



2015

GREAT SOCIETY

SYMPOSIUM

“What President Johnson understood was that equality required more than the absence of oppression. It required the presence of economic opportunity. A decent job. Decent wages. Health care. Those too were civil rights worth fighting for.”

President Barack Obama, April 2014
*Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of
The Great Society*

The Great Society Symposium
Sunday, November 1st, 2015
5:30 - 7:45 p.m.
Williams College Faculty House

A speaker and discussion dinner exploring the legacy of the Great Society and brainstorming ways to address the challenges that remain.

Moderator: Professor Cathy Johnson
Political Science Department, Williams College

Keynote Address: Professor Leslie Brown
History Department, Williams College

Featured Speaker: Deborah Leonczyk
Executive Director, Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC)

Professor Brown will provide a historical background and her perspective of President Johnson's Great Society Programs. BCAC Executive Director Deborah Leonczyk will discuss today's challenges as they affect our region.

In small group discussions, student leaders will facilitate sharing of successes, challenges and possible improvements.

Program & Dining Schedule

5:30pm: Introduction: Professor Cathy Johnson
5:40pm: Keynote: Professor Leslie Brown
6:00pm: Featured Speaker: Deborah Leonczyk
6:10pm: Participant Introductions
6:25pm: Small Group Discussion: Successes/Challenges
6:55pm: Whole Group Review with dot votes for pressing challenges
7:05pm: What Next: Brainstorming Improvements
7:25pm: Whole Group Review with dot votes for top priorities
7:35pm: Next Steps
7:45pm: Adjourn

Speaker Biographies

Professor Cathy Johnson

Political Science Department, Williams College



Cathy Marie Johnson is a professor of political science at Williams College. Her interests include inequality, social welfare policy, concepts of citizenship, and the representation of children. She has written book chapters and articles on children's interests and welfare reform, and her most recent book is *Creating Gender: The Sexual Politics of Welfare Policy*.

Courses taught regularly include:

- PSCI/WGSS 209 Poverty in America
- PSCI 208 Wealth in America
- PSCI 311 Congress
- PSCI 316 Policy Making Process

Professor Leslie Brown

History Department, Williams College



Leslie Brown was born in New York City and grew up in Albany, New York. She attended Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts, where she received a B.A. in sociology and English. After working for the McDonald's Corporation as a manager and field supervisor she served as a college administrator at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, New York, where she directed the Higher Education Opportunity Program. She returned to graduate school in 1990, and received a certificate in Women's Studies and her A. M. and Ph.D. degrees in history from Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. From 1990-1995 she co-coordinated "Behind the Veil:

Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South, a collaborative research and curriculum project at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke.

She is the author of *Upbuilding Black Durham: Gender, Class, and Black Community Development in the Urban South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), winner of the 2009 Frederick Jackson Turner Prize from the Organization of American Historians for the best book in U.S. History written by a first time author. With Anne Valk (Brown University), she edited *Living With Jim Crow: African American Women and Memories of the Jim Crow South* (New York: MacMillan, 2010), which in 2011 received the Oral History Association's Biennial Book Award. Her newest publication, a collection of primary source documents, *African American Voices: From Emancipation to the Present* (London: John Wiley), will be

available late fall 2013. Brown is also co-editing (with Leslie Harris, Emory University) the Oxford University Press Handbook of African American History, projected to go online to accompany the opening of the Smithsonian Museum of African American History. Her current projects focus on gender and migration, urban race relations, and teaching across the color line.

A nationally renowned teacher, Brown has been invited to teach content and methodology courses on slavery and emancipation, civil rights, and Jim Crow for junior high and high school teachers. Before coming to Williams in 2008, Brown taught a range of courses in race, gender, and documentary studies including American and African American history and studies; American, comparative, and African American women's history and studies; and oral history at colleges and universities, including Duke University, Skidmore College, Washington University-St. Louis.

