Professor Sandra Gill publishes a new book on the Cultural Trauma experienced at Birmingham, Alabama during the Civil Rights Movement.
By Chrisbell Jimenez Sosa ’17

Professor Gill has published the new book *Whites Recall the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham: We Didn’t Know it was History until after it Happened*. In addition to giving a concise overview of some of the central events of the Civil Rights Movement, Professor Gill’s interviews with her classmates at an all-white high school in Birmingham demonstrate that even memories of one’s past arise from social experiences.

The book is a perfect embodiment of Gill’s feelings on how whites viewed the events that occurred in Birmingham during this time. She refers to this as, “white silence -- that whites don’t talk about their segregationalist past.” From her research she was able to show that while the bombing in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church where four young black girls were killed was central to how whites remembered the Civil Rights era, they also had trouble recalling other troubling events from this time. For example, Professor Gill shows that these same individuals had no recollection of two black boys killed by whites on the same day as the bombing of the church.

Similarly, even the fact that a black boy was killed by one of their own classmates often escapes recollection. Professor Gill places these findings within the framework of the reception of memory and analyzes how white southerners reconstruct a difficult past.

Professor Charlie Emmons publishes his own Memoir Called “Back in our Day”
By Keyana Moody ’17

Professor Charles Emmons has recently published a book dedicated to his friends and family called *Back In Our Day*. This book is about his younger days growing up in Erie, Pennsylvania. Professor Emmons was inspired to write this book because he is nostalgic and believed it will be interesting for people to compare and contrast the past and the present. I asked him if he believes remembering the past is important and he stated,

“Well somebody has said that people who fail to remember the past are condemned to repeat it... We learn a lot from the way things were; …it’s not exactly what we have now, but we could get lessons from the past. Mostly, I think about it just as fun.”

Professor Emmons wished previous generations had written such a work so that later generations could see how much has changed. I had asked him whether or not he thought his memories were real, and he said he is aware that every time we revisit a memory it is reconstructed in our minds. Nevertheless, he is confident about his memories. His favorite memory is about his Godmother/Aunt...
Grace because she is his favorite adult and the thought of her touches his heart. Professor Emmons enjoyed writing his book and he encourages others to write about their past experiences because he thinks it's important to look at history and see what sort of things existed.

Professor Emmons enjoyed writing his book and he encourages others to write about their past experiences because he thinks it's important to look at history and see what sort of things existed.

If this book sounds interesting to you, it is available on Amazon. The paperback version is $10 and the ebook is $4. If you ever wanted to publish your own book one day, Professor Emmons recommends the website, Createspace.com, which he used to publish Back In Our Day:

What’s Next? More Books…

In 1982 Professor Emmons published Chinese Ghost and ESP: A Study of Paranormal Beliefs and Experiences that will be re-released in revised form on May 2 of this year as Chinese Ghosts Revisited. This book will be on Amazon, Blacksmith Books in Hong Kong and London, and in bookstores. In addition, this summer Professor Emmons will begin writing another book - Integrated Medicine and Spiritual Healing Research - that he believes will take him a couple years to complete. Plan on making this book part of your summer 2019 reading!

Professor Emelio Betances – 25 years of service to the College.
By Professor Nathalie Lebon

It is quite an extraordinary journey that has taken Emelio Rafael Betances Medina from his beautiful Canca la Reina, a small, rural, conservative, Catholic, farming community in the Cibao region in the northern part of the Dominican Republic, to a full professorship here at Gettysburg College. Emelio told me with a chuckle once that in 12th grade in High School, a counselor was surprised he had such a large vocabulary. Emelio explained he always liked to read. Nonetheless, the counselor decided the best future for Emelio was to become a farmer. (Luckily, Emilio did not heed this advice – inserted by editor)

Emelio is an accomplished scholar, the sole author of 3 books, one of which was translated into Spanish, and co-editor of 2 books and a special issue of Latin American Perspectives, the flagship journal of Latin American Studies in the United States. He has presented no less than 34 conference papers and organized 11 panels. He has also been invited to give 47 guest lectures, not only throughout the US and in the Dominican Republic, but also in Mexico, The United Kingdom, Nicaragua, and Haiti -- and in three different languages (English, Spanish, and French).

He received the 2009 National Book Award in the category of Scientific Essay granted by the Ministry of Culture of the Dominican Republic for his third book, entitled: The Catholic Church and Power Politics in Latin America: The Dominican Case in Comparative Perspective.

