

K I R W A N

Update

I N S T I T U T E

W I N T E R 2 0 0 4

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity is a university-wide interdisciplinary research institute. Its goal is to deepen our understanding of the causes of and solutions to racial and ethnic disparities and hierarchies. This includes an explicit focus on Ohio and the United States, but also the Americas and our larger global community. Our primary focus is to increase general understanding that, despite many differences, human destinies are intertwined. Thus, the Institute explores and illustrates both our diversity and common humanity in real terms.

The Institute brings together a diverse and creative group of scholars and researchers from various disciplines to focus on the histories, present conditions, and the future prospects of racially and ethnically marginalized people. Informed by real world needs, its work strives to meaningfully impact policies and practices.

The Institute also focuses on the interrelatedness of race and ethnicity with other factors, such as gender, class, and culture, and how these are embedded in structures and systems. Collaboration with other institutions and organizations around the world and ongoing relationships with real people, real communities, and real issues are a vital part of its work.

The Institute employs many approaches to fulfilling its mission: original research, publications, comparative analyses, surveys, convenings, and conferences. It is part of a rich intellectual community and draws upon the insight and energy of the faculty and students at Ohio State.

While the Institute focuses on marginalized racial and ethnic communities, it understands that these communities exist in relation to other communities and that fostering these relationships deepens the possibility of change. It is the sincere hope and goal of all of us that the Institute gives transformative meaning to both our diversity and our common humanity.

*“Despite many differences,
human destinies are intertwined.”*

— from the Kirwan Institute Mission Statement



An update of activities from the Kirwan
Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Executive Notes

We have just celebrated the Kirwan Institute's first anniversary. And while the first year has been very busy, we expect the second to be even more so. I hope by now you have had a chance to come by our offices, which are located on the fourth floor of Mendenhall Laboratory. They were designed and remodeled with the help of wonderful friends, Margaret Schulman, Debbie Danielson, and Mary Vorland. They did great work with an eye for good taste and function. We are still putting in some finishing touches.

We also have started to fill out the **Institute staff**. The capable staff that joined us in the first year are Nile Hull (research assistant), Tara McCoy (administrative associate), Becky Millard (research associate), Mellody Parchia (research associate), Cathy Presper (research volunteer), Jason Reece (research associate), and Eric Stiens (research associate). We also have a joint hire with the department of history, Dr. Hasan Jeffries. Dr. Jeffries will join us this spring. We expect to hire a number of additional staff members this year, as well as develop clearer protocol for our new hires, especially our joint hires.



Professor John A. Powell

The **mission of the Institute** is to better understand and address the structures, practices, and conditions that maintain or promote racial and ethnic hierarchy. Our **goal** is to build a body of knowledge and initiatives to disestablish racial and ethnic hierarchy in the United States and the world. To accomplish this goal, it is critical that we help bring together scholars and policy analysts from different areas of study across the university and the larger national and international community to work and think collectively on these issues. We will also support conferences, studies, data collection, surveys, and other tools in furtherance of this work. The Institute is focused on improving the life changes of marginalized racial and ethnic persons throughout the world via scholarship and research with a policy focus. We believe that this effort will benefit all groups and communities, not just marginalized groups.

We have created a **Faculty Oversight Committee** that functions as an advisory board. Currently, there are nine members of the advisory board. We anticipate adding six more members by the end of the year. At least one member of this board will be from the Greater Columbus community. In addition, we are creating two additional boards: a national/international research advisory board and a development board. We have started to identify and have conversations with prospective members of the national/international board and expect to have our first meeting in the fall. The development board will advise and assist the Institute with development and fund raising.

(continued on page 2)

We already are involved in myriad projects and expect the number of projects to increase over the next year. We also have designed three **conferences**. Our May 2003 inaugural conference, *Growing Together: Achieving Racial and Social Justice Through Regional Planning*, brought together scholars, practitioners, and advocates working on regionalism and equity. The conference was focused on the experiences of the African American community. We had a smaller, follow-up convening this February with scholars and policy makers on deepening the understanding of and developing an agenda for equity-based regionalism from the African American perspective. The Ford Foundation supports this work. Our third conference, the *Affirmative Action in the U.S. and Latin America Symposium*, was held at the Kirwan Institute and Moritz College of Law. The president of the State University of Rio de Janeiro, Nilcea Friere, was a panelist at this conference, and John Payton was our keynote speaker. John was one of the attorneys who successfully argued the historic Michigan case before the Supreme Court last year.