Deborah Leonczyk

Executive Director, Berkshire Community Action Council



Deb Leonczyk is a CPA and a graduate of UMASS Isenberg School of Management and the MBA program at Western New England College and has over 30 years of Nonprofit Executive and Financial Management experience .

Having functioned in the roles of Executive Director, Consultant, Chief Financial Officer and Auditor, Deb's experiences span a wide range of NPOs including Community Action Agencies, Head Start, Mental Health Clinics, Sheltered Workshops, Adult and Child Day Care programs, Residential Treatment Homes, Foster Care, Family Support Services, Public and Private Schools, Colleges and Universities and Community Service Organizations.

Her financial expertise lies in Federal, State and other regulatory compliance requirements for nonprofit organizations. She has developed strong skills in organizational, strategic and financial planning and has demonstrated repeated successes in designing strategic response plans to fiscal crises.

Symposium Sponsors

Williams Poverty Initiative

<http://learning-in-action.williams.edu/courses-teaching/williams-poverty-initiative/>

Faculty, staff, and students at Williams College are committed to teaching about, studying, and addressing poverty and related issues. The mission of the Williams Poverty Initiative (WPI) is to coordinate, organize, and strengthen these efforts both inside and outside the classroom. We seek to encourage a broad set of students to study poverty so that they are more informed and more compassionate actors in their future professional and civic endeavors, whatever those may be. We also aim to highlight the diverse curricular and co-curricular offerings related to poverty and the many efforts made in the community to better understand and alleviate poverty, and to strengthen linkages between the classroom and experiential approaches to poverty. To this end, we provide information on curricular offerings related to poverty, help coordinate experiential learning on poverty issues, serve as a clearinghouse for related on-campus activities, and organize occasional events. Chaired by Professor Tara Watson (Economics Department), the Williams Poverty Initiative is administered through the Center for Learning in Action.

The Center for Learning in Action at Williams College

Connecting Curriculum and Campus to Community

<http://learning-in-action.williams.edu>

The Center for Learning in Action (CLiA) cultivates and sustains experiential learning opportunities, curricular and co-curricular, in service of the teaching goals of our faculty, the civic aspirations of our students, and the needs of the wider community. The Center's programming, projects and connections include volunteer and paid work opportunities, fieldwork courses, summer internships and research fellowships.

CLiA takes and encourages a collaborative and continuous learning approach in its work, partnering with a wide range of community organizations, student groups and other campus departments and programs to provide students opportunities to help address civic problems.

For more information on all our offerings and resources please visit our website.

Participating Community Organizations

Berkshire Community Action Council (BCAC)

<http://www.bcacinc.org>

The Berkshire Community Action Council, incorporated in 1966 as a non-profit human service organization, was designated the anti-poverty Community Action agency for Berkshire County, MA. We serve to act as a catalyst to stimulate quantifiable change in people's lives as they work towards self-reliance. Our programming is designed to minimize the impact of poverty on people's lives, help people help themselves and each other, and make Berkshire County a better place to live.

The BCAC offers a comprehensive list of programs to tackle poverty in the Berkshires such as asset development, emergency services, food depot, medical reassurance, weatherization, heating system repair and replacement, LIHEAP-fuel assistance, project RECONNECT, and transportation.

Berkshire County Regional Employment Board (BCREB)

<http://www.berkshirereb.org>

The mission of BCREB is to develop opportunities that will assist Berkshire County households in securing the skills, knowledge, and resources necessary to achieve self-sufficiency and household stability. We do this by developing and implementing a continuum of services and programs that address the underlying causes of household instability and homelessness. Our institution serves to assist households to develop strategies to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency and collaborate with other human service providers, including grass roots organizations and faith-based organizations, to alleviate the causes and effects of household, housing, and community instability.

Berkshire Family and Individual Resources (BFAIR)

<http://www.bfair.org>

The Berkshire Family and Individual Resources is a national and state accredited human service agency responsive to the unique needs of people with disabilities and their families through a dedication to excellence, diverse service options, safe and healthy environments, fiscal responsibility, and community partnerships, career opportunities and advancement.

