

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB PROFESSOR RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED BOOK AWARD

An examination of Western feminist notions about gender from an African perspective is the recipient of the American Sociological Association's 1998 Distinguished Book Award in the sex and gender category. UC Santa Barbara scholar Oyeronke Oyewumi will receive the award Aug. 25 at the association's annual meeting in San Francisco.

Oyewumi, an assistant professor in UCSB's Department of Black Studies, is being honored for her book, "The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses." The work was praised as "one of the most original recent contributions to the sociology of sex and gender. The book's most important insight is to locate the discussion of gender within the broader question of the sources of social categories in general."

"I am, of course, very pleased to receive this award. More importantly, if this award should create a greater awareness among American sociologists of Africa as a legitimate and necessary area of sociological inquiry, I will have achieved one of my main objectives," said Oyewumi. "Given that Africa has been at the center of the most fundamental historical and social processes in the making of the modern world, it has never made sense that the study of African social realities be limited to the province of anthropology."

"To have won this award is a remarkable honor. There is a great deal of contemporary scholarship on gender and sex, so there is much competition," wrote Judith Howard, chair of the Distinguished Book Award Committee of the American Sociological Association, Sex and Gender Section. "Professor Oyewumi's book emerged as the clear winner."

"The reviews of Oyewumi's book are certainly outstanding, and to receive this award from the prestigious American Sociological Association is a significant accomplishment," said Ed Donnerstein, UCSB's acting dean of social sciences in the College of Letters & Science.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.