

2015 Macalester alumna receives Undergraduate Essay Award from the Association of Africanist Anthropology

St. Paul, Minn. – Sara Yukimi Saltman, a 2015 Macalester graduate, has won the Nancy “Penny” Schwartz Undergraduate Essay Award from the Association of Africanist Anthropology (AfAA) for her honors thesis, “The Grass that Grows on Top of Bodies: Women, Marriage and the Construction of Collective Narratives in Rural Rwanda.” (http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/anth_honors/24/)”

“I am honored and humbled by the award,” said Saltman. “I think more than anything, the award speaks to the power of the women I spoke to, and their narratives.”

Saltman’s thesis drew upon extensive ethnographic fieldwork in southern Rwanda. She presented the narratives of Rwandan women who formed an economic cooperative in the aftermath of the genocide in that country. The Association recognized the strength of her ethnographic fieldwork and her rich theorization of women's narrative in southern Rwanda, calling her research “emotionally powerful and theoretically rich.”

Saltman argued that women in the collective draw upon an “idealized idiom of marriage” in order to provide social continuity in the wake of extreme social upheaval. In doing so, women fulfill their responsibilities as female-heads of households in the physical absence and narrative presence of husbands.

Saltman has also applied her social justice focus beyond the classroom. She was the tutor coordinator for the Ramsey-Macalester tutor program where she helped other Macalester students volunteer to assist Ramsey Junior high students who needed extra classroom support such as help in science, math or French.

Now that she’s graduated from Macalester with a major in Anthropology and minors in Psychology and American Studies, Saltman continues to teach.

“Currently I am one of three teachers of a preschool classroom of 20 teaching early childhood education through Teach for America in Chicago,” Saltman said. “In September, I start teaching in my classroom, which is located in the Auburn Gresham Portal on the south side of Chicago.”

The purpose of the Association for Africanist Anthropology (AFAA) shall be to stimulate, strengthen, and advance anthropology by promoting the study of Africa, as well as Africanist scholarship and the



[Download \(//d2ihvqrbsd9p9p.cloudfront.net/contentAsset/raw-data/96c1bd89-b376-47ed-88ca-a2d5db00c5ea/image1\)](http://d2ihvqrbsd9p9p.cloudfront.net/contentAsset/raw-data/96c1bd89-b376-47ed-88ca-a2d5db00c5ea/image1)

professional interests of Africanist anthropologists in the U.S., and both in and outside of the African Continent.

Is graduate school in Saltman's future?

"I am currently pursuing a masters in education as part of the Teach for America program," she said. "Beyond that, I have thought about further studies/PhD programs but am undecided."

The award ceremony will be held during the AfAA Reception at the Annual Meetings of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in Denver, CO (November 18-22, 2015).

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,045 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>).

August 18 2015

- [About Macalester \(http://www.macalester.edu/about/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/about/)
- [Academics \(http://www.macalester.edu/academics/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/academics/)
- [Admissions & Financial Aid \(http://www.macalester.edu/admissions/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/admissions/)
- [Life at Mac \(http://www.macalester.edu/lifeatmac/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/lifeatmac/)
- [Support Mac \(http://www.macalester.edu/supportmac/\)](http://www.macalester.edu/supportmac/)