

LA DONNA L. FORSGREN

Department of Film, Television, and Theatre
University of Notre Dame

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- Education* Ph.D., Northwestern University, Interdisciplinary PhD in Theatre and Drama, Gender Studies Certificate, 2012.
- M.A., Brigham Young University, Theatre History, Theory, and Criticism, 2005.
- B.A., Western Oregon University, Theatre Arts, History Minor, 2002.
- Academic appointments* *Rev. Thomas J. McDonagh, C.S.C.* Associate Professor of Film, Television, & Theatre, with a joint appointment in Department of Africana Studies, 2020-Present, University of Notre Dame; Assistant Professor, 2017-2020. Concurrent faculty, Gender Studies.
- Associate Director of Community Engagement, Initiative on Race and Resilience, 2022-2024, University of Notre Dame.
- Assistant Professor, Miami University, Department of Theatre, 2016-2017.
- Assistant Professor, University of Oregon, Department of Theatre Arts, 2012-2016. “Acting” Assistant Professor, 2011-2012.
- Visiting Instructor, Luther College, Department of Theatre, 2010-2011.
- Publications— Books* *Black Queer Girlhood on the Musical Theatre Stage* (Oxford University Press, 2026)
- Sistuhls in the Struggle: An Oral History of Black Arts Movement Theater and Performance* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020).
- Outstanding Book Award Finalist, Association for Theatre in Higher Education.
- In Search of Our Warrior Mothers: Women Dramatists of the Black Arts Movement* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018).
- Refereed Articles* “Transculturation, Reclamation, and Adaptation: Approaches to Teaching ‘Father Comes Home from the Wars,’” *Modern Drama* 66 no. 2 (2023), pp. 179-202.

*Refereed
Articles
(cont'd)*

“Violence, Ritual, and Vogue: Black Queer Feminist Praxis in Motion,” *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 46 no. 4 (2021), pp. 37-53.

“Hands Up, Don’t Shoot: ‘Suicide,’ Black Gun Ownership, and Restoring Black Masculinity on Black Arts Movement Stages,” *Theatre Journal* 73 no. 4 (2021), pp. 467-488.

“*The Wiz* Redux; or Why Queer Black Feminist Spectatorship and Politically Engaged Popular Entertainment Continue to Matter,” *Theatre Survey* 60, no.3 (2019), pp. 325-354.

- Oscar G. Brockett Essay Prize, American Society for Theatre Research.

“From the Black Arts Movement to the Contemporary Chitlin’ Circuit: An Interview with Woodie King Jr.” *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 33 no. 2 (2019), pp. 61-80.

“Performing Black Womanhood: A Dramaturg’s Guide to *Voyeurs de Venus*,” *Continuum: The Journal of Black Drama, Theatre, and Performance* 5 no.1 (2019), pp. 11-18.

“Breaking Down the ‘Walls of Whiteness’: Strategies for Teaching About Race and Social Justice in a ‘Very Black Year,’” *Theatre Topics* 27 no.2 (2017), pp. 151-162.

“Black Folk’s Theatre to Black Lives Matter: The Black Revolution on Campus,” *Theatre History Studies* 36 (2017), pp. 301-309.

- Robert A. Schanke Theatre Research Award, Mid America Theatre Conference.

“‘Set Your Blackness Free’: Barbara Ann Teer’s Art and Activism During the Black Arts Movement,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 36 (2015), pp. 136-159.

“The Black Arts Movement (1965-1976): An Interview with J.e. Franklin,” *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters* 37 no.5 (2014), pp. 1139-1157.

“Militancy and Ministry: Revolutionary Conversion in Ben Caldwell’s *Prayer Meeting* and James Baldwin’s *Blues for Mister Charlie*,” *New England Theatre Journal* 22 (2011), pp. 107-123.

*Book
chapters*

“Barbara Ann Teer” in *Women’s Theatre Theory and Dramatic Criticism*, eds. J. Ellen Gainor and Catherine Burroughs. (New York: Routledge, 2023), pp. 302-307.

