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Isom Report

Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender  
Studies

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Fall 2013

## Fall 2013 Newsletter of the Sarah Isom Center

Theresa Starkey

Susan R. Grayzel

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# THE SARAH ISOM CENTER FOR WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES

## FALL 2013 NEWSLETTER

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### Are you Ready to Eat and Think?

This fall, those interested in learning more about gender, labor, and the meaning of food can feast their minds on the stimulating papers and presentations that form the first ever graduate symposium jointly sponsored by the Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies and the Southern Foodways Alliance [SFA]. Under the broad theme of “Women, Work, and Food,” MA and PhD students from our campus and even across the Atlantic from a variety of disciplinary perspectives (including nutrition, law, health, sociology, history, and cultural studies) will speak about their research September 12-13, here at the University of Mississippi.

As John T. Edge, from our co-sponsor SFA, further explains:

“Our goals are to mentor students, strengthen their presentation skills, and give them a good opportunity to share their research while promoting interdisciplinary and nuanced conversations about foodways. My personal goal is to get a whirlwind tour of ascendant foodways scholarship.”

We are delighted that Desirée Hensley and Alison Korn will share their important work during a plenary session Friday Sept. 13 about “Fishing, Farming, and Family: Female Self-Sufficiency as a Political and Civil Right in the Mississippi Delta.” The other plenary features Grisham writer-in-residence Megan Abbott along with Dr. Theresa Starkey, assistant director of the Isom Center, speaking about James M. Cain’s *Mildred Pierce*. As Megan Abbott explains, Mildred Pierce serves as an iconic touchstone for the three subjects of the symposium—women, work and food:



“We can see all the gender politics of the Depression come to the fore in Mildred Pierce. As she rises from grass widow to successful restaurateur, Mildred shows how the comforts of home--pies, chicken and waffles--can be sold in the marketplace, transforming bread-maker to breadwinner, and beyond.”

The symposium begins with the annual Lucy Somerville Howorth lecture delivered by Dr. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders of Emory University, which also serves as a keynote for the symposium. Her talk at 7 p.m. on Thursday September 12 at Barnard Observatory “Dishing Up Dixie in the Post-Racial South” is free and open to the public as are all of the sessions at the Yerby Center starting at 9 a.m. on Friday.

With sessions on “Talking with Our Mouths Full: Women, Food, and Oral Histories,” “Consumption, Production and Restaurant Culture,” “Nutrition and Activism,” “Making Food, Making Identity,” and “Reading and Representing the Southern Kitchen,” there is sure to be something to whet all of our appetites!

We look forward to seeing you there.

## From the Director: Welcome back to Oxford!

We're starting our second year in our new (temporary) locale—002 Lyceum South—and looking forward to working with old and new partners on events this coming year.

We are particularly excited about our first ever collaboration with the Southern Foodways Alliance (SFA) at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture. September 12-13, together with SFA, the Isom Center is hosting a graduate student symposium on “Women, Work, and Food.” As a kick off to panels featuring the innovative scholarship of graduate students both local and from around the country and even the United Kingdom, we are having the annual Lucy Somerville Howorth lecture launch the conference as its keynote on Thursday September 12.

This year's Howorth lecture, “Dishing Up Dixie in the Post-Racial South” will be delivered by Professor Kimberly Wallace-Sanders of Emory University and author of *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender and Southern Memory*. We look forward to greeting you at this talk on September 12 at 7 pm in Barnard Observatory as well as at the sessions that follow on September 13. Full details

about the symposium will be available online at our website, and you can find out more about Dr. Wallace-Sanders in these pages. Thanks to the Departments of African American Studies, English, History, and Sociology and Anthropology for supporting us!

This year's newsletter also features conversations with two of our new affiliates, Assistant Professor Natalia Kolesnikova of the Department of Economics and Assistant Professor Barbara Combs, who holds a joint appointment with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Southern Studies. On October 7, Dr. Kolesnikova will deliver a brown bag on “Understanding the Gender Gap in Earnings.” Later this semester, on November 11, Dr. Combs will share her recent work on “Women and the Selma Alabama Voting Rights Campaign.” We hope that you will join us for these brown bags and others in the Faulkner Room of the J.D. Williams Library.