We are working with a number of groups around the country on the issue of **structural racism**. Hundreds of groups have signed up to be involved. We have a caucus of institutional leaders as well as scholars who have worked in this area to help develop both a conceptual and a practical approach to the issue of structural racism.

Dr. Larry Libby and Dr. Hazel Morrow-Jones and the Institute are exploring how we can share work and collaborate to convene professors and scholars on campus who are working on **land use issues**.

We also received a grant to look at how high **incarceration** affects communities of color here in Columbus. We are working on this project in conjunction with Professor Ruth Peterson and the Criminal Justice Research Center. A number of other collaborations are being considered with the Multicultural Center, the Office of Minority Affairs, and the Hispanic Oversight Committee. The Institute also is starting a small grants program for Ohio State faculty to support work related to its mission.

Our work thus far has been very rewarding, and we look forward to the work ahead!

Sincerely,



Professor John A. Powell
Executive Director

Symposium Offers Insight into Brazil's Affirmative Action Program

by Nile Hull,
Research Assistant



John Payton

Insights into how affirmative action is being enacted in Brazil were offered at the *Affirmative Action in the U.S. and Latin America Symposium* on October 13, 2003, at the Kirwan Institute and Moritz College of Law. The two-part symposium explored diversity and affirmative action challenges on a national and international scale.

University of Michigan diversity litigator John Payton, who successfully argued the validity of affirmative action in the school's undergraduate and law school admissions procedures before the Supreme Court, opened the event with a keynote address.

The Institute hosted this event along with members of the International Human Rights Group, which has recently been renamed Global Rights: Partners for Justice. Global Rights formed an Affirmative Action Affinity Group after the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR). The purpose of the group is to promote the exchange of ideas and lessons learned in the implementation of affirmative action measures.

The group has been working collaboratively with proponents of affirmative action measures to support efforts in two Latin American countries: Brazil and Uruguay. The challenges the group faces were exemplified during the second portion of the conference by Nilcea Friere, the first woman to serve as president of the State University of Rio de Janeiro. The university is presently in the center of controversy about its implementation of affirmative action quotas for acceptance of black students.

Also attending the symposium were Zakiya Carr-Johnson; Rodnei da Silva, a member of the Strategic Alliance of Afro-Latin Americans and Afro-Caribbean People who specializes in human rights and international legislation; Humberto Adami Santos Jr., a litigator who currently heads the effort to defend the quota system recently established for applicants of African descent to public universities in the state of Rio de Janeiro; and Gay McDougall, the executive director of Global Rights: Partners for Justice. McDougall supervises the development and implementation of country and thematic programs and initiatives in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Americas.

*"We are all caught up in an
inescapable network of mutuality,
tied in a single garment of destiny.
Whatever affects one directly
affects all indirectly."*

—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Kirwan Institute Studies Connection Between Race and Land Use

By Jason Reece, AICP, Research Associate

The Kirwan Institute has been busy working on several projects addressing land use policies and race. Discriminatory housing policies and exclusionary zoning practices have trapped large numbers of minorities in depressed urban areas; this phenomenon particularly impacts African Americans and Latinos. Often it is the poorest people of color who are unable to seek opportunity. As urban sprawl draws a steady progression of jobs and new housing to the urban periphery, poor inner city residents are left with declining schools, high crime, dilapidated housing, a declining tax base, and few opportunities. The Institute is working with other stakeholders to formulate land use policies that can alleviate this problem in communities throughout the nation.

