faith. His experience of the outside world has led him away from what he considers the parochial values of his aunt and her community. He cannot accept an unquestioning faith in a divine order when he has both learned the value of reason and has used reason to gain an understanding of human behavior. And though not politically active, he rejects the idea that the existing racial order is either natural or unchangeable. His problem is that he has no new values with which to replace the old ones. His reason has left him with skepticism and not with hope. The source of his despair is thus the very opposite of that of Raoul and Charlotte. The future seems closed to them because there is no one to whom they can pass on their values; to Jackson, the future is far too open because he is young but has no direction. The story is in one sense Jackson's search for a home, a place he can have faith in and still be true to his reason.

He tries to create this place through his love for Catherine, but this effort is made extremely difficult by her attachment to her father. At first she rejects the idea that she even cares for Jackson, even though they had loved each other before he left. That separation was caused in part by Raoul's refusal to allow his daughter to have anything to do with young black men. While Jackson was gone for several years, the relationship between father and daughter deepened, to the extent that her mother, Della, claimed that Catherine was more of a wife than she herself was. While no incest is implied, Raoul's attitude toward his daughter is very much that of a jealous husband. He watches over her constantly and will not allow her to develop close ties to any other people in the community. When she falls in love with a young Creole man and bears his child, Raoul drives off the baby's father and isolates Catherine even more completely. Catherine accepts Raoul despite his fanatical behavior and even sees in him a kind of heroism for showing so much devotion to the land and to his family. She gladly becomes a substitute son for him, even though his actions virtually guarantee that the land will be lost to the Cajuns after his death.

Jackson disturbs this unnatural equilibrium by seeking and getting Catherine's love. But in place of Raoul's imprisoning devotion to land and family, the young man can offer escape to nowhere and nothing in particular. Catherine is torn between the desire for freedom and her love of father and the soil. Much of the book is devoted to an analysis of her fluctuating loyalties and to Jackson's uncertainties about the meaning and future of the relationship. Meanwhile the two of them continue to meet in secret, fearful of Raoul's anger. In a final confrontation, Jackson defeats Raoul in a fistfight and believes himself to have literally won Catherine. To his surprise, however, she insists that she must nurse her father back to health and that the conqueror must wait to gain his prize. Jackson's bitterness at this ironic turn is neutralized somewhat by Della's observation that he has in fact won; Catherine no longer sees her father as heroic, and her admiration has turned to pity. If the victor will be patient, he will have what he sought. Crucial to her understanding is the revelation that Raoul deliberately killed their son, Marky, the product of Della's extramarital liaison with a black man. In effect, what all the family now understands is that Jackson has exacted Marky's revenge and become the son that Raoul destroyed. Consistent with the naturalistic tone that dominates the work, the father acquires the son only by being beaten

and supplanted, and the son can acquire a father and a family only by allowing himself to be imprisoned in the very life he wishes to escape. The end of the novel has Jackson waiting in the yard, "hoping that Catherine would come back outside. But she never did." The reader is left in a state of uncertainty, having to choose between Della's optimistic reading of events and Jackson's own despair. Neither possibility will bring him comfort. Either he has lost Catherine or, the deepest irony, he has succeeded in his quest, but at the price of his freedom.

Perhaps because of this ambiguity and pessimism, the book did not receive much attention when it was first published. Even with Gaines's increasing reputation, *Catherine Carmier* has been largely neglected. Those who have commented on it tend to see its pessimism as reflective of the influence of Hemingway, an influence which Gaines himself has conceded. It is considered the most despairing of his works and, perhaps for that reason, the least characteristic. While this latter point can be debated, given the tone of some later works, it is clear that *Catherine Carmier* is not entirely successful in presenting its major characters and their motivations. It is hard to understand, for example, what draws Catherine and Jackson together, given the experiences and values they have accumulated over the time of separation. Moreover, the revelation of the cause of Marky's death is unnecessarily melodramatic. On the other hand, Gaines does begin here to create a sense of the black community and its perceptions of the world around it. Shared ways of speaking, thinking, and relating to the dominant white society are shown through several minor characters. This element of Gaines's fiction continues to develop throughout his career; it is the very richness of this social fabric that calls into question the frustration and sterility of the major characters in this first novel.

Though *Catherine Carmier* was not a critical or financial success, Gaines steadfastly worked on his writing. Though he does not consider himself prolific, he wrote four novels (of which only *Catherine Carmier* was published) and a dozen short stories before *Of Love and Dust* brought him recognition in 1967. Some of the success of the new book can be explained by certain differences between it and his first novel. This new book deals much more directly with the black-white relationship, including miscegenation, and thus could be considered more accessible than the earlier work, which focused almost exclusively on black life. In addition, *Of Love and Dust* more clearly condemns the economic, social, and racial system of the South for the problems faced by its characters. While Gaines is not a protest novelist in the tradition of Richard Wright, his questioning of the southern political structure certainly would strike a chord at the socially tumultuous time it was published. Finally, hope, if not optimism, is apparent at the end of this work, which clearly was not the case with *Catherine Carmier*.

Of Love and Dust is narrated by Jim Kelly, a middle-aged black man who has gained a degree of respect on the plantation where he works. He is trusted by both the owner and the overseer to do his job well. Part of that job becomes the supervising of Marcus, a young man charged with stabbing another man and released into the custody of Marshall Hebert, the plantation owner. Jim is asked by Miss Julie Rand, another of Gaines's "aunt" figures and Marcus's godmother, to take care of Marcus while he is at the plantation. She believes him to be good despite his obvious bitterness, hostility, and insensitivity.

