

Frederick Douglass Institute

► Established in 1986, the University of Rochester's Frederick Douglass Institute for African and African-American Studies (FDI) brings together scholars of African-American literature, history, politics, religion, sociology, and many other branches of the humanities and social sciences.

The experiences of people of Africa and the African Diaspora (the United States and North America, the Caribbean, Latin America, the African Continent, and parts of Europe) are ongoing areas of research. Given the vibrant nature of the field, though, new areas of inquiry are constantly being pioneered and developed.

FDI's primary mission is to promote intellectual conversations on issues that are at the core of African and African-American studies. FDI fosters this conversation through a WIPS (Work In Progress Series), which is focused on faculty research; a lecture series; and a conference that brings outstanding speakers and the University

Frederick Douglass

Frederick Douglass was an American social reformer, orator, writer, and statesman. He lived in Rochester with his family for 25 years and began his abolitionist newspaper, the *North Star*, here. He was attracted to Rochester for many reasons, including its links to the Underground Railroad, its progressive reputation, and its support of abolitionism as well as other reform movements.

community together. FDI also hosts pre- and postdoctoral fellows who enrich the intellectual environment here through their groundbreaking approaches and research.

FDI offers a bachelor's degree in African and African-American studies. Inherently interdisciplinary, the program exposes undergraduate students to core scholarship and methodological approaches in this dynamic field.

Points of Pride

Research

The University's Rare Books and Special Collections holds a large and important collection of Frederick Douglass primary source materials:

correspondence, photographs, memorabilia, and copies of his newspapers. FDI leverages this and offers undergraduate internships with the larger goal of creating a digital collection of Douglass's materials. This unique collection helps facilitate scholarly and public access to the life, ideas, and times of Frederick Douglass, broaden awareness of his work, and advance research related to African and African-American studies.

Lectures and Conferences

In the 2008–09 academic year, FDI and the Susan B. Anthony Institute inaugurated the annual Two Icons Lecture to explore the intersection of race and gender. The lecture



"FDI gave me opportunities for serious scholarship, research, and study abroad. It helped me learn how to think critically, to understand how history and culture affect people's lives, and to grasp opportunities that truly make a difference in our global society."

Marius "Mimi" Kother '13

African and African-American Studies major, Renaissance & Global Scholar

Renaissance & Global Scholars are an exceptional group of about 60 students who come to Rochester from around the world. They are academically talented and have unique backgrounds, which adds to the richness of the student body. Mimi came to the United States in 2000 as a political asylum refugee from Togo, West Africa.

honors the legacy of these two iconic individuals from Rochester whose deep commitment to civil rights and social justice changed the course of history.

The Frederick Douglass Medal

Created in 2008, the Frederick Douglass Medal is awarded by the University of Rochester and FDI each year to acknowledge both scholarship and civic engagement that honor the Douglass legacy. The most recent honor was given to renowned anthropologist Yolanda T. Moses, a leading scholar on the origins of social inequality.

How You Can Help

Rising from the civil rights era and developing into black studies programs, African and African-American studies have become an increasingly important vehicle for cultural understanding. Consider making a gift to support the interdisciplinary work of FDI's faculty and students.

Undergraduate Students

Supporting students is one of the University's highest priorities. One way to enrich their experience is by funding study abroad scholarships and related expenses such as passports and academic field trips

while abroad. Many FDI students are first-generation college students who have never had the opportunity or means to study overseas. Close the gap for them and enrich their overall learning experience.

Another way to support students is to fund undergraduate prizes. FDI currently offers the Frederick Douglass Prize to select the best undergraduate research paper in the broad area of African and African-American studies. Typically given to outgoing seniors, additional prizes are desired for students in earlier stages of their college careers.

Graduate Students

Each year the department funds two pre- and postdoctoral positions. In doing so, the University benefits from their research and scholarship and helps fill the academic pipeline with scholars in this growing field, many of whom have gone on to teach at some of the most esteemed universities around the country. Your support can help sustain and grow FDI's pre- and postdoctoral program.

Faculty

Another University priority is supporting faculty and staff through endowed programs and positions. These help to attract and retain

faculty of exceptional talent and are visible honors recognized across the University and by other top educational institutions. Help enrich the educational experience of students here by endowing the FDI directorship.



*“I would unite
with anybody
to do right and
with nobody
to do wrong.”*

—Frederick Douglass
a firm believer in the equality of all people regardless of color, race, socioeconomic status, or gender

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