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9-9-2016

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Recommended Citation

Pernell, Janet, "UIUC professor talks injustice in the US" (2016). *For All the World to See: In The News*. 3.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/lib_exhibits_civilrights_news/3

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UIUC professor talks injustice in United States

By Janet Pernell
Multicultural Reporter | @DEN_News

Janice Collins, a journalism professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and former broadcast journalism professor at Eastern, spoke about how citizens are denied basic rights and how they are fighting for these them in a speech at the Booth Library.

Before the speech, the West Reading Room was a full house as students and other guests came to hear Collins deliver her speech.

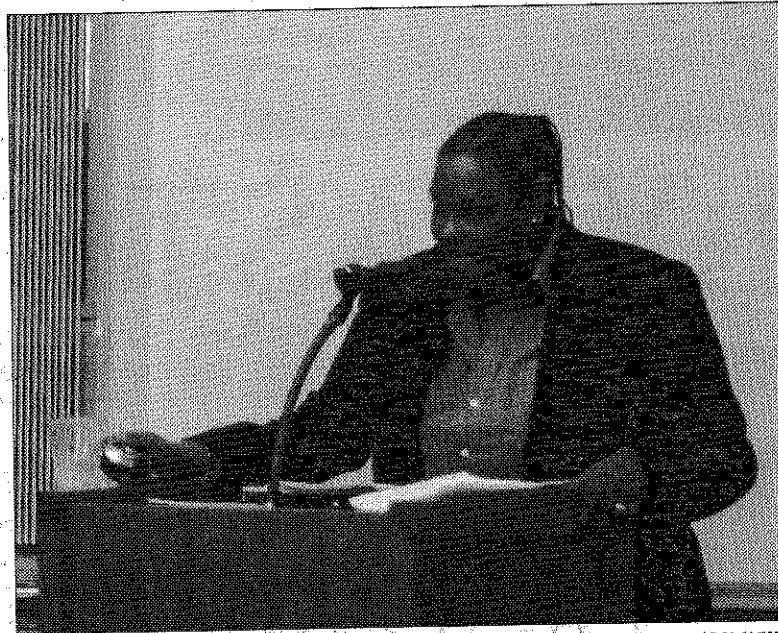
Collins' speech was about people needing to build better relationships with others, and how they each need to reflect on their strengths, weaknesses and stereotypes.

"We must reflect on the world and see what we're doing, and when things happen in our community we have to reflect on that," Collins said.

In her speech she explained how people are denied the rights to living life, having liberty and happiness based on how some people endure injustice in the United States.

"Either you choose to be open and tolerant of others, or you don't," Collins said.

Collins said she considered her speech to be educational and spirit-filled for the audience. It took her a while to spend time getting the message ready that she wanted to leave with the audience.



OLIVIA SWENSON-HULTZ | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Janice Collins discusses the power of visual culture through media in The West Reading Room in the Booth Library Thursday night.

"At any point in time you can talk from passion, you can talk from anger, you can talk from love, you can talk from research, you can talk from theory and all of it is appropriate depending on what message you want to get across," Collins said. "At the end of the day, I spoke from my heart but I talked about history."

Collins said to her, what is important is what is behind the visuals and artifacts in the Booth Library.

Collins said her speech was connected with the Black Lives Matter movement because she wanted to point out how African-Americans are not the problem and how everyone can flourish in the United States.

"We don't want a black America, we don't want a white America, we don't want a gay America, we don't want a straight America," she said. "We want an America where everybody can flourish and that's why I think the systems have

to be changed and revised."

In her speech, Collins mentioned how those who believe 'All lives matter' have to believe African-American lives matter as well.

"If you believe all lives matter, then you must believe black lives matter," Collins said.

Collins said this was her first speech that had a lot of diversity and thought it was great.

"I thought it was wonderful that the library at Eastern, they didn't have to wait until African-American heritage month to do something like this," Collins said. "This was a little different, the crowd was a little different, the community people (were) here which I think is wonderful."

Collins said what influenced her to deliver the speech was people who are still fighting for rights and equality.

"We have to fight for the rights and equality for everyone," Collins said. "I may not understand everyone's place (or) position, I may not understand their culture, but what I do understand is that they're human beings and they're American citizens and they should have the right to life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness under the law."

Collins said her goals for giving her speech was to get the truth out, even though it can be hard to swallow.

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