Beverly Guy-Sheftall, PhD.

Biography:

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Ph.D., is founding director of the Women’s Research and Resource Center (since 1981) and Anna Julia Cooper Professor of Women’s Studies at Spelman College. She was for many years an adjunct professor at Emory University’s Institute for Women’s Studies where she taught graduate courses in their doctoral program.

At the age of sixteen, Guy-Sheftall entered Spelman College where she majored in English and minored in secondary education. After graduation with honors, she attended Wellesley College for a fifth year of study in English. After a year at Wellesley, she entered Atlanta University to pursue a master’s degree in English. Her thesis was entitled “Faulkner’s Treatment of Women in His Major Novels.” A year later Guy-Sheftall began her first teaching job in the Department of English at Alabama State University in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1971 she returned to her alma mater, Spelman College, and joined the English Department.

Guy-Sheftall has published a number of texts within African American and Women’s Studies which include the first anthology on Black women’s literature, Sturdy Black Bridges: Visions of Black Women in Literature (Doubleday, 1979), which she coedited with Roseann P. Bell and Bettye Parker Smith; her dissertation, Daughters of Sorrow: Attitudes Toward Black Women, 1880-1920 (Carlson, 1991); and Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought (New Press, 1995). Additional anthologies include Traps: African American Men on Gender and Sexuality (Indiana University Press, 2001), co-edited with Rudolph P. Byrd; I Am Your Sister: Collected and Unpublished Writings of Audre Lorde (Oxford University Press, 2009), with Rudolph P. Byrd and Johnnetta Betsch Cole; and Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women’s Studies (Feminist Press, 2009), co-edited with Stanlie James and Frances Smith Foster. She has also completed with Johnnetta Betsch Cole a monograph, Gender Talk: The Struggle for Equality in African American Communities, which was published by Random House in February 2003, and Who Should Be First?: Feminists Speak Out on the 2008 Presidential Election (SUNY Press, 2010). In 1983 she became founding editor of Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women which was devoted exclusively to the experiences of African descent.

Guy-Sheftall is the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards, among them a National Kellogg Fellowship; a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship for dissertations in Women’s Studies; and Spelman’s Presidential Faculty Award for outstanding scholarship. She has been involved with the national women’s studies movement since its inception and provided leadership for the establishment of the first women’s studies major at a historically Black college. She is also past president of the National Women’s Studies Association (NWSA). Beyond the academy, she has been involved in a number of advocacy organizations.
which include the National Black Women’s Health Project, the National Council for Research on Women, and the National Coalition of 100 Black Women, on whose boards she serves. In her role as Director of Spelman’s Women’s Center, she has also been involved with the development of student activism around misogynist images of Black women in hip hop as well as a broad range of social justice issues, including reproductive rights and violence against women. She teaches women’s studies courses, including feminist theory and global Black feminisms.