Sidney Bonbon, the white overseer on the farm, expects Jim to help break Marcus of his rebelliousness and arrogance by forcing him to labor in the fields under intolerable conditions. As a result, Marcus considers Jim a traitor to his race for cooperating with the white bosses and contemplates ways of getting even with the whites. While Jim tries to keep his promise to Miss Julie, he finds it difficult to deal with a man so unwilling to adapt to his conditions. All of the black community becomes alarmed when Marcus starts paying attention to Bonbon's black mistress, Pauline, with whom the overseer is very much in love. In fact, he cares more for her than he does for his white wife. One of the accomplishments of the novel is Gaines's presentation of the nuances of

such a relationship. Everyone on the plantation, including Bonbon's wife, knows of this love, yet no one can in any way acknowledge it, not even the two children that are its products. A very careful social etiquette is followed, by which everybody ignores what they all in fact know.

When Marcus is rejected by Pauline, he turns his attentions to Bonbon's wife, Louise, who desires revenge on her husband for his infidelity. The black community, represented in this instance by Aunt Margaret, is horrified by this development, not merely because of Marcus's motives, but more important because his action threatens the security of the whole community. If it is discovered that a black man is violating this most sacred of southern taboos, then every black man is a potential target of white violence. But even though he is repeatedly warned by Jim against such behavior, Marcus's desire for self-gratification overwhelms the need for community safety.

What in fact happens is that Marcus and Louise transcend their exploitative motives and begin to love each other, much like Pauline and Bonbon. They then plot an escape with the aid of Marshall Hebert, the owner, who has his own reasons for getting back at his overseer. Hebert then betrays the lovers by arranging Bonbon's presence at the moment of their leaving. Marcus is killed, Louise goes insane, and Bonbon and Pauline flee the plantation. Jim also must leave, because Hebert realizes that he knows too much to be fully trustworthy.

In the process of telling the story, Jim comes to understand two things. One is Bonbon's statement to him that they are all victims. Race is ultimately less important than one's position in the social and economic hierarchy. Hebert and the system he has created and maintained are vastly more powerful than any of the petty manipulations of Marcus and Bonbon. The second insight Jim gains comes from observing Marcus. While Marcus's motives were primarily selfish, he still displayed a courage and spirit that deserved respect if not emulation. Jim learns that he himself has been too willing to accept his victimization. Throughout the story he has been a blues performer, singing and talking of lost loves and opportunities. He has chosen to be self-pitying and self-protective, but Marcus has taught him that risk is necessary if one is going to live in dignity. Jim acknowledges this lesson when he refuses to accept Hebert's offer of a recommendation. Though it will make his life more difficult, he realizes that his integrity requires cutting all ties to such a man. Unlike Jackson of *Catherine Carmier*, Jim Kelly has hope at the end of the novel because he has found something to believe in -- himself.

By moving to a first-person narrative in *Of Love and Dust*, Gaines renders life in rural Louisiana much more effectively. Jim Kelly both speaks in the idiom of the place and time and instinctively asserts the values of the black community. Thus, a much greater immediacy is apparent here than in *Catherine Carmier*. But beyond these benefits, the first-person narration also comes closer to the ideal of the folk storyteller and thus is more appropriate than omniscient narration to the folk materials Gaines uses in his fiction. He has said that the novel was inspired by a Lightning Hopkins blues song, "Mr. Tim Moore's Farm," and clearly Gaines's method of presenting the story comes closer than his first novel to resembling black folk stories of love and trouble. The book received decidedly mixed reviews. While Sara Blackburn asserted Gaines "is a writer of terrific energy; his characters have a dimension and authenticity that make us care about them" (*Nation*, 5 February 1968), James Lea found them to be stereotypical and unconvincing. He felt the book was "mustily reminiscent of innumerable novels of the down-on-the-old-plantation variety" (*Saturday Review*, 20 January 1968).

Some of Gaines's best use of folk material comes in the stories collected in *Bloodline*. Although this book came out in 1968, some of the stories were among the first of his work to be published. Three of the five, "A Long Day in November" (1958), "Just Like a Tree" (1962), and "The Sky is Gray" (1963), preceded *Catherine Carmier*. Nonetheless, some factors unify the collection. The sequence is determined in part by the age of the narrator or central figure: beginning with a six-year-old in the first story, these characters get progressively older

until Aunt Fe, in the last story, is on the verge of death. Further, the action of each story is confined to a single day in the area around Bayonne, Louisiana. Thematically, the stories in *Bloodline* are about the relationships between younger and older generations; more specifically, they usually deal with a son's heritage from his father. Stylistically, they are presented in the folk idiom of rural southern blacks. Gaines displays in these stories a mastery of these speech patterns, giving them an authenticity that is seldom present in dialect writing.

The second story of the collection, "The Sky is Gray," reflects Gaines's career-long concern with the achievement of manhood within the context of community. The eight-year-old narrator of the story learns about social rules, in this case the rules about race relations and personal integrity. Gaines has said that this story is patterned after Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path," and the connection is clear in the journey motif and the need for certain rituals. The difference is in the level of experience of the central character: while Welty's Phoenix Jackson has taken her journey many times, this is the initial and thus most important journey for James .

He has already had several painful episodes in his young life when his mother sought to teach him crucial lessons in survival. Because his father is in the army, she is the only one who can provide for the family. Fearing that something might also happen to her, she wants James to be able to take care of the others. Out of this necessity, she one day forces him to kill two small redbirds he has caught in a trap. When he cries that they should be set free, she beats him until he stabs them. Since the birds make very little food, James fails to understand her actions until an aunt explains that the mother wants him to learn that survival is more important than sentiment.