We are also eagerly anticipating the visit of Laraine Newman, original cast member of Saturday Night Live for a panel on gender and humor, featuring UM's own writer-in-residence,

Jack Pendarvis. We are grateful to the Departments of English and Theatre Arts and the University Lecture Series for helping to co-sponsor this event.

As always, it will be our pleasure to welcome you to our events this fall and next spring and to hear your ideas and input for how we can make the Sarah Isom Center and its programs serve our mission of “integrating scholarly research on women's and gender issues with advocacy for women in the classroom, on the campus, and in the larger community.”

Please feel free to drop by our center, shoot us an email, give us call or otherwise help us make the Sarah Isom Center a more effective advocate for women (and their allies) on our campus, and a place helps enrich, entertain, and enlighten our campus and community about issues of interest to women and that shed light on how gender shapes our world.

Thanks so much for your support over the past year and in the months ahead.

## First Graduate Level Gender Studies Course Approved for Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies

Thanks to the tireless and truly collaborative efforts of the Gender Studies Teaching and Curriculum Committee over the past year and more (including Professors Melissa Bass (Public Policy), Yunhee Chang (Nutrition and Hospitality Management), Deirdre Cooper Owens (History), Ross Haenfler (Sociology and Anthropology), Jaime Harker (English), Laura Johnson (Psychology), Natalia Kolesnikova (Economics), Diane Marting (Modern Languages), Heather Ondercin (Political Science), and Carrie Smith (Psychology) the newly created Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies is off to a promising start. One of the

major new initiatives for graduate students interested in the certificate is the arrival of a brand new course: G St 600: Gender Studies Methodology. This just-approved class will “introduce students to the interdisciplinary field of gender studies, including the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to understand gender in a transnational perspective.”

In Spring 2014, Dr. Jaime Harker will serve as the instructor of record for this class, aided by visiting faculty from across the disciplines. We are very excited about this new course, which will be open to any graduate students

but will ideally suit those pursuing the Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies.

Two courses this fall, ENGL 676 – The Queer South taught by Dr. Jaime Harker and The Body in Question: Exploring the History of the Body in Modern Europe and its Colonial Empires taught by Dr. Susan R. Grayzel will also fulfill the requirements of the Grad Certificate. Any graduate students interested in learning more or enrolling in the Graduate Certificate in Gender Studies program of study should contact Dr. Susan Grayzel at the Isom Center.

## Meet Dr. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, 2013 Howorth Lecturer

Professor Wallace-Sanders is an Associate Professor and the Director for Graduate Studies in the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts. Originally from New York, and a graduate of Oberlin College, Wallace-Sanders holds a MFA in English from Brown University and a PhD in American Studies from Boston University.

She teaches courses on cultural representations of the female body; race, gender and visual culture; representations of race and gender in American culture; contemporary feminisms; nineteenth-century African-American popular culture; and African-American material culture.

In 1997, Wallace-Sanders co-founded the Comparative Women's Studies Program at Spelman College with the Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women's Studies, Beverly Guy-Sheftall. It was the very first Women's Studies major established at an HBCU. Professor Wallace-Sanders' scholarly interests include the intersections of race and gender in visual culture and 19th-century cultural representations of Black female sexuality. Professor Wallace-Sanders served as a judge for the Emory University 2009 LGBT essay contest.

Professor Wallace-Sanders' books include the edited volume *Skin Deep. Spirit Strong: Critical Essays on the Black Female Body in American Culture* (University of Michigan Press, 2002), the only scholarly book nominated for an NAACP Image Award. Her most recent book, *Mammy: A Century of Race, Gender and Southern Memory* (University of Michigan Press, 2007) won the 2002-3 Provost Manuscript Development Program Award at Emory University. Her scholarly work has appeared in *American Quarterly*, *Initiatives*, *Oxford Companion to African American Literature*, *Burning Down the House: Recycling Domesticity* (Harper Collins, 1996) and *The Teacher's Body: Embodiment, Identity and Authority*

*in the Academy*, (SUNY York, 2003), *Women in Popular Culture: Representation and Meaning* (Hampton Press, 2008), *Black Womanhood: Images Icons and ideologies of the African Body* (Hood Museum, 2008), *Southern Quarterly* (2013), and *Southern Literatures* (2012)

She is currently working on a unique book of 19th and early 20th century photographs called *Mammies, Nannies and Love Slaves: Portraits of Black Women with White Children in the US and Brazil*.

The Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies announces the 18th Annual Lucy Somerville Howorth Lecture:

# "Dishing up Dixie in the 'Post-Racial' South"

Presented by

**Dr. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders**

Associate Professor and the Director for Graduate Studies in the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University



Thursday, September 12th  
7 PM

**Barnard Observatory Lecture Hall**

Co-sponsored by the Departments of African American Studies, English, History, and Sociology and Anthropology

Presented in conjunction with the Southern Foodways Alliance as part of the SFA - Isom Center's Graduate Student Symposium on Women, Work, and Food.

For more information and symposium schedule, please visit our website at [www.sarahisomcenter.org](http://www.sarahisomcenter.org) or email us at [isomctr@olemiss.edu](mailto:isomctr@olemiss.edu).

**WOMEN  
ATWORK**



## A Conversation with Dr. Natalia Kolesnikova



*Dr. Kolesnikova will be giving a Brown Bag talk on “Understanding the Wage Gap in Earnings” in Faulkner Room on October 7th at noon.*

**D**r. Natalia Kolesnikova joined the department of Economics as an assistant professor in Fall 2012. Before joining The University of Mississippi’s faculty, she was a research economist at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

**D**r. Kolesnikova studied economics and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University, where she received both her masters and doctorate. She also holds a masters in mathematics from Novosibirsk State University in Russia. Her research focuses on labor economics and applied microeconomics. The Sarah Isom Center is proud to have Dr. Natalia Kolesnikova as one of its newest affiliated faculty members, someone who has contributed to revising our curriculum. Thank you, Dr. Kolesnikova for your support of the Isom Center.

**Theresa Starkey:** In your research you focus on labor economics and applied microeconomics. Can you talk a little about your methodology and explain how you approach a subject? For instance, I’m thinking of your interest in labor markets at a city or micro level.

**Natalia Kolesnikova:** Most of the labor economics research of the U.S. labor market is done on a national level. However, there are significant differences in wages, amenities, cost of living, housing values, etc. between U.S. cities. If these factors are important when workers make decisions about their labor supply, we should see different behavior

in different cities. My co-authors and I explore the variation in city-specific characteristics to better understand people’s labor market behavior.

**TS:** Interdisciplinary discourse is important to the Sarah Isom Center’s mission and we are always interested in how conversations in different disciplines overlap in unexpected and surprising ways. What fields do you find yourself in conversation with as an economist and how do these encounters shape the questions you ask as you explore a topic?

**NK:** My research agenda could be broadly described as an intersection of labor economics and regional studies. So the research in demography and urban studies is interesting to me and I try to stay up to date.

**TS:** We’re excited to have you as guest speaker this fall. I want to thank you for taking time out of your schedule to support the Isom Center and for sharing your subject with us, and for being an Affiliated Faculty member. Thank you, Natasha. Without giving too much away can you tell us what the topic of your talk will be and if it is based on a new project in the works?

**NK:** In my talk, “Understanding the gender gap in earnings,” I will present economists’ views on the persistent difference between the earnings of men and women and discuss the causes of gender inequality and possible solutions.

## From our friends at the UM Department of Theatre Arts:

**O**le Miss Theatre recently unveiled its 2013-2014 season, “Beyond Boundaries.” Mainstage productions include *The Laramie Project*, *Hairspray*, *Marisol*, and *Six Characters in Search of an Author*.