Berkshire Food Project (BFP)

<http://www.berkshirefoodproject.org>

The BFP seeks to alleviate hunger, food insecurity, and social isolation by serving healthy and dignified noontime meals every weekday, by providing education in making good nutritional choices and by helping people access available food resources. We also seek to alleviate a need that had grown even in periods of economic expansion nationally. We seek to provide a forum to facilitate unselfconscious interaction among disparate segments of the population. And lastly to provide information helpful to our consumers.

Berkshire Interfaith Organizing (BIO)

<http://www.berkshireinterfaithorganizing.org>

The goal of Berkshire Interfaith Organizing is to alleviate the root causes of poverty in the community. We seek to gain a seat at decision making tables and change the power relationship that exists between our member congregations and allies, and institutions whose decisions shape access to income, transportation and food for the poor and working poor in Berkshire County. Our strategy is to develop leadership skills of hundreds of clergy and lay leaders in our member institutions, leading to a powerful Berkshire organization capable of making systemic changes.

BerkshireWorks

<http://berkshireworks.org>

BerkshireWorks is a partnership between Berkshire Training & Employment Program and the Massachusetts Division of Career Services, chartered by the Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. Together, we provide access to a comprehensive system of employment-focused programs and services for businesses, job seekers, workers, and employers. We serve all 32 cities and towns in Berkshire County.

Whether you're looking for your first job, a new job, career advancement, or quality employees, BerkshireWorks is here to assist you. We are committed to providing quality programs and services to employers, job seekers, and our community partners.

The Caleb Group / Mohawk Forest

<http://www.thecalebgroup.org/wp1/find-housing-2-2/massachusetts/mohawk-forest-north-adams>

The Caleb Group is a nonprofit, faith-inspired affordable housing organization that creates residential communities that are attractive, well-managed, nurturing, and affordable for those of low to moderate income in North Adams, Mass. Mohawk Forest is a 190-unit townhouse and garden style community. In 1999, Caleb purchased and renovated this community and built a new community center. This project is an example of intergenerational collaboration working to build community and enhance the lives of all the residents. The Caleb Group provides resident service coordination to assist in linking residents to the services they need within the community. A frequent beneficiary of grant funding, this property has wonderful programs for residents of all ages and interests.

Ecu-Health Care

<http://ecuhealth.boxcarexpress.com>

Our mission is to help the uninsured and underinsured residents of North Berkshire access affordable health care. Ecu-Health Care is the designated outreach and enrollment site in northern Berkshire County for all of the Massachusetts health programs and we also help residents enroll into all supplemental programs associated with Medicare.

The programs we help residents access include: The new subsidized and unsubsidized Qualified Health Plans, ConnectorCare, MassHealth, the Health Safety Net, The Children's Medical Security Plan, Medicare Part-D, Prescription Advantage for seniors and the disabled, Medicare premium assistance, reduced fee dental care, and all prescription assistance programs.

First Congregational Church, Williamstown

<http://firstchurchwilliamstown.org>

The First Congregational Church of Williamstown is a lively, progressive congregation, meeting in the iconic white clapboard Meetinghouse in the center of town. Our church's architecture may be conservative, but our thinking is innovative. Our church has been active from our earliest days to the present speaking out for the oppressed in our society. It was predominantly members of our church who started the local ABC House, the only member of the national "A Better Chance" organization to send kids to a public high school. We have been active in supporting LGBT rights, and have been glad to host gay and lesbian commitment ceremonies, and weddings since 2004, when the Massachusetts began issuing marriage licenses.

Goodwill Industries of the Berkshires, Inc.

<http://www.goodwill-berkshires.com>

At Goodwill, your donations help people find good jobs. Proceeds from your shopping treasure hunt stay in our community supporting job skill training for your neighbors. Every item you donate, every item you buy, gives back to the community. You help people, of all ages, and from all walks of life, get job skill development and training at Goodwill that strengthens their family's economic status.