When he develops a toothache, an opportunity develops for him to learn another lesson in survival, this time black survival in a white-dominated, racist society. What James must become aware of is the system of rules that dictates black-white relations. His grasp of the rules is evident when he gets on the bus and immediately moves to the back, past the "White-Colored" sign, before looking for a seat. What he will acquire in Bayonne is a sense of the complexity of the system and of the means of maintaining one's dignity under such conditions.

In the dentist's office he is presented with two different perspectives on social adaptation in a confrontation between an alienated, educated young man, much like Jackson of *Catherine Carmier*, and a black preacher who defends the principles of faith and humility. The young man rejects those principles in the name of reason and the harsh view of reality that reason has given him. In frustration over this attack on his way of life, the preacher strikes the young man. The preacher acts this way not only in order to protect what is for him a relatively successful compromise with the powers that be but also because the refusal to compromise could be a threat to the entire black community. This same fear was expressed in *Of Love and Dust*. The community would be doubly threatened if its children began to admire the spokesmen of such a view, as James does here: "When I grow up I want to be just like him. I want clothes like that and I want to keep a book with me, too."

When the dentist closes for lunch without attending to James, he and his mother must walk the streets in the bitterly cold weather. Not permitted to enter any of the white-owned restaurants, they have no way of keeping warm. James now receives another lesson in survival and racial etiquette. His mother takes him into a hardware store and positions him by a hot stove. She then asks to examine an ax handle. While she looks over several, she keeps glancing at James; when she sees that he is warm, they leave without buying anything. In this way, she provides him an example of how to get the necessities of life without giving whites the satisfaction of seeing her beg.

A third lesson that is social in nature comes in an encounter between mother and son and a white couple who

sincerely desire to help them. The white woman wishes to give them food, but James's mother refuses to accept it as charity. They agree that the boy must work for the food by carrying around the garbage cans. Though he believes the cans to be empty, James is prevented by the women from opening them. After the meal James's mother wishes to buy a small amount of salt pork in the couple's tiny grocery and is offended when the owner attempts to give her a piece much larger than her quarter will buy. James's mother refuses to accept more meat than she can pay for.

This scene is important in showing the nuances of race relations. Even those people who wish to transcend racial hostilities must do so in the context of the social rules. These two women cannot face each other candidly; they must play their socially assigned roles despite their personal desires. Moreover, in the charade of the garbage cans, they conspire to teach James that the maintaining of dignity in human contacts is a fragile process. That James may have started learning this and the other lessons is indicated in the mother's last words: "'You not a bum,' she says. 'You a man.'"

While the first four stories in *Bloodline* feature male protagonists, the last story, "Just Like a Tree," treats a matriarchal figure. Although Aunt Fe has always lived on the land, her family fears for her safety and wants to move her to the city. The move seems necessary because Emmanuel, her grandnephew, has been active in the civil rights movement; as a result, whites have started bombing black homes. The setting of the story is Fe's home the night before she is to leave. Family and friends have come for a final celebration of her life. The story is narrated by these visitors, following, as Gaines has noted, the structure of William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Significantly, the only characters we do not hear directly from are Emmanuel and Fe herself. The effect is to give us a broadly based sense of both the public and private meanings of one of Gaines's aunts. The voices of the old and the young, male and female, black and white offer a broad and deep sense of the quality of life for which the characters in the other stories have been searching. At the end of "Just Like a Tree," we see why that quest is so crucial. In an ironic play on the spiritual from which the title is derived, Aunt Fe "will not be moved": she dies after a nightlong conversation with Aunt Lou, her lifelong friend. Her death, which seems willed, signifies that life for her is sustained by a time, place, and community that contain the richness of her experience. To leave all of that is to die spiritually, and for her physical life is nothing without the spirit.

Critics have seen *Bloodline* as a series of portraits of southern black rural life in which the characters search for manhood. While Gaines is praised for the effectiveness of his characterizations and settings, doubts are raised about his way of defining manhood as primarily aggressive, head-oriented behavior and about the apparent lack of resolution in the stories. Granville Hicks, for example, commented that "Gaines has trouble in winding up [some] stories. In spite of my reservations about the endings, they are strong stories" (*Saturday Review*, 19 August 1968). Gaines deliberately leaves his characters facing the future, trying to apply the lessons they have learned.

The time after the publication of *Bloodline* was devoted to the writing of what turned out to be Gaines's most effective and most popular work, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971). The novel started out as a communal biography, a fuller version of "Just Like a Tree." In writing, Gaines made the brilliant discovery of Jane's own voice, which radically changed the nature of the book. Through this point of view came both a fully rounded character and a folk history of the black experience in America from the Civil War to civil rights. One hundred and eight years old when she tells the story, Jane captures the experiences of those millions of illiterate blacks who never had a chance to tell their own stories. By focusing on the particular yet typical events of a small part of Louisiana, those lives are given a concreteness and specificity not possible in more general histories. Gaines accomplishes this by showing the impact of the larger events of those one hundred years -- the war, Reconstruction, segregation, the civil rights movement -- on individual blacks. But the work is not simply

another historical novel, for the narrator enriches the story with elements of popular culture and folk experiences. Boxing and baseball on the radio, comic strips, sermons, voodoo, and superstitions all make their way into Jane's story. What we have, in effect, is the totality of life as lived by Jane; in the process, the author reveals what it is that gives his aunt figures, including Jane, Fe, and Charlotte, their stability and dignity.

