

Prof. Aaron Porter

**LEADERSHIP CHANGES AMONG
PHILADELPHIA BLACK LAWYERS:
*From Traditional to Open Systems of
Equality.***



Dr. Aaron Porter serves as an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Research Associate of the Center for Disaster Research and Emergency Management at Millersville University, (Pa.)

After pursuing a dual major: English/Journalism and Economics, he earned the Bachelor's degree at Bloomsburg University, (Pa). Serving as an Institute Fellow as part of a National Honors program, he took post Baccalaureate training in Economic Theory and Business Development at Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pa.

He earned the Master's and Doctorate degrees in Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. While there, Dr. Porter also received national awards from both the Ford Foundation and the American Bar Foundation in Chicago for his scholarship on Minority Lawyers and their work; not only in minority firms, but within the larger mainstream firms and the legal professional community. Also, he received a MacArthur Foundation award through the American Bar Foundation with which he was able to advance his training in Europe.

He was selected to Who's Who Among Teachers in American Colleges while a professor at the University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign, adding to his list of achievements at several private and public colleges, including University of Florida where he collaborated with the noted scholar, Dr. Joe Feagin, in publishing articles regarding Race Relations.

Dr. Porter's work on black law firms helps provide insight into changes in American racial relations. His particular work on "Norris, Schmidt, Green, Thomas, Higginbotham, and Associates: The Socio-Legal import of Philadelphia Cause Lawyers," (in Austin Sarat and Steward Scheingold (eds.), *Cause Lawyering: Political Commitments and Professional Responsibility*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 151-180), established a new paradigm in the Professions and Organizations literature; specifically, the Black Law Firm as an institution. He helped develop new modes of thought regarding the significance of ethno-historical research in socio-legal studies and its value to studies on Black middle class leadership.

During the past six years, Dr. Porter has helped expand the curriculum of the Sociology department at Millersville, by incorporating ten new course offerings. Among them: *Sociology of Complex Organizations*; *Race and the Law*; *Urban Ethnography*; and *the Black Male in Public*, a course that elaborates and expands Dr. Elijah Anderson's work, "Against the Wall."

His most recent articles detail social and legal movement efforts for social change in the United States, pointing to the divisions of labor within the civil rights movement. Particular focus is on the role that "organic intellectuals" play in organizations or professional institutions. Mediation efforts among lawyers are his central ethno-historical focus. His book-in-progress on minority lawyers is contracted with the University of Chicago Press.

Monday, November 14, 2011 11:30 a.m. – 1:20

493 College st, Room 208

Workshop in Urban Ethnography