Goodwill industries offers workforce development programs including Business 101 job training, skill development, recycling processes, logistics, and retail sales job training. These programs include the following projects: Spot-on cleaning, Recycled Rags, Waste Cardboard Recycling, Dell Reconnect Computer Recycling, Popcorn Wagon Project, Office Internships, Suit YourSelf, Soft Skill Development, Electrical Testing and Quality Control, Donation-to-Resale and After-Market Handling and Processing, Certification for Forklift Operation & Safety Training, Retail Associate Training Program, and Retail Associate In-Store Training.

Growing Healthy Garden Program

<https://www.facebook.com/GrowingHealthyGardens>

Over the past 9 years, the Growing Healthy Garden Program has developed thirteen school and community gardens in North Berkshire County as a way to encourage people to eat more vegetables, and we are involved in a grassroots initiative to preserve and increase farming and infrastructure in Berkshire County to create a successful local food system.

Higher Ground

<http://highergroundnb.org>

Our mission is to provide services and funds to meet the immediate and long-term physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of disaster survivors. We develop disaster replacement housing for those who lost their homes in the flood and prepare our community for future disasters and to assist in disaster response.

This past winter, Williams students offered to compile "Memory Books" for any current or former Spruces residents who wished to preserve the memory of their home and experiences in the park. Paula Consolini, Director of the Williams College Center for Learning in Action, and student Bushra Ali (Williams 2017) led the project with the assistance of other students. At the end of the semester, participating Sprucians were treated to a lovely picnic dinner and received first drafts of their books, which are still in production.

Hoosac Harvest

<http://www.hoosacharvest.org>

The mission of the Hoosac Harvest is to support and encourage access for North Berkshire residents across income levels to sustainably-raised, locally grown food while building relationships between the land, each other, and our food. We value food security for all members of our community, local food, farmers, and farmland as keystones to the health and well-being of our community, agriculture as a vital facet of a thriving economy, and community-based action as a crucial component in creating lasting social change.

Hoosac Harvest partook in the creation of Square Roots Farm and Many Forks Farm both of which operate on the community supported agriculture model. We raise funds to subsidize one-fifth of the shares available at both farms to enable low-income community members to participate. Our program Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food connects farmers, small food producers, and the community. We also have a Sharing the Abundance program for local gardeners and volunteers.

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dta>

The mission of the Department of Transitional Assistance is to assist low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, increase their incomes and improve their quality of life. Services include: SNAP Food Assistance, Job Assistance, Cash Assistance.

Meals on Wheels

http://www.esbci.org/programs_and_services/nutrition.html

The Meals on Wheels program provides homebound elders with a nutritious, hot meal each weekday at the noon hour. Frozen meals are available for those elders who are in need of weekend meals.

New York State Community Action Association (NYSCAA)

<http://nyscommunityaction.org>

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other. The NYSCAA provides its agencies with information, professional development, and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of agencies to serve as effective, responsive community resources. Its agencies have been the proven local, grassroots, federally-designated network of anti-poverty agencies in New York for more than 50 years. They are a catalyst for change, testing new initiatives and developing innovative methods to eliminate the causes and effects of poverty.

North Adams Council on Aging / Mary Spitzer Senior Center

http://www.northadams-ma.gov/index.php?nav_id=25

Northern Berkshire Community Coalition (nbCC)

<http://www.nbccoalition.org>

The mission of the coalition is to improve the quality of life for people in Northern Berkshire by organizing, supporting, and empowering the community. The Coalition works to achieve its mission by connecting and providing a public space for the community, providing prevention strategies, building stronger neighborhoods, promoting positive youth development, helping families stay healthy, happy, and strong, and helping to make healthy choices, the easy choices.

Our programs include: Coalition Core, Northern Berkshire Neighbors, UNITY Youth Programs, nb21 Prevention Programs, Mass in Motion, and The Family Place.