The narrator structures her saga primarily through the experiences of a series of heroes, but she always presents them in the context of their nonheroic communities. Jane herself is shown to have heroic potential when, in the opening pages, she tells of beatings she suffered as a child because, though a slave, she insisted on being called by the name given her by a Yankee soldier who passed through the plantation. She also encourages a group of slaves to leave the plantation as soon as the war is over.

It is at this point that Gaines establishes a crucial tension of the text. The efforts of this group are challenged by those who are older because they question the value of radical change; they doubt that white hostility has lessened just because the war has ended. This more conservative group does *not* believe that whites necessarily know better or are better than blacks, but their experience tells them that confrontation produces trouble for both individuals and the community. They value security over the risks of freedom.

Their fears are realized when the departing group is attacked by a gang of Confederate veterans who kill all but Jane and the little boy Ned, who manage to hide. The incident also sets forth Gaines's use of the conventional idea of heroism. Big Laura, Ned's mother, dies fighting back against the white violence. Her story is one that Jane tells to Ned and others for years as one model of black courage. Thus, the hero advances the cause of freedom but at the cost of her/his life. Jane's role becomes that of the preserver of the legends which will inspire others.

Jane herself settles down after this experience into the relatively passive role of observer and bearer of stories. Ned, encouraged by Jane, follows in the steps of his mother. He goes away for education but then returns to teach and to encourage the community to claim its rights. He renames himself Ned Douglass as a way of claiming the mantle of the great orator and activist Frederick Douglass. The price of his dignity and leadership is his death; he is assassinated by a Cajun friend of Jane's, who is also a hired killer. Albert Cluveau, the killer, represents, as did Bonbon in *Of Love and Dust*, the white man caught in a system of racial oppression almost as much as the blacks. Cluveau cannot refuse to murder Ned; to do so would cost him his own life.

Another kind of heroism is symbolized by Joe Pittman, a man who sought economic rather than political freedom. Joe's antagonist is nature rather than racism. He defines his manhood by his ability to break wild horses; he does so even when the horse is one that Jane calls a "ghost." He dies in the effort to tame the untamable. Jane acknowledges his bravery by taking his name, even though they never were legally married.

Acquiring a fatalistic wisdom through these experiences, Jane both fears and admires courage. She herself is an important part of the community, but she retains a degree of individuality and independence that allows her to understand the heroes that enter her life. For example, she is made a church mother because of her devotion, but she loses that status when she prefers listening to baseball games over attending Sunday services. But what she listens to in part is the performance of Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers, whom she sees as another hero of the race.

The relationship between religion and heroism is made even more explicit in the story of the last of the book's legendary figures. From the time Jimmy Aaron is born, the old people label him The One, a modern Moses to

lead them. They understand this in spiritual terms and carefully watch and train him to be the person they want. He then goes away for schooling and returns, prepared to lead. But he wishes to lead them into the civil rights movement, not to the Promised Land. They cannot follow because of their deeply ingrained caution and their long experience with danger of confrontation. They fear losing everything with no guarantee of any improvement in their lives.

Jane, too, though she admires Jimmy and believes him to be right, doubts the effectiveness of his call to action, given southern racial conditions. When he is killed, her fears seem confirmed. But this time she decides that she must act. On the last page of the story, she faces the plantation owner, Robert Samson, who has said that anyone who marches will lose his home: "Me and Robert looked at each other a long time, then I went by him." Jane's action is, in essence, that of the black masses, who put aside very real fears and long-established habits of accommodation to white power in order to play their role in history, to become the heroes of their own story.

Though this work, like the earlier ones, leaves the character at the beginning rather than at the end of some experience, Gaines gives a much stronger sense of the character's probable success in whatever must be endured. This optimism is doubtless one reason why the book was both critically and financially successful. Consistently the work has been praised not only for its effective use of folk materials but also for its integration of political and artistic concerns. Jerry Bryant called Jane "a master of her people's language" who is "unsurpassed as a story-teller" (*Nation*, 5 April 1971). P. L. Gerber adds that Gaines's command of the Louisiana black and Cajun dialects is "masterful" (*Saturday Review*, 1 May 1971).

The popularity of the book was such that a television movie was made of it. Though Stacy Keach Jr. wrote the screenplay, Gaines was actively involved as a consultant. The production received high ratings and won praise from television critics. Because of key changes from the novel, however, the movie did stir some controversy in academic journals. The shift from a black to a white frame figure who interviews Jane, the revision of certain historical elements, and the revised ending, where Jane actually goes to Bayonne to drink from a segregated fountain, all have been cited as evidence that the producers of the film undercut the novel's message in order to make it more palatable to a largely white audience.

Gaines remained out of the controversy, preferring to return to his writing. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship (1973-1974) to continue his work. He began a novel, "The House and the Field," which he later put aside in order to write *In My Father's House*, which was published in 1978.

This novel returns to the father-and-son theme of the earlier works. As in *Catherine Carmier* a key character is a young man whose life is rootless and who seeks some meaning for his existence. But *In My Father's House* differs from the earlier works in its urban setting and the noncentrality of rural folk materials. The transition from rural to urban life has largely cut away such connections. Reflecting this change, the novel is set several years after the conclusion of *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. Though the central character, Philip Martin, is a civil rights leader, the movement, like the black community, is in transition. Throughout, characters question the utility of protest and of white participation in the movement. The idealism that inspired Ned Douglass and Jimmy Aaron has dissipated.