Advocating for an Urban Land Bank in Detroit

Abandoned properties and vacant land are detriments to most central city areas. Vacant properties reduce property values in surrounding areas, depress property tax revenues, and create significant public safety hazards. A land bank can be established in order to address urban blight and promote redevelopment. A land bank generally involves public acquisition of abandoned property; the land is then transferred to a nonprofit third party for redevelopment. Land banks attempt to unlock the potential value of properties and sites, with the goal of returning them to productive use. The Kirwan Institute is working with the Gamaliel Foundation to promote the establishment of a land bank in Detroit, which currently has 40,000 to 70,000 vacant properties. The land bank could bring new investment into Detroit and promote affordable housing opportunities in the city.

Smart Growth and Equity in South Carolina

The Kirwan Institute is assisting the Center for Social Inclusion in an analysis of smart growth policies in Richland County, South Carolina. A large number of rural African American farmers is concerned about how new smart growth policies will impact the transfer of land to their heirs. The Institute is assisting the Center for Social Inclusion with examining how the county's new land use policies will impact the African American community.

Research on Smart Growth and Urban Issues

The Institute also is assisting with research addressing the interplay of race, sprawl, and smart growth. In conjunction with the University of Minnesota, the Institute is researching how the fragmentation of local governments impacts segregation in America's metropolitan areas. The Institute recently conducted research into new state smart growth policies and how they impact social equity.

Who We Are

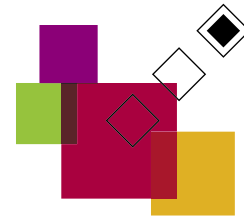
Professor John A. Powell, executive director of the Kirwan Institute and the Williams Chair in Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University, is an internationally recognized authority in the areas of civil rights, civil liberties, and issues relating to race, ethnicity, poverty, and law.

He has worked and lived in Africa, where he was a consultant to the governments of Mozambique and South Africa. In addition, Professor Powell has worked in India, Europe, and South America. He is one of the co-founders of the Poverty & Race Research Action Council (PRRAC), and he serves on the boards of several national organizations.

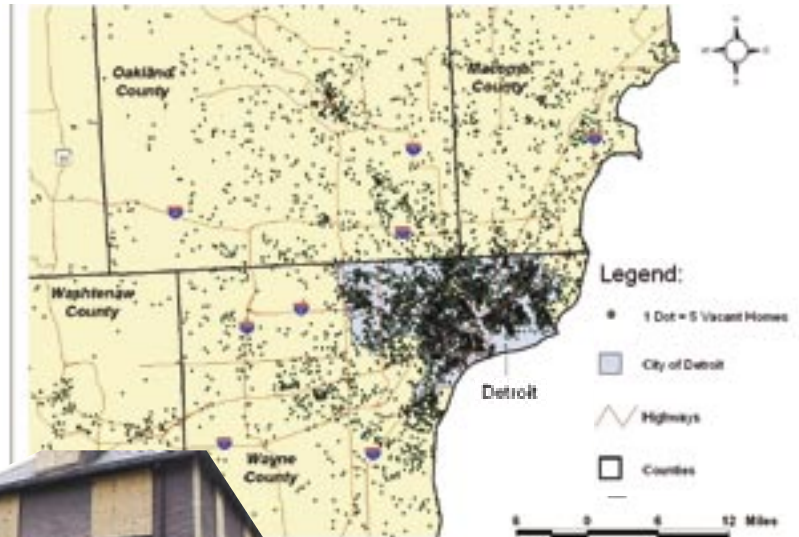
Nile Hull is a research assistant at the Kirwan Institute. She is a third-year law student at the Moritz College of Law. She earned her bachelor of arts from Emory University, which is located in her hometown of Atlanta.

Tara McCoy is the assistant to the director of the Kirwan Institute and the Institute's fiscal

(continued on page 4)



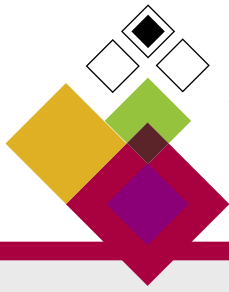
Vacant Homes in the Detroit Area in 2000



Each dot on this map of Detroit, above, represents five vacant houses in that area.



Through land bank acquisition, nonprofit groups can renovate a home and put it back on the market as affordable housing. The before and after pictures at left show the quality of work that can be accomplished.