Northern Berkshire Interfaith Action Initiative / Friendship Center Food Pantry

<https://www.facebook.com/Northern-Berkshire-Interfaith-Action-Initiative-Friendship-Center-100392236707183>

The Northern Berkshire Interfaith Action Initiative (NBIAI) is a group of people of faith working together with others of goodwill to find ways to serve our community. The NBIAI meets the third Friday of each month at 10 a.m. at the First Baptist Church of North Adams. In addition to agenda items, each meeting begins with a period of silent prayer, faith sharing, and brief community announcements. All people of goodwill are welcome to participate.

The Friendship Center is the home of the Northern Berkshire Interfaith Action Initiative. It also hosts a food pantry. The Food Pantry is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays. Donations of food may be brought to 43 Eagle St. on Tuesdays between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The Nutrition Center

<http://www.thenutritioncenter.org>

Our mission is to inspire a healthy relationship to food through counseling, nutrition, and culinary education, TNC provides nutrition and cooking education services to everyone, regardless of insurance status or ability to pay. We work to improve the overall wellness of people by inspiring them to cook and eat real food. We strive to accomplish our goals of reducing obesity rates and managing and/or preventing chronic disease by empowering our clients with the tools and resources they need to make informed decisions and to nourish themselves and their families.

Successful TNC programs include Food Adventures, Cooking & Nutrition, Fresh Start Cooking, Berkshire Food Web, Think Food Conference, Nutrition Counseling, and Wellness in 5.

Take & Eat

<http://takeandeat.org>

The mission of Take and Eat, Inc. is to recruit, train, and empower members of various Faith Based Communities to prepare and deliver meals on weekends and three-day holiday weekends to homebound elders, free of charge.

Turner House Living Center for Veterans

<http://turnerhousevets.weebly.com>

Residence for 10 homeless veterans. Program is a case management model working toward helping vets overcome what caused homelessness so that they can live independently after graduation.

Williamstown Affordable Housing Committee

http://williamstown.ws/?page_id=1896

The mission of the Williamstown Affordable Housing Committee is to promote the creation and preservation of housing and housing programs in Williamstown that ensure that people with incomes below the area median can access an affordable place to live. We seek to create enough affordable housing so that ten percent of the town's total housing units be affordable to those whose incomes are at or below eighty percent of the area median income. Additionally we promote an economically vibrant community and maintain and preserve the character and historic nature of Williamstown.

Williamstown Council on Aging / Harper Center

http://williamstown.ws/?page_id=17

Participating Student Organizations

Learn more about these organizations by visiting the CLiA website:

<http://learning-in-action.williams.edu/opportunities/>

Berkshire Farm Center

Williams at Berkshire Farm Center (WBFC) works with at-risk youth both on and off campus. These youth come from Berkshire Farm Center (BFC), a residential treatment center in Canaan, NY. They are males ages 12-18 who have committed some sort of minor infraction and have been court-ordered to stay at BFC for a designated amount of time. Williams volunteers meet with the youth for a few hours on weekends, alternating between visiting BFC and hosting activities on campus. At Berkshire, the club has participated in rope course activities, gone on a nature scavenger hunt, and met the farm animals. At Williams, the group has stepped with Sankofa, learned about the 3-D printer in Sawyer Library, played basketball, and written poetry with Speakfree. Every weekend is a new opportunity to discover more about what Williams and the Berkshires have to offer while building a meaningful connection with the youth and other Williams participants.

Brayton Tutoring Program

Each semester, Williams students have the opportunity to serve as tutors and mentors to K-7th grade students at the Brayton Afterschool Program in North Adams. Williams volunteers work closely with teachers to improve literacy, as well as inspiring a general love of learning in the classroom through themed programs such as “Under the Sea,” “Kitchen Science” and “Rainforest Adventures.” The commitment is about three hours, one afternoon per week, including travel time. The Brayton Afterschool Tutoring Program open to all class years and is a great way to get involved in education, work with kids, and make a difference in the Berkshire community! Weekly commitment is essential to the success of the program.