But, Emelio’s most proud accomplishment is his latest book, In Search of Citizenship: Social Movements and Democratization in the Dominican Republic, published just this summer in Spanish by the Archivo General de la Nación. This book was just launched on July 5, 2016, at the National Archives in Santo Domingo.
This expansive study explains the role of social movements as pillars in the construction of social citizenship in the Dominican Republic. It traces a wide range of movements which have pushed for citizenship rights, such as education, health care, employment, cost of living, infrastructure, and land starting after the fall of the Trujillo dictatorship in 1961. The political actors analyzed here are urban grass-roots, labor, peasant, teachers and environmental movements.

Emelio chose to write this book in Spanish to contribute to the intellectual conversation and national political debate in his country. This decision is emblematic of the way he thinks of himself as a public intellectual. Just this summer, this work was rewarded by a prestigious award from the Economic and Social Science School of the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo in recognition for his contribution to the study of Latin America and for the many lectures he has given at the University over the last 25 years.

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**Emails from Alumni**

On 2/28/17, 1:08 PM, "John P. Gibbons, Esq."

Hey Charlie,

I was elated when I saw your name on the faculty list for the sociology department. To this day, I am thankful to have "found" sociology and I continue to be interested in the subject matter which cuts across all areas of life. As I sit here now, I am looking at a copy of The Power Elite by Mills, which I had picked up in the last month. I had read The Higher Circles while at Gettysburg, but had never read the Power Elite.

Anyway, while in my first or second year at Gettysburg (I spent 5 years there), one professor "advised" me after I had fallen asleep in one of his fascinating classes that I was "not college material" and that I should not waste any further time in college.

At that time, I had you as a teacher in either Sociology 101 or some other introductory level sociology course and I thought that your outlook might be somewhat different than his. I dropped in on you in your office and recounted my conversation with that professor. You told me that he was wrong and that you would agree to be my new advisor.

The rest as they say is history. I never did warm to many college classes, other than sociology. Safe to say, that I owe you and the entire department many thanks for making learning an exciting and enjoyable experience.

I am glad I had the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Grateful is an emotion that is many times experienced too late to express. My wife and 6 kids have been treated to many stories about you. The one they like best is when you returned from Washington D.C. after a weekend of slam dancing with a broken nose. As with your class that day, it gets their attention.

Thanks again and be well.
John (Class of 1985)

John P. Gibbons, Jr., Esq.
Spellman Rice Gibbons
From: Elizabeth Mueller  
Sent: Thursday, December 01, 2016 5:25 PM  
To: Emelio Betances  
Subject: Congrats on your recent Spotlight!

Dear Professor Betances:

I was so heartened to read your recent spotlight on the Gettysburg website that Katie Ragon shared with me on Facebook! It's so great to hear what's new in your classroom. You were always a great mentor and professor and I will agree that you taught me how to learn. Shelby and Mairead have such a fantastic opportunity to be working with you on these research projects and I have to admit, I'm a little jealous of all the cool work you guys are doing!

Also, congratulations on your newest book! I can't wait to read it. I'll have to stop by one day so you can sign it for me. I miss learning so many new things on a daily basis. It feels like there is significantly less time in the "real world" for deep thought and reading, but I try my best. Next time I plan on coming to campus, I'll let you know. I'd love to grab coffee and hear more about what's new with you.

All my best,

Elizabeth

P.S. Attached is a great picture of you, me, and Katie Ragon from 2013 when Katie and I graduated! Still one of my favorites.

From: Wandiba Solly  
Sent: Monday, February 06, 2017 6:19 PM  
To: VoonChin Phua  
Subject: RE: Hello

Prof. Phua,

Yes, I graduated with my Masters in Public Health in 2015. I am currently a City Service Corp member (a branch of Americorp) placed at the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

How is Gettysburg? I still think about your Data and Analysis class and all the life lessons I took from it. Like during tests every time I asked you a question you said I am not asking the right question because the way I would ask it requires a response that would give away the answer. I think about this every time I want to ask a supervisor or instructor for help with something. I also remember you saying you prefer a hard 'A' over an easy one. And I must say I completely agree with you. The reward of getting an A in a difficult class is more gratifying than getting an A from a not so difficult class. As frustrating as your class was at times I loved it and you were an awesome professor. So I thank you! :-)

Thank you,

Wandiba Solly, MPH  
Drexel Dornsife School of Public Health  
Community Health and Prevention

From: Ali Moses  
Sent: Friday, March 03, 2017 9:54 AM  
To: Craig Lair  
Subject: update

Good Morning Professor Lair,

Happy Friday! I just wanted to touch base with you about my application status. As of this week, I have been accepted into both Fordham and NYU for the Fall 2017, and most likely will be attending NYU. I just wanted to say thank you again for your recommendation, without it I would not have been able to attending NYU in the fall.

All the best,

Ali Moses

Dear Professor Betances,

I hope you’re doing well. I took your Sociology 101 class in the Spring of ’06, and I absolutely loved it. I now teach sixth grade humanities in Washington, DC and I refer back to a lot of the concepts that I learned in your class. I recently read the piece about you in the Gettysburg Magazine, and I am glad to hear that you are doing well and continuing to have a great impact on many more students. Have a great day!

