

Rhonda Williams



Rhonda M. Williams (USA, 1957 - 2000). She earned her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and her Ph.D. in Economics from the MIT in 1983. She taught (and was a scholar-activist) at the University of Texas, Yale University and the University of Maryland (where she was director of the *Afro-American Studies Program*).

Her interests ranged from labor economics and econometrics to literature, history, philosophy, ethics, and public policy. Her work offers a political economic analysis of racial inequality in the US. She criticized neoclassical economics and showed that neither human capital explanations nor cultural differences could explain persistent racial inequality. Rhonda's writings carefully incorporated the role of class and gender in creating and maintaining racial inequalities. She fought actively for social justice and an end to oppressions of all kinds, especially those based on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation.

*"For orthodox economists, white racial identity is a non-starter. In a competitive world, whites are race-less entrepreneurs, heroically dismantling irrational wage and price differentials. Past discrimination - presumably more robust due to its legal foundations - injured Blacks, but apparently neither helped whites in any cumulative manner nor substantively altered their capacities to critically assess Black ability. Today's white market agents are color-blind by assumption"**

*"How Does it Feel to be Free?: Reflections on Black-White Economic Inequality in the Era of "Color-Blind" Law" (with William E. Spriggs), *Review of Black Political Economy* 27(1): 9-22, 1999.