Converging Worlds

Converging Worlds serves as a pen pal exchange, both parties involved are able to build a bond and those that were once considered as “outsiders” in our communities have the opportunity to share their experiences. At our meetings, we typically discuss topics surrounding prison education, laws that affect these marginalized members of our community. We hope to build a tutoring program within the Berkshire County Jail within the next school year.

Eph Buddies

Eph Buddies was created to facilitate friendships between the students at Williams College and members of our community who have mental and physical disabilities. We strive to support these individuals, provide them with additional resources and activities, and create for them a greater sense of social belongingness in our community. Most of our work is with the United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) center and Berkshire Family & Individual Resources (BFAIR).

InterFaith

InterFaith is dedicated to fostering discussion and cooperation between faith communities on campus. We also provide a place for individuals to explore a diversity of perspectives and traditions in a welcoming group. Throughout the year we organize and cosponsor different types of events including formal and informal discussions, social gatherings, sustainable dinners, cultural events. We also have weekly dinners and open board meetings and engage in monthly or bi weekly community service projects.

Kinetic

Kinetic strives to empower students to design and implement sustainable solutions to national and international issues by emphasizing in-depth research, innovation and collaborative problem solving. We envision a culture of boldly engaged global citizens who combine empathy, analysis, and action to create innovative solutions to prevailing problems.

Lehman Community Engagement (LCE)

Lehman Community Engagement (LCE) strives to promote and facilitate fellow Williams' students' relationships and interactions with our Berkshire community, both by providing regular opportunities for such engagement and supporting existing initiatives with similar goals.

Matriculate

Matriculate is a Williams College extracurricular organization dedicated to helping low-income high-achieving high school juniors and seniors of primarily underrepresented minorities gain access to higher education through a cohesive mentoring program. Matriculate's mission is to create long-lasting mentorships that help our students get into the nation's best colleges and become leaders in their communities.

Mohawk Forest Mentoring Program

Williams students mentor elementary and middle school children weekly at the Mohawk Forest low-income neighborhood in North Adams, preparing shared dinners, playing games, sports, music, teaching computer skills, and providing homework help. Occasionally, the group takes weekend field trips, especially to Williams.

Sweet Brook Volunteers

Sweet Brook Volunteers organize transportation to-and-from the Sweet Brook Rehabilitation and Nursing Center every week. Once volunteers are accepted by the nursing center, they become “friendly visitors” and are matched up with one of the senior residents. “Friendly visitors” spend quality time with their resident each Sunday. Each pair determines how to spend their weekly time together. Some volunteers play games with their residents, others read out loud to them and yet others simply chat.

thinkFOOD

Think Food comes from a food system — from seed to plate — that fundamentally respects human dignity and health, animal welfare, social justice, and environmental sustainability. We use “Think Food” as a holistic term to bring together many of these diverse ideas people have about a values-based food economy.

Williams Homeless Outreach (WHO)

Williams Homeless Outreach is dedicated to raising campus awareness and enacting systemic change regarding the issues of homelessness and economic disparity, especially as they pertain to the local families of rural Massachusetts. Our club meets biweekly to collaboratively create student-led, philanthropic initiatives that are determined by the interests of the current members of WHO. Additionally, we provide a platform for volunteerism at local non-profits.

Williams Recovery of All Perishable Surplus (WRAPS)

WRAPS packages and delivers surplus dining hall food to the communities in and around Williamstown facing food insecurity, including Mohawk Forest and Brayton Hill Apartments in North Adams and Louison House in Adams. Volunteers ordinarily commit one evening per week, and can participate in pickup, packaging and/or delivery efforts.

Symposium Organizing Committee

Paula Consolini

Director, Center for Learning in Action

Tracy Finnegan

Assistant Director, Center for Learning in Action

Claudia Forrester '18

Professor Cathy Johnson

History Department

Dalia Luque '18

Eleanor Lustig '18

Megan Maher '17

Sharif Rosen

Muslim Chaplain & Assistant Director, Center for Learning in Action

Acknowledgments

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