Lutie A. Lytle Black Women Law Faculty Writing Workshop

The Lutie A. Lytle Black Women Law Faculty Writing Workshop (the “Lytle Workshop”) is an annual workshop for current and aspiring black women law faculty, and black women law students considering going into law teaching. While the primary focus is on legal scholarship, this event is important for networking, bonding, and getting refreshed. Since the workshop began, workshop participants have published 29 books, 44 book chapters, and 425 articles. See this link for a bibliography of works authored by workshop attendees: http://scholars.law.unlv.edu/lytle2013/1/.

The Iowa workshop developed out of a discussion between Prof. Angela Onwuachi-Willig (University of Iowa), Prof. Sacha Coupet (Loyola University Chicago), and Prof. Ruqaiijah Yearby (Case Western) at the 2007 Midwest People of Color Conference. An e-mail writing group for black women that Prof. Imani Perry (Princeton) started in the summer of 2004 is the original inspiration for the workshop. Based on that e-mail group, Prof. Michele Goodwin (University of Minnesota) hosted a writing workshop for a small group of black women at her home in Chicago in 2005. The participants at the writing workshop hosted by Prof. Goodwin all felt refreshed and ready to return to their projects at the end of the workshop. The Lytle Workshop builds on this tradition.

The Lytle Workshop began in the summer of 2007 as the Summer Writing Workshop for Black Female Faculty. Prof. Onwuachi-Willig hosted the first workshop at the University of Iowa College of Law in Iowa City, Iowa. Professors presented scholarly works-in-progress and gave valuable feedback in the areas of corporate law, employment law, child support and family law, predatory lending and financial aid on college campuses, competency in death penalty cases, sexual profiling and feminism, international law, infanticide in Senegal, and the zoning of sex offenders. The participants also benefited from rich conversations on research and writing, grant writing, teaching, and balancing work and family.

Since the 2007 Iowa workshop, the Lytle Workshop has been held annually each summer in a different location: University of Denver Sturm College of Law in 2008 under the name Black Female Faculty Summer Writing Workshop hosted by Prof. Catherine Smith (University of Denver) and Prof. Jacquelyn Bridgeman (University of Wyoming), Seattle University School of Law in 2009 hosted by Prof. Natasha Martin, University of Kentucky College of Law in 2010 hosted by Prof. Melynda Price, Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law in 2011 hosted by Prof. Asmara Tekle, Suffolk University Law School in 2012 hosted by Dean Camille Nelson, and the William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2013 hosted by Prof. Rachel J. Anderson. Each year the Lytle Workshop continues the professional development and community building that made the 2007 Iowa workshop such a success.

The Lytle Workshop was given its current name in 2008 at the second annual workshop in Denver, Colorado, by a vote of the workshop participants present at the business meeting on the final day of the workshop. Prof. Lutie A. Lytle, a black woman from Topeka, Kansas born into the working-class, became the first woman law professor in the United States, and perhaps the world in 1898. Prof. Lytle held the position of instructor at the Central Tennessee College, a black law school in Nashville, for the 1898-99 session. She taught the Law of Domestic Relations, Evidence, Real Property, and Crimes and Criminal Procedure. The Lytle Workshop offers professional support and community to the black women law faculty who are continuing the legacy of achievements by black women in the field of legal academia that began with Prof. Lytle over a century ago.

Rachel Anderson, UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law, August 6, 2013