The plot of the novel involves Martin's recognition of his illegitimate son and then his quest to find out the truth and consequences of his past life. In the beginning he is a highly respected, now rather conservative leader in the community whose reputation has been made in earlier nonviolent activism. His efforts for equality have necessarily shifted from social and political protests to less dramatic economic protests. In the process many

people, including the black middle class represented here by schoolteachers, have become indifferent and cynical. In the midst of arousing enthusiasm for a new demonstration, Martin is confronted with the return of his son, who calls himself Robert X. The father is so shocked by this ghost from his past that he faints when he first sees the young man. Martin's inability to justify having abandoned Robert and his mother and Robert's hostility toward his father make communication between the two impossible. Nonetheless, Martin becomes obsessed with this aspect of his past, to the neglect of his civil rights activity. He returns to the plantation where he grew up, where he loved and lived with Johanna many years before. He then goes to Baton Rouge and encounters friends of his youth, including Chipppo Simon, his alter ego, who has become as dissipated as Martin would have been if he had not found religion and civil rights. In a final dramatic scene, Martin learns that his son has committed suicide. He fights with Chipppo over the question of responsibility for the past and achieves a tentative reconciliation with his wife.

In some ways *In My Father's House* is one of the most pessimistic of Gaines's books. All of the son figures are somehow misguided. Robert has been destroyed by his own hate and frustration; Billy, a young man Martin meets in Baton Rouge, has lost all contact with his father and has turned to suicidal revolutionary violence; and Jonathan, the young minister in Martin's church, refuses, in his arrogance and inexperience, to be guided by the wisdom of the past in his role as new leader. Given such characters, the future holds little promise. Moreover, the circumstances of Martin's tragedy suggest a rather strong destructive and deterministic aspect to human experience. Martin's final perception that nothing can be done about the past and that it does not necessarily bring life or enlightenment contradicts Jane Pittman's implicit assertion that history is full of meaning and that it gives vitality to the present.

This nihilistic undertone is perhaps responsible for some of the weaknesses of the book. Inadequate motivation is provided for Martin's immediate acceptance of Robert as his son and the resultant obsession with private responsibility to the neglect of social responsibility. He suddenly wants to be a father after abandoning Johanna and her children twenty years earlier. The son Martin sacrifices himself for is a flat, burned-out character whose psychological deadness is inadequately accounted for. The deterministic element gives the book a mechanical quality, with characters functioning more as opportunities for Martin to talk about fathers and sons than for effective dramatic action to take place. The resolution and hopefulness at the end seem imposed and not the natural product of the story's development. Critical response reflected discomfort with the novel's tone and theme. V. M. Burke noted that it has "a weak plot, stick figures, and flat redundant writing, except for runs of crackling dialogue" (*Library Journal*, 1 June 1978). Ellen Lippman, in the *Southern Literary Journal* (November 1978), generally praised it but felt that "Gaines' pace is a little slow, however, and, unfortunately, neither Martin's developing urgency nor Etienne's desperation rings true."

A Gathering of Old Men (1983) returns to the rural world of Gaines's earlier fiction, but its time is closer to the present. On the Marshall plantation the only ones left are the old blacks who have worked the land all their lives, the white Marshalls, and the Cajuns who are gradually displacing the blacks. In one sense the novel is a detective story. A Cajun work boss, Beau Boutan, has been killed in front of the cabin of Mathu, one of the blacks. Since the latter has a history of confrontations with the Boutan family, the case seems open-and-shut. But when Sheriff Mapes arrives on the scene, several black men are present with their recently fired shotguns. Moreover, Candy Marshall, in order to protect the old man who essentially raised her, claims that she is the guilty one. With an excess of suspects and the possibility of racial violence, Mapes is compelled to listen to all of their stories. Complicating the situation is the fact that the sheriff believes that none of the men except Mathu has enough courage to commit murder, and so he is baffled by this group compulsion to confess.

The emotional center of the novel is its collection of stories. Each man tells of the accumulated frustrations and

injustices of his life -- raped daughters, jailed sons, public insults, economic exploitation -- that serve as sufficient motive for murder. Though Beau Boutan is seldom the immediate cause of their anger, he clearly represents the entire white world that has deprived them of their dignity and manhood. The confessions serve as ritual purgings of all the hostility and self-hatred built up over the years. If they did not literally kill Boutan, they symbolically did so many times, and thus their confessions are psychologically true. What makes their narratives especially poignant is their previous submissiveness and even impotence; in addition to Mapes, the Cajuns, Candy, and, most important, Mathu have always assumed that they are weak and insignificant. Through their stories they face their self-hatred and enter, at least metaphorically, their manhood. The actual murderer turns out not to be Mathu, as everyone, including all the "confessors," believed, but Charlie, who for fifty years has been the weakest of them all. He has always absorbed abuse and run away from trouble, even though he is the biggest and hardest working of the blacks. When he can absorb no more, he responds to Boutan's physical abuse by striking back in self-defense. He then tries to run, but Mathu threatens to beat him if he does. So he takes the old man's shotgun and kills the Cajun, who has come after him with his own gun. Then he runs again after begging Mathu to take the blame, which he does. But Charlie finds that something -- his nascent manhood -- prevents him from escaping. So he returns to accept responsibility and thus fully becomes a man, a change which is acknowledged by everyone, including the sheriff, when they call him Mr. Biggs.

Meanwhile, change is also being experienced in the Cajun community. The Boutans are planning their usual revenge on the blacks, but they come up against certain modern realities. Gil, Beau's brother, plays football at Louisiana State alongside a black running back. They are known throughout the region as Salt and Pepper. Their success as a combination has made race largely irrelevant; working together, they have the possibility of becoming All-Americans. The possibility will be destroyed for Gil if he is linked to racial violence. In other words he has begun to measure his life by values different from those of his father and brother. His reluctance offends his father, Fix, who refuses to accept change, but at the same time the father will not act without the son. Both are frustrated, but the effect is to create a new order.

