

University of Mississippi

eGrove

University of Mississippi News

9-20-2019

Conference to Examine History of Mass Incarceration

Christina Steube

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews>

Recommended Citation

Steube, Christina, "Conference to Examine History of Mass Incarceration" (2019). *University of Mississippi News*. 1161.

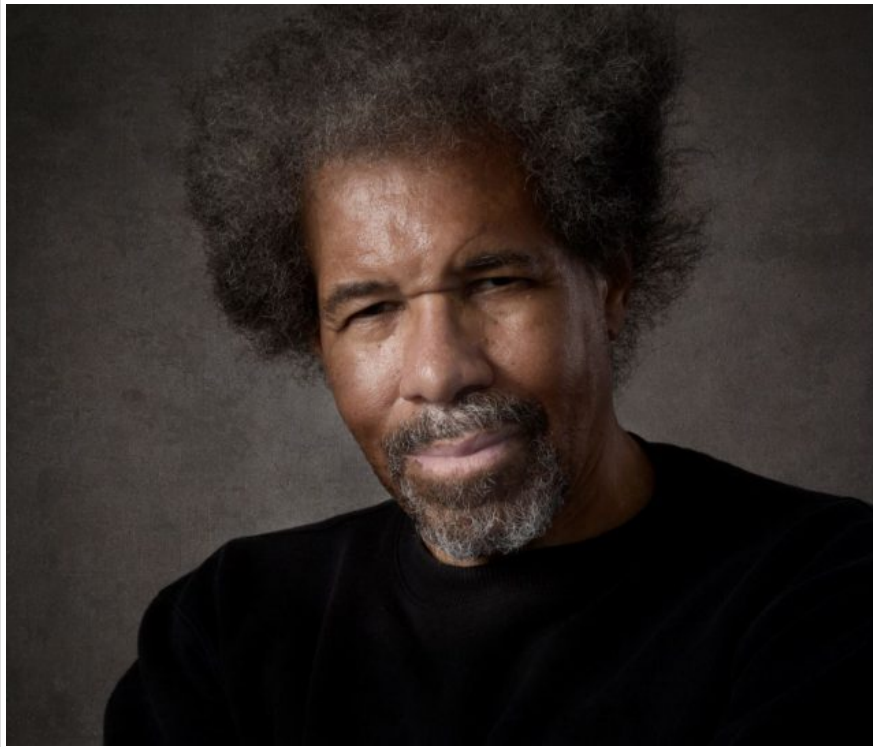
<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews/1161>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Mississippi News by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

Conference to Examine History of Mass Incarceration

Albert Woodfox, one of the 'Angola Three,' to deliver opening keynote for interdisciplinary symposium

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019 BY CHRISTINA STEJBE



Albert Woodfox, known as one of the 'Angola Three' who was the nation's longest-held prisoner in solitary confinement after being wrongly convicted and serving more than four decades at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, is set to deliver the opening keynote for the Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration conference at the University of Mississippi. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – More than 2.2 million people are imprisoned in the United States, a higher rate of incarceration than anywhere else in the industrialized world. On a state level, Mississippi is surpassed only by Oklahoma and Louisiana in the number of people it imprisons per capita, but organizers of an international conference at the [University of Mississippi](#) hope to highlight solutions.

The **Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration** conference, set for Dec. 4-6, will examine the history of mass incarceration and envision a world without prisons.

The opening keynote address is to be delivered by Albert Woodfox, who was the longest-held prisoner in solitary confinement after serving more than four decades in a 6-by-9-foot cell at the Louisiana State Penitentiary, known as Angola Prison, for a crime he did not commit.

"I think it is a very important discussion to be had and I want to thank the University of Mississippi for bringing the men and women who are involved in the prison rehabilitation movement to this conference," Woodfox said.

Other keynotes include a conversation between renowned activist-scholars Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Robin D.G. Kelley and a discussion featuring memoirists Susan Burton and Kiese Laymon with transformative justice strategist Rukia Lumumba.

The conference will bring together scholars, activists, policymakers, lawyers, students and Mississippi residents to look for interdisciplinary ways to reduce society's reliance on prisons and other punitive solutions.