- George Freedley Memorial Award Special Jury Prize (2023) The Library Association (TLA)

“Chisa Hutchinson” in *50 Key Figures in Queer US Theatre*, eds. Jimmy A. Noriega and Jordan Schildcrout (New York: Routledge, 2022), pp. 99-102.

“The Remaining One-Third: Vinnette Carroll and the Urban Arts Corps” in *The Great North American Stage Directors*, eds. Henry Bial and Chase Bringardner (London: Methuen Drama, 2021), pp. 75-97.

“Performing Blackness, Ecodramaturgy, and Social Justice: Toward a Radical Pedagogy” in *Teaching Critical Performance Theory in Today’s Theatre Classroom, Studio, and Communities*, ed. Jeanmarie Higgins (New York: Routledge, 2020), pp. 81-93.

“From ‘Poemplays’ to Ritualistic Revivals: The Experimental Works of Women Dramatists of the Black Arts Movement,” in *The Routledge Companion to African American Theatre and Performance*, eds. Kathy A. Perkins, Sandra L. Richards, Renee Alexander Craft, and Thomas DeFranz (New York: Routledge, 2019), pp. 250-256.

Work in progress

“The Black Arts Movement and Beyond: Portraits of Black Womanhood” in *African American Literature and Culture in Transition* eds. Marlo D. David and Casarae Abdul-Ghani (Cambridge University Press; under contract and submitted 2/4/25)

Naturally: The Performance and Politics of Black Hair in Theatre and Film (monograph)

Black Women, Embryo Donation, and Reproductive Justice (article)

Book reviews

Review of Jonathan Shandell, *The American Negro Theatre and the Long Civil Rights Era* (Iowa City: Iowa University Press, 2018), *Journal of American History* 106 no. 4 (2020), pp. 1135-1136.

Review of Devorah Heitner, *Black Power TV* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013) and Fred Carroll, *Race News: Black Journalists and the Fight for Racial Justice in the Twentieth Century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), *American Literature* 91 no 3. (2019), pp. 663-665.

Review of Malik Gaines, *Black Performance on the Outskirts of the Left: A History of the Impossible* (New York: New York University Press, 2017), *Modern Drama* 61 no. 2 (2018), pp. 244-246.

Review of Sandra G. Shannon (ed.), *August Wilson’s Pittsburgh Cycle: Critical Perspectives on the Plays* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2016), *Theatre Topics* 26 no. 2 (2016), pp. 267-268.

Review of Brandi Catanese, *The Problem of the Color[blind]: Racial Transgression and the Politics of Black Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), *Theatre Journal* 65 no. 2 (2013), pp. 302-303.

Review of Nadine George-Graves, *Urban Bush Women: Twenty Years of African American Dance Theater, Community Engagement, and Working It Out* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010), *Theatre Journal* 63 no. 2 (2011), pp. 290-291.

*Awards
and honors*

National:

National Humanities Center Summer Residency Program in Triangle Park, NC, 2022.

Outstanding Book Award Finalist, Association for Theatre in Higher Education.

- *Sistuks in the Struggle: An Oral History of Black Arts Movement Theater and Performance* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2020).

Oscar G. Brockett Essay Prize, American Society for Theatre Research, 2020.

- “*The Wiz* Redux; or Why Queer Black Feminist Spectatorship and Politically Engaged Popular Entertainment Continue to Matter,” *Theatre Survey* 60, no.3 (2019), pp. 325-354.

Robert A. Schanke Theatre Research Award, Mid-America Theatre Conference, 2016.

Dissertation Fellowship, Consortium for Faculty Diversity at Liberal Arts Colleges, 2010.

Notre Dame:

Marian Mullin Hancock Teaching Award, Gender Studies Program, 2022.

Teaching Beyond the Classroom Grant, College of Arts Letters, \$500, Fall 2020.

Initiation Grant, Faculty Research Support Program, \$10,000, Fall 2019.

Small Grant for Research and Creative Work, Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (ISLA), \$2,500, Fall 2019.

