

BROMMEL-ADAMS-BELL-JORDAN SCHOLARSHIP IN COMMUNICATION, MEDIA AND THEATRE

This scholarship has been created to honor two colleagues who continue to carry out the leadership roles in the Communication Department. Dr. Adams and Dr. Bell-Jordan consistently publish more scholarship and appear on more regional and national programs as speakers than any other faculty! In addition, each is a superior teacher who attracts large classes and maintains high academic standards. It gives me pleasure to honor them as they continue to teach and direct a department in which I taught for 26 years.

As chairman of the search committee in 1997 that hired Katrina, I not only went to great lengths to convince her to come to Northeastern to teach but thereafter to remain happily at NEIU. I knew several of her professors at Ohio University and called them to encourage her to choose our university. Dr. Bell-Jordan earned all three of her degrees at Ohio University, beginning with a degree in journalism followed by an MA in Interpersonal Communication and finishing with a Doctorate in Communication. Between her first two degrees she gained experience in media as a writer on the staff of the Cleveland Plain Dealer and later the New York Daily News.

Bell-Jordan conducts research in the areas of race and its representation in the media; Black popular culture, identity politics and comedic performance. In an interview, she said that her research was a “natural extension of who I am and the kinds of questions I asked about the media.” She views popular culture as a reflection of who we are as a nation and in terms of understanding the west. Katrina expects her students to develop the ability and tools to question and read everything “in the spirit of learning.” She pushes her students to be more critical consumers of media.

Dr. Tony Adams came to Northeastern soon after completing his doctorate at the University of Florida, Tampa, in 1908. Prior to that, he had earned a two-year associates degree from Danville Community College and bachelors and masters degrees from Southern Illinois University. In those degrees he concentrated his work on mass communication, radio and television, rhetoric and the philosophy of communication. At Florida, Tony concentrated his work in the areas of Interpersonal and Family Communication. I had respected his dissertation advisor, Arthur Bochner, for years. He along with several of us pioneered the field of Family Communication. We started with a small committee in the National Communication Association, and today it is one of the largest divisions of the NCA. Bochner’s early book in family communication competed with Kathleen Galvin’s and my book in the same field.

Adams’ research has been widely published in the areas of gender communication, especially in the area of LBGQT communication. He has advocated the use of the narrative to reveal the dynamics of personal and interpersonal communication. His work has certainly broadened the scope of Qualitative Research in the field. Tony finds meanings in the stories people tell and write about themselves. He led a workshop at the

national NCA convention in 2012 that trained professors from around the country on how to do more effective qualitative research. His work in ethnography has attracted critical attention, including his book, *Narrating the Closet; An Autoethnography of Same-Sex Attraction*. Today he is nationally recognized as a scholar of ethnography and its influences and uses in communication. The 2013 publication of the *Handbook of Autoethnography*, which he co-edited with Stacy Holman Jones and Carolyn Ellis, now leads that field of critical inquiry into communication.

Tony is an exceptional classroom teacher. I know because over the years I have been a guest lecturer in his classes. His students radiate with enthusiasm whenever he speaks. I try at least once or twice a year to visit his classes and just join in with him in team teaching. Although we are decades apart in age and in training, we merge easily onto the “same page.” He can complete my sentences and I can do the same for his. Tony teaches most of the courses that I wrote and put into the curriculum at Northeastern when we switched from an emphasis in public address to wider aspects of communication theory and practice. Tony has taken that whole part of the academic areas of communication to the next level. With his leadership and Katrina’s, the department, now called the Department of Communication, Media and Theatre, thrives!

In July 2014, Dr. Jordan became Associate Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences at NEIU and Dr. Adams became Chair of the CMT Department.

-Dr. Bernie Brommel