

## Macalester to host 14th annual American Studies Conference “Alternatives in a changing food world”

**St. Paul, Minn.** - “Alternatives in a changing food world” is the topic University of Maryland **Prof. Psyche Williams-Forson** will discuss as the keynote speaker at the 14th Annual American Studies Conference at Macalester College, Feb.21-22. The conference also features a film screening of Byron Hurt’s *Soul Food Junkies*, a conversation with the filmmaker, and a food drive.

The keynote address is at 6 p.m. and the food drive begins 4:30 p.m. on **Thursday, February 21**, in the Alexander G. Hill Ballroom, Kagin Commons. The American Studies Department will also accept packaged food or checks anytime prior to Thursday. More information, [scott@macalester.edu](mailto:scott@macalester.edu).

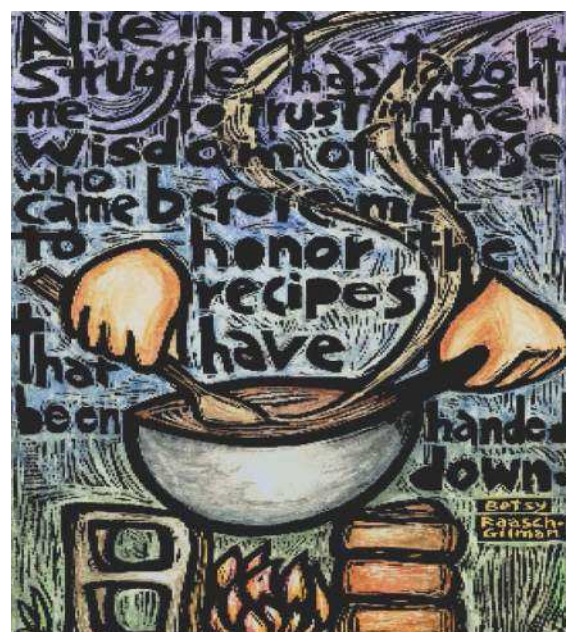
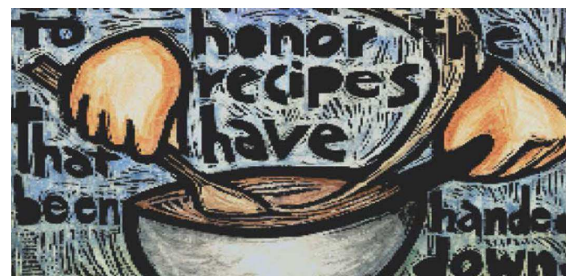
**Byron Hurt**’s *Soul Food Junkies*, and a conversation with the filmmaker, on **Friday, February 22**, in the John B. Davis Lecture Hall, Ruth Stricker Dayton Campus Center, explores the health advantages and disadvantages of Soul Food, a quintessential American cuisine. Soul food will also be used as the lens to investigate the dark side of the food industry and the growing food justice movement that has been born in its wake.

Williams-Forson is an associate professor and Director of Graduate Studies in American Studies at the University of Maryland. Her research and teaching interests include cultural studies, material culture, food, women’s studies, and social and cultural history of the U.S. in the late 19th and 20th centuries. She is the co-editor of *Taking Food Public: Redefining Foodways in a Changing World* (Routledge 2011). Her award-winning book, *Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, & Power*, (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), examines the complexity of black women’s legacies using food as a form of cultural work.

The food drive is for the Emergency Foodshelf Network, a full service food bank, providing quality, nutritious food and support services to over 200 hunger relief partners, including food shelves, on-site meal programs, and Fare For All sites, throughout the state.

One in 17 Minnesotans rely upon local food shelves to help feed their families. Last year, there were 2 million visits and 47 million pounds of food distributed at Minnesota’s 300 food shelves. There has been a 62 percent increase in food shelf visits since 2000. This year, many food shelves are seeing double and triple digit increases.

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