Large Humanities Research Grant, ISLA, \$14,940.51, Spring 2018.

Indexing and Copyediting Support, ISLA, \$900, Fall 2017.

Small Grant for Research and Creative Work, ISLA, \$2,500, Fall 2017.

Teaching Beyond the Classroom Grant, College of Arts Letters, \$1,300, Fall 2017

Other Institutional Recognitions and Honors:

Grant to Promote Research, Miami University, \$1,825, Fall 2017.

New Faculty Research Community Professional Development Grant, Miami University, 2017.

Professional Development Grant, Teaching Enhancement Program, Miami University, 2016.

Humanities and Creative Arts Fellowship, College of Arts and Sciences, University of Oregon, \$5,000, Summer 2014.

Travel Grant, Center for Study of Women in Society, University of Oregon, 2012.

“La Donna Forsgren Scholarship” given to undergraduate in honor of candidate’s “exemplary qualities in teaching, research, and leadership,” Bowerman Foundation, University of Oregon, 2012.

*Invited
talks*

“Black Arts, Black Spaces, and Black Performance,” Schomburg Center’s Conversations in Black Freedom Studies (CBFS) series, 2 October 2025. Prepare the invited talk but to decline in November due to FMLA leave.

“The Black Arts Movement,” Guest lecturer, University at Buffalo. Buffalo, NY, 29 March 2023.

“Outrageous American Home Truths: Blackgirl Wit, Imagination, and Folklore in Contemporary Musical Theatre,” Coffee and Concepts Series, University of Washington. Seattle, WA, 30 April 2021.

“Sistuks in the Struggle” Invited Book Talk, Northwestern University. Evanston, IL, 3 March 2021.

“Black Women’s Art and Activism During the Black Arts Movement,” Guest lecturer, Utah Valley University. Orem, UT, 2 March 2021.

“*Uh Huh But How Do It Free Us?: The Art of Black Liberation*,” Guest lecturer, Duke University. Durham, NC, 24 February 2021.

“The Black Arts Movement,” undergraduate seminar taught by Eleanor Russell, Northwestern University. Evanston, IL, 17 November 2020.

“Finding Life/Work Balance,” in professional development Seminar taught by Dr. Henry Bial, University of Kansas. Lawrence, KS, 30 October 2020.

“Transculturation, Reclamation, and Adaptation: Approaches to Teaching Suzan-Lori Parks’ *Father Comes Home from the Wars Parts 1, 2 & 3*,” Literature and Humanities Series, Columbia University. New York City, NY, 26 October 2020.

“Sistuks in the Struggle” in Theatre History graduate seminar taught by Megan Sanborn-Jones, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT, 26 October 2020.

Expert Panelist, “The Journey from the Black Victorian to Black Lives Matter: A Conversation Inspired by *Relentless*,” TimeLine Theatre Company. Chicago, IL. 24 September 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPY-OSbKj6I>

“In Search of Our Warrior Mothers: Women Dramatists of the Black Arts Movement,” Guest lecture, Texas Tech University. Lubbock, TX, 4 February 2019.

“In Search of Our Warrior Mothers,” Guest lecture, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT, 26 October 2018.

“In Her Own Words: Constructing an Oral History of Black Arts Movement Theatre and Performance,” Guest lecture, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT, 25 October 2018.

“*The Bronx is Next: Revolutionary Theatre of the Black Arts Movement*,” Guest lecture, Brigham Young University. Provo, UT, 25 October 2018.

“Research Methods,” Guest lecture, University of Missouri. Columbia, MI, 8 October 2018.

“In Her Own Words: Constructing an Oral History of Black Arts Movement Theatre and Performance,” Alumni Reunion, Northwestern University. Evanston, IL, 5 October 2018.

“Black Folk’s Theatre to Black Lives Matter: The Black Revolution on Campus,” Guest lecture, University of Missouri. Columbia, MI, 13 April 2017.

