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What: AAA Awards Ceremony

Who:
Kent Lightfoot,
Elizabeth Chin, James
Diego Vigil, Rocio
Magana, Elana Shever,
Noa Vaisman

Where: Marriott
Ballroom Salon 1,
Marriott Wardman
Park Hotel

When: Thursday,
November 29, 7:00-
9:00 p.m.

ON THE WEB:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 16, 2007

American Anthropological Association Honors Members for Contributions to Anthropology

The American Anthropological Association will recognize eight individuals for their excellence in teaching, service, research and other contributions to the profession of anthropology with several awards during a ceremony at the association's 106th Annual Meeting, November 28-December 2, in Washington, DC.

The ceremony will be held from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 29 in the Marriott Ballroom Salon 1 in the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. The ceremony will be followed by a lecture by AAA President Alan Goodman: "Bringing Back Biology (Into Anthropology)."

The honorees and their awards are as follows:

Kent Lightfoot and Elizabeth Chin
AAA Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

The AAA Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching is given annually to recognize teachers who have contributed and encouraged the study of anthropology.

Lightfoot is a professor of anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, where he has taught for 20 years.

He teaches undergraduate courses on California archeology, lab methods, an advanced seminar on cultural contact, a popular introductory course in archeology, and an upper level service-learning course that engages undergraduates in ethnographic fieldwork while they work with 6th graders in an underserved Oakland, CA, school.

Lightfoot has a reputation for being an energetic, passionate and caring teacher who presents insightful and thought-provoking lectures and classes—often infused with his own research experiences.

His recent book "Indians, Missionaries and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers (2004) has been hailed as a "superb choice for undergraduate classrooms."

Chin, an associate professor of anthropology at Occidental College in Los Angeles, CA, is being recognized for her role as an educator and mentor to students both inside and outside the classroom.

She has led student groups on two study trips to Cuba and one to Haiti, developed a project to teach anthropological methods to fifth graders, designed the curriculum for a gang intervention and prevention program, and founded a Haitian folkloric dance performance group among Occidental students.

Chin teaches the courses Anthropology Theory, Urban Anthropology, the Anthropology of Children and Childhood, Music and Motion in the African Diaspora, and the provocative *The Unbearable Whiteness of Barbie*. Although her courses have been described as "no cakewalk," students rave about her challenging and intellectually-stimulating teaching style.

Chin has shared her views on anthropology and teaching through multiple commentaries on NPR's Tavis Smiley Show.

James Diego Vigil
Robert B Textor and Family Prize for Excellence in Anticipatory Anthropology

The Textor Award is given annually to recognize contributions in the use of anthropological perspectives, theories, models and methods in an anticipatory mode.

Vigil is a professor of anthropology at University of California at Irvine. He will receive The Textor Award for his fieldwork focusing on poor youth in the Latino communities of immigrant origin in southern California. His research explores the relationship between urban gangs or patterns of educational attainment and the presence or absence of parents.

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Anticipatory anthropology involves the use of anthropological methods and practices to help citizens and leaders make informed policy choices to improve their communities' futures.

Vigil was selected for his contributions to understanding the critical issues of adolescent and gang cultures and the consequences that affect communities both in the US and across our borders.

Text contributions from Thomas Leatherman

Rocio Magana

Minority Dissertation Fellowship

The fellowship is awarded each year to an outstanding doctoral student. It is intended to increase the number of anthropology doctorates earned by people from historically underrepresented populations, thereby improving diversity in the discipline and promoting research on issues of concern among minority populations.

Magana is a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago. Her dissertation research focuses on Northern Sonora and Southern Arizona cities, towns and settlements. It explores a landscape in which national security and physical safety collide—and how the protection of life and the treatment of death become idioms by which sociopolitical authority is produced, rights are exercised, and the border is mapped onto its subject.

The dissertation is based on over thirty months of ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the Arizona-Mexico border region between 2001 and 2006. Her data collection focused on the activities, strategies and relations of those who experienced or responded to the presence, death or injury of illegal border-crossers. She used participant-observation on both sides of the boundary—from taking part in multi-day desert hikes and joining patrols to observing hospital visits and funerals. Over 200 interviews were conducted.

After earning her doctorate, Magana plans to continue her exploration of the politics of life, territoriality issues, social tensions, and challenges to democracy and governmentality.

Text contributions from Kathleen Terry-Sharpe

Elana Shever and Noa Vaisman

The David M Schneider Award

The David M. Schneider Award is awarded annually to a doctoral candidate in anthropology in recognition of innovative work in the fields of kinship, culture theory, and/or American culture.

Shever is a doctoral candidate in anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. She will receive a Schneider Award for her essay, "I am a Petroleum Product: Kinship, Sentiment and Capitalism in the Argentine Oil Industry."

Following Yanagisako, Strathern, and others, Shever takes kinship theory deep into the terrain of capitalism as she traces the co-production of particular kinship and industrial forms, the creation of towns and complex social worlds in the high desert, the emergence of "petroleum nationalism," and the conflicts over privatization and the downsizing of the oil industry in the 1990s.

Shever's title promises to show us how sons and daughters were as much "petroleum products" as were hydrocarbon fuels. Her essay delivers that and much more as it extends kinship theory in unexpected directions and challenges us to rework our ideas about capitalism, the state, and working class culture, politics, and self-making.

Text contributions from Susan Harding.

Vaisman, a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Cornell University, will receive a Schneider Award for the essay titled "Legal Truths, Kinship Ties, or, A Problem in Self Knowledge."

Vaisman's essay focuses on contemporary efforts by Argentine civil society and human rights organizations to restore kin relations and with them, biogenetic codings of identity, which were ruptured during the 1976-1983 military dictatorship. She analyzes the distinctive challenges posed by "falsified" biological ties, taken as the basis of true relations, for a theory of nation grounded on the logics of kinship.

Vaisman is praised for her carefully crafted, thought-provoking analysis of competing regimes of knowledge and truth—where the relation between the biological and the social, the state's changing commitments, and the individuals' own use of the biological as the ultimate horizon of self-knowledge, are all thrown into question.

Text contributions from Cori Hayden

Other honors to be announced during the ceremony are the AAA President's Award and Margaret Mead Award, which is given jointly by AAA and the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA).

The President's Award can be bestowed each year at the discretion of AAA's chief officer.

The Mead Award is given to a younger scholar for a particular accomplishment (such as book publication or film production) that helps interpret anthropological research in ways meaningful and accessible to broad public audiences. While the Mead recipient's name will be announced at AAA's ceremony, he or she will not officially receive the award until the SfAA annual conference in March 2007 (see <http://www.sfaa.net/sfaa2007.html>).

For more information, contact Jennifer Steffensen, media relations assistant, American Anthropological Association, 703-528-1902, ext. 3039, or jsteffensen@aaanet.org.

Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association (AAA) is the world's largest professional organization of scholars and practitioners in the field of anthropology. With over 10,000 members, the Arlington, Virginia-based association includes archaeologists, cultural anthropologists, biological (or physical) anthropologists, linguists and applied anthropologists in universities and colleges, research institutions, government agencies, museums, corporations and non-profits throughout the world. AAA publishes 19 peer-reviewed scholarly journals and conducts the largest annual meeting of anthropologists in the world. For more information on the American Anthropological Association, please visit <http://www.aaanet.org>.