“Beyond Boundaries” is the department’s effort to raise awareness and understanding in relation to the human condition. Although our heritage, sexual orientation or background may be different, as individuals we all experience joy, love, pain, and overcoming adversity. Many theatre arts faculty spoke of what the season meant to them, including Joe

Turner Cantú, director of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. He hopes to be a part of “surpassing our creative limitations as artists, and exploring new societal or cultural frontiers in notions, reasoning, and reflection.” Rene Pulliam, director of *Hairspray*, said of this year’s season, “I like the variety of issues being covered by the productions – from gay rights and

## A Guy and a Gal Walk into a Panel: SNL Alumna Laraine Newman Visits

The Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies and M.F.A Program in Creative Writing are excited to announce that Laraine Newman, one of the original cast members of Saturday Night Live, will be at the Overby Center Auditorium on Tuesday, October 29th at 6:00 for an evening of discussion with author Jack Pendarvis.

The event is free and open to the public. We hope to see you see there and want to invite you stay for the reception afterwards.

### About Laraine Newman:

Laraine Newman is a native of Los Angeles and began her career at the age of 15 when the improv group she worked with was hired to bring culture and self-expression to the youth of East LA and South Central.

After High School she went to Paris and studied mime with Marcel Marceau. A fact that none of her comedian friends will ever let her live down.

At the age of 19 she appeared in the New Theatre For Now at the Mark Taper Forum and was accepted to the Theatre School at Cal Arts. She lasted there for 3 months. Too many actors. She went on to join another improv workshop that soon became the Groundlings.

In 1973 Laraine appeared in a Lily Tomlin special. Lorne Michaels produced that special and later hired Laraine for SNL assuring her that it probably wouldn't last more than 13 weeks.

Laraine's more notable movie roles have been: *Stardust Memories*, *American Hot Wax*, *Perfect and Problem Child 2*. Then there are the roles she did for money. They won't be listed here. Laraine's most recent television appearances include: *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *7th Heaven* and *According To Jim* plus the upcoming *How To Live With Your Parents*.

Laraine has enjoyed a thriving animation career where her voice can be heard regularly on; *Doc McStuffins*, *Fairly Odd Parents*, *Winx*, *Motor City*, *Garfield*, and *Metacocalypse*. The rest are too numerous to mention and wouldn't resonate with an audience over the age of 11.

Laraine is contributing editor for the online food magazine *OneForTheTable* and has written for *Esquire*, *The Jewish*



Laraine Newman

*Journal*, *The LA Times Magazine*, *Worst Laid Plans*, *Strays*, *Huffington Post* and *The Believer*.

She lives in Los Angeles with her husband of 23 years and her 2 daughters.

homophobia to race relations and the female image." And *Marisol* director, Amanda Wansa Morgan, added, "Social circles and civilizations put 'boundaries' on what is accepted and those boundaries have moved throughout history - forward, backward, and side to side." She continued, "Our job as artists is to find the events and moments in life that are

out of the ordinary and present them for others providing a glimpse into those situations and to pose questions as to why they are significant." Through these four productions, Ole Miss Theatre hopes to accomplish just this.

*Continued on page 7*

## A Conversation with Dr. Barbara Combs



**Barbara Combs will be giving a Brown Bag talk on “Women and the Selma Alabama Voting Rights Campaign” in the Faulkner Room at noon on November 11th.**

By Susan R. Grayzel

Over the summer, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to sit down and talk to Dr. Barbara Combs, assistant professor of Sociology and Southern Studies, who will present a Brown Bag talk on “Women and the Selma Alabama Voting Rights Campaign” on November 11 at noon in the Faulkner Room of the J.D. Williams Library. This talk comes from research for her forthcoming book *From Selma to Montgomery: The Long March to Freedom*, which is part of the series Critical Moments in American History published by Routledge. We are so pleased that Prof. Combs has joined us as an affiliate of the Isom Center and program in Gender Studies and that she will be sharing her important research with us this semester.