“Barbara Ann Teer and the National Black Theatre,” 8th Annual African American Intellectual Thought Symposium, California State University. Fresno, CA, April 2014.

“Edutainment: or How I Learned to Survive the University Classroom,” University of Oregon. Eugene, OR, 26 October 2013.

“Modern Stereotypes: Welfare Mother, Welfare Queen, Angry Black Woman, and Video Vixen,” Guest lecture, Luther College. Decorah, IA, 30 March 2010.

“Martie Charles and Black Revolutionary Drama: Negating Distorted Images of Black Motherhood,” Guest lecture, Luther College. Decorah, IA, 29 March 2010.

Professional conferences Panel organizer and moderator:
“Pedagogy of Extraordinary Bodies,” co-chair with Jessica Brater and Michelle Liu Carriger, American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR), San Diego, 17 November 2018.

“Emerging Scholars,” Mid-America Theatre Conference (MATC), Cleveland, 7 March 2014.

Panel moderator:

“Race & Performance in the U.S.,” MATC, Minneapolis, 17 March 2016.

“Invention, Diaspora, & Mobilities,” MATC, Cleveland, 6 March 2014.

“Feeding, Fighting, and Fornicating: Consumption and Myth,” MATC, St. Louis, 9 March 2013.

Papers presented:

“*The Color Purple*, Spectatorship, and the Queer Possibilities of Black Girlhood,” Plenary, ASTR, Seattle, 14-17 November 2024.

“Arousing the Public: Black Women Intellectuals Remember the Revolution,” Plenary, ASTR, Arlington, 7-10 November 2019.

“*The Wiz* Redux: or Why Queer Black Feminist Spectatorship Continues to Matter,” Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), Orlando, 9 August 2019.

“Myths, Memories, and Monuments: From Emancipation Park to The Beguiled,” ATHE, Boston, 5 August 2018.

“Introducing Blackness as a Performative Gesture,” MATC, Milwaukee, 16 March 2018.

“Teaching African American Performance and Activism in a ‘Very Black Year,’” MATC, Houston, 18 March 2017.

“‘The play is the thing’: Spectatorship, Revolutionary Theatre, and Community in August Wilson’s ‘The Janitor,’” ATHE, Chicago, 13 August 2016.

“Black Folk’s Theater and the Black Revolution on College Campuses,” MATC, Minneapolis, 17 March 2016.

“Re-visioning Wonderland: Adapting Victorian Literature for 21st c. Spectators,” ATHE, Scottsdale, AZ, 26 July 2014.

“Set Your Blackness Free: Barbara Ann Teer’s Ritualistic Revivals,” ATHE, Scottsdale, AZ, 27 July 2014.

“Black Foils and Female Guides: A Spiritual Search for Black Manhood in Amiri Baraka’s *Madheart*,” Amiri Baraka: A Retrospective Conference, Institute of Contemporary Arts, University of Kent, UK 12 April 2014.

“Revision and Recovery: Adapting Nina Simone’s ‘Four Women’ (1966) for the Black Arts Movement Stage,” MATC, Cleveland, 6 March 2014.

Papers presented (cont’d):

“Women Playwrights of the Black Arts Movement: Their Work and Legacy,” The Black Arts Movement and Its Legacies, Uni. of California-Merced. Merced, CA, 2 March 2014.

“Defying Death: A Search for Black Manhood and the True Black Woman in the Black Arts Movement,” National Council for Black Studies. Indianapolis, 14 March 2013.

“Topsy Turvey: Adapting the African Trickster Tale for 20th Century Spectators,” MATC, St. Louis, 8 March 2013.

“Living Trademarks: Aunt Jemima and the Performance of Black Women’s Labor (1893-1964),” MATC, Chicago, 2 March 2012.

“The ‘Negro’ to ‘Black’ Conversion: Militancy and Ministry in Ben Caldwell’s *Prayer Meeting* & James Baldwin’s *Blues for Mister Charlie*,” ATHE, Black Theatre Association Debut Panel, Los Angeles, 4 August 2010.

