In Spring 2015, the UT-Austin community lost a brilliant global scholar, Ms. Nneka Waturuocha. Nneka was a 21-year old senior who was planning to graduate May 2015 with a double major in ‘African and African Diaspora Studies’ and ‘International Relations and Global Studies’.

In her memory, the College of Liberal Arts ceremony observed a moment of silence in her honor during the Spring 2015 graduation ceremony. The AADS department named the student space on the second floor of the newly renamed Gordon White Building (formerly the Black and Latino Studies building) after Nneka. It’s the department’s hope that students will use that space to study, meet, and explore in the spirit of Nneka’s exemplary scholarship.

In addition, the ‘AFR 376: Senior Seminar’ class that Nneka was enrolled in Spring 2015 put together a set of “Nneka Guidelines” which are meant to outline what qualities an AFR major should have in the model of
Nneka herself. These guidelines are shared with all incoming AFR majors but are not only valuable to majors: any student can employ these guidelines in their study of Africa and the African diaspora:

1. One must strive to understand the intersectionality of oppressions forced against marginalized groups, with a focus on blackness, not only in America but across the globe.
2. One must make efforts to shed their prejudices and respect those that may not think, act, or behave in ways identical or similar to themselves.
3. Beyond the academy, it is necessary to acknowledge, respect, and reach out to those of our community that may not fit within the spaces we currently occupy, nor within the frames of respectability by which we are forced to live in accordance.
4. Blackness is multifaceted. Tolerance and understanding therefore need extend beyond race and culture into spheres of sexuality, spirituality, ideology and otherwise.
5. Love, respect, and reach out to those of your experience. This journey cannot and should not be suffered alone.

Please come by the Nneka Waturuocha Student Lounge in BLS 2.116 to learn more about Nneka and her contribution to African and African Diaspora Studies.