Prof. Combs joined the UM faculty in 2012. Prior to earning her Ph.D. in Sociology at Georgia State University, she had an impressively varied and interdisciplinary academic career, earning first a bachelor’s degree in Political Science, an MA in English, and a law

degree. I asked her to talk to us about what it means to be teaching in interdisciplinary programs. She explained:

*I love working in an interdisciplinary program. I think it’s because I already think that way. I see connections everywhere. One of*

*my favorite exercises to do in the classroom is to give students the opportunity to speak one on one with each student in the class and figure out a non-the obvious connection that they have with each other. At the end of the class, we share our lists. Of course, it only works in a small classroom, but the connections the students did not foresee always amaze them (and me) and work to build a level of trust that facilitates better classroom discussions. I use poetry, fiction, history, art, law, and popular culture and infuse them into my class discussions. A little psychology creeps in, too. Sociology is the study of human behavior in society and how society influences human outcomes. It is impossible to understand how society influences humans without studying the institutions, groups, and social processes that create, maintain, reproduce, and reify social structure.*

*I also wanted to know what influences and inspires her both in terms of her research and her teaching:*

*I love music. My favorite artist is India Arie. My favorite book is *Pride and Prejudice*. The person I most admire is Maya Angelou. The scholar I most admire is Mary Pattillo, author of [Black on the Block: The Politics of Race and Class in the City](#); [Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class](#), and co-author of [Imprisoning America: The Social Effects of Mass Incarceration](#).*

As is the case for anyone doing research, it is always filled with the unexpected detour that turns into something rich and interesting and with the human aspect of finding out about how our history is collected and preserved. Dr. Combs had a wonderful example of what happened to her when she went to Selma:

*I think what surprised me most was the great appreciation and reverence that people from other countries have for America’s civil rights struggle. I spent several weeks going through archives at the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute in Selma, Alabama. The organization is privately funded and operates on a shoestring budget, so there’s little money available for advertising, but somehow people from various countries would find their way to Selma and ultimately the museum and they would look at the exhibits with awe and listen to the docents’ every word. It saddened me that that kind of honor and reverence could be displayed by people who did not personally benefit from the movement when so many of us who have benefited from it fail to show that same respect.*

Finally, I wanted to know what she most hoped her students would take away from her classes. She responded:

*I want my students to be able to understand and consider the point of view of someone standing in a social location different than their own. Too often we dismiss other people’s opinions simply because they don’t agree with our own. Learned people should never do this. As a society, we root for underdogs. We believe in miracles and Cinderella stories, yet we don’t appreciate the underdogs around us every day. I think with knowledge comes with an obligation. Once you understand what it’s like to be the “outsider,” it’s your responsibility to do something about it.*

She also had this important insight into our campus:

*The University of Mississippi has been physically integrated for decades, but we don't have true social integration. On our college campus we have lots of outsiders. People are outsiders because of their racial or ethnic background, their religion, their sexual orientation, etc. Through my presence, course offerings, and classroom exercises, I hope to provide a forum for people to make progress toward social integration. One of the chapters in the book is called "Everyday People." This chapter makes important point that while the well-known leaders of the civil rights movement were critical to its successes, so too were ordinary people who stood up for what was right. I hope to inspire my students to do the same.*

We are looking forward with great anticipation to hearing and learning from Prof. Combs on November 11 and to reading her book, which also comes out that month.

I thank her deeply for taking time from her busy life to answer my questions, and we encourage all of our students to take note of the classes that she offers in both Southern Studies and Sociology and find their way to this inspiring teacher.

## The Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies

### Staff:

**Susan R. Grayzel, Director**

**Theresa Starkey, Assistant Director and Instructor of Gender Studies**

**Kevin Cozart, Coordinator of Operations**

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## From our friends... Continued

Rory Ledbetter will be directing *The Laramie Project*, the first production of "Beyond Boundaries." *The Laramie Project* examines issues of homophobia, judgment of individuals, forgiveness and healing.

The play chronicles the beating and death of Matthew Shephard, an openly gay male in Wyoming, the murder trials of the defendants who left him to die tied on a fence, the Laramie community that had to deal with this horrific act, and the national media attention it garnered.

The Laramie Project, according to Ledbetter, compliments the season. "The play forces us to step beyond initial judgments about who people are and see the complexities that make them living, breathing human beings." This play, aside from the topic, is a unique theatrical experience. "Through simple changes in costume and voice, speech and physicality, actors will transform into new characters in front of the audience." He added, "I hope the audience is able

to get in touch with their own humanity through seeing this production. I think the audience will be able to see themselves in the characters on stage. It will be wonderful for the audience to experience the magic of theatre throughout the show."

