UNIVERSITY of HOUSTON | ENGLISH

FORWARD

The Newsletter of the UH Department of English

Message From the Chair

Next month we will host our annual Department Honors Day celebration when we recognize all our students who have done so much this year. Our students have published in our journals and anthologies, served, and leadership roles. Students who have completed Senior Honors Theses and independent research projects and Rowan Foundation internships, and our outstanding students who have received awards and scholarships. We will also honor our faculty who have published books and monographs (this year) the faculty who have started writing in our first year composition classes, the faculty who have served on committees, the faculty who have served as Graduate Advisors, the faculty who have served (assisted university-wide Teaching Excellence Awards, Cullen, Emily, Dill, Cinnamon, and Ann Blackburn, it's starting to feel like teaching school around here).

Honors Day is a cherished event begun decades ago by our beloved emeritus colleague, Professor Ann Blackburn. Ann's idea was to honor our students and faculty members who had done so much in undergraduate research and creative and production of left-wing publications (in Houston, for Houston, mainly "over the center," but she made a strong effort to include everyone and everything). Ann's idea was to celebrate our students and faculty members who had done so much in poetry and I saw her collapsing a cup of lemonade up in the third floor hallway.

Since then, the planning has been taken up by the Upper Division Studies committee, and the celebration has been moved to the Spring semester. We have had to do it in the Spring because we were so busy with our students, annual faculty awards, and so forth, and we are humbled by how sacrifices they made to succeed. As Ann said, I also salute colleagues like Dr. Vargas who set up a Fulbright for a student, Dr. Ellis who helped a student get into Oxford, Dr. Ortiz who helped students and lectures, who mentor and recommend our students as well as Prince who mentor our students and who also helped a student get into Oxford, Dr. Ortiz who helped a student get a Fulbright (I love to see you two mentor). Oh dang, it's late, so I'm at the 50 Great Brilliant Comics with Mike, Scott to follow. Happy Honors Day everyone!

Ann Christensen

Francine Harris Finalist for Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award

UH Associate Professor of English Francine Harris is a finalist for the 2019 Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award. This nomination recognizes her National Book Award finalist book, *Play Dead*. Now in its twelfth year of this award, the third collection of Harris's poetry, *Play Dead* (Persea Books) is one of the original annual awards in poetry given by Tufts to honor the best work of several Houston-area poets. Selected for consideration by scholarships and publishers last year, Harris's work was chosen by Tufts and Professor of English at the University of Houston since 2005.

Harris's poetry has appeared in such venues as Callaloo, Tin House, Ploughshares, Poetry, and Ploughshares. Her work has also appeared in several anthologies, including Best American Poetry, Best American Poetry 2015, and The Hip Hop Canon. Her poetry is of the typical