“Colonialism and the Staged Irishman: Performing Whiteness in Dion Boucicault’s *The Octoroon; or, Life in Louisiana*,” MATC Graduate Debut Panel, Cleveland, 2 March 2010.

“A ‘Classless, Crass and Deplorable Stunt’: The Technological Consumption of Janet Jackson’s Deviant Black Female Body.” Society for the Interdis. Study of Social Imagery, Colorado Springs, 10 March 2007.

Panelist on a Roundtable or Working Group:

“Radical Inclusion Two: A Continuing Discussion Offering Tactics for Creating Productive Learning Spaces for Engaging with Race,” sponsored by American Theatre and Drama Society (ATDS), ATHE, Boston, 1 August 2018.

“Spotlight on New Works: Discussion of Newly Published Books from the ATDS, BTA, and LIA Focus Groups,” Presenter (Respondent: Soyica Colbert, Georgetown University), ATHE, Boston, 3 August 2018.

“Transgressing Theatre History: New Modes of Teaching About Extraordinary Bodies,” Pedagogy of the Extraordinary Bodies Working Group, ASTR, Atlanta, 16 November 2017.

“Teaching African American Performance and Activism at an HWCU,”
Roundtable, ATHE, Las Vegas, 6 August 2017.

Notre Dame presentations “Sistahood is Powerful: Recovering Black Women Intellectuals of the Black Arts
and Black Power Movements,” *Literatures of Annihilation and Resistance*,
4 December 2020.

Panelist, *Crazy Rich Asians* post discussion sponsored by the Liu Institute and
Department of Film, Television, and Theatre, 29 November 2018.

Presenter, “The Sexual Harassment Project,” sponsored by the Office of Research
and the Program on Law and Market Behavior, 9 May 2018.

Panelist, *The Mountaintop* (L.A. Theatre Works) post play discussion sponsored
by the DeBartolo Performing Arts Center, 19 January 2018.

Service Service to the Field:
Editor, *Theatre Survey*, American Society for Theatre Research, 2023-2024.

Editorial Board, *Theatre Topics*, Association for Theatre in Higher Education,
2021-Present.

Playwriting Judge, EMOS Festival, Earth Matters Onstage, Artistic Director Dr. Theresa
May, earthmattersonstage.org, 2024.

Committee Member, Cambridge University Press Prize Committee, American
Society for Theatre Research, 2023-2024.

Associate Editor, *Theatre Survey*, American Society for Theatre Research, 2021-
2022.

Executive Committee, Mid-America Theatre Conference. Elected positions:

- Vice President/Conference Planner, 2020-2021
- Associate Conference Planner, 2018-2020

Editorial Committee, *Journal of American Theatre and Drama*, American Theatre
and Drama Society (ATDS) 2019-2020.

Manuscript Reviewer, Iowa University Press, 2020.

Program Committee Member, Community Theatre for Social Justice Action,
South Bend, Indiana, 2018.

Peer Reviewer, *Theatre Practice*, 2018.

Peer Reviewer, *Theatre Journal*, 2018.

Peer Reviewer, *Theatre Topics*, 2017-2020.

Peer Reviewer, *Theatre History Studies*, 2017-2019.

Emerging Scholars Panel Mentor, Mid-America Theatre Conference, 2017.

Adjudicator, Black Theatre Association Debut Panel, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, 2016-2017.

Adjudicator, AGE and the Arts Grant (\$35,000 professional theater grant), 2016.

Full-Length Play Committee Reader, Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, Region V, 2015-2016.

Co-Chair, Emerging Scholars Panel, Mid-America Theatre Conference, 2013-2015.

Playwriting Judge, ACT-SO, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Eugene, Oregon Branch, 2013-2014.

Playwriting Judge, Northwest Ten Playwriting Competition, Oregon Contemporary Theatre, Eugene, Oregon, 2012.

University Service:

Academic Council, elected 2021-2024.

Moreau Program Curriculum Committee, 2023-2024.

Provost Search Committee member, elected by Academic Council, 2022.