Thanks so much.

Always,

Dave Levy  
Middle School Teacher, Coach and Enthusiast Athletic Director Lowell School
From: Allison Rudolph  
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2017 8:48 AM  
To: VoonChin Phua  
Subject: Your Stats Class

Good morning, 
I hope this message finds you well! I just wanted to let you know that I still refer to my notes from your statistics class to this day. The way you balanced learning about the statistics and using SPSS (which I also use in my current position), was beneficial. You are clearly deeply knowledgeable about not only in the use of statistics, but how to convey to students the key understandings. I would not be successful today doing educational research and evaluation if it weren't for the groundwork you laid in that class.

Thank you!

Allison Rudolph

From: Mackenzie Aquino  
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2017 at 10:27 AM  
To: Sandra Gill  
Subject: HI Professor Gill - have some news that I must share with my favorite professor!

Hi Professor Gill!

I have some great news... I had to share it with you given what an incredibly intellectual, supportive and encouraging mentor you've been for me over the year!

When we were initially emailing about the recommendation letter [that you so kindly wrote for me] you might recall that I mentioned my passion for doing criminal defense and more specifically, public defense. That passion has only grown tremendously since I've been in law school largely because I had the best criminal law professor my first semester [she reminded me of you because she was always challenging me to think outside the box rather than follow the easy "norm"]. Also, I had the opportunity to try out for the Moot Court Honors Society (trial court division) which is the school's mock trial team that travels to compete with other law schools across the country. I lucked out because I was assigned the defense side, and was required to prepare an opening statement and cross-examination of the prosecution's [fake] witness - the police detective that worked on the case. You can imagine that I did not take this lightly, and was truly exhilarated to have the opportunity to use some of my creativity and consider how I would advocate and defend someone in real life like I've always dreamed of. Though I thought I ruined my chances during my "first round" try-out, somehow I made it to the "final round" and now I am waiting to hear if I made the team [we find out sometime at the end of April]... fingers crossed.

Okay now to get to the real point of this excessive email... I took a risk when applying to summer internships [which is expected of law students as I'm you know] and put basically all my eggs in just the few public defense "baskets" because I know that is truly the only type of law I want to do. Much to my surprise, I landed an interview in the biggest/oldest non-profit legal organization in the country called The Legal Aid Society - and specifically the organization's Criminal Defense Practice - Trial Unit [which was a shock because the trial unit is usually only offered to second year law students]. I was ecstatic and unlike other job interviews - this interview did not make me as nervous because I've already been confronted by so many questions already about "why I want to help or defend the bad guys" and I have no problem telling people why....

Long story short, at the end of the interview the attorney interviewing me said "well now I would usually say I'll get back to you in a few weeks, but this internship is all yours if you will accept the offer." As expected, I jumped and accepted the offer without any hesitation. It is my DREAM JOB as cliche as that sounds - every day will be different... I will be going to courts [including specialized drug/rehabilitation courts and mental illness courts in NYC], doing research and drafting motions/office memorandum, working with investigators [going to crime scenes, hunting down witnesses, interviewing witnesses, analyzing the evidence, going to police line ups], going to "lockup" at Rikers Island and taking calls from inmates], working with social workers [when issues regarding mental health, addiction, or any other issues call for greater attention than is ordinarily afforded to clients prior to going to trial], and best of all - if one of the two/three attorneys I am assigned goes to trial during the internship I will get to sit "second chair" at trial alongside the senior attorney handling the case.

As you can probably tell, I am over the moon about this but I must say I truly owe it to you given that I really do not have specific experience in public defense and my passion truly comes from sociology which thankfully you encouraged me to pursue at the outset of my undergrad career. The woman interviewing me made it a point to say that my sincerity was unusual - and when she asked where it came from I simply told her that I am driven by the fact that I was so fortunate to be exposed to the social ills in our systems that we are too often blinded to because I had professors that forced me to acknowledge the reality of things... so I thank you for all that knowledge, drive, and ambition you provided over
the years [your theory of social change class especially has resonated with me].

Now that I have probably wasted way too much of your time with this email, I will put an end to my rant. I hope we can catch up sometime exchange stories and you can share more of your intellect and experiences! [I was thinking of your book the other day about the Birmingham bombing that killed those little girls - I can't wait to read it!]

Hope to talk more soon!!

Sincerely,
Mackenzie Aquino

Fall holiday party at the Sociology Department. December, 2016

Managing Editors
Chrisbell Jimenez Sosa ’17
Keyana Moody ’17

Supervising Staff and Faculty
Andrea Switzer
Craig Lair
VoonChin Phua