"Not every conference you go to will have in the room academics, activists, practitioners and formerly

Follow us on social



Campus Briefs

Donations Sought for 25th Annual Books and Bears Program

OXFORD, Miss. – The University of Mississippi is asking the community to help spread a little joy this holiday season by donating to the 25th annual Books and Bears program. Donations such as toys, books, dolls, bicycles and other children's play items are being accepted through Dec. 14. All donations will be collected and sorted

[Read the story ...](#)

More Posts from this Category

Thank You To Our Donors

Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship Aims to Build Leaders

OXFORD, Miss. – Twenty-five inaugural recipients of the Mississippi Excellence in Coaching Fellowship – a program hosted by the University of Mississippi School of Education in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Coaches and the Mississippi High School Activities Association – are expected to increase their impact on student-athletes and their communities. The coaching fellowship

[Read the story ...](#)

More Posts from this Category

Ole Miss In the News

Clarion-Ledger: New Essay Collection Tells the Story of Meredith's Enrollment

Essays celebrate 60th anniversary of James Meredith's enrollment at University of Mississippi By Lauren Rhoades Oct. 1 marks the 60th anniversary of James Meredith's 1962 enrollment at the University of Mississippi as the school's first African-American student.

incarcerated people: people who are all working towards the same goal,” said conference speaker Michelle Jones, a third-year doctoral student in American studies at New York University. “Usually these conferences, particularly in academia, are siloed.”

The three-day conference will include panel discussions on legacies of slavery, prison activism, criminalization, law and abolition, women’s incarceration, keynote conversations and public history presentations. It also will feature an exhibit of artworks by incarcerated artists, including drawings, photography and paintings.

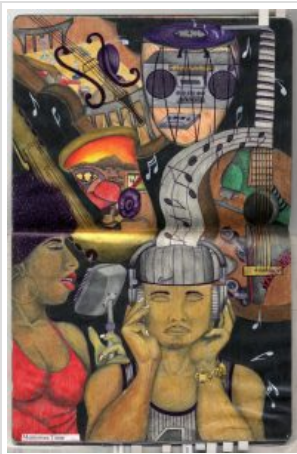


Michelle Jones, a third-year doctoral student in American studies at New York University, is among the featured speakers for the Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration conference. Submitted photo

Most conference sessions will be held at the university’s **Overby Center for Southern Journalism and Politics**, except keynote lectures, which are slated for Off Square Books on the Oxford Square. Registration for the conference is free and open to all.

Garrett Felber, lead organizer of the conference, is an assistant professor of history at UM who has also taught courses in prisons. An expert on 20th century African American history and mass incarceration, and someone involved in prisoner support, Felber wanted to provide an opportunity for academics to connect with activists and practitioners in transforming both universities and prisons.

“This conference allows us to explore how universities can address mass incarceration in a more meaningful way,” Felber said.



Anne Twitty, an Ole Miss associate professor of history who has studied extensively on slavery and legal culture, is excited the university is hosting the conference.

“After slavery ended in 1865, white Southerners searched for new ways to exploit black workers,” Twitty said. “Convict leasing, a system created in the South in which prisoners could be contracted to work a variety of dangerous jobs under brutal and unhealthy conditions without pay, provided elites with thousands of laborers, the vast majority of whom were formerly enslaved men or their descendants.

“The convict leasing system, which emerged as a direct response to the end of slavery, is widely considered to be one of the key developments in the history of mass incarceration. Slavery and mass incarceration, simply put, are inextricably intertwined.”

The Making and Unmaking Mass Incarceration conference will include an exhibit of artworks by incarcerated artists, including drawings, photography and paintings. Submitted photo

The conference is sponsored by the university’s **Arch Dalrymple III Department of History** with support from the UM **Center for the Study of Southern Culture, College of Liberal Arts, School of Law, Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement, African American Studies Program**, and

Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

Outside support comes from FWD.us, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Laughing Gull Foundation and the Mississippi Humanities Council.

For more information on the conference program, registration and speaker bios, visit <https://mumiconference.com/>.

FILED UNDER: **CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOUTHERN CULTURE, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS, NEWS RELEASES, SCHOOL OF LAW**

“James Meredith: Breaking the Barrier,” a collection of essays edited by UM professor of journalism Kathleen Wickham, honors this historic milestone with

[Read the story ...](#)

[More Posts from this Category](#)