As part of the celebration of LGBTQ History Month in October, the Isom Center is holding a brown bag to launch the month later that week on September 30 at noon in the Faulkner Room of the J.D. Williams Library. This event—The UM Theatre Production of *The Laramie Project*: a forum for LGBTQ History Month will feature director Rory Ledbetter as well as members of the cast. As Ledbetter explained: "I'm excited about staging *The Laramie Project* at UM. The issues and personal struggles highlighted in the play are pertinent to our campus community as we continue to move forward in addressing the prejudices that permeate our culture." And the Isom Center couldn't agree more.

Please reserve space on your calendar for the Brown Bag and for these productions.

*The Laramie Project* by Moisés Kaufman and the Members of Tectonic Theater Project

September 26 – September 29; October 1 – October 6 at 7:30pm

September 28 – September 29; October 5 – October 6 at 2:00pm

Meek Auditorium

### *Hairspray*

Music by: Marc Shaiman; Lyrics by: Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman; Book by: Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan  
November 1 – November 2 at 7:30pm  
November 2 – November 3 at 2:00pm  
Ford Center for the Performing Arts



## Fall 2013 Calendar of Events

### September

5th at 6:00 PM - Overby Center Auditorium - "Voodoo Child: Memoirs of a Freak"

A documentary by Mikki Newton. Filmmaker Mykki Newton's journey from tormented television anchorman to happy hippy chick transexual in Mississippi.

9th at Noon - Faulkner Room - Brown Bag: "100 Years of Studying Nutrition and Hospitality at UM"

Kathy Knight, interim chair and associate professor of Nutrition and Hospitality Management

12th at 7:00 PM - Barnard Observatory Lecture Hall -

18th Annual Lucy Somerville Howorth Lecture: "Dishin' up Dixie in the Post-Racial South"

by Dr. Kimberly Wallace-Sanders, associate professor and the director of Graduate Studies at the Graduate Institute of Liberal Arts at Emory University

13th 9 AM - 6 PM - Yerby Center Auditorium - SFA/Isom Center Graduate Symposium on "Women, Work, and Food"

<http://sarahisomcenter.org/sfa-and-isom-graduate-student-conference/>

30th at Noon - Faulkner Room - Brown Bag: "The UM Theatre Production of *The Laramie Project*: a forum for LGBTQ History Month"

with Rory Ledbetter, director and assistant professor of Theatre Arts, and cast members

30th at 4:30 - 6:30 PM - Lyceum 200 - Annual Welcome Reception for Female Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students

Hosted by Chancellor's Commission on Status of Women and Sarah Isom Center

### October

3rd at 5:30 - Farrington Gallery, Bryant Hall - LGBTQ History Month Reception

7th at Noon - Faulkner Room - Brown Bag: "Understanding the Wage Gap in Earnings"

Natalia Kolesnikova, assistant professor of Economics

21st at 6:30 PM - Overby Center Auditorium - The Unforgiving Law: A film screening of *The Strange History of Don't Ask Don't Tell* in conjunction with the Common Reading Experience's *The Unforgiving Minute*.

Sponsored by the Sarah Isom Center for Women and Gender Studies, Veteran and Military Services, and the University Libraries. Free and open to the public.

29th at 6PM - Overby Center Auditorium - "A Guy and a Gal Walk into a Panel: What's so Funny About Gender"

Laraine Newman, comedian, actress, and writer, and Jack Pendarvis, fiction writer-in-residence  
*Reception to follow*

### November

11th at Noon - Faulkner Room - Brown Bag: "Women and the Selma Alabama Voting Rights Campaign"

Dr. Barbara Combs, assistant professor of Sociology and Southern Studies.

### December

2nd - In Honor of World AIDS Day

Candlelight vigil and other events TBD

The above are events scheduled thus far, but please subscribe to our listserv by emailing [isomctr@olemiss.edu](mailto:isomctr@olemiss.edu) and check out our website ([www.sarahisomcenter.org](http://www.sarahisomcenter.org)) and Facebook page for updates and news.