



IN MEMORIAM

Lindon W. Barrett
Professor of English and African American Studies
UC Irvine
1961 – 2008

Lindon W. Barrett, literary and cultural theorist, died on July 7, 2008 at his home in Long Beach, California. He was 46.

Lindon Warren Barrett was born on October 10, 1961 in Guyana and moved to England with his parents, Dorothy and Leslie Barrett along with his older brother, Leslie, Jr., when he was one year old. Five years later, the Barretts moved to Winnipeg, where Lindon grew up. He received his undergraduate education at the University of Manitoba and York University in Toronto, where he earned his B.A. in 1983. He did his graduate work at the University of Denver (M.A., 1986) and the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned his Ph.D. in English in 1990. In the same year, he received his first academic job at the University of California, Irvine, where he rose from assistant to full professor by 2001. He remained on the faculty for 17 years, until he joined the faculty at University of California- Riverside in 2007.

For a decade and a half Lindon served the UCI community in a number of different capacities. A distinguished scholar and teacher, Lindon was one of the founding members of the program in African American Studies and served as its director between 2004 and 2007. He taught a range of courses in literary and cultural theory, gender and sexuality, African American literature and popular culture, which, over the years, reached thousands of undergraduate and graduate students at UCI.

But Lindon's reach and influence extended well beyond the confines of the UCI campus. He made scholarly presentations in over ten different countries, including China, Australia, Thailand and Finland. He was actively engaged in scholarly organizations, such as the American Studies Association, and the Modern Language Association. He served for several years (1997-2000) as the Associate Editor of one of the leading journals in his field, *Callaloo*, in which he also published. His essays appeared in other influential journals, such as *Cultural Critique*. Lindon also contributed chapters to a variety of scholarly anthologies. But his greatest scholarly impact was made with the publication of his pioneering study, *Blackness and Value: Seeing Double*, published in 1999 by Cambridge University Press, which has been widely praised for its originality and rigor, and the opening up of new lines of literary inquiry. At the time of his death, Lindon was busy completing, his magnum opus, *Racial Blackness and the Discontinuity of Western Modernity*, a daring and ambitious re- examination of the relationship between the early modern black experience and western modernity. Incomplete though it is, the book is sufficiently original and important to warrant publication, which we shall endeavor to make happen. He is widely acknowledged to have been one of the most gifted and promising members of his generation in his field.

As the 2007 farewell conference organized in his honor demonstrated and as the outpouring of grief after his death expressed, Lindon established a special bond with his students. He was especially adored by his

graduate students, who have testified movingly about Lindon's exceptional gifts and qualities. As a colleague, Lindon was dedicated, fearless and self-sacrificing. The existence of the program in African American Studies at UCI owes much to Lindon's hard work, leadership in adversity, brilliance and unbounded courage. Those of us who were lucky enough to have been one of Lindon's friends will forever cherish his generosity, his wisdom beyond his years, his zest for life, his laughter, his hatred of injustice, his brilliance and curiosity, and most of all his gift of friendship, and the warmth and light that he radiated.

Winston James
Department of History
University of California, Irvine