New Database Is Resource for Issue Research

Volunteer Cathy Presper has compiled a database of organizations that are doing work in the areas of race, ethnicity, poverty, and social justice. The Institute ultimately wants the database to be a resource for anyone interested in finding out who is working on issues related to these topics.

The database can be accessed via the Kirwan Institute web site at www.kirwaninstitute.org under the heading Links.

Although staffers will be working with The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University to further classify and refine the database, it is currently organized on our web site under four categories: Academic Institutes and Centers, Grass-Roots Groups and Useful Resources, Issue-Related Links, and National Organizations.

Kirwan Institute Small Grant Program Promotes Research

In the spirit of promoting research and knowledge of the many variables of race and ethnicity, the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity will be incorporating a small grants program for faculty and researchers beginning this summer. The program will support work focused on marginalized racial and ethnic groups in the United States and abroad.

The award may be used for research, convenings, travel, and other like purposes. There will be a balance of awards granted to junior pre-tenure and senior faculty, as well as for work conducted in Ohio, the United States, and the international community.

Awards

Awards are made in the range of \$1,000 to \$10,000, and evidence of either matching funds or additional support by the applicant's academic department or outside sources is desirable.

Selection Criteria

All proposals are reviewed by a committee consisting of members from the Ohio State University faculty along with the director of the Kirwan Institute. A number of factors will be considered in the review process of proposals submitted, including, but not limited to, the following:

- ✦ Projects that will best fulfill the goals and spirit of the Institute.
- ✦ The demonstrated interest of the applicant to do work in this area.
- ✦ The collaborative nature of the work. For example, collaborating with other researchers or with the communities that are affected by the nature of the work.
- ✦ Interdisciplinary collaborations and support for research within the university and/or outside sources.
- ✦ Projects that produce a tangible outcome with broad implications.
- ✦ Reasonable budget to accomplish goals.
- ✦ Research with a clear policy focus and time frame for completion of the work.

Please contact Tara I. McCoy for more details via e-mail at mccoy.266@osu.edu. For proposal guidelines, visit our web site, www.kirwaninstitute.org.

Who We Are (continued from page 3)

and human resources representative. She graduated from The Ohio State University with a bachelor of arts in communications. She has been employed at the university for the past four years; her last position was with the Department of Psychology.

Rebecca Millard is a research associate at the Kirwan Institute. She holds a bachelor of arts in psychology from The Ohio State University, where she graduated summa cum laude. Becky has worked as a research assistant at both Otterbein College and Ohio State. She is a volunteer at several social service organizations in Columbus.

Mellody Parchia is a research associate at the Kirwan Institute and editor of Kirwan UPdate. She is an alumna of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and University of

Wisconsin. She has served as a print journalist for two of Wisconsin's leading newspapers, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* and *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. Mellody freelances for the *Columbus Dispatch* and is a volunteer with the Columbus Literacy Council.

Cathy Presper is a volunteer at the Kirwan Institute. She graduated from Duquesne University with a degree in economics and from The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business with a master's degree in business administration in 1992. She worked in sales research in Cincinnati before deciding to stay at home with her four children.

Jason Reece is a research associate and demographer for the Kirwan Institute. In 1999, he received a bachelor of arts in geography and bachelor of arts in urban and regional

planning from Miami University. He received a master's degree in city and regional planning from The Ohio State University in 2001. For the past five years, Jason has worked in planning and community development for Ohio State Extension as well as local, regional, and state government agencies. Jason was professionally certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners in 2003.

Eric Stiens is a research associate and webmaster at the Kirwan Institute. He graduated from Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, in 2001 with a bachelor of arts in sociology. He has also worked at the Institute on Race and Poverty at the University of Minnesota Law School. He currently makes his home in Cincinnati and also does freelance web design work. He is involved in a number of social justice organizations in the region.

The Kirwan UPdate is produced by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at The Ohio State University, 423 Mendenhall Lab, 125 South Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210.

For questions or comments about this publication, please contact Mellody Parchia at (614) 292-2634 or by e-mail at parchia.1@osu.edu.