

Dr. Tonya Thames-Taylor

Contributed by Kathy Schlegel

February 8 -

Today we invited Dr. Taylor to join us to talk about Black History; not only because it's Black History Month, but because it's interesting, and educational. Dr. Taylor is a History Professor here at WCU, and if you don't recognize the name, it's because she recently married. You may know her as Dr. Thames-Leonard.

Dr. Taylor gave us a better understanding of the causes and reality of black lynching in America. Many people think lynching was only a problem in the south. A lynching took place in 1911 in Coatesville, PA, only a few miles from WCU. Zacchariah Walker was dragged out of a hospital bed and lynched. As with all lynchings, the laws of society were not enforced to protect him. This is called extra-legal violence. Lynching did not cease until the late 1960's, and no anti-lynching legislation was ever passed in the United States. A book, entitled, "The Evolution of Black Lynching in America," written by Dr. Taylor will soon be available in local bookstores. Keep checking on www.amazon.com, and get your copy.

Dr. Taylor also gave us a historical perspective on the structural inequalities that contributed to the delay in the help given to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. When you know the history of slavery and lynching, you can see how it relates to the injustice of class disparity. Dr. Taylor teaches a class on "African American History and the Turbulent 1960's," and a topic that often comes up is whether or not something is just, simply because it is the law. For example, Rosa Parks broke the law, but she was trying to achieve justice. You'll learn a lot more about these topics if you sign up for one of Dr. Taylor's courses.