Neither father nor son can prevent the final explosion of racist violence, led by a family associate, Luke Will. He and others arrive at Marshall just as Mapes is taking Charlie away. The whites open fire, and the old black men, who have in a sense been frustrated because their confessions had so little effect, get their chance to do what they have only dreamed of. The ensuing battle blends the absurd with the heroic. Some of the blacks accidentally fire their guns through Mathu's roof, and all of them miss their targets. In the end only Charlie and Luke Will are killed. Charlie dies because he refuses to use the protection of darkness; instead he stands at his full height and openly challenges the whites to shoot him. He kills Luke Will while being shot himself.

One of the most effective devices of the book is the variety of narrators. Developing the technique he used in "Just Like a Tree," Gaines employs white, Cajun, and black voices. He thereby achieves a range of social values as well as different perspectives on the action. Significantly, as in the earlier story, the central characters do not narrate; the words and actions of Candy, Mathu, and Charlie are reported by others. The author creates in this way a communal rather than individual story. The narrative works best when focused on the black community; the Cajun scenes lack the same rich texture, and the killing off of Charlie and Luke Will seems more related to the author's moral imperatives than to narrative necessity.

The effectiveness of the narrative is evidenced by the fact that it too was made into a successful television movie, starring Lou Gossett Jr. and Richard Widmark. *A Gathering of Old Men* appeared without the controversy connected with *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. The book received a California Commonwealth Award for Fiction, as well as generally positive reviews. The comment of Reynolds Price (*New York Times Book Review*, 30 October 1983) about Gaines is representative: "He has built, with large and single-minded skills, a

dignified and calamitous and perhaps finally comic pageant to summarize the history of an enormous, long waste in our past -- the mindless, mutual hatred of white and black, which, he implies, may slowly be healing."

Gaines's time after *A Gathering of Old Men* has been divided between Lafayette, Louisiana, where he teaches creative writing at Southwestern Louisiana State University, and San Francisco. During this period he also gained considerable recognition for his literary achievements. He received honorary doctorates from Brown University (1985), Bard College (1985), Whittier College (1986), and Louisiana State University (1987). Awards came from the San Francisco Arts Commission (1983), the Commonwealth Club of California (1984), and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters (1987). In 1993 he was given a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant and also was married to Dianne Saulney.

It was also in this year that he published *A Lesson Before Dying*, which continues the focus on manhood in its story of a young man, Jefferson, convicted of murder and condemned to die, and the teacher, Grant Wiggins, who is asked by the man's godmother to talk with him. As would be expected, Gaines concerns himself not so much with the fairness of the legal system as with the search for self-worth under conditions which work against it. The Hemingway value of "grace under pressure" has special resonance for Gaines's work, but to the personal struggle must be added the reality of racial oppression. Grant's task in the novel is not to save Jefferson but rather to convince him that he is not the "hog" he was described as being by his own lawyer in the trial.

Grant's problem is that he himself has little desire to be where he is and sees little value in trying to change Jefferson's perspective. He is another of the alienated young men of Gaines's fiction who has seen the larger world and has no faith in it or in his own ability to change it. But also like Jackson, Robert X, and others, he knows that he cannot return to the values and attitudes of the rural community he once belonged to. Grant only goes to Jefferson because he is urged to do so by his own aunt and by the woman he loves and with whom he wants to leave Louisiana with as soon as possible.

What happens in the interaction of these two men is that both are transformed by their experience. Grant attempts at first to offer some conventional wisdom and to understand Jefferson's position. The prisoner has become cynical in his self-hatred and hopelessness. He refuses to speak when others come to visit him, and he will not take solace in religion. Most of the novel is taken up with how each of them comes to see the other in human terms. Eventually, Jefferson is convinced to keep a journal that describes his feelings about his own life and about the people in it. The end result is that both men gain some sense of the value of their lives. With this recognition, Jefferson can die as a man rather than a hog, and Grant can be more sympathetic to the community he chose to leave.

The book was awarded in early 1994 the National Book Critics Circle Award as the best novel of 1993. The evaluation of Charles R. Larson (*Chicago Tribune*, 9 May 1993) demonstrates why it would be so recognized: "This majestic, moving novel is an instant classic, a book that will be read, discussed and taught beyond the rest of our lives."

The focus of Gaines on human dignity, especially African American humanity, has won him considerable recognition, critical praise, and financial success. In addition to the MacArthur award, he has received National Endowment for the Arts (1967), Rockefeller (1970), and Guggenheim (1971) grants. This recognition results not only from the quality of his storytelling but also because of his success at doing what many great writers have done: making a small world into a microcosm of universal human experience. Like William Faulkner, he has

created a "postage stamp" of the South that represents the whole world.

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 Office of the Chancellor

OK
 3.12.12

March 8, 2012

Dr. Ronald Mason Jr, President
 Southern University System Office
 4th Floor, J. S. Clark Administration Building
 Baton Rouge, La. 70813

**Ref: Authorization to grant an Associate of Science degree in
 Computer Science (Posthumous) to Mr. Brandon Hewitt**

Dear Dr. Mason:

This correspondence comes requesting approval that would authorize Southern University at Shreveport Louisiana (SUSLA) to grant an Associate of Science degree in Computer Science (Posthumous) to Mr. Brandon Hewitt. Mr. Hewitt was a sophomore enrolled at SUSLA, who maintained an overall GPA of 3.2 prior to a tragic and fatal automobile accident on August 2011.