Provost Office Representative, Faculty and Staff Experience Subcommittee, Committee for the Experience of Students of Color, appointed by Provost Miranda, 2020-present.

Undergraduate Studies Committee member, 2019-2020.

Faculty Senate, 2017-2019.

College of Arts and Letters Service:

Initiative on Race and Resilience Board member, appointed by Dean Mustillo, Fall 2020-2022.

Search Committee member (Creative Writer, English Department), appointed by Mark Sanders, Fall 2020.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee member, appointed by Dean Mustillo, Fall 2020.

Center for Race Committee member, appointed by Dean Mustillo, Spring-Fall 2020.

Anti-racism Accountability Committee, Shakespeare@ND, invited by Peter Holland, 2020-2021.

Special Committee member, Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, 2018.

Service: Film, Television (FTT) and Theatre Department Gender Studies Program
Gender Studies Steering Committee, elected 2025-present.

FTT Musical Theatre Lab Committee member, 2023-2025.

FTT Search Committee Chair (Directing) 2023-2024.

FTT Season Selection Committee member, 2017-Present.

FTT CARE Committee member, elected 2022-2023.

FTT/IRR Search Committee member (Black Film) 2021-2022.

Gender Studies Steering Committee member, elected 2021.

FTT Senior Thesis Advisor, "Layered," by Zoë Spence, 2020.

FTT Senior Thesis Reader, "America's Next Top Activist: The Mediation of Contemporary Girlhood Activism Discourse in U.S. Mass Magazines," by Samantha "Sammy" Viqueira, 2020.

FTT Senior Thesis Advisor, "God's Gonna Trouble the Water," by Tyrel London, 2019.

FTT International/Identity Curriculum Committee member, 2017-2018.

FTT Theatre History Curriculum Subcommittee member, 2017-2018

*Service at
other
institutions*

Miami University:

Committee Member, Undergraduate Recruitment Committee, Theatre Department, 2016-2017.

Dramaturgy Supervisor, Theatre Department, 2016-2017.

Committee Member, Dean's Advisory Committee, College of Art, 2016-2017.

University of Oregon:

PhD Exam Committee Member, Jessica "J.K." Rogers, Theatre Department, 2016.

Honor's Thesis Second Reader, "The Object in Science Fiction Theatre and Marked: A Play in Two Acts," by Nicolas Maurer, 2016.

Honor's Thesis Second Reader, "A Game Called Dying: Playing with Death & Family Through Playwriting," by Thomas Varga, 2014.

Dissertation Chair, Rachel Foran, Theatre Department, 2013-2016.

Honor's Thesis Second Reader, "In the Rays of the Sun" and "Depth Perception," by Evan Marshall, 2013.

Master's Thesis Reader, "Clowns Ex Machina: An Investigation of the Relationship Between Gender and Clown," by Kimberley Bates, 2012.

Honor's Thesis Second Reader, "Assistance: An Original Play," by Maddie Downes, 2012.

Dramaturgical Advisor/New Play Development Coordinator, New Voices Playwriting Competition, Theatre Department, 2012.

Theatre Season Selection Committee Member, Theatre Department, 2011-2016.

Search Committee Member (Technical Director), Theatre Department, 2011-2012.

*Selected
theatre
experience*

Dramaturg, "August Wilson Project," South Bend Civic Theatre, South Bend, IN, 2018-2019.

Dramaturg, *Stage Kiss* by Sarah Ruhl, Robinson Theatre, directed by Zeina Salame, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 2016.

Director and Playwright, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Hope Theatre, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 2014.

Dramaturg, *Arcadia* by Tom Stoppard, directed by Scott Kaiser (Oregon Shakespeare Festival), Robinson Theatre, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 2013.

Director, *I Ain't Yo' Uncle: The New Jack Revisionist Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Robert Alexander, Hope Theatre, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR, 2012.

*Professional
memberships* American Society for Theatre Research
American Theatre and Drama Society
Association for Theatre in Higher Education

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July 20, 2026