Wesley and her family survived the first two years of the Liberian civil war, immigrating to the United States in 1991. Her research project entitled: "They Tell Their Stories: Liberian Women’s Trauma Stories from the Civil War," took her to three major cities in the U.S., to Ghana’s Buduburam Refugee Camp, and to Monrovia, Liberia over the past four years. In 2008, Dr. Wesley testified as an Expert Witness for Advocates for Human Rights’ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia’s Diaspora Hearings on the Liberian Civil War.

She is the author of three books of poetry: Before the Palm Could Bloom: Poems of Africa (New Issues Press, 1998), Becoming Ebony (SIU Press, 2003), and The River is Rising (Autumn House Press, 2007). She has won several awards, including a World Bank Fellowship, the Crab Orchard Award, and the Victor E. Ward for Literary Excellence Award. Wesley served as the Chairperson for Modern Language Association (MLA’s) Division on African Literature. She is a featured author and speaker in the U.S. and internationally, and her poetry has been critically acclaimed. Wesley is working on a memoir of her own experiences of the Liberian civil war, and editing a fourth book of poems. She is currently an assistant professor of English and creative writing at the Pennsylvania State University’s Altoona campus and lives there with her family.

Guests should register for the event through the Office of Research.

Wesley will also present a poetry reading hosted by the Creative Writing Program on Thursday, February 25 at 7 p.m. in 311 Denney Hall. Wesley’s books will be available for purchase.