Therein, it has been determined that the guidelines for awarding this degree have been met, and accordingly, recommendation to that end, have been directed to my attention. I, further, find concurrence, with Dr. Orella Brazile, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Academic Council to advance this consideration and wish that you deem this action appropriate to garner your endorsement.

I thank you in advance for you favorable response to this request.

Respectfully submitted,

Ray L. Belton, Ph.D.
 Chancellor

RLB/lw

3050 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DRIVE – SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA 71107
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OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Ray L. Belton
Chancellor

From: Dr. Orella Brazile *ORB*
Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Date: March 7, 2012

Re: Posthumous Degree for Brandon Hewitt

Based on the recommendation from the Mathematics and Computer Science Department and the Division of Science and Technology, the Academic Council voted to approve the request to award Brandon Hewitt posthumously the Associate Degree in Computer Science. Brandon was one semester before completing his degree when he died.

Enclosed are recommendations and additional documentation needed to support this recommendation.

/rsr

Enclosures



DIVISION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

To: Dr. Orella Brazile, Vice Chancellor - Academic Affair

From: Vanessa White, Department Head
Mathematics and Computer Science

Date: March 7, 2012

RE: Posthumously Associates degree for Brandon Hewitt.

March 7, 2012

This letter comes as a request for the approval of a posthumously Associates degree for deceased computer science major, Brandon Hewitt.

During Brandon Hewitt's matriculation at Southern University, Shreveport, he was involved in a tragic accident. Brandon was in the process of completing his last semester (Fall 2011) and his greatest desire was to obtain his Associate's degree in Computer Science, and afterwards pursuing his Bachelor's degree at Grambling State University.

The Computer Science department is requesting that you transmit this request through the necessary channels. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

cc: Dr. Barry Hester, Division Chairperson
Science and Technology

Received

MAR 06 2012

SUSLA Office of
Vice Chancellor
Academic Affairs

DIVISION OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. Orella Brazile, Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs

FROM: Dr. Barry Hester, Division Chairperson
Science & Technology



DATE: March 6, 2012

RE: Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt's Computer Science Degree – Awarding Degree Posthumously Request

Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt, a sophomore, recently deceased student, was working toward a degree in Computer Science here at Southern University at Shreveport. Mr. Hewitt was an active participant of the HBCU-UP Academic Scholarship Program, maintaining an overall GPA of 3.2. While meeting and achieving all requirements for the completion of the Computer Science Degree, he was only seventeen credit hours short of completing a degree in Computer Science.

On Friday morning, August 19, 2011, Ms. Josephine Loston, Coordinator of the HBCU-UP Program, spoke with Brandon regarding his scholarship and Fall Registration (see attached letter). She also informed him that all requirements toward maintaining his HBCU-UP Scholarship for the next semester had been met. He informed her that he would be completing his registration on Monday, August 22, 2011 and would be in classes on Monday, August 22, 2011. Unfortunately, on Friday night, August 19, 2011, Brandon died as a result of an auto accident.

We are aware that under the guidelines for awarding a degree, under these circumstances, the student must have been enrolled in school during the last semester at the time of his/her demise. Because of Mr. Hewitt's GPA and his intention to register for the fall semester, I am requesting that the Computer Science Degree be awarded to Brandon D. Hewitt posthumously and presented to his family. Please accept this communication as my official request. Thank you for your special consideration in this matter.

Cc: Ms. Josephine Loston



To: Dr. Ray Belton, Chancellor

From: Josephine Loston, Program Coordinator
HBCU-UP Program

Date: December 7, 2011

RE: **Brandon D. Hewitt's Computer Science Degree Diploma**

Brandon D. Hewitt a well deserving student was diligently working toward a degree in Computer Science. He also possessed strong work ethics and dedication making him an ideal candidate for meeting and achieving all requirements for a completing a Computer Science degree. Hewitt was also an active participant of the HBCU-UP Academic Scholarship Program, maintaining an overall GPA of 3.2, under the direction of Dr. Barry Hester. However, at the time of Brandon's untimely demise, he was seventeen credit hours short of accomplishing his degree in Computer Science.

I was informed today, December 7, 2011, by Dr. Orella Brazile, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Ms. Crystal Bobo in the registers office that the original status for Hewitt's diploma had changed. I was also informed that under the guidelines for this presentation, the student must be enrolled in school the last semester at the time of his demise.

On Friday morning, August 19, 2011, I spoke with Brandon concerning his intentions to register Monday, August 22, 2011 and to ensure him that all requirements to maintain his HBCU-UP Scholarship for the next semester had been met; the accident occurred Friday night, August 19, 2011.

Please accept this communication as an official letter of request for consideration for a Computer Science Degree Diploma to be presented to Brandon D. Hewitt.

Thank you for your special consideration in this matter.

Cc: Dr. Orella Brazile
Dr. Barry Hester
Ms. Crystal Bobo

**RESOLUTION
FOR
BRANDON D. HEWITT**

Associate of Science in Computer Science (Posthumously)

Whereas, Southern University at Shreveport, an institution within the Southern University and A & M System, seeks to provide quality education for its students, while being committed to the total community. This institution prepares students for careers in technical and occupational fields; awards certificates, diplomas and associate degrees; and offers courses and programs that are transferable to other colleges and universities. Dedicated to excellence in instruction and community service, this open enrollment institution promotes cultural diversity, provides developmental and continuing education, and seeks partnerships with business and industry; and

Whereas, the untimely passing of **Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt**, a very talented young man is a tragedy felt by the entire academic community, and where the loss is particularly difficult for the student's family, SUSLA administration, faculty, staff and peers' alike; and

