

## **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. Although the Workshop’s primary focus is legal scholarship, it also plays a vital role in incorporating professional and personal skill-building into its gatherings. Since its inception in 2007, the Workshop has been an unqualified success. Its attendees have published more than 29 books, 44 book chapters, and 500 articles.<sup>1</sup>

The seeds for the Workshop were planted in a “virtual” e-mail writing group started by Professor Imani Perry (Princeton) in the summer of 2004. The following summer, Professor Michele Goodwin (UC-Irvine) hosted a writing retreat for a small group of women at her then-home in Chicago. Participants left the Chicago gathering renewed, refreshed, and ready to return to their scholarship and teaching. The Lytle Workshop builds on this sown tradition.

The Lytle Workshop in its current form began in the summer of 2007 as the “Summer Writing Workshop for Black Female Faculty.” The idea for a larger, formal workshop developed out of a discussion among Professors Angela Onwuachi-Willig (University of Iowa), Sacha Coupet (Loyola-Chicago), and Ruqaiyah Yearby (Case Western) at the 2007 Midwest People of Color Conference. That summer, Professor Onwuachi-Willig developed and organized the first national Workshop at the University of Iowa College of Law. Professor Peggie R. Smith (Washington University in St. Louis, then at University of Iowa), assisted with the final details of the Workshop.

At the 2007 Workshop, professors from across the country presented papers and works-in-progress and exchanged constructive feedback in a diverse array of scholarly subjects (including corporate and banking law, employment law, family law, education law, criminal law, constitutional law, international law, and land use law). The participants at the inaugural Workshop also benefited from rich conversations on research and writing, grant writing, teaching, preparing for promotion and tenure, and balancing work and family.

Since the inaugural gathering in Iowa, the Lytle Workshop has been held annually each summer:

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<sup>1</sup>See *Bibliography of Works Authored by Workshop Attendees 2007-2013*, <http://scholars.law.unlv.edu/lytle2013/1/>.

2008: Sturm College of Law at the University of Denver, hosted by Professors Catherine Smith (Denver) and Jacquelyn L. Bridgeman (Wyoming) (under the name “Black Female Faculty Summer Writing Workshop”)

2009: Seattle University School of Law, hosted by Professor Natasha T. Martin

2010: University of Kentucky College of Law, hosted by Professor Melynda J. Price

2011: Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University, hosted by Professor Asmara M. Tekle

2012: Suffolk University Law School, hosted by Professors Kim M. McLaurin and Bernie D. Jones (and the first “Lytle Dean,” Camille Nelson)

2013: William S. Boyd School of Law at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, hosted by Professor Rachel J. Anderson

2014: University of Wisconsin Law School, hosted by Professor Tonya L. Brito

2015: Vanderbilt University Law School, hosted by Professor Beverly I. Moran

2016 (*10<sup>th</sup> Annual Commemorative Workshop*): University of Iowa College of Law, hosted by Professor Angela Onwuachi-Willig

Each year, the Lytle Workshop continues the professional development and community building that made the 2007 inaugural gathering such a success. The Workshop incorporates an Aspiring Faculty Workshop, designed to prepare prospective applicants for the legal academic hiring market. In 2013, the Workshop also instituted an optional writing retreat, structured to give attendees uninterrupted, concentrated time to write and develop projects, and immediately incorporate feedback from individual paper workshops.

The Workshop was given its current name at the 2008 Denver gathering. In 1898, Lutie A. Lytle, the daughter of a slave, became the first woman law professor in the United States, and perhaps the world, when she began teaching law at her alma mater, Nashville’s Central Tennessee College (CTC). Founded in 1867 to provide educational opportunities to former slaves, CTC offered academic programs in teacher education, law, theology, agriculture, and medicine. During her two-year program of study, Lytle was the only woman enrolled in the school’s Law Department. One year after her graduation in 1897, Lytle was appointed as an instructor at the law school, teaching the Law of Domestic Relations, Evidence, Real Property, and Crimes and Criminal Procedure. In honor of her achievements and her example, the Lytle Workshop continues to offer professional development, support, and community to a growing cadre of women faculty who are continuing the legacy of excellence in law teaching that began with Professor Lutie A. Lytle over 118 years ago.