Whereas, it is appropriate to recognize and honor the accomplishments of our recently deceased student **Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt**, in ways that promote the emotional healing of the family and the academic community; and

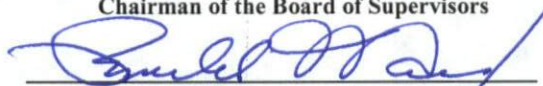
Whereas, it is the practice of numerous higher education institutions to award posthumous degrees to a recently deceased student who meet specified criteria, and

Whereas, it is the right and authority of the Faculty for Southern University at Shreveport to establish graduation requirements for eligible students at this institution

Be It Therefore Resolved, that the Faculty of Southern University at Shreveport determines that the criteria for the award of the Associate degree posthumously to **Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt**, has been completed. Namely, **Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt** meets all of the following provisions: (a) the student had been pre-advised for registration for the Fall 2011 semester at the time of death; (b) the enrolled courses would have fulfilled graduation requirements; and (c) the deceased student had a grade point average at the time of death which meets the University administration standards.

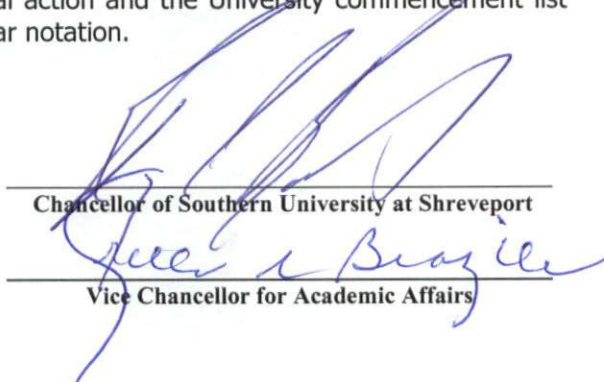
Be It further Resolved, that in those instances in which **Mr. Brandon D. Hewitt** meets the criteria for the award of a posthumous degree, the deceased student's transcript shall note that the degree was awarded posthumously by special action and the University commencement list shall include the name of the student with a similar notation.

Chairman of the Board of Supervisors



President of the Southern University System

Chancellor of Southern University at Shreveport



Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Office of the Chancellor
P.O. Box 9374
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70813

Voice: (225) 771-5020
FAX: (225) 771-5075

March 20, 2012

Dr. Ronald Mason, President
Southern University System
J. S. Clark Adm. Bldg.
Baton Rouge, LA 70813

Dear President Mason:

This communication comes to request your approval and the approval of the Board to delay any submittal of tenure and promotion recommendations for SUBR at this time. This delay is necessary because the declaration of financial exigency approved by the Board on October 28, 2011 has allowed the University to enter into a reorganization process that will affect both academic programs and tenured faculty. We therefore want to postpone our tenure and promotion recommendation submission to the Board for now.

Sincerely,

James L. Llorens
Chancellor, SUBR

xc: Ms. Cheryl Dunn
Ms. Evola Bates

Southern University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

Recruitment Update

March 9, 2012

High School Counselors Luncheons

The Office of Recruitment had the pleasure of hosting six luncheons for high school counselors across the state during the month of February. The luncheons were held to foster a positive relationship with the high school counselors as well as increase the presence of Southern University across the state. The luncheons were hosted and attended by Chancellor Llorens, President Mason, and Southern University Board Members Myron K. Lawson, Warren A. Forstall, Dr. Eamon M. Kelly, Walter C. Dumas, Rev. Joe R. Gant, Jr., former board member Walter Guidry, Jr. and members from the local SU alumni chapters.

The first luncheon for the 2012 calendar took place on February 15, 2012 in Alexandria, Louisiana. The luncheon was held at Bistro on Bayou Restaurant. Representatives from 8 high schools were present. The second luncheon was held on February 16, 2012 in New Orleans at Pascal's Manale Restaurant. In attendance were 30 high school counselors representing 25 local high schools. The next luncheon was in Baton Rouge at Ralph & Kacoo's on February 17, 2012. This was the largest of the luncheons with over 50 high school counselors in attendance representing 20 high schools from the Baton Rouge metropolitan area. Lake Charles was the location for the next luncheon at the L'auberge dulac Casino and Resort on February 24, 2012. There were 21 high school counselors representing 10 schools from the local area. The last two luncheons were held in north Louisiana in Shreveport and Monroe. On February 28th, Shreveport Country Club served as the venue for 18 high school counselors from 15 different high schools. The last luncheon was held on February 29th in Monroe at Johnny's Seafood where SUBR hosted 15 high school counselors from 13 local schools and one college, Grambling State University.

During the luncheons, the counselors were presented with information on the new fall 2012 admissions standards for new freshmen and transfer students. Presentations were made on financial aid and academic programs. Faculty members Nathaniel Denu, College of Engineering, and Interim Dean Doze Bulter, College of Family and Consumer Science made presentations on their respective departments and extended scholarship offers.

Application fees waivers were extended to every high school present for those students who submitted a complete application package. At the conclusion of the luncheon, each counselor was presented with a Southern University gift bag which included a portfolio, mug with spoon, pen, and SU pennant.

Recruiting Activities and Tours

During the month of February 15 on campus tours were held with over 600 students visiting the campus. In addition, there were 20 high school recruiting events attended by recruiters.

The recruiters also participated in the 2012 SWAC College Expo in Garland, Texas as a part of the SWAC Basketball Tournament.

Upcoming Events

College Night on the Bluff will be held on Wednesday, April 11, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. in the Smith-Brown Memorial Student Union. This event is the annual spring recruiting event for fall 2012. All academic departments are show